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## **THE PORTUGUESE-SPANISH BORDER THROUGH THE CENTURIES: IN SEARCH OF NEW SOLUTIONS**

**Abstract:** *The continent of Europe is characterized not only by its common culture and history, but also by its many borders. The colorful historical landscape inherited from the Middle Ages created European states in the 19th and 20th centuries, most of which still exist today, each with its own individual development. Few countries have such little changed borders over the centuries as that of Spain and Portugal - one of the oldest in Europe. In specialized and popular literature in Spain and Portugal, the term “Luso-Spanish border” has acquired citizenship, and for this reason, in this article, we will use this particular term to denote the Portuguese-Spanish border.*

*The border between the two Iberian countries Spain and Portugal, also known over the centuries as La Raya, experienced many vicissitudes during different historical periods. It is about the Middle Ages, the Reconquista and the New Age, to get to the Modern and the new realities in modern Europe. Of course, things have not always looked this way, and in this part of the European continent passions have raged and there have been conflicts. While Spain has land borders with four neighboring countries (with five if we include the border with Gibraltar) 19 km with Morocco in North Africa, 63 with Andorra, 656 km with France and 1234 with Portugal, the latter has only one neighbor, which is Spain. And it shows.*

*The role and significance of state borders are not unambiguous over time. In most of the past historical eras, they have been changed very often, and there are relatively few stretches of time during which wars were not fought, the result of which in most cases was a change in these borders, thereby also changing the extent of the national geographical space of one or more countries. In this sense, borders have been political barriers separating often warring countries.*

*In the modern world, as a result of a long and painful development, in many cases they have already become axes of good neighborliness and cooperation. An example of fruitful cooperation is the state borders between*

*European Union (EU) countries, which now have an almost symbolic meaning with the abolition of border control, customs checks and other functions performed between them until recently. Things are changing significantly, especially after the signing of the Schengen Agreement.*

*People on both sides of the border hardly imagined that one day it could disappear. The border has always been there and it has been felt by the people. However, things have changed dramatically now. There are no guards, no barriers, there are roads, bridges and well-maintained highways. These are changes that occurred after the accession of Portugal and Spain to the Schengen area after 1991. Thus, borders acquire other functions, from dividing lines they become unifying ones. This inevitably leads to symbiosis and mutual penetration between two neighboring peoples.*

*This is an example that can also be useful for the countries of the Balkan Peninsula, where the historical past has also left its mark. Already several Balkan countries are full members of the EU, these are Greece (1981), Slovenia (2004), Bulgaria (2007), Romania (2007) and Croatia (2013). Most of the countries of the "Western Balkans" are countries applying for EU membership. Balkan member countries of the Schengen area are Greece, Slovenia and Croatia. The full membership of the other Balkan countries in the EU and Schengen will contribute to the European integration and rethinking of the borders from both a historical and a current point of view.*

**Key words:** *Luso-Spanish border, Middle Ages, Reconquista, Modernity.*

## PORTUGALSKO-ŠPANSKA GRANICA KROZ VIJEKOVE: U POTRAZI ZA NOVIM RJEŠENJIMA

**Apstrakt:** *Kontinent Evropa karakterišu ne samo zajednička kultura i historija, već i mnoge granice. Raznolik historijski pejzaž naslijeđen iz Srednjeg vijeka stvorio je evropske države u 19. i 20. vijeku, od kojih većina i danas postoji, svaka sa sopstvenim individualnim razvojem. Malo je zemalja koje su tokom vijekova imale tako malo promjenjene granice kao Španija i Portugal - jedne od najstarijih u Evropi. U specijalizovanoj i popularnoj literaturi u Španiji i Portugalu, termin "luso-španska granica" je postao uobičajen, i iz tog razloga ćemo u ovom članku koristiti ovaj termin da označimo portugalsko-špansku granicu.*

*Granica između dvije iberijske zemlje, Španije i Portugala, poznata i kroz vijekove kao La Raya, doživjela je mnoge prevrate tokom različitih historijskih perioda. Riječ je o Srednjem vijeku, Rekonkvisti i Novom vijeku, do Modernog doba i novih realnosti u savremenoj Evropi. Naravno, stvari nisu uvijek izgledale ovako, i na ovom dijelu evropskog kontinenta strasti su divljale i bilo je sukoba. Dok Španija ima kopnene granice sa četiri susjedne zemlje (sa*

*pet, ako uključimo granicu sa Gibraltarom) - 19 km sa Marokom u Sjevernoj Africi, 63 km sa Andorom, 656 km sa Francuskom i 1.234 km sa Portugalom, Portugal ima samo jednog susjeda, a to je Španija. I to se pokazuje.*

*Uloga i značaj državnih granica nisu tokom vremena jednoznačni. U većini prošlih historijskih epoha granice su često mijenjane, a relativno malo je perioda u kojima se nisu vodili ratovi, čiji su rezultati u većini slučajeva bili promjene ovih granica, čime se takođe mijenjala i veličina nacionalnog geografskog prostora jedne ili više zemalja. U tom smislu, granice su bile političke barijere koje su razdvajale često zavađene zemlje.*

*U savremenom svijetu, kao rezultat dugog i bolnog razvoja, u mnogim slučajevima one su već postale ose dobra susjedstva i saradnje. Primer plodne saradnje su državne granice između zemalja Evropske unije (EU), koje sada imaju gotovo simbolično značenje uz ukidanje graničnih kontrola, carinskih provjera i drugih funkcija koje su se između njih obavljale donedavno. Stvari se značajno mijenjaju, posebno nakon potpisivanja Šengenskog sporazuma.*

*Ljudi s obje strane granice teško su mogli da zamisle da bi jednog dana ona mogla nestati. Granica je oduvijek postojala i bila je osjećana od strane ljudi. Međutim, stvari su se sada drastično promijenile. Nema čuvara, nema barijera, tu su putevi, mostovi i dobro održavane autoputevi. Ove promjene su se desile nakon pristupanja Portugala i Španije Šengenskom području nakon 1991. godine. Tako, granice stiču druge funkcije; umjesto da budu razdvojene linije, postaju jedinstvene. To neizbježno dovodi do simbioze i međusobnog prožimanja dva susjedna naroda.*

*Ovo je primer koji može biti koristan i za zemlje Balkanskog poluostrva, gde je historijska prošlost takođe ostavila svoj trag. Već nekoliko balkanskih zemalja su punopravne članice EU: Grčka (1981), Slovenija (2004), Bugarska (2007), Rumunija (2007) i Hrvatska (2013). Većina zemalja "Zapadnog Balkana" su zemlje koje se prijavljuju za članstvo u EU. Balkanske članice Šengenskog područja su Grčka, Slovenija i Hrvatska. Puno članstvo drugih balkanskih zemalja u EU i Šengenu doprinijeće evropskoj integraciji i preispitivanju granica kako iz historijske, tako i iz aktuelne perspektive.*

**Ključne riječi:** *Luso-španska granica, srednji vek, rekonkista (ponovno osvajanje), modernost.*

## Introduction

The Luso-Spanish border or La Raya attracts the interest of not a small number of researchers. Some like Torres<sup>1</sup>, Gaspar<sup>2</sup> and Ribeiro<sup>3</sup> examine it in its entirety, others like García<sup>4</sup> and Limpo Píriz<sup>5</sup> the separate aspects of cross-border cooperation on both sides of the border, and others like Medeiros<sup>6</sup> and Vasquez<sup>7</sup> the interaction at the regional or local level. Many of the issues are discussed in detail by Kortasar<sup>8</sup> and Peres<sup>9</sup>. Interesting information can also be found in the local press, in newspapers such as: Barroso News, Noticias de Barroso and La Region.

The formation of the Luso-Spanish border is little affected in modern Bulgarian historiography. Among the authors who worked on the problem, we can name: Veselin Boyadzhiev<sup>10</sup>, Nikolay Popov<sup>11</sup>. In 2016, the only comprehensive study of the Luso-Spanish border was published: "Cross-border cooperation between Spain and Portugal"<sup>12</sup>.

The object of scientific research is the Luso-Spanish border, and the object of research is the model of border cooperation and interaction created over the centuries. Our aim is to make an analysis regarding the formation and development of the oldest border on the continent of Europe. For us, the answer to the question is important: how it was formed over the centuries and how a historical border in Southeastern Europe functions from the perspective of the past and the present. This is interesting from the point of view of the events and vicissitudes of history and the existing borders of the Balkans, as well as the

<sup>1</sup> J. Torres, *Fronteras hispánicas: geografía e historia, diplomacia y administración*. Instituto de Estudios Políticos. Madrid 1960.

<sup>2</sup> J. Gaspar, *A fronteira como factor geográfico*. Actas de encontros/encontros en Ajuda. Diputación de Badajoz, 1985.

<sup>3</sup> O. Ribeiro, *Aspectos e problemas de expansão portuguesa*. Fundação da Casa de Bragança, Lisboa 1955.

<sup>4</sup> L. M. Garcia Mana, *La frontera hispano-lusa en la provincia de Ourense*. Museo Arqueológico Provincial, Ourense 1988.

<sup>5</sup> L. A. Limpo Píriz, *Olivenza, entre España y Portugal: (un catálogo crítico de la bibliografía española sobre Olivenza)*. Olivenza. EXCMO, Ayuntamiento 1989.

<sup>6</sup> E. Medeiros, P. Neto, Border cities in Portugal-Spain and territorial development trends. In Eduardo Medeiros (Ed) (2021). *Border Cities and Territorial Development. Regions and Cities Book Serie*. Routledge, New York 2021, 190.

<sup>7</sup> F. J. C. Vázquez, Reviewing the Spanish-Portuguese border: Conflict, interaction and cross-border cooperation. *Estudios Fronterizos, nueva época*, vol. 16, núm. 31, enero-junio de 2015, 40.

<sup>8</sup> V. Kortasar, *Kratka istoriya na Ispaniya*. Izdatelstvo „Riva“, Sofia 2009.

<sup>9</sup> H. Peres, *Istoriya na Ispaniya*. Izdatelstvo „Kama“, Sofia 2005.

<sup>10</sup> V. Boyadzhiev, Srednovekovnata iberijska darzhavnost i kolonializam – nachalo na globalizatsiyata. *Godishnik na SU „Sv. Kliment Ohridski“*, GGF, kniga 2 – Geografiya, tom 96, 2005, 7.

<sup>11</sup> N. Popov, *Politicheska geografiya na portugalskata kolonialna imperiya*. Izdatelstvo „Askoni“, Sofia 2010.

<sup>12</sup> S. Dimitrov, *Trangranichnoto satrudnichestvo mezhdu Ispaniya i Portugaliya*. Izdatelstvo „Faber“, Veliko Tarnovo 2016.

expansion of the EU and Schengen in South-Eastern Europe. However, these borders retain their significance as contours of the national geographical space of the member states, over which the respective state exercises its sovereign rights<sup>13</sup>.

We set ourselves the task of highlighting some of the most important events concerning the relationship between Portugal and Spain and the border area between them. The study is the result of long-term scientific research and has no claims to be comprehensive, but we believe that it is an attempt to present an interesting historical question, relatively little studied in Bulgaria.

The main research methods are the system-structural analysis and the comparative-historical research method. The applied approach can also be useful in other similar studies examining the borders between the countries of the Balkan Peninsula.

## Exhibition

The Iberian Peninsula is the largest, most continental and least dissected of the three southern European peninsulas with an area of 585,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It is also known as the Iberian Peninsula after the name of its oldest population - the Iberians. It is connected to the continent through the Pyrenees, which are located along its northern border with Western Europe. In the west it is washed by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean - from the Bay of Biscay to the Strait of Gibraltar, in the east - by the Mediterranean Sea. On the peninsula are the extreme western (Cape Cabo da Roca 9°3' N) and the extreme southern point (Cape Tarifa 35°58' N) of the continent.

Within the borders of the Iberian Peninsula are three countries - Spain, Portugal and Andorra, as well as the British possession of Gibraltar. The geographical position of the peninsula as a link between Europe and Africa has great historical and economic significance<sup>14</sup>.

Surrounded by the sea and isolated from the rest of Europe, the Iberian Peninsula has a historical path determined by its geographical position, especially during Antiquity, when man's opportunities to avoid the inconveniences of nature were limited. With the presence of the dangerous obstacle – the Pyrenees, the territory is as if condemned to remain closed in on itself, inaccessible to the cultural influences coming from the north.

If the location of the Peninsula has a significant influence on its history, the same can be said about its internal structure, subject to a cut relief, hampering communication until the nineteenth century. Unlike the coastal lands exposed to external influences, the Central Plateau suffered long periods of isolation,

<sup>13</sup> B. Kolev, *Natsionalnoto geografsko prostranstvo na Republika Balgariya*. Izdatelstvo „Heron pres“, Sofia 2008, 73.

<sup>14</sup> M. Glovnya, E. Blagoeva, *Fizicheska geografiya na kontinentite*. Sofia 1989, 181.

blocked by the mountain ranges of the Iberian system, the Andalusian highlands and the peaks of Cantabria and Galicia, preventing connections between north and south, east and west. According to its relief, the peninsula is divided into different geographical regions: the Meseta, the Cantabrian high coast, Galicia, the Ebro and Guadalquivir valleys, the Levant, Catalonia, which in the course of history will become culturally distinct areas<sup>15</sup>.

The border between Spain and Portugal, known over the centuries as La Raya, arose gradually during the Middle Ages, when the Kingdom of Portugal was formed, as well as the other countries of the peninsula. The reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula, involving the efforts of these Christian states, marked the beginning of a long process of expansion, reformulation and consolidation of land borders, but not always linear and generally unpredictable. This process took place during the Middle Ages, reaching the dawn of the New Age. Even today, despite the signing of several successive treaties removing restrictions between the two countries, disputes over sovereignty and legitimacy persist along some sections of the border between Spain and Portugal. Such is, for example, the dispute over the question of the affiliation of the town of Olivenza<sup>16</sup>.

La Raya played a very important role in defining the boundaries of the respective spheres of influence on the peninsula between the individual kingdoms and in the consolidation of Portugal as an independent kingdom, completing this process almost two centuries before the Spanish. After consolidating and asserting its positions on the frontier, unable to expand eastward, Portugal turned to the open seas, beginning with sometimes quite risky expeditions outside of Europe<sup>17</sup>. It is a strategic decision, the consequences of which lead to the formation of the Portuguese identity with the self-confidence of a great colonial power. It also played a successful role in Portugal's quest to maintain its independence from the powerful Kingdom of Castile<sup>18</sup>.

Social sciences tend to accept that some things that at first glance seem purely anecdotal and unimportant may be able to reveal important aspects of social reality. There is a story in Portugal that tells how, in preparation for the Spanish Prime Minister's visit to a school in Lisbon, the principal gives instructions to the students, and when asked what Spain means to the Portuguese, they must answer: "the Spanish are our friends". "No, sir", replied one of the younger boys, "the Spaniards are our brothers". "That's a very good answer",

<sup>15</sup> V. Kortasar, *Kratka istoriya na Ispaniya*. Izdatelstvo „Riva“, Sofia 2009, 10.

<sup>16</sup> L. A. Limpo Piriz, *Olivenza, entre España y Portugal: (un catálogo crítico de la bibliografía española sobre Olivenza)*. Olivenza. EXCMO, Ayuntamiento 1989, 43.

<sup>17</sup> J. Torres, *Fronteras hispánicas: geografía e historia, diplomacia y administración*. Instituto de Estudios Políticos. Madrid 1960, 104. Un ejemplo al respecto es la muerte del rey portugués Sebastião durante una expedición a Marruecos en 1578.

<sup>18</sup> J. Gaspar, *A fronteira como factor geográfico*. Actas de encuentros/encontros en Ajuda. Diputación de Badajoz, 1985, 225.



says the headmaster, “but why brothers and not friends?” “Because, replies the boy, we choose our friends”<sup>19</sup>.

Of course, this is an apocryphal story and a joke, but could it be something else? There is another story that relates to the visit of the Spanish King Alfonso XIII (1886 – 1931) to the Portuguese city of Braga in the month of December 1903. According to the canon of the cathedral, in a conversation with the visitors, the monarch commented on why he thought that the two Iberian countries should remain forever separated, making the following remark: “Spain and Portugal are like brother and sister... and, as you know, the Holy Catholic Church does not approve of consanguineous marriages”<sup>20</sup>.

A British historian wrote: “a century of wars with Castile had created a deep antagonism between Portugal and their only land neighbours. There are proverbs that warn of the danger of relying on the Castilians and highlight the popular differences between the two cultures”<sup>21</sup>.

A Castilian proverb says: “The Portuguese are a mad little nation”. And the Portuguese reply: “From Spain neither good wind nor family happiness”. Proverbs, legends and history itself speak of their enmity towards each other. “In this blind hater, the Portuguese, as weaker and more excited than ardent patriotism, expresses deep fury, and the Spaniard, as stronger, is treated with greater contempt”, notes Elyse Reclue. There is bias in all these estimates, and things have changed<sup>22</sup>.

Portugal's territory is only 1/5 of that of Spain, and its population reaches a quarter of that of its neighbor. Therefore, it is no wonder that the smaller country of them, since the twelfth century and even after that, is trying to protect its independence from its eastern neighbor. From the 14th century, it relied on the help of various treaties with England (and later Great Britain) to guarantee its independence.

Even today, the national history textbooks used in Portuguese schools refer very negatively to the period between 1580 – 1640, when Portugal and its possessions were incorporated into the Spanish monarchy. The Portuguese go back to when the country was ruled by Kings Felipe II (1556 – 1598), Felipe III (1598 – 1621) and Felipe IV (1621 – 1665) Spanish (Philip I, Felipe II and Felipe III of Portugal, respectively) as a dual monarchy known as the Philippine Dynasty but also as “Spanish Dominion” or “Spanish Captivity”<sup>23</sup>.

The Portuguese historian Saraiva wrote that “the feeling of rejection of the domination of Spain pervades the Portuguese psyche, and remains its

<sup>19</sup> D. Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993, 35.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> S. Dimitrov, *Trangranichnoto satrudnichestvo mezhdru Ispaniya i Portugaliya*. Izdatelstvo „Faber“, Veliko Tarnovo 2016, 77.

<sup>23</sup> J. H. Saraiva, *Portugal – A Companion History*. Carcanet Press. Manchester 1997, 64.

permanent element”<sup>24</sup>. The respective epithets by which these monarchs are known in Portugal give us some idea of the sentiments felt by her subjects. While King Felipe III is known in Spain as “Pius”, the same person is known in Portugal as Cruel. As for his son, Felipe IV, known in Spain as “The Great” in Portugal is called the Violator (Estuprador). And the medieval battle of Aljubarrota (August 14, 1385), in which the Portuguese defeated the Castilians, as well as the restoration of independence in 1640, when, according to Saraiva, “the Portuguese threw off the Spanish yoke”<sup>25</sup>, today they are still seen as “key moments in the process of asserting national identity against the eternal Spanish enemy”<sup>26</sup>.

The respective national histories<sup>27</sup> provide numerous references supporting national identity, which are naturally associated with kings, conquerors, political figures, soldiers, writers, etc. Examples include selected facts about King Afonso Henriques, King Alfonso X the Wise, King Dinis, Catholic monarchs Isabella and Fernando, Henrique the Navigator, Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Luis de Camoix, Miguel de Cervantes, and others. Historical figures serve to strengthen their identity and to symbolically distinguish them from others, and thus two contradictory pictures of the historical past are often shown.

In May 1801, during a brief conflict known as the War of the Oranges, the Spanish army crossed the border with Portugal south of the city of Badajoz and occupied the Portuguese city of Olivenza, which has since been a Spanish possession. However, its loss is still a sensitive subject for many Portuguese, and in the Portuguese press it is called an “invasion”. Anti-Hispanicism remains a constant in the sense of Portuguese identity. A Portuguese politician stated that “a Portuguese who dares to show his open collaboration with Spain can be accused of being a bad Portuguese, even a traitor”<sup>28</sup>. In a similar vein, the same author quotes a Portuguese soldier who said: “we were taught to hate Spain”<sup>29</sup>.

Even nowadays, during a debate on Portuguese television before the 2009 parliamentary elections, the opposition candidate accused the Prime Minister of making too many concessions in favor of Spain. Arguably, in the eyes of many, Portugal was historically itself (and in many ways still does), precisely because it is “not Spain”.

It is worth noting, however, that from the 18th century there was also a movement known as “Iberismo”. This peculiar “Iberian federalism” is in favor of the political unification of the two sides of the Iberian Peninsula. This is an

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, 68.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> N. G. Monteiro, A. Costa Pinto, Cultural Myths and Portuguese National Identity. En A. Costa Pinto (ed) *Contemporary Portugal – politics, society and culture*. Boulder: Social Science Monographs. 1993, 49.

<sup>27</sup> P. Bourdieu, J. C. Passeron, *La reproducción: elementos para una teoría del sistema de enseñanza*. Editorial Laia S, A, Barcelona, Laia 1979.

<sup>28</sup> M. Kaplan, *The Portuguese - The Land and Its People*. Penguin. London 1993, 65.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, 69.



idea that enjoys popularity especially among the representatives of the intellectual elites of both countries.

The Portuguese writer who won the Nobel Prize for Literature, José Saramago, is one of its most famous representatives, who predicted that Portugal and Spain would one day finally form a single country called “Iberia”. However, most residents of both countries have always shown little interest in such a union.

In fact, the nations themselves do not know much about their neighbors. Besides the anti-Spanish jokes in Portugal cited above, there are also Portuguese anti-jokes in Spain. A 2009 study by the Center for Social Analysis of the University of Salamanca found that while 54% of Portuguese respondents knew the name of the Prime Minister of the Spanish government, less than 2% of Spaniards correctly answered a similar question about Portugal. Mutual ignorance may raise other very old and persistent stereotypes, but it is clear that Spaniards are far less informed about their Western neighbors than the other way around.

It should be noted, an important fact, strange to some, that thirty years ago there were only 13 official points on the border between the two countries (an average of 1 point per 93 km border), and in the border between Spain and France, which is mountainous and twice as short, they are 18 (one point every 36 km). Also, most of the customs posts on the Spanish-Portuguese border usually closed at nine in the evening, even in the summer<sup>30</sup>. Things changed a lot after January 1986 when both countries became members of the EU and especially after they joined the Schengen Agreement on 25 June 1991.

The landscape and climate are identical on both sides of the Luso-Spanish border. The same goes for the language people use on both sides of the border, especially Galician, which is not very different from Portuguese. Language is a key element of differentiation, and this is so despite the fact that in some enclaves on the border there are various mixed language dialects – Barranquenu, La Falla, El Mirandes, etc. On the border there are also original mixtures, both Portuguese and Castilian, although the presence of this Portuñol language is not evenly distributed in all areas of the border, as well as in all strata of society. It is somewhat surprising that in La Raya, where people often speak both Spanish and Portuguese, people tend to be humble and with relatively little institutional education.

The old houses in the villages look the same on both sides of the border, and most still retain the hidden corners of the wall (known as a cache) where contraband can be hidden when the border guards inspect the houses. However, the Portuguese and Spanish border settlements have had different national histories, different political systems and different state administrations for hundreds of years.

<sup>30</sup> G. A. Pintado, E. Barrenechea, *La raya de Portugal: La frontera del subdesarrollo*. Madrid 1972, 109.

There are also many things that are changing even on the border between Portugal and Galicia. For example, music – the Portuguese traditionally play the accordion, the Galicians the bagpipe. Religious processions are decorated with relatively simple images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints in Galicia, and their equivalents are pompously decorated in Portugal. Even when crossing the border, there is a difference in the time that is one hour behind in Portugal.

The border between Portugal and Spain is one of the oldest in Europe and has remained almost unchanged for the last eight hundred years. Rich in history, the Iberian Peninsula is actually the peripheral part of Europe. For many years, both Portugal (between 1926 and 1974) and Spain (between 1939 and 1975) were considered politically peripheral to the rest of democratic Europe.

This is due to their dictatorial regimes and economic backwardness. The peripheral border territories are neglected by the governments in Lisbon and Madrid, and too little is known about the neighboring country. On both sides of the border sparsely populated agricultural areas prevail, with almost no industry and infrastructure. There are only a few cities of significant size, and opportunities for cooperation and communication with their respective national capitals are poor.

Of course, the Luso-Spanish border was not always a quiet and peaceful area, which is evident from the many fortifications between the two sides, as well as from the cannons pointing at the neighboring country. Historically, it is one of the most stable borders in Europe. There was a change in 1864, when Portugal and Spain signed a treaty on the borders, with which three villages, until then separated by the border (Cambedu, Sotelinu da Raya and Lamadarkos) became part of Portugal. He expressly mandated that control be put in place over smuggling, which until then was weak, as many houses along the border had two doors, one to Spain and one to Portugal. This circumstance gives rise to mock situations in which the customs authorities find themselves and is detrimental to the good harmony that should exist between these people<sup>31</sup>. They were mainly engaged in smuggling, but after the treaty of 1864, which handed over the three villages to Portugal, this became a little more difficult.

Garcia Mana<sup>32</sup> believes that in the 12th century the monarchs of Portugal and Spain settled in the border areas some criminals and not only murderers. Some of them receive probation and atonement for their crimes, which is forgiven if they settle in these places with their families.

In troubled times, the border provides an ideal point of escape and tax evasion. During the Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939) there were many people who saved their lives by crossing the border. Even then, many people have Spanish relatives in the Portuguese villages near the border. Some of them are anti-Franco and are politically persecuted by the regime of General Franco.

<sup>31</sup> L. M. Garcia Mana, *La frontera hispano-lusa en la provincia de Ourense*. Museo Arqueologico Provincial, Ourense 1988, 112.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, 39.

In the 1960s, many young Portuguese, who wanted to avoid military service and participation in the colonial wars for the “ancient” African provinces of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau, crossed the Spanish border and emigrated to France.

Smuggling is also characteristic of the border areas. This is the so-called “night work” - characteristic not only for men, but also for women. One of them, who emigrated to Paris, talks about her life between the ages of 14 and 18. “Every night we carried knapsacks full of whiskey and tobacco weighing between twenty-five and thirty kilos”, and many of the people were shot by the border guards. This “night work” carries other risks as well.

One of the local doctors found a higher incidence of liver cirrhosis among people, especially women, who practiced the profession of smugglers for a longer time<sup>33</sup>. This is due to the quantities of cognac that are drunk to withstand the cold during the night treks.

A pastor in one of the villages of La Raya, wrote in the December 1992 issue of the newspaper<sup>34</sup> about the possible illegality or immorality of this activity, which will end after the border is removed, and these people will “lose their main source of employment and wealth, which is smuggling”. For this activity it is necessary to maintain closer contacts with the “foreigners”. In this sense, the border is a bridge, not a barrier. Sometimes government officials themselves are involved in illegal cross-border trade.

Many of the stories recreate the numerous abuses of power by border officials on both sides, who are often brutal. These stories hint at the possibility that border guards may sometimes be harsher on their neighbors than on their own. Some of the Portuguese farmers in the border villages are forced to sell their farms that are on the other side of the border because of the difficulties imposed on them to cross. In addition, they need to obtain a special permit to cultivate their lands and are forced to travel only during the daylight, and many times it happens that their crops are confiscated.

A good example of such “cooperation” and “trust” is the tungsten smuggling practiced during the Second World War (1939 - 1945). In a Galician village near the border there is a mine that was used by the German side. This mineral, used to make bombs and airplanes, is being illegally imported from Portugal to Spain. As Britain's oldest ally, the Portuguese could not export tungsten directly to Germany, and the ore was first passed to Spain, where it was smuggled in to be legally exported from Spain to Germany.

At night, large groups of sixty to a hundred Portuguese men load sacks of tungsten onto donkeys and horses and take it across the border to the mine in Galicia. The police on both sides of the border are bribed, the bribe usually consisting of a percentage of the contraband, and the guards always count the number of loads. The next day, sacks of ore from the mine are loaded onto trucks

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> *Noticias de Barroso*, XII, 1992.

and sent openly to their destination. People working in the mine at that time in Galicia say that the actual amount of tungsten produced was insignificant compared to the amount of ore that was exported from it. Therefore, it is necessary to cooperate with trusted people on the other side of the border. This does not mean that the neighbors always speak well of each other, and they almost always call the neighbors “foreigners”.

There are many examples of friendships between men (not as much among women, probably because of the division of labor by gender) of the two peoples. But when you ask them what they generally think of people across the border, the first thing you usually hear is mutual dislike and stereotypes – “Galicians are loud, snotty and want to live without working”, “Portuguese are backward, seem very irresponsible and they are actually insincere, etc.”. When someone asks them if they would like to marry one of their children to someone from the other side, the most common answer is, “No, they are very different from us”. However, mixed marriages are not unknown.

Until thirty years ago, for many people on both sides of the border, the “Europe without borders” decision was something they did not expect to happen in their lifetime. It was almost impossible to hold a conversation, even for an hour, with some of these people in La Raya without the border dispute coming up in one way or another. Whatever they say about the past, the border has always been there. Today, however, there are no border guards, and the barriers that blocked the roads to reach La Raya have been removed. The dirt roads that used to cross the border are now well paved and maintained.

The Schengen Agreement was signed on 14 June 1985 in Schengen (Luxembourg), a town of 1,500 inhabitants located on the border with France and Germany. Five members of the then European Community (Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) reach an agreement to abolish common borders. Portugal and Spain joined the agreement on 25 June 1991.

If we look at the agreement signed in Schengen, we see its main definitions. Title I, which is devoted to common definitions, says: “the borders shall be formed by the common land border between the member countries that have signed this agreement” and Title II of the agreement, which regulates the abolition of internal border controls and the movement of people, from different countries, such as “common borders can be crossed at any place without monitoring some people”. There are no common borders, they disappear, that is, border control disappears to allow free movement. Existing borders serve to limit the space in which each state exercises its powers and sovereignty. Thus border control disappears. “What were once barriers are now bridges”.

Title II of the agreement also states that “any person who is not a national of the Member States of the EU shall be considered a foreigner”. The agreement states that the borders still in place limit the space in which each state exercises

its powers and sovereignty, but it also makes clear that EU citizens have ceased to be, in a sense, “foreign” to each other<sup>35</sup>.

The disappearance of the border after the Schengen agreement brings many changes, but not all of them are considered positive from the point of view of the local population. The most obvious of these is that, despite the disadvantages and risks of living on the border internationally, it is a fact that the border is perceived as a source of income for the residents, given the smuggling. The transfer of contraband now no longer exists, except for the movement of drugs such as heroin and cocaine, but these are not considered income comparable to smuggling in the past.

Soon after the disappearance of border control in 1992, rumors emerged of a Portuguese village on the border that was the subject of active sinister activities carried out by the Spanish side, made possible by the opening of the border. One of them is that some Portuguese girls from poor families in La Raya were tricked, with the promise of work, to Spain, where they were drugged and then kept as prisoners in some brothels and forced into prostitution.

The other rumor, for which there is no evidence, is that some Spaniards are coming to Portugal in high-tech vehicles to kidnap children for organ trading<sup>36</sup>.

One thing that hasn't changed much in recent decades is that many Spaniards, and especially Galicians, continue to visit La Raya, for annual pilgrimages to four shrines located across the border in Portugal. When you ask the neighbors why the Galician communities are so devoted to these religious ceremonies in sanctuaries belonging to another country, their answers show their belief that these border saints are particularly powerful, and they do not think that they are “foreigners” and that they are as theirs as much as the Portuguese's. This is an interesting religious asymmetry partly based on the fact that many of the inhabitants of the Portuguese towns and villages near the border went to consult some popular healers in the neighboring Spanish towns. Their powers and powers are highlighted as the reason. All this comes to show that the boundary which may be divided by many worldly matters does not tolerate a division in regard to the spiritual life.

Economic changes are also taking place. Before the “disappearance” of the border in 1992, it was common to see people from the other side buying things in local shops that were more expensive in one place than the other. This trade ends with the opening of the borders, when the prices for the same products are already approximately the same in both neighboring countries.

An interesting consequence of this development is that the disappearance of border controls does not lead to closer relations between the peoples on both sides of the borders. In fact, the opposite seems to have happened with the

<sup>35</sup> W. Kavanagh, *Identidades en la frontera luso-española: permanencias y transformaciones después de Schengen*. *Geopolítica (s)*, Vol. 2, núm. 1, 2011, 40.

<sup>36</sup> *Barroso News*, 20.XII.2010, 2.

younger generation. Although it is true that during the weekends young people from both countries cross the border to go to bars and nightclubs in nearby neighboring towns on the other side of the border, they stay within their own groups and do not mix with the other nation.

So when you ask if they have friends on the other side of the border, the most common answer is no. However, if you ask their parents or grandparents the same question, the answer is almost always positive, and they talk about the people on the other side of the border as their best friends. This paradox can be explained by recalling the importance of smuggling in the past, when there was an absolute necessity to have loyal partners on the other side of the border, which is now completely unnecessary.

Crossing points, where customs were used internationally and for border control traffic, are also becoming redundant. With the “opening” of the border in 1992, after Schengen, these buildings were abandoned, and later some of them were used for other purposes. Some are municipal and others become interesting museums tracing the history of smuggling. It is ironic that what was for hundreds of years an economic base for the border towns (and in many cases a matter of life and death) is now becoming part of the local tourism industry, which has transformed the old smugglers' trails into cycle lanes and paths for cyclists and tourists.

The infrastructure between the two countries is also undergoing a significant transformation. In addition to the new highways, in June 2010 the Eurocity Chaves-Verin project, financed by the ERDF, started to be implemented, which includes an ambitious plan to create an Atlantic Union (Association of thirty-four border towns in Galicia and Northern Portugal)<sup>37</sup>.

Galicia's prime minister, Alberto Núñez Feijó, said at the time that Eurocity Chaves-Verin was a project to “remove the borders in education, health and transport between the two countries”<sup>38</sup>.

Like other general benefits<sup>39</sup> a newspaper in Ourense reports that the main priority of Eurocity Chaves-Verin is to create a common public transport network, which is very important for both municipalities.

In the area of this border, there has been a three-fold increase in passengers and transported goods over the last ten years<sup>40</sup>. Palmeiro and Otto note: “However, this mobility on the border between Galicia and northern Portugal is based exclusively on private cars. People on low incomes, those under 18, the elderly, or people without a driver's license cannot benefit from the great progress in accessibility between Galicia and Northern Portugal, and depend

<sup>37</sup> *La Region*, 5.I.2009.

<sup>38</sup> *La Region*, 2.VI.2009.

<sup>39</sup> *La Region*, 5.I.2011.

<sup>40</sup> J. L. Palmeiro, M. P. Oton, La Eurorregion Galicianorte de Portugal: una aproximacion a la movilidad en el contexto iberico. *Estudios Geograficos*, LXIX, 264, 2008, 225.



heavily on inefficient public transport”<sup>41</sup>. This is also a problem for a significant part of the rural population.

There have been other interesting phenomena over the years. Immediately after the full opening of the border in 1992, large blue EU billboards were installed with each country's name surrounded by twelve yellow stars. Thus, at the end of the 1990s, almost all the old signs of the state disappeared and were replaced by standard indicators.

Sometimes the only indication of the visible presence of the international border is just a pile of stones, sometimes half hidden in the grass of the ditch. The most common difference when crossing from one country to another is only the change in the type of road surface. In other cases, even this is not noticeable, because there is no difference. The residents of the area naturally know very well where the border is.

The number of border crossings between the two countries is also increasing. They are already 69 (one point falls on the 15 km border). The points between Spain and France also increase to 44 (one point per 16 km).

After the signing of the Schengen Agreement in 1985 and the accession of Portugal and Spain to it (June 25, 1991), things changed. Now the existing border is configured as a base of comparison and trying to build a single cultural identity across the border seems absurd, as there are significant variations of identity on both sides of the same border and even within the same settlement and among the same people. Today, it is clear to the unbiased observer that the Luso-Spanish border is not so much a line of territorial demarcation between two countries, but rather a vast contact zone of transition and interpenetration between two neighboring peoples.

The total disappearance of border control and any visible marks does not lead to the disappearance of the “psychological border”. Eight centuries of history cannot disappear overnight and each member state is still a major source of security, organization, identity and loyalty to its citizens. Asking a man from Spain about the border, and what he thinks about the changes that the border city or “EU without borders” will bring him after Schengen, he thinks for a moment and then, carefully repeating his words, tells me: “You can remove the door, but it is only a frame.” And he explains that the time when there will be no difference from one side to the other will take many years to come, “perhaps a hundred years or more...or never”.

Although the task of “building Europe” in this segment of Europe's internal borders is not as quick and easy as some would like, we must admit that things are changing. There are many initiatives that are financed by the EU through INTERREG programs of the EFRD. They aim to remove bureaucratic obstacles and common administrative arrangements across the border, to promote common policies in the fields of education, health and transport in areas with “internal” EU borders. But it is always remembered that from Spain “neither

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, 233.

good winds nor good marriages” can be expected, and “the truth is that the Spaniards were anything but brothers to the Portuguese”<sup>42</sup>.

The great asymmetry observed in the standard of living in the last decades, which has now almost completely disappeared, is striking. In the early 1990s, the difference between the two sides of the border was still evident. At the time, it was quite easy to tell where was Portuguese and where Spanish territory by observing the different dress and overall appearance. While in rural Spain they dress according to urban fashions, their rural Portuguese neighbors dress “more old fashioned”. Today in Portuguese and Spanish rural areas, they tend to dress mostly in the same way that is used elsewhere in Europe.

The subsidies received by Portugal and Spain from the EU after 1986 have had a significant effect in reducing economic disparities, both between the two countries and in relation to the countries of Northern Europe. All this should lead to the creation of ever closer ties between the peoples living so close to each other, on both sides of the border.

## Summary

For centuries, the Luso-Spanish border has gone through many vicissitudes. In the 20th century, and especially in its last quarter, things changed very dynamically. Spain and Portugal become EU and Schengen member countries.

After the signing of the Schengen Agreement in 1985 and the accession of Portugal and Spain to it (June 25, 1991), things changed. Now the existing border is configured as a base of comparison and trying to build a single cultural identity across the border seems absurd, as there are significant variations of identity on both sides of the same border and even within the same settlement and among the same people. Today, it is clear to the unbiased observer that the Luso-Spanish border is not so much a line of territorial demarcation between two countries, but rather a vast contact zone of transition and interpenetration between two neighboring peoples.

Before 1992, when the border was a “real border”, people on both sides did not miss the opportunity to apologize and often complained that they were forcibly “separated from their dear friends”, on the other side. They also complain about the unjustified restrictions imposed on them by both countries and are eager to visit the neighboring country much more often. Now the previous discourse is gone, as now there is no excuse and they are free to cross the border, much more often than before, and it happens much less often.

In the past, some of the goods were much cheaper in one country or the other, and therefore it was a good basis for economic activity. Today, however,

<sup>42</sup> Kavanagh W, *Identidades en la frontera luso-española: permanencias y transformaciones después de Schengen. Geopolítica (s)*, Vol. 2, núm. 1, 2011, 48.

when these products are sold in the same supermarket chains at the same prices in Euros on both sides, maintaining frequent social relationships with others decreases.

Thus, life in “Schengenland” serves to redefine their relationship with the “other”. Earlier, the “other” is different but useful. Today, the “other” is different and has outlived its usefulness.

The visits of Galicians across the border to Portugal for pilgrimages remain with the same devotion as in the past, and meanwhile the Portuguese continue to consult healers on the Spanish side with an enthusiasm similar to that which they have always had.

We can therefore argue that the “meaning” of the border changes radically depending on whether one or the other people on either side of the border have more needs for spiritual communication. And we hope that one day the borders will remain only a memory.

## **Zaključak**

Tokom vijekova, luso-španska granica prolazila je kroz mnoge promjene. U 20. vijeku, posebno u njegovom posljednjem kvartalu, stvari su se vrlo dinamično mijenjale. Španija i Portugal postaju članice EU i Šengenskog prostora.

Nakon potpisivanja Šengenskog sporazuma 1985. godine i pristupanja Portugala i Španije (25. juna 1991), situacija se promijenila. Sada se postojeća granica postavlja kao osnova za usporedbu, a pokušaj izgradnje jedinstvene kulturne identitetske slike preko granice čini se apsurdnim, s obzirom na značajne razlike u identitetu s obje strane iste granice, pa čak i unutar istog naselja i među istim ljudima. Danas je očigledno svakom nepristranom posmatraču da luso-španska granica nije toliko linija teritorijalne demarkacije između dviju zemalja, koliko prostrana zona kontakta i međusobnog prožimanja između dva susjedna naroda.

Prije 1992. godine, kada je granica bila “stvarna granica”, ljudi s obje strane nisu propuštali priliku da se žale i često su se žalili da su prisilno “odvojeni od dragih prijatelja” s druge strane. Također su se žalili na neopravdana ograničenja koja su im nametnule obje zemlje i željeli su mnogo češće posjećivati susjednu zemlju. Sada je prethodni diskurs nestao, jer više nema izgovora i slobodni su da prelaze granicu, mnogo češće nego prije, i to se dešava mnogo rjeđe.

U prošlosti su neka dobra bila mnogo jeftinija u jednoj ili drugoj zemlji, što je bila dobra osnova za ekonomsku aktivnost. Danas, međutim, kada se ti proizvodi prodaju u istim supermarketima po istim cijenama u eurima s obje strane, održavanje čestih socijalnih odnosa s drugima opada.

Tako život u “Šengenlandu” služi za redefinisanje njihovog odnosa s “drugim”. Ranije je “drugi” bio drugačiji, ali koristan. Danas je “drugi” drugačiji i izgubio je svoju korisnost.

Posjete Galicijanaca preko granice u Portugal za hodočašća i dalje ostaju s istom pobožnošću kao i ranije, a istovremeno se Portugalci i dalje obraćaju iscjeliteljima s španske strane s entuzijazmom sličnim onome koji su uvijek imali.

Stoga možemo tvrditi da se “značenje” granice radikalno mijenja u zavisnosti od toga ima li jedan ili drugi narod s obje strane granice veće potrebe za duhovnom komunikacijom. I nadamo se da će jednog dana granice ostati samo sjećanje.

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