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Tactics
in movement:
pursuing social
inclusion in
transnational
migration

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INTRODUCTION

Within the social webs comprising migratory movement, mutual-help and forms of cohabitation prove to be fundamental for their creation and maintenance. Both in the sphere of national and international migration, overlapping or running in parallel with forms of State agency or even the illegal networks that emerge in this area, these support relations are a crucial axis of the circulation composing the dynamics of migration, as a collective fact and an individual itinerary (Menezes and Godoi 2011; Martes 1999). Whether in search of new forms of family-based economic reproduction, or due to “going out into the world” seeking social experience of a diverse order, migrants create trajectories that are contingent upon exchanges, favours and interactions between relatives, friends from the place of origin and new ones met along the travelled route. This process involves an intense movement of people, assets and information. It continuously redefines and creates the social relations and significance of place that characterise the daily experiences of these individuals (Olwig 2007).

In the debate on transnational migratory mobility, this phenomenon is reflected in the movement of non-institutional actors crossing one or more national, geographic, cultural and political frontiers (Schiller Basch and Blanc 1995; Portes 2006), and creating heterogeneous personal and collective experiences in view of the political and economic asymmetries generated by these frontiers, in complex and non-linear transits (Lee 2008; Sheringham 2010). On this extensive spatial scale, in which circulation is accelerated by the development of transport and communication technologies, a whole procedural mechanism of interpersonal relations is formed, articulating space, time, precariousness or clandestinity, delineating and diversifying social networks in terms of dimension, location and social form (Hannerz 1996; Harney and Baldassar 2007). Crossing the transatlantic distance and that of national frontiers, the networks implicated in this journey between the place of origin and the various destinations involve a daily negotiation of social and translocal interactions in terms of obligations, opportunities and constraints (Olwig 2007, 9). It is in this broad scenario of movements, interests and practices between point of origin, trajectory and place of destination that the migrants construct places and feelings of belonging.

Regarding Brazilian emigration, given the absence of government initiatives for this movement and the significant existence of barriers into the

countries of destination¹, it is the reciprocity between relatives and friends or acquaintances in the town of origin that, on most occasions, guide the flows of transnational movement. Acts of mutuality foster everything, from the provision of invitations, information and practical measures for migration, to logistical and emotional support upon arrival and in adapting to the intended destination, including the maintenance of ties with the place of origin. Although institutional networks, such as tourist agencies and illegal contacts for recruitment of undocumented migrants, may play a significant role in some of these flows (Pereira 2011; Assis 1999), they lack the intense dynamics of the webs of interpersonal relationships.

The world of mutual help has a substantial, albeit not total, component of social interaction alluding to feelings of familiarity/similarity. This means that people involved in these support networks are, in principle, relatives and friends or acquaintances who, in some manner, embody a lingering proximity with the family and place of origin. With time and circulation, these networks also include people related to the daily life of the migrant, who contribute by adding other meanings of place. Thus, the construction of the transnational itinerary can be viewed from a procedural configuration of kinship, family and friendship, from the intersubjective participations that formed them (Carsten 2004; Sahlins 2011) and from the identity of places (Olwig 2007).

Transnational mobility moves and is moved along these axes, making the migratory experience a piece of personal and collective history, and creating a new way of being in the world. However, precisely due to its procedural and negotiated nature, this sphere characterised by connectivity stands on a fine balance of interactions, subject to the political, social, economic and personal imponderables of this movement. It is essential to understand the rough lines and sharp edges involved along the route, and the spatial and time dimensions directing them, searching for the forms of intersubjectivity, the fragile relationship

1 Up to the 1970s, the migratory movement was sporadic. Brazilian emigration began to be more systematic from the 1980s onwards, with significant numbers emigrating particularly to the United States and Japan. The flow increased from the second half of this decade, as did news about Brazilians barred abroad. A large number of these migrants were illegal, except for the *dekasseguis* in Japan, who were legalised. During the 1990s, the destinations of Brazilian emigration diversified further. Adding to the movement to the United States and Japan, by this time gaining density, Italy and Portugal became other destinations (Assis and Sasaki 2001). In the 21st century, most West European countries were included in this route, such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Spain and France. For the majority of the flows, these emigrants are illegal, although there is also a significant number of people with double citizenship.

between time, employment networks and the investment expectation identifying this connectivity. I therefore decided to frame them under the concept of vicinality. Reflected in mutual-help practices and forms of cohabitation between transnational migrants, vicinality is understood herein as the dynamics of territory and circulation of people, creating webs of proximity, initially formed by family members, but later or simultaneously by kin and friends.

The concept refers, in different anthropological studies, to neighbourhood groups, including relatives (that generally come in first place), similar and non-family members recruited for specific mutual-help purposes, with non-rigid inter-group relationships and spatial definitions (Webster 2009; Pina-Cabral 1991). Although the formation of this vicinality emerges, in the cases in which it has been identified, from the gathering together of relatives, there is a common and necessary inclusion of people with more tenuous ties. In other words, cohabitation and neighbour relations extend beyond the primary social unit (Pina-Cabral 1991). In both contexts, the condition of belonging to the group is given by an expected reciprocity, by the maintenance of loyalties, negotiated and transformed over time (Webster 2009, 90).

In theorising my research context – the migration of the inhabitants of the state of Goiás (Goianos) to Portugal – two aspects of this concept are particularly interesting. The first refers to the way that neighbourhood experiences are spatially flexible, often giving rise to the establishment of mutual-help practices among people who are not necessarily close neighbours. Although there is a certain spatial coherence, the belonging to the group is not defined according to the proximity of the homes, but rather to the strength of the ties that are maintained (Webster 2009). Thus, for the most part, mutuality relations condition the dynamics of the particular vicinality and its inherent mobility. Pina-Cabral addresses this condition in an interesting manner: vicinality is not a spatially determined area, but rather a spatial relationship. The residential proximity occurs around ties that are structured, and which modify or have modified the actual spatiality of the relations according to the geographical or social distances that are created therein (Pina-Cabral 1991, 186). This feature confers relative expansion dynamics in spatial terms, as well as relationship networks comprising the vicinality; a potential enlargement and inclusion, which maintains a certain spatial and genealogical coherence.

I propose theorising this potential enlargement and inclusion in the case of transnational migratory transits. This would enable, on the one hand, understanding how mutuality relations enlarge and modify, both in the cities

the migrants left behind or those they went to, and in the actual migratory trajectory. To what extent are the mutual-help practices maintained along this transnational distance? What are the elements that make it work and what are the limiting aspects? How do people reiterate or remake their solidarity with relatives and friends? How are new relationships created in the destination? Through the description of the trajectory of these migrants, I wish to show that vicinality is a form of organisation in which mutuality relations play a central dynamic role, not fixed or predetermined but, as Webster describes, plastic. I would venture to say that it is this very plasticity that conditions the construction of migratory mobility.

The second aspect refers to the tenacity of this set of exchanges and the feelings involved in it. From Webster's perspective, the balancing of two dimensions is attempted. On the one hand, feelings such as solidarity, cronyism, hospitality, "friendship", affinity and kinship underlie the constitution of groups and the set of actions of relatives and non-family members. Steeped in the same inspiration, and based on Porto families, Pina-Cabral suggests commensality as "the most important form of representing familiarity and, consequently, one of the principal pillars of the language of emotion" (Pina-Cabral 1991, 200). On the other hand, and particularly in Chope's case, internal competitiveness and falling expectations of mutual help can lead to the breakup of these connections (Webster 2009, 131). Vicinality is, therefore, defined as a negotiated feature: the close relationship between the language of emotions and the pragmatic actions that involve the group. The maintenance of these aspects requires constant negotiation and care, and the emotional components are reasons to change vicinality.

In the trajectories of the people I followed, what really caught my attention was not so much the formation of webs, but rather the apparently volatile parameters sustaining them. In these essential mutual-help group relations making up cohabitation, there is a series of imprecisions, emotional turbulence, practical failings, negotiations that, in general, appear less in studies on migration than the cohesion of these webs (Martes 1999). There is a fragile balance in these interactions, maintained based on feeble relations of trust which, nevertheless, fuel the circularity moving these paths. Crucial feelings in the sustainment of these webs of solidarity, commensality and mutual-help, such as trust and consideration, are constantly being challenged by the characteristic difficulties of migratory circulation. In this case, the initial consequence of vicinality is a drive to reproduce the interactions between

the relatives who once were and those who remained behind, the friends of back home and friends due to affinity. Migrants move to places that are references for them via their contacts in their place of origin, and likewise live in the same houses or houses close to Goianos in the destination society. However, while the network initially serves to strengthen the reproduction of these relations, over time and due to the changes of migratory dynamics, the network broadens, opening up to other social interactions.

Based on the experience of Goianos who moved to Portugal, in this article I propose to examine how people construct the space of mutuality in transnational mobility.² In order to better understand the social and individual hardships of migrants in this broadly encompassing context – in more extended spatial dynamics and challenging temporality – I will list, through several trajectories, the vicinality practices involved in constructing the path of this mobility, and following this, how it is revealed in initial cohabitation experiences. In the construction of this path, vicinality pervades through temporalities and barriers of a diverse nature, constantly repositioning generational, affective and labour-related relations, expectations of world and the notion of belonging. The emerging fragility of these dynamics paradoxically coexists with the tenacity of the webs that underpin the migratory circuit, and the search for inclusion practices in the destination society.

VICINALITY IN ROUTE

Goiânia and its surroundings can be considered one of the major centres of most visible Brazilian emigration, together with the region of Governador Valadares, a well-established centre in this transnational process (Assis 1999; Machado 2010), and North of Paraná. This is not a precise statistical finding because, although there are numbers on Brazilian immigrants abroad, there is no accurate information on the amount of people and the proportion per region in these flows. However, the massive presence of migrants from these three regions is empirically noted in various European countries, notably Portugal, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium and Spain. Goiás is a region

2 The study on which this article is based addresses the dynamics of the migratory networks between Goiás and Portugal. This research ran from 2009 until 2015, as part of my post-doctorate, and included fieldwork in Lisbon, Goiânia and Anápolis.

in which migration grew exponentially in the first decade of the 21st century.³ According to the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística – IBGE – at this time, Goiás became the state with the largest number of international emigrants⁴, although the visible effects of the international migration are still rather diluted in Goianan cities.

Goianan emigrants constitute a dense network, motivated by the opportunity to fast-track their entry into a consumer circuit, by the desire to venture into a world already known to their contemporaries and by a commitment to investments in order to create their place (which, in the majority of cases, is back in the region they left, although there are many exceptions). Most of these people come under the profile of the migrant worker and, at least in the beginning, move without documentation. As constantly happens where lack of documentation is the most common condition, the social webs around this movement are responsible for helping the migrant in taking the first steps, in adapting to the destination, and in maintaining ties with Goiás.

During the trajectory involving the migratory movement, mutual-help practices stand out in some particular moments: in obtaining information about the destination society and the ways to get there; in obtaining the airline ticket and other travel arrangements; in reception upon arrival; and in employment indications and the continuous return journeys or visits to Goiás. Although other gradually and timidly emerging social networks in this circuit are present, such as commercial interest (the case of tourism agencies), prostitution and religious entities, it is the connection with relatives and family members, friends and acquaintances of the town of origin that actually enable the circulation of people, information and resources. These links are informal and not necessarily inter-articulated.

3 It should be said that there was already a flow of Goianos to the United States in the 1980s (Ribeiro 1999).

4 The IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) 2010 demographic census records 35,572 Goianos living abroad. The Centre-West region corresponds to 12% of the emigrants, in particular Goiás, which contributes with 7.2% of this contingent. Although the largest flow is from the Southeast (49%), these three other regions – Minas Gerais, Paraná and Goiás – are increasingly visible. This is due to the fact that they have very systematic flows containing a more homogenous profile of the undocumented labour migrant. See “Goianos lideram emigração”, *O Hoje*, Thursday, 17th November 2011. From then on, even with the economic crisis in Portugal that has prompted Brazilian migrants to return to home in recent years, there is still a significant flow coming from Goiás, less numerous, but steady.

Relatives or friends from the same neighbourhood are essential in stimulating the drive to migrate, even when the information is not necessarily real or positive. The people that I contacted or interviewed went to Portugal as a result of encouragement by their mother, aunt or uncle, children, a cousin, a brother or else a friend who was already in Portugal. “Friends” generally means friends of parents, neighbours in Goiânia, friends of cousins. This encouragement is done by the Internet (migrants are avid users of social networks or chat rooms such as Msn/Skype and Orkut/Facebook in order to communicate) or telephone. On some occasions, the stimulus is given in a less intentional way. Communication with the relative or friend nourishes the imagination of those remaining behind concerning the desired world of possibilities, even if the severe plight of the migrant’s situation is frequently highlighted, along with disappointments concerning work and the difficulty of returning. At other times, it is the parents or friends that instigate the movement, and ensure a good initial experience, as is the case, for example, of mothers who encourage their daughters to emigrate in order to have access to good education, or get over a “broken heart”, or even to be close to them.

This is the case of Soraia, who I met and followed up in Lisbon. Currently 30 years old, she moved to Portugal eleven years ago due to separating from her former husband. Her mother, who was already in Lisbon, together with Soraia’s aunt, persuaded her to leave Goiânia. Both mother and aunt had arrived through the intervention of a cousin. Her airline ticket was purchased. When questioned why she decided to move, Soraia said that she was kind of “drifting” as a result of the breakup. She knew nothing about Portugal or the employment possibilities, which were vaguely listed by her mother. This “drifting” is common in the discourse of the young migrants in my research. But these are not necessarily feelings of passiveness or indifference; they appear, above all, to be possible answers to personal misfortunes, to the need for adventure, or the desire to rapidly access consumer products, one of the aspects of information most conveyed in this migratory transit.

Nonetheless, the objectives are somewhat obscure, inasmuch as the information is uncertain.⁵ The decision to migrate is encouraged by those who return as migrants, or by friends who are abroad, with whom they communicate

5 Taken by older relatives or friends, a large number of these young people (who are a considerable part of the migratory profile) wish to explore a new world, even when based on a relatively clouded perspective. Other issues related to gender, age and generation create different expectations and fears, but these also appear to be based on uncertain information.

by the Internet. In other words, the ideas and references substantiating this decision and the strategies that enable the movement are fostered from various points (spatial and temporal) of the migratory circuit. Those who have already left or who are in transit supply a constant source of “expectations of change”. The fact that this information might be far from being reliable, or that there may be discouraging discourses on the migratory experience (expressing the harshness of “life abroad”, for example) is of little significance in comparison to the ambitions projected by images and consumer products circulating on the Internet. At this initial stage, and at subsequent moments of these trajectories, information is the great mobiliser of the mutual-help networks. Their potential failings can lead to cracks in this network, without, however, compromising the projection of the migrants’ expectations.

Once the desire to travel has been expressed, the arrangements must be made for the journey. Arnaldo, another interviewee, paid for his airline ticket out of his own pocket, while Soraia obtained hers through her mother. In most cases, the airline ticket is funded by the closest relatives, who can be in the homeland or already outside the country, establishing a debt that is payable according to negotiated deadlines, depending on proximity and affection, or the relative’s need. In many cases, due to this form of indebtedness, the migratory project initially becomes a family project (Nogueira 2011; Pereira 2011; Assis and Sasaki 2001). However, this condition is not always maintained. The debt might not be paid, or, once paid, the person who migrated begins to establish other social ties and other priorities, weakening this connection.⁶

This first material exchange is one of the clearest connections between the place of departure and arrival. Other important preparations for the journey, such as the letter of recommendation written by a person in the destination society, are also part of this strategy. Together with the letter, there will be an address that becomes the reference accommodation for the immigration agents. This address may or may not correspond to place the person will actually be. The preparatory steps for the relocation have progressively changed in accordance with the gradual increase of the flow of Brazilian emigrants to Portugal and their experiences of entering the country. There is a difference between the period when Arnaldo travelled, and the time when

6 Another group of these migrants require an agent to fund the journey. This generally implies a pawning of assets, which ends up involving the migrant’s family, placing the family’s assets and belongings at risk (Pereira 2011, 227). Although these cases are not the majority, they indicate the complex relationship between other members of the migratory network and personal mutual help relations.

Soraia moved. Regarding Arnaldo, the demand for civil construction workers in the early 21st century facilitated the entrance of Brazilian migrants, who bought their flights and travelled with tourist visas. Many were received by potential employers right at the airport. Five years later, when Soraia travelled, it was more difficult to enter the country, especially for Brazilian women, who were constantly suspected of belonging to prostitution rings. The changes of strategy are set out, above all, by friends and family members who are abroad, and constitute a part of this empirical experience, not always very clear, of “being abroad”.

MUTUAL-HELP GROUPS IN THE DESTINATION

Having arrived in Portugal, and having successfully passed through the immigration service, the migrant begins the next stage. Arnaldo telephoned his cousin’s husband, who explained to him how to get to the house by taxi. Soraia was received by her mother, like many migrants who are received at the airport by their relatives or friends and then go to their homes, or to rented rooms in the same house. Even if they do not have a contact person to receive them, in general, they have details about a boarding house or private house linked to their place of origin. After the first few days at his cousin’s house, having already contacted a contractor recommended by a friend in Goiânia, Arnaldo moved to a house lived in by people of various nationalities and began working in civil construction. Soraia, who went to her mother’s house, started working in a restaurant the following week.

The arrival in Portugal is, in most cases, delineated by this mutual-help system. Through the network of their contacts, by this time more enlarged, they might be able to find work right in the first week, at this time also making a commitment to pay the rent and other charges. For the initial period, until they adapt to the new place, the recently arrived migrants remain in these residential schemes, which may or not be extended, depending on the balance between interaction with relatives and other more pragmatic issues. Thus, work, house and initial contacts essentially involve these relationships. The gradual insertion in other social and economic scenarios in the destination countries slowly but steadily expands their mesh of social connections, covering Brazilians from other regions, migrants of other nationalities, non-migrants, religious or political entities. However, the initial networks prior

to this later stage suggest that proximity to the family, the connection with Goiânia and daily life among Brazilians are stronger reference points than the alterity relations experienced in the new country. There is, in the beginning, an impression of territorial continuity, which is especially evident in the presence of the known, of close kinship or friendship as if with a relative, through these mutual help and protection networks. While this may minimise the yearning for the homeland or homesickness, it does not prevent the transformation of feelings of belonging.

Another important aspect of this circuit is the maintenance of ties with the homeland, whether temporary or permanent. The relationship with the place they left is constantly maintained either through cash remittances or through contact via the Internet, telephone or letters, as was done in the previous decade (Assis 1999; Frangella 2013). Here, information is once again a fundamental element in the maintenance of mutuality relations. The exchange of news between those who left to embrace the world and those who stayed behind is an essential thermometer of continuity or rupture of relations (Nogueira 2011), underlying both the socio-economic schemes that structure these interactions, and also keeping alive the narratives on the updated “experience”, thus strengthening the relatives’ incentive to circulate. There is a need for news affirming the success of a migratory project, which then legitimises the risk of the experience to the family, neighbours and friends. As a consequence, there is a complex fictional side to these narratives, which contributes intensely to the specific maintenance of this network.

Finally, the temporary visit for leisure purposes or definitive return also involves arrangements made by close and extended family members, as in the case of Arnaldo and his brothers, recently returned to Goiânia. They were received at the airport with great joy. Some of the brothers, still without a home, were hosted in the homes of family members and friends as guests or new residents. In some cases, depending on the degree of success or failure of the person returning, money is also loaned. When the return is temporary, the visitors must meet two requirements. The first is to visit the people who were part of their daily life when they lived there, in addition to visiting other more distant relatives to tell the news and share their experience. The second is related to the concept of a gift (Nogueira 2011). Apart from the assistance that the migrants continue to assure even during their temporary return, there are products and presents to be distributed. Not bringing presents can be interpreted as “mean spirited”, or lacking in consideration, thus recalling

the reciprocity established implicitly between the migrants and those who remained behind.

The very brief and systematic incursion into this trajectory serves as an analytical map of highly dynamic relations involving a re-dimensioned spatiality. People who experience the mutuality practices referred to above come, in principle, from a localised aggregation in the country of origin. As they move along the migratory path, however, they seek to temporally and spatially extend these relations. A vicinality thus occurs surpassing the core of kinship and spatial geographical proximity, creating a type of *continuum* between the place of departure, the place of arrival and the actual path. The dynamics of information embody an empirical field conditioning and altering relations and feelings, constituting another fundamental place in this *continuum* (Oosterbaan 2010). In this regard, the connection between relatives, friends and neighbours is plastic and inclusive, without necessarily losing its reference to the initial core.

All these mutual-help practices are marked by feelings. They rely, in the first place, on the feeling of trust. Trust is the credit given to people in relation to whom consideration is nurtured; i.e. an emotive investment fostering the upkeep of material relations and of sharing between people (Pina-Cabral and Vanda Silva 2013, 26).⁷ Affection is connected to trust due to the person “belonging to the family” or being a “friend of the family”, or “a friend of mine from my home town”. Accompanying this classification is the implicit expectation, on some occasions, that this consideration will activate the wheels of inter-help group practices. This expectation is the affective projection based on the hope that the mutuality relations derived from relations of trust will be materialised and made public⁸ in their shared environment. Although this was not a systematic part of the discourse of my

7 In their study on the Bahia Southern Lowlands, Pina-Cabral and Vanda Silva explored the notion of consideration that came up in their interviewees’ discourse. This concept was what gave meaning to the relationship between people, albeit being a vague and large implicit attitude (Pina-Cabral and Silva 2013, 25). The study by Pina-Cabral and Silva brings out this significant element which I believe can be seen in other contexts of relations of reciprocity, such as is the case of the Goianos in question. Although the empirical mapping of this concept in their study is particularly directed at relations of affiliation and kinship in Bahia, it involves the issues of vicinality present in this context.

8 Being made public means, according to Pina-Cabral and Silva, that consideration must be expressed and constructed in a joint action between the subjects that foster it (2013, 27). Moreover, consideration is always embodied in interpersonal relations.

interviewees, their narratives pointed to the importance of this feeling as the engine driving such reciprocity. Consideration appears to be essential for the construction of this vicinality.

The counterbalancing feeling permeating these relations, particularly when they do not work out well, or when they become more vulnerable, is envy, deception. The weak nodes holding together this circulation are justified by competition between relatives, neighbours and friends. This competitiveness goes far beyond a banal conflict between Brazilian compatriots; it is part of the daily immigrant narrative. It becomes more serious when these supportive relationships, supposedly the mainstay of the trajectory, are broken. Family and friend networks involving Goiano migrants are marked by numerous fissures and fault lines, or setbacks. From the very beginning, the information exchanged on laws, places to stay and employment guarantees, on which the decision to migrate is based, are often inaccurate.

Likewise, not all the practical preparations are rock solid. Letters of invitation that are badly written or contain information that heightens the suspicion of the immigration official are part of the lack of success narratives in entering the country. Sometimes, the recently arrived migrants are faced with the absence of the people who were supposed to receive them. Cases were reported to me of cousins, or friends of uncles and aunts, who had promised accommodation and work, and then did not turn up, leaving the migrants in very difficult situation. Very often, the employment networks do not function, forcing the recently arrived migrant to search for other resources or contacts. And, finally, gossip and moral accusations feed the network via means of communication, or even personal conversations, as described by Machado. These can become threats to the connections established up to this point, such as marital affairs (Machado 2010). All these issues alert us to the notion of the immigrant's risk and social fragility (Pereira 2011), creating a constant tension within these links of affection and mutual exchange, and of survival practices.

The feeling of cooperation appears to be the keynote that justifies the grouping of relatives and non-family members. In the case of the Chope society, studied by Webster (2009), the nature of the relationship between the leader who forms the vicinality and the follower is transactional. It is based on a reciprocity that can be broken, and the probabilities of fission are significant. On the one hand, feelings such as solidarity, cronyism, hospitality, "friendship", kinship and affinity lay the foundations for group constitution and the actions of relatives and non-family members. On the other hand,

internal competitiveness and lowered expectations of mutual help can lead to the breakup of these emotional connections.

These two aspects of vicinality delineate the negotiated character of these relationships, in addition to the close link between the language of emotions and the pragmatic actions involving the group. A relative spatial flexibility in the constitution of the neighbourhood (including relatives and non-family members) reinforces the path (time and space tension in this mobility) and, in itself, a production of place. These networks are, for a long period of the migrants' stay, the basis of the movement that allows them to remain in the destination country, and maybe the only main support until the migrant eventually manages to access more diverse social and economic opportunities, through the State or through the labour and housing market.

It is almost consensual that in many international migratory situations, recently arrived migrants share houses or rooms. The forms of accommodation vary according to what is achieved in that initial period, in general with people who share their closest points of reference (Dias 2010; Assis 1999). This means that people who lived close to one another or were neighbours in Goiânia, or with whom mutual help relations were already maintained, tend to live together. When this is not the case, people helping the migrants in their initial arrangements normally provide a room in a collective house, with other migrants. Some neighbourhoods are concentrations of pensions or rented houses, which are offered for modest prices upon arrival in the country through the information networks circulating in the cities, as in the case of Arroios, in Lisbon, in the last decade (Frangella 2014). Very often, the houses are shared by people of the same town; when this is not the case, the dwellers are practically all Brazilian. Here, the house serves as a place of preservation of "Brazilian" socio-cultural rules and the promotion of a "national" sociability, in addition to transmitting cultural capital about the destination (Dias 2010).

If entry into the desired country is difficult, living with strangers makes this even more complicated. When he and his brother moved into the house offered by his employers, Arnaldo experienced considerable hardship, living in a house with other foreigners, who allegedly robbed him. Cases like this are regularly narrated and constitute the primary complaint of recently arrived immigrants. After their construction work finished, and their move to another city in Portugal, Arnaldo and his brother started to rent an apartment, which was gradually filled up with other brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces and households also part of this migratory movement. However, neighbourhood

relations are added to the family core, with various friends from Goiás and new Brazilian and foreign friends visiting the house.

This first address represents an important experience, as it marks the beginning of the adaptation and is also a test of proximity and trust. Following common rules, learning to live “all on top of one another” (as is the case of couples with children who share a room), paying for the accommodation, all the while getting used to the new location, is always recounted as an enormous challenge. Here, the social interaction, the exchanges of loans and the expectations of mutuality are exacerbated. Trust and envy merges dynamically. At this address, many friendships and affective relationships revolving around kinship start to founder and the search for new living spaces begins. Thus, vicinality becomes a slow congregation of this network that begins with Brazilian relatives and subsequently incorporates, in a fragmented manner, other friends, provided that they adopt Brazilian attitudes.

Understanding vicinality and its permeability is therefore essential in theorising a rationality where exchange relations gradually expand beyond what was the initial network (relatives, friends or acquaintances in some way linked to the town of origin). Slowly and steadily, other Brazilians, some Portuguese, some immigrants of African origin are included. Above all, a network of mutual-help and sharing is formed, linked to the dynamics of the house and dispersed in the urban space where the daily lifestyles are staged. Cohabitation relations, while continuing to be guided by similar mutual help, change according to the possibilities of daily life. In Portugal, the houses become an extension, not analogous, but rather reconfigured, “of the homes” – or family configurations – of origin, and also create another sense of place.

The same occurs with another spatial dimension, the neighbourhood in which they live. In general, the choice of the neighbourhood is linked either to accommodation references obtained from informal networks, or is explained by the ease of circulation offered by the district and the different social and economic possibilities implied by the location. Arroios, for example, as already mentioned, has become a reference point for material resources, possibilities of socialising and mutual help among Brazilians, but also of conflict during social events among Brazilians and between Brazilians and people of other nationalities (Frangella 2014). The neighbourhood has contributed even more to showing how the plastic, dynamic nature of negotiation and care in vicinality intersect with temporalities and spatial connections. In other words, the stay in the country of destination can be circumscribed by the initial mutuality

networks and remain like that, creating a strong sensation of proximity with the country of origin (territorial continuity). However, other types of mutual help and interaction in the neighbourhood can be added to this experience that defy these territorial boundaries throughout the migration project.

FINAL NOTES

It is recognised in this debate that the transnational migratory experience is endowed with differentiated meanings and formats according to empirical differences – motivation, class, gender, religion, forms of entry and the density of the constructed networks, among others. The degree of linkage between the connected countries, creating stronger or weaker ties with the homeland (Lee 2008), is also diverse in migratory contexts. In this regard, the tenacity of a migrant's transnational connections emerges as a relevant issue. The intensity of the movements and the variety of possibilities of being situated in multiple locations, or assuring ties between one place and another are linked to the time of the people in the migratory circuit, to the gradual change of objectives brought about by the daily experience of life, and to their actual constitution as a person.

In this article, I have sought to understand how the transnational migratory path and the initial forms of cohabitation are constituted and imbued with meaning based on their underlying conviviality, mutual help and mobility relations. In order to theorise beyond a multi-situated vision, my research aimed to understand how the trajectory is progressively created, whether of departure or return, and, as such, produces inter-subjectivity and complex feelings of belonging. Although the discussion about the transnational world affirms the dynamic relationship between the place of departure and that of arrival, these are still viewed as dichotomous.

The real effect of the *temporal flow* moving this migration is frequently overlooked. Time, which constitutes these extended spatial flows, should be interpreted herein in its chronological dimension, but also by means of the social and political barriers permeating it, and the dynamics of continuity of the relations enveloping the person who migrates. With the progression of time, there can be, on the one hand, a densification of the migratory circuit's social webs, contributing to the idea that the migratory project is a project of return. However, on the other hand, the migrants' way of positioning themselves and

living in the world may change completely. Vicinality constitutes one of the principal mainstays to be investigated in order to understand the effect of migratory movement.

In the midst of the extensive debate on migratory social networks, interpersonal networks – relations that involve family and friends – tend to be interpreted as sources of personal trajectories which, as such, embody merely one among other networks comprising the migratory experience. Many authors endeavour to show personal ties as drivers of this trajectory (Boyd 1989, 639; Martes 1999) and state that the actual interpersonal networks offer greater flexibility in the circulation of information about employment opportunities and the strongest possibilities of social reinvention (Granovetter 1973; *apud* Fazito 2002). Despite this, some sociological literature on migration tends to view them as having little explanatory value due to their focus on the individual.

Now, in spite of the importance that migration has for the construction of the individual itinerary of these migrants, their interpersonal experience should be seen from the perspective of the mutuality relations that constituted it. This means that, from the decision to migrate up to the arrival and permanence in the place of destination, all these choices are made through a system of relationships that is above all collective, continuously articulated with the socio-structural constraints and dynamics conditioning migratory mobility. In a migratory cycle, the structural conditions and the world of feelings and exchanges that involve the migrant are in continuous interlocution. In this regard, although the potential explanatory power of interpersonal networks may not be as exhaustive, they are the main thread enabling this mobility.

Vicinality opens doors to more encompassing dynamics of interpersonal relations in the new accommodation situation, without ever detaching from the initial reference network. However, despite an effort to constitute a place that corresponds to the migrant's position in Brazil, the forms of socialising gradually assimilate other lifestyles, which challenge this person's expectations and ways of interpreting the world. Therefore, new forms of inhabiting the world are engendered, even if they will rarely be detached from previously constituted mutuality relations. A whole world is composed within this path, a material and symbolic outcome of this very mobility, maintaining a web that is gradually and constantly composed in search of a place. Vicinality is produced along the way, always negotiated and continuously relying on an attitude which paradoxically weakens it: consideration for others.

If we view vicinality as a dynamics assuming the maintenance of an underlying mesh of solidarity and mutual help, marked by the interaction of relatives and non-family members recruited for this purpose (Webster 2009), I believe that we can find certain affinities with the transnational migratory circuit. In these dynamics of labour migration, mobility to another country and between two or more countries, essentially depend on the establishment of networks providing information, support, financial and logistical arrangements and emotional support. The construction of the webs is based, above all, on relatives, friends of the family and, to a lesser extent, acquaintances from the same town.

These webs maintain the operability of the circuit, but are also fraught with very weak, imprecise and faulty organisation. The mutuality relations implicated in these webs are subject to constant breakdowns, and feelings of trust and envy are part of the recurrent narratives linked to their success or failure. The transformation of these relations affects the modes of living together, the migratory project plans and previously established alliances. I am left to imagine if there is actually a specificity of vicinality in this context. I believe that the differential is that the spatial and temporal relationship moulding these relations appears to be of another intensity.

The tenacity of these networks and their chaotic redesigning can be seen as a powerful resource in responding to continuous social exclusion mechanisms that mark migration mobility politically, economically and logistically. The transnational distance implies physical distance, but also the national-based social and political constraints and negotiations. There are continuous exclusion practices, from blockages of movement at border controls, to denial of documents, and good daily living conditions, to low-paying jobs and social discrimination. Such processes affect the migratory project, holding back or altering expectations on this set of mutual arrangements. At the same time, nonetheless, there is a constant movement guaranteeing the emergence of other reciprocity networks, driving a continuous circulation, allowing the maintenance of transnational movements, strategies of social inclusion and creating new ways of being in the world.

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