Europe’s Border Relationships and International Migration Relations*

ANDREW GEDDES
University of Sheffield

Abstract
This article explores the impact of changed border relationships within and between EU Member States on the increasingly important external dimension of migration and asylum policy. The article distinguishes between types of borders and identifies key patterns in the post-cold war migration politics of Europe. It then links these to new forms of international migration relations between EU states and their neighbours.

Introduction
What impact have changed border relationships in Europe had on responses to international migration and the position of minorities whose origins lie in migration? To address this question, this article explores the domestic roots of the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policy. This involves analysis of connections between domestic social and political factors in Member States and the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policy. The argument is that externalization of aspects of EU migration and asylum policy is driven by concerns to maintain key organizational and conceptual borders of work, welfare and citizenship. This is an argument that goes beyond ‘fortress Europe’ and instead focuses on the construction of the ‘useful migrant’ understood in terms of putative economic contribution. The article thus examines the ways in which various types of border – territorial, organizational and conceptual

* I am grateful to Elspeth Guild, James Hollifield, Oliver Schmidtke and Cathryn Costello for comments on earlier versions of this article.

© 2005 The Author(s)
Journal compilation © 2005 Blackwell Publishing Ltd 2005 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK and 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA
– make migration visible and the effects that these then have on understandings of and responses to various types of international migration.

European integration’s impact on border relationships within and between EU Member States has been a key theme in recent EU scholarship (see, e.g., Donnan and Wilson, 1999; Zielonka, 2001; Anderson and Bort, 2001). The relationship between international migration in its various forms and these borders has also been a key focus of research (see, e.g., Zolberg, 1989; Andreas and Snyder 2000; Guild, 2001). The nature, form and content of Europe’s border relationships have important implications for the study of international migration and migrants. This means that attention is not directed towards the ways in which the ‘external’ (international migration in its various forms) is internalized, but to the ways in which internal changes such as those of labour markets, populations and welfare states in their various forms play a key role in structuring the external dimension of EU action. Concerns to maintain and protect borders of work, welfare and citizenship underpin the type, form and content of EU external action in the areas of migration and asylum. This is not too distinct from arguments that postulate the EU as an external venue to which the executive branches of Member State governments ‘escape’ in order to circumvent legislative and judicial constraints on their capacity to regulate migration (Freeman, 1998; Guiraudon, 2000). The article does, however, seek to take these arguments some steps further: it specifies the relationship between various types of borders; it identifies the centrality of organizational borders of work and welfare in the light of labour market, population and welfare state changes; it specifies the centrality of the notion of the ‘useful migrant’ understood in terms of putative economic contribution, locating these in the context of a wider Europe, and it then specifies the content of new forms of European international migration relations.

I. Migration and Europe’s Borders

International migration viewed as immigration is typically understood and managed as a domestic concern marked by the responsibility held by interior ministries and associated agencies for the regulation of immigration. In such terms as a national issue, then, international migration in its many and various forms (to work, to study, to join with family members, to seek refuge) is made visible by the territorial, organizational and conceptual borders of Europe’s states. It is borders of territory that are typically understood as the sites at which the sovereign authority of states to exclude is exercised. The argument developed in this article is that organizational and conceptual borders also play an important role in giving meaning to international migration in its various forms, strongly influencing the position of minorities whose origins
Europe’s Border Relationships and International Migration Relations

lie in migration, and providing the domestic roots of the external dimension of EU actions in the areas of migration and asylum policy. The remainder of this section explores these territorial, organizational and conceptual borders more closely.

Territorial borders are those sites – typically land, air and sea ports of entry – at which the sovereign powers of the state to exclude are exercised. Whilst the location at which migrants encounter the territorial borders of EU states has changed as a result of, for example, forms of ‘remote control’ migration management, it is also the case that EU action has tended to focus on territorial borders and their consolidation on the edges of the Union. In their analysis of changed debates about sovereignty in Europe, Guiraudon and Lahav (1999) point to the ways in which migration controls move ‘up’, ‘down’ and ‘out’ with a greater role played by international and private actors. The exercise of migration controls at territorial borders has, in some senses, moved up, down and out to include, for instance, supranational actors, third countries, and private actors such as truck drivers, ferry operators and airlines (Guild, 2001).

Organizational borders are not necessarily co-terminus with territorial borders. For Weber it was the confluence of territorial and functional borders that marked the state and its confines, gave meaning to sovereign authority therein and established the limits of the political community (Weber, cited in Anderson, 1996, p. 1). Functional or organizational borders can then be understood as those sites where membership conditions for migrant newcomers are specified. These would include access to the labour market, the welfare state and national citizenship.

The relationship between international migration in its various forms and these territorial and organizational borders is complex because there are many motives for international migration and many routes or paths that migrants can take from their point of entry to inclusion. The social and legal context for a highly-skilled migrant differs very markedly from that facing an asylum-seeker. There is no single amorphous phenomenon that can be called ‘immigration’ that makes any sense in practical or analytical terms. Higher skilled labour migrants, lower-skilled labour migrants, seasonal workers, family migrants and asylum-seekers will all experience a different relationship between the territorial borders at which they seek entry and the organizational borders that involve their making some claim (which could be welfare state benefits) and undertaking reciprocal responsibilities (which could be working or learning the language) in the society to which they are moving, but even this balance between rights and responsibilities can shift between migrant types. For example, many migrants move for purposes of work. It is highly relevant to look at the particular forms of economic activity that they undertake and the structural characteristics of the sectors to which they move. Research has shown that
sectors such as health care, ICT and construction, all of which have a traditionally strong presence of migrant workers, are organized very differently. In terms of organizational basis, the ICT sector is strongly international, the construction industry has a European dimension because of free movement provisions for service providers in the Treaty of Rome, while the organizational basis of healthcare systems remains strongly national (Bommes et al., 2005). The EU’s role in economic migration is limited (Commission, 2004a). Only after five years do legally resident third-country nationals acquire rights as a result of the November 2003 directive on the rights of long-term residents (Council, 2004).

In addition to these borders of territory it is also important to consider conceptual borders of community and identity. Conceptual borders comprise a set of more abstract but no less important concerns centred on notions of belonging and identity that can be tied to trans-national, national and/or sub-national communities. Conceptual borders can be but need not necessarily be co-terminus with territorial and organizational borders. While European societies are multicultural, it has been argued that policy responses to new migrants have become more assimilatory with greater emphasis on socio-economic and linguistic adaptation (Brubaker, 2001; Joppke and Morawska, 2003). These tensions centred on notions of ‘integration’ have been particularly evident in European welfare states where Morris (2002) argues that attempts to ‘manage the contradiction’ between openness and closure have been particularly evident with a resulting ‘negotiated pragmatism’ at the borders of welfare states that can manifest itself in tensions between residents and newcomers over access to scarce resources.

A distinction between territorial, organizational and conceptual borders is a useful way of thinking about the domestic roots of the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policy. It is these borders that give meaning to international migration. It is a desire to maintain key organizational borders of work, welfare and citizenship that motivates the desire to project borders of territory and to use the EU as an institutional venue to pursue external aspects of EU migration and asylum policy. The EU has become particularly concerned with the projection of territorial borders focused on the regulation of migration flows defined as unwanted or less useful in order to maintain organizational borders of work, welfare and citizenship that remain primarily national.

II. ‘Widening’ and ‘Reconstruction’

This section seeks to identify salient aspects of contemporary European migration politics. Geo-political and conceptual widening of migration flows and
EUROPE’S BORDER RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION RELATIONS

Table 1: The Widening and Reconstruction of Post-Cold War European Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-cold war trends in migration flows</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Geo-political widening | • New migration countries  
| | • All EU Member States are to some extent sending, receiving and/or transit countries  
| Conceptual widening | • New migration flows such as trafficking and smuggling  
| | • New forms of non-state, state and supranational response such as increased role for EU  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-cold war trends in migration policies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Spatial reconstruction | • Increased EU role  
| | • Intensification of bilateral, multilateral and international co-operation  
| Temporal reconstruction | • More ‘positive’ approaches to certain forms of migration, particularly highly skilled economic migrants  

Source: Author’s own data.

spatial and temporal reconstructions of policy responses are identified. These are summarized in Table 1.

The Geo-political Widening of Migration

There is a new politics of migration in Europe that encompasses all 25 EU Member States and not just the ‘older’ immigration countries of north west Europe. Central, eastern and southern European countries have all become migrant sending, receiving and/or transit countries. The guestworker and post-colonial migration patterns that characterized post-Second World War migration to north west European countries such as Britain, France and West Germany (Castles and Kosack, 1973) have been supplemented by new and more diverse migration flows (King and Black, 1997; King, 2001; Wallace and Stola, 2001; Sciortino and Colombo, 2002). A particular concern in central, eastern and southern EU Member States has been the development of irregular migration flows and the people smuggling and human trafficking networks that have developed around them (Jordan and Düvell, 2002; Samers, 2004). This geo-political widening has been accompanied by an intense attempt to diffuse the EU asylum and migration acquis, particularly to the May 2004 accession states (Grabbe, 2002). The geo-political widening of migration is closely linked to the emergence and development of new forms of international migration relations and has been a key driver of policy responses. The proximity of these new EU Member States with recent experience of migration to sending regions in the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa has contributed to the increased
attention that has been paid to the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policy (Boswell, 2003; Lavenex and Uçarer, 2004).

The high level working group on migration and asylum (HLWG) made migration management a ‘cross-pillar’ issue within the EU, with implications for foreign and security policy, justice and home affairs, trade and development, as well as the units and departments that must seek to manage these policies. The HLWG arose from a Dutch government initiative. Within the Dutch government the responsibility for international migration and refugee strategies rests with the foreign affairs ministry rather than the justice ministry. The EU approach thus reflected this Dutch attempt to ‘integrate’ the internal and external dimensions of migration policy (Boswell, 2003). The HLWG produced action plans in 1999 for Afghanistan, Albania, Iraq, Morocco, Somalia and Sri Lanka, focusing on ‘root causes’ of migration (Gent, 2002). The intention was to co-ordinate the EU response and bring the interests of security, foreign policy and development to bear on protection of human rights; democratization and constitutional governance; social and development; combating poverty, conflict prevention and resolution; asylum; and irregular migration. Security has been the watchword, however. The HLWG was composed of mainly JHA officials with relatively little experience of dealing with third countries or with development aid.

The reports were criticized for reflecting EU priorities of migration control, readmission and return rather than the pursuit of partnerships based on real dialogue. The Morocco plan attracted some specific criticisms. First, the proposal for the use of MEDA funds (the EU’s principal financial instrument for the implementation of the Euro–Mediterranean partnership) to analyse migration patterns and instruments led to tensions between the HLWG and Commission officials working in the areas of development and external relations. Second, the Moroccan government was not consulted about the action plan and initially refused to discuss the plan with the EU. Third, there was a lack of co-ordination between JHA, external relations and development within the EU, although one effect of the HLWG has been to stimulate agenda-setting activity by Commission officials working on development and external relations. Fourth, the HLWG lacked a financial basis, although this has changed with €15 million allocated in 2003. Since then, for example, the HLWG has funded a programme encouraging Moroccan migrants to set up businesses in Morocco and another project to establish a savings bank for the remittances of Moroccan migrants (Boswell, 2003, p. 631).

The Seville European Council summit (June 2002) conclusions called for a targeted approach using all EU foreign policy instruments: ‘an integrated, comprehensive and balanced approach to tackle the root causes of irregular immigration must remain the EU’s constant long-term objective’ … ‘closer
economic co-operation, trade expansion, development assistance and conflict prevention are all means of promoting prosperity in the countries concerned and thereby reducing the underlying causes of migration flows’. Seville concluded that ‘any future co-operation, association or equivalent agreement which the EU or the EC concludes with any country should include a clause on joint management of migration flows and on compulsory readmission in the event of irregular immigration’.

The conceptualization of migration as a foreign policy issue is also evident in the Commission communication on relations with third countries based on four key principles (Commission, 2002, pp. 4–5): maintaining the coherence of external policies and actions through a comprehensive approach, of which a part is migration and which is differentiated by country; addressing root causes; including migration within regional and country strategy papers; extending additional funding, initially through budget B7-667 ‘Co-operation with 3rd countries in the field of migration’ since replaced for 2004–08 by the budget line ‘financial and technical assistance to third countries in the areas of migration and asylum’ (AENEAS). The Council conclusions on ‘integrating migration issues in the EU’s relations with 3rd countries: migration and development’ of May 2003 (Bulletin EU 5-2003) then set an EU agenda in this area. They identify migration as a major strategic priority for the EU; highlight the importance of addressing root causes; establish regional and country strategy papers as the strategic framework; and stress the importance of including dialogue on migration within current and future co-operation and association agreements. The following priorities are identified: managing migration and combating trafficking; improving national legislation; offering migration-related assistance; and facilitating ‘sustainable return’. The Council conclusions focused on action in five areas to promote circulation by migrants and return for those who want it: the better use of remittances; the better integration of legally resident third-country nationals living in EU Member States with rights and obligations comparable to those of other EU residents; and opportunities to participate in education and vocational training; possible tensions between highly-skilled recruitment and development if EU Member States cherry-pick skilled migrants; and, finally – a key EU concern – readmission agreements. This agenda is also evident within the EU’s neighbourhood policy (ENP) (Commission, 2004b; Guild, 2004, ch. 10). The ENP seeks to develop a ‘ring of friends’ drawing in 14 of the EU’s neighbours from Belarus to Morocco that are not in line to join the EU. The first set of action plans (covering Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, Tunisia, Ukraine, Israel and the Palestinian Authority) was presented in December 2004, with priorities covering a number of areas, including justice and home affairs.
The EU’s rules on border controls have been described as ‘complex and controversial’ (Peers, 2005, p. 1). They have their origins in Articles 2–8 of the Schengen convention, which further complicated the picture because of the way that Schengen developed outside the formal treaty framework until being brought ‘inside’ by the Amsterdam Treaty. The Schengen border manual presented to the JHA Council in February 2002 outlined four elements of an EU entry control system: activities in third countries; international border co-operation; measures at external borders; measures within the Schengen area (cited in Pastore, 2004). The effort to strengthen frontier controls is also evident in the establishment of the Warsaw-based European agency for the management of operational co-operation at the external borders (FRONTEX, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Co-operation at the External Borders of the Member States), with dedicated funding in place by May 2005 (Commission, 2003; Cholewinski, 2003). It will be a co-ordinating body, monitoring land, air and sea borders between Member States; it will have no policy-making role or law enforcement powers, but will support national authorities with training and risk assessment.

The Conceptual Widening of Migration

The conceptual widening has seen new migration flows coupled with new forms of state response. That said, the term ‘new’ can be overused. In some ways, there is an ‘old wine in new bottles’ problem in that migrants tend to come from the same parts of the world that they always have and to move for the same reasons. What has changed is the ways in which this movement is understood and becomes a political problem. This is what is meant by conceptual widening in relation to new migration flows such as large-scale asylum-seeking, irregular migration, people smuggling and human trafficking that have been particularly evident since the end of the cold war (on asylum, see Hailbronner, 2004; Byrne et al., 2002; Byrne, 2003; on irregular migration, see Bogusz et al., 2004). Closely linked to the emergence of new forms of migration has been the development of new forms of state and supranational response to these migration flows that have implications for the debate about state sovereignty with externalization of policy and the involvement of surrounding states and regions in EU controls. Conceptual widening has thus played an important part in the development of Europe’s new international migration relations.

Attempts to ‘move’ the borders of Europe have been important components of the debate about asylum (Guild, 2001). The relationship between territorial, organizational and conceptual borders has been particularly apparent with regards to asylum-seeking migrants with the notion of the ‘economic’ or ‘bogus’ asylum-seeker legitimating strategies that reduce or remove access to work and welfare, and place asylum-seekers outside ‘the community of legitimate
receivers of welfare state benefits’ (Bommes and Geddes, 2000). Again, the EU focus has been on territorial borders, but the origins of this approach are linked closely to the maintenance of organizational and conceptual borders of work, welfare, belonging and entitlement.

Asylum is an area where a common EU response is evident, and demonstrates how the conceptual widening is linked to the spatial reconstruction of migration (discussed more fully in the next section). The origins of the EU approach can be found in the Tampere declaration of 1999 which identified four building blocks of the EU asylum system: determination of the state responsible for the examination of an application; conditions for the reception of asylum-seekers; minimum standards on asylum procedures; qualification and content of refugee and subsidiary protection status. The Dublin II regulation established criteria determining the state responsible for a particular asylum claim, while three further directives set out minimum protection standards for refugees, reception standards and a common definition of ‘refugee’. In addition to this, the Eurodac system enables Member States to compare fingerprints of asylum-seekers while the European refugee fund establishes EU financial support for reception centres and voluntary repatriation schemes.

During the January–June 2003 Greek presidency, the UK government initiated a debate (inspired by the Australian ‘Pacific solution’) about the future of the international refugee protection system that involved clear intentions to externalize the response to asylum as a way of reducing asylum flows to EU Member States. The background for this had been provided by the symbolic and material erosion of the status of asylum-seekers (with imputations of bogusness and abuse) that had occurred since the 1990s. The broader political debate on asylum coalesced around positions staked out, on the one hand, by the UK government, and, on the other, by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UK government’s ‘new vision’ paper proposed the creation of regional and transit processing centres outside EU territory. In response the UNHCR proposed a ‘three pronged’ approach that emphasized the core principle of state responsibility, but in a European and regional context. The UK plan was that asylum-seekers would be kept closer to their countries of origin in ‘regional processing centres’. This envisaged camps in Turkey, Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan for Iraqis, in northern Somalia for southern Somalis, and in Morocco for Algerians. A flaw in the UK argument was identified by Noll (2003) when he argued that, ‘the injustice of the global refugee regime, so vigorously decried in the UK vision paper, is addressed by locating the refugee beyond the domain of justice’ outside the destination state and outside established mechanisms for assessing the claim. Noll (2003) went

---

1 The UK document can be accessed at «http://www.ecre.org/eu_developments/debates/ukletter.pdf».
on to argue that the UK proposal would ‘liberate an exercise of discretionary sovereignty which we believed to be fettered in international refugee law since 1951’. Loescher and Milner (2003) called for comprehensive engagement by the EU in the regions of origin, and, on this basis, they then argue that the UK government proposals do not conform to international human rights and refugee protection standards and would place asylum-seekers at risk. The three-pronged UNHCR approach emphasized the principle of state responsibility, burden- and responsibility-sharing, the better working of national asylum systems and the strengthening of capacity in asylum countries at the point where asylum-seekers first seek protection. The EU element of this would include: closed reception centres and the listing of safe countries of origin (a concession to the UK position); speedier determination of a claim; rapid return of persons not in need of protection; strengthened protection capacity with EU support in countries of origin. Noll points out that the UK vision merits close attention because it talks about smaller groups of states pressing ahead with such measures. If they do, then these might work themselves slowly into EU practices in the same way that the notion of ‘safe countries’ did from a 1986 Danish law. In its communication ‘Towards more accessible, equitable and managed asylum systems’ of 3 June 2003, the Commission distanced itself from the UK proposals. Instead, the Commission seemed more inclined to support the UNHCR ‘three pronged solution’. The Commission’s June 2003 communication outlined ten premises on accessible, equitable and managed asylum systems (which needs to be read in conjunction with the March 2003 communication on the common asylum policy and the agenda for protection). The UK proposal seems to run counter to many of them. The Commission suggested resettlement schemes (that share responsibility between Member States) and protected entry procedures (that allow access for applications made outside the EU). In addition, a new legal basis was sought for co-operation with third countries that will seek to build capacity.

The debate about asylum can indicate just what is at stake when the relationship between the EU as a regional grouping and national/international legal standards is under discussion, but it can also illustrate the domestic origins of EU external action rooted in the relationship between territorial, organizational and conceptual borders. Moreover, there are links between asylum and the ‘fight against illegal immigration’. The ‘fight’, however, is projected into the future in the sense that the aim of the policy is, as far as possible, to ensure that people do not get the opportunity to enter EU territory. Thus the ‘fight’ is against the potential illegal immigrant who, by definition, is not on EU territory. There is an additional ambivalence because irregular migration flows have played an important role in the European labour market, particularly in southern Europe. The ‘fight’, as it has been constructed, focuses on external borders of territory,
but a core relationship is an ‘internal’ one between borders of work, welfare and irregularity. There are also issue linkages between irregular migration and asylum. Morrison (2000) has argued that the attempts by EU Member States to make territorial access more difficult can have the effect of creating the category of the ‘illegal asylum-seeker’, unknown up until now in international law, because the only way to enter an EU Member State would be to do so in a way defined by national and EU laws as illegal.

The Spatial Reconstruction of Policy-making

The geo-political and conceptual widening of migration flows to Europe has been accompanied by a spatial reconstruction of the policy response with an increased EU role. EU migration co-operation accelerated within the justice and home affairs pillar after the Maastricht Treaty (1992). The Amsterdam Treaty (1997) then moved immigration and asylum to join with free movement within a new Title IV of the Treaty concerning free movement, immigration and asylum (Geddes, 2000; Peers, 2000). Much of the Schengen agreement relating to free movement, immigration and asylum was also included within the new Title IV. There was some concern among Member States about this move towards a Community approach to migration and asylum policy. The UK, Denmark and Ireland opted out of Title IV. It was also agreed that unani-

The Tampere conclusions, issued by the heads of government in October 1999, called for a common migration and asylum policy and emphasized, amongst other things, a root causes approach to migration and the importance of migration relations with third countries (European Council, 1999). The Tampere conclusions outlined components of a ‘common migration and asylum policy’ that would include: ‘a comprehensive approach to migration addressing political, human rights and development issues in countries and
regions of origin and transit’. Member States were invited ‘to contribute … to a greater coherence of internal and external policies of the Union. Partnership with third countries concerned will also be a key element for the success of such a policy, with a view to promoting co-development’. Since Tampere the European Commission has pursued a two-phase approach that seeks to create a basic legal framework centring on the development of minimum standards in those treaty articles introduced by Amsterdam, and combine this with the employment of the open method of co-ordination to promote gradual convergence of legislation, policy and practice. EU concerns have particularly focused on asylum, irregular migration, readmission and return. Indeed, it is important to remember that a criticism of the externalization of EU migration and asylum policy and the pursuit of a ‘root causes’ approach is that it reflects the interests of EU Member States to reduce migration flows and offers little to sending counties. Moreover, there is some suspicion that EU measures may impose costs on sending and transit states that have to pick up the tab for those migrants prevented from entering the EU or sent back if apprehended while trying to enter an EU state.

Funding for EU actions in the areas of migration and asylum was initially made within budget line B7-667, since replaced for 2004–08 by the budget line AENEAS with an allocation of €250 million, of which €120m is for the period until 31 December 2006 (Regulation EC 2004/401). AENEAS is particularly intended for countries that are negotiating or have concluded a readmission agreement with the EU to facilitate: development of migration legislation (admission, rights, integration, anti-discrimination); development of legal immigration in accordance with demographic, economic and social situation in countries of origin; development of refugee protection in accordance with Geneva Convention and New York protocol; preventive measures and legislation against illegal immigration, human trafficking and smuggling; and readmission. A series of possible measures is identified, including information campaigns, advice to would-be migrants, measures to facilitate links between migrants and their countries of origin, and capacity-building measures.

The prioritization of the external dimension of migration and asylum policy was also evident in the Hague programme which outlines EU action in the areas of freedom, justice and security for the period 2005–10. The Hague programme typifies the developing EU role in the consolidation of territorial borders through measures to prevent and deter those forms of migration defined by Member States as unwanted, such as asylum-seeking and irregular migration flows. The Hague programme calls for a common European asylum system by 2009; measures on legal immigration; integration measures; partnerships with third countries; a policy to expel and return illegal immigrants to their countries of origin; a fund for the management of external borders; the Schengen
information system (SIS II) – a database of people who have been issued with arrest warrants and of stolen objects, to be operational in 2007; and common visa rules (Council of the European Union, 2004b).

**The Temporal Reconstruction of Policy-making**

The temporal reconstruction refers to the ways in which EU Member States have sought to reconstruct, at a temporal distance from the guestworker and post-colonial recruitment of the 1950s and 1960s, new forms of positive labour migration policy. There is a close link between this temporal reconstruction and the other patterns that have just been sketched. So far, the temporal reconstruction has been largely centred on national responses to perceived migration needs. This means that there is as yet little connection between the spatial reconstruction of migration marked by the developing EU role and the temporal reconstruction of migration. The treaty base for supranational action in the area of labour migration is weak, although the Commission did begin a discussion in 2005 about more consolidated EU action in the area of labour migration policy (Commission, 2004a). Here, however, we see a core dilemma for the developing EU migration role in the way that EU action has so far tended to focus on territorial borders and their reinforcement, while labour migration raises fundamental questions about organizational and conceptual borders of work, welfare, entitlement and belonging that still retain a powerful national resonance.

There is also a clear link between the development of the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policy and this temporal reconstruction. The explanation developed in this article for the externalization of EU action in some areas of migration and asylum policy has centred on the relationship between territorial, organizational and conceptual borders. This has implications for both the shape and content of policy and also for an increased policy emphasis on the ‘wanted’ or ‘useful’ migrant understood in terms of potential contribution to the economies of Member States. It is also important to note that legal migration channels are not within the EU’s remit. Thus, Member States have their own strategies in the global market for highly-skilled migrants (Salt and McLaughlan, 2000). Debates about labour migration have ascended the political agenda because of population changes, welfare state pressures and labour market shortage and have tended to centre on various interpretations of ‘facts’ concerning changes in the borders of work, welfare and citizenship in EU Member States. But these debates about facts are never too far from more fundamental debates about values, as well as views about belonging, entitlement and identity. This drives what was earlier referred to as the ‘negotiated pragmatism’ at the borders of European welfare states (Morris, 2002).
also raises the question of the links between legal and illegal immigration, which was the subject of a June 2004 Commission communication (Commission, 2004c). While the causes, scale, extent, drivers and effects of irregular migration may remain obscure, it is worth noting that irregularity is closely tied to economic informality and that this is a particularly prevalent form of economic activity in central, eastern and southern EU Member States. The informal economy can provide space for the economic insertion of irregular migrants (de Tapia, 2004).

The geo-political and conceptual widening of migration flows, coupled with the spatial and temporal reconstruction of the policy response, has heightened the salience of the external dimension of EU migration policy. They have done so in two ways: first, they reflect the changed nature of territorial, organizational and conceptual borders within the EU resulting from European economic and political integration. The result has been heightened interdependence with a particular focus on the control capacities of those Member States on the Union’s southern and eastern edges and beyond. Second, the external frontiers of EU Member States now constitute substantial international thresholds of inequality with migration pressures from south and east. In addition to this, the coalescence of EU Member States within a distinct and unique form of supranational international organization provides a distinct and novel element of Europe’s emergent international migration relations. The next section examines these international migration relations in more detail, as well as specifying what is ‘old’ and what is ‘new’ about them.

III. European International Migration Relations Old and New

A contrast between Europe’s older and newer international migration relations is informative because it demonstrates the ways in which relations between sending and receiving states structured the guestworker and post-colonial migration flows of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. This amounted to a political-historical structuring of migration leading to the creation of pathways along which future flows of migrants moved (Messina, 1996). Migrant networks then developed, were consolidated and linked sending and receiving states (or to be even more precise particular areas within those sending and receiving states often linked to particular forms of economic activity). These continued even after the oil price rise induced the so-called ‘immigration stop’ in 1972–73. The EC’s role at this time was very limited with regard to immigration from outside the EC, although by 1968 the basic parameters of the common market had been established and a free movement dynamics initiated.

Older international migration relations tended to centre on relations between states with a lesser role for intermediary international organizations
such as the EC. There was a web of connections between European states and sending countries. For example, the Federal Republic of Germany initiated its first recruitment agreement with Italy in 1955, although recruitment into the agricultural sector began in 1953. Indeed, these recruitment agreements tended to be a reflection of de facto flows rather than the devices that created them. This suggests to us that while states and their borders have been central to migration management, a lot of migration occurs despite rather than because of state interventions (Castles, 2004).

While there are important elements of continuity in European immigration politics linked to the ‘embeddedness’ of national approaches to migration and migrant politics (Hansen, 2002), the context has shifted as a result of the changes specified earlier, namely the geo-political and conceptual widenings of migration accompanied by the spatial and temporal reconstruction of the policy response. There are more immigration countries, the countries of origin of migrants are now more diverse, new and troubling forms of migration have emerged, new responses to migration have developed, the role of the EU and other international organizations has expanded, while there has also been a more positive reorientation of labour migration policies. Europe’s new international migration relations centre in particular on the EU and the attempt to project territorial borders on to surrounding states and regions in a bid to maintain organizational and conceptual borders better. This debate moves beyond ‘fortress Europe’ to examine the domestic pre-conditions for the export via the EU of migration and asylum policy. It has been argued that this externalization of migration and asylum policy is closely linked to the organizational and conceptual borders within and between EU Member States, as well as their projection on to other states and regions.

The domestic determinants of external EU action in the field of migration and asylum have induced a concern to project borders of territory on to those countries that are seen as the source of ‘unwanted’ migrants while maintaining some openness to other forms of migration, particularly by the highly skilled. Current demand for migrant workers in EU Member States is fuelled by labour market and skills shortages and by the effects of population change, low fertility rates and ageing populations (Commission, 2004a). Continued migration to EU Member States, as well as efforts to promote more flexible European labour markets, are elements of EU attempts to secure the ambitious economic reform objectives agreed at the Lisbon European Council in 2000 (European Council, 2000). There are, however, sharp disjunctions in the policies of European states towards labour migration (particularly by the highly skilled) – which is largely welcomed – and asylum-seeking and irregular migration flows – which generally are not. So, while there seems likely to be continued migration pressures from surrounding states and regions and while eastern, south eastern, Middle
East and north African countries continue to attract migrants from areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, the development of EU migration and asylum policies will have an important impact on developments in each of these areas.

**Conclusion**

This article has been interested in the relationship between borders and migration. If there were no such things as state borders, then we would not be studying international migration. It is states and their borders that make migration visible (Zolberg, 1989). The purpose of this article has been to explore the ways in which changes in border relationships within and between European states have affected understandings of and responses to international migration in its various forms. Migration ‘in its various forms’ has been an important component of this article, because it is the sheer diversity of migration that presents many of the challenges that have been analysed in this article. There is a methodological point here too. Migration is often posited as a challenge to the nation-state, but clearly it is also the case that changes within these states affect the ways in which international migration is understood and the responses to it that develop.

In order to further this point, the article distinguished between different types of border. It was shown that the main emphasis of EU policy has been on the consolidation of territorial borders as a way of reducing flows of those forms of migration defined as unwanted. However, it was also argued that to understand ‘migration challenges’ more fully, we also need to examine the ways in which migration is also made visible at organizational and conceptual borders and that these organizational and conceptual borders of work, welfare, belonging and entitlement are not necessarily co-terminus with the territorial borders of states. It was then argued that these forms of border need to be related to the salient trends in European migration since the end of the cold war. These were specified as the geo-political and conceptual widenings of migration and the spatial and temporal reconstructions of the policy response (all four of which are linked). The main focus of responses to the geo-political and conceptual widenings of migration has been on the consolidation of territorial borders with the EU playing a key role through the spatial reconstruction of the policy response. Meanwhile the organizational borders of work, welfare, entitlement and belonging are brought most clearly into view by a temporal reconstruction of policy responses which, as yet, remains primarily national.

There are, however, close links between the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policy because it is the desire to maintain key organizational borders of work and welfare that drives an approach to migration that sees the EU become a forum for the consolidation of borders in response to
unwanted flows. European countries, however, have reconstructed their policy responses to labour migration in a more positive direction. Borders, therefore, are central to the analysis of international migration. As they change, then so too does the way in which international migration is understood and responded to. While migration and migrants may be literally and metaphorically on the margins, they are central to the future of the EU because they shed light on the core border-shifting functions of the EU and the challenges that it raises that stretch far beyond the politics of migration.

Correspondence:
Andrew Geddes
Department of Politics
University of Sheffield
Elmfield
Northumberland Road
Sheffield S10 2TU, UK
Tel: +44 (0)114 222 1703 Fax: +44 (0)114 222 1717
e-mail: a.geddes@shef.ac.uk

References


© 2005 The Author(s)
Journal compilation © 2005 Blackwell Publishing Ltd
EUROPE’S BORDER RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION RELATIONS


