KU LEUVEN

FACULTEIT SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN

Crossing borders: The lived experiences of Brazilians on the move

Mieke SCHROOTEN

Proefschrift aangeboden tot het verkrijgen van de
graad van Doctor in de Sociale en culturele antropologie

Promotor: Prof. Dr. Noel B. Salazar
Onderzoekseenheid: Centrum Interculturalisme, Migratie en Minderheden [IMMRC]

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

What are your lines? What map are you in the process of making or rearranging? What abstract line will you draw, and at what price, for yourself and for others? (Deleuze, & Guattari, 1988, p. 203)

In the spring of 2013, a wave of public demonstrations cascaded through cities in Brazil. The protests were initially sparked by opposition to rising public transport fares in some Brazilian cities, but turned rapidly into the biggest street demonstrations Brazil has seen since 20 years, when citizens took to the streets calling for the impeachment of president Fernando Collor de Mello. The protests started on June 6th 2013 in São Paulo over bus fare increases from R$ 3.00 to R$ 3.20. One week later, the military police responded harshly to the ensuing protests, using rubber bullets, pepper spray and tear gas against protesters, bystanders and journalists. Demonstrators found with vinegar – which can be used to lessen the effect of tear gas – were arrested.

By mid-June, what had become known as the 'V for Vinegar' movement or 'Salad Revolution' had grown to become a nationwide movement against a range of grievances, such as corruption, the high cost of living, police brutality, poor public services and excessive spending on the FIFA World Cup. As with the 2011 protests in Egypt and Tunisia and the 2013 protests in Turkey, social media have played an important role in the organisation of the demonstrations. On Facebook, communities such as 'Occupy São Paulo' and *'Manifestação Brasilia'* were created, which kept protesters informed about the place and time the protests would take place, but also included guidelines about the behaviour to be adopted during the protests, legal advice, information about how to deal with

tear gas and so on. Other communities, such as *'Manifestações Brasil 24h'* informed its visitors about the revolts throughout the country.

Also outside Brazil, people were mobilized online to join the demonstrations that were organised with the aim of supporting the protests in Brazil and to let the world know what was happening. Operating in a movement that transgressed national borders, Brazilians went to the streets in Canada, Australia, Ireland, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Italy, the United States, the United Kingdom and many more countries around the world. With the slogan *'democracia não tem fronteiras* / democracy has no boundaries', the protesters aimed to show that, despite living outside Brazil, they were conscious of their role in the social and political change they wanted to see in their country. As one of the participants in the manifestation in Brussels said: 'We are proud to be Brazilian, despite the bad things that happen in our country. Although we live abroad, Brazil is still part of us.'

Social media alone did not cause the upheaval inside and outside Brazil, but information technologies surely provided new opportunities and tools for the protesters to develop a public sense of shared grievances and potential for change. Moreover, they fostered transnational links between Brazilians all over the world, enabling ideas, information and social networks to flow quickly through and across geographical and political borders (Schrooten, 2012a; Wastl-Walter, 2011). The digital public sphere played a similar role in shaping political debates in the Green Protests in Iran in June 2009 and the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011, in the *'indignados'* protests in Spain and in the Occupy movement (Gerbaudo, 2012; Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Maziad, 2011). These cases highlight how the Internet – 'a "gift" of globalization', as Moghadam (2012, p. ix) calls it – has enabled rapid communication and mobilisations across national state borders, and, important for Brazil, also within (huge) countries. During the 1990s, discourses of globalisation and cosmopolitanism highlighted and celebrated global 'flows' of people, objects and ideas. Most early globalisation scholars argued that globalisation pressured on state borders to the extent that borders were opening and, in some cases, a 'borderless world' was emerging *(debordering)* (Appadurai, 1996;

Horsman, & Marshall, 1994; O'Brien, 1992; Ohmae, 1990; Ong, 1999). They stated that unimpeded flows of capital and information were challenging state borders and even making them redundant.

The idea of abolishing frontiers *('sem fronteiras')* is also a slogan in the political and economic marketing of Brazil. A well-known example of this rhetoric is the '*ciencias sem fronteiras'* (sciences without borders) scholarship program, established in 2011 by the Brazilian federal government. The goal of the initiative is to promote the consolidation and expansion of science, technology and innovation in Brazil by means of international exchange and mobility. In placing both undergraduate and graduate students as well as researchers from Brazil in international institutions of excellence around the world, and in inviting their counterparts to Brazil, the government aims to create a highly competitive and entrepreneurial environment. As the Brazil Scientific Mobility Program obviously encourages the international mobility of Brazilian scholars, it a strong example of the growing permeability of Brazil's national boundaries.

However, while borders may be opening to the circulation of goods and information, and to people with a certain background, they are (re-)closing to other persons at one and the same time (Salazar, & Smart, 2011). Often less desired than the circulation of money or goods, human mobility shakes policymaking both in countries of origin and destination and in between (Padilla, 2011). State borders retain their significance, albeit under new appearances (Popescu, 2011). While borders may be opening to certain cyber, social and economic functions, they can be (re-)closing to other security and political functions *(rebordering)* (Newman, 2006). As I argued in one of the articles that is part of this thesis (Schrooten, 2012b, p. 90), borders still have a strong impact on everyday life, not only because of international, state and other borders of polity, power, territory and sovereignty, but also because of the mix of populations and the metaphorical negotiations of borderlands of personal and group identities. What happens at, across or because of political borders lies at the focus of the research field of border studies. As Wilson and Donnan (2012b, p. 1) state,

> [t]he proliferation of borders, and the many forces that have created and fostered their development, together have drawn scholars from all the humanities and social sciences to a mutual interest in what happens at, across and because of the borders to nations and states, and in extension to other geopolitical borders and boundaries, such as those of cities, regions and supranational polities.

Compared to the other kinds of studies that anthropologists have traditionally pursued, ethnographies of people living at national borders and in border regions were, until recently, few in number (Cohen, 1965; Cole, & Wolf, 1974). In the meantime, this type of anthropological work has increased. Within contemporary border studies, two approaches are generally distinguished: the geographical perspective focuses on interstate border lines and borderlands, or border regions, geographical areas situated along state borders as distinctive kinds of territorial places; whereas more anthropologically inspired border research emphasises the importance of boundaries as cultural divides and as sites of real and intense 'crossings' and cross-cultural interaction (Alvarez, 1995; Kearney, 1995; Lamont, & Molnár, 2002; Pratt, 1991). The latter uses boundaries in a largely metaphorical and conceptual manner and has linked them to a much broader intellectual agenda critiquing modernist conceptions of space and time (Anzaldúa, 1987; Michaelson, & Johnson, 1997; Rosaldo, 1989). In anthropology, the concept of the 'border' generally stands for a line demarcated in space, whereas a 'boundary' means the socio-spatially constructed differences between cultures/categories (Barth, 1969; Donnan, & Wilson, 1999; van Houtum, 2005).

I argue that many insights of border studies could be broadened and related to human mobility more generally. Many contemporary societies can be considered as border regions in the more symbolic and metaphorical significance of the concept that is often used in anthropological research. The interpretation of border areas as symbolic places where identities are constantly challenged, shaped and transformed (Anzaldúa, 1987; Barth, 1969; Donnan, & Wilson, 1999; Horstmann, &

Wadley, 2006) aptly suits the study of human mobility. As people cross international, state and other borders of polity, power, territory and sovereignty, populations mix and metaphorical borderlands of personal and group identities are negotiated. These diverse contexts or 'contact zones' (Pratt, 1991) with a hybrid population are not only restricted to the regions bisected by the boundary line between states, but can also be found in other 'superdiverse' places around the world (Arnaut, 2012; Camarillo, 2007; Crul, Schneider, & Lelie, 2013; Vertovec, 2007). In the western part of Europe, for example, many urban areas serve as the main destination of international migrants. A growing number of these cities are becoming 'majority–minority cities', where the majority of its inhabitants have roots in migration (measured as inhabitants who were born in another country, or whose mother and/or father is born abroad). Furthermore, there is an increasing diversity within the diversity: compared to half a century ago, these urban spaces are characterised by an increasing diversity in nationalities and countries of origin of their inhabitants, an increase of the different languages spoken, religions practised, and so on. We also see an increasing diversity in migration motives, statuses of migrants and socio-economic positions (Geldof, 2013b; Martiniello, Rea, Timmerman, & Wets, 2010).

In contrast to the classical anthropological idea of a 'taken-for-granted space in which an "other" culture or society lies waiting to be observed and written' (Gupta, & Ferguson, 1997, p. 1), the everyday lives of many individuals more often than not transcend the geographical locations in which classical fieldwork took place, challenging anthropologists to include these social spaces in the demarcation of their fieldwork sites (Schrooten, 2016). Appadurai (1991, p. 191) has formulated the consequent challenge for anthropologists in the following terms:

> As groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic "projects", the *ethno* in ethnography takes on a slippery, nonlocalized quality, to which the descriptive practices of anthropology will have to respond. The landscapes of group identity – the ethnoscapes – around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects, insofar as groups are

> no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious, or culturally homogeneous.

This PhD thesis investigates the paradoxical role of the physical and metaphorical border from a bottom up perspective, focusing on the individual border experiences of Brazilians on the move. The central research question of this thesis is: *What are the lived experiences of Brazilians that cross physical borders and metaphorical boundaries?*

From migration to mobility

Mobility has been an integral part of the human way of life from prehistoric times through the present. Humans have developed a wide range of modes and patterns of mobility: settlement migration, travel, tourism and pilgrimage, amongst others, have always been central to human interactions and identities (Barnard, & Wendrich, 2008; de Bruijn, van Dijk, & Foeken, 2001; Wolf, & Eriksen, 2010). Since Malinowski, anthropologists have attempted to understand how individuals move 'in and through social systems' (Fortes, 1971, p. 2), but, as I describe in the final chapter, engagement with human movement and mobility in anthropology is a more recent phenomenon (Schrooten, Salazar, & Dias, 2015, pp. 1–2).

Much of the research carried out by social and cultural anthropologists during the first half of the 20th century paid little attention to human mobility as many ethnographers were working with a bounded concept of culture and a static structural-functional theoretical paradigm (Brettell, 2013; Gupta, & Ferguson, 1997). They portrayed societies across the globe as bounded, territorialised, relatively unchanging and homogenous units (Brettell, 2003; Salazar, 2010, 2013a; Tsing, 1993; Vertovec, 2010) and cultures 'as essentially immobile or as possessing a mobility that is cyclical and repetitive [...] Those with culture are expected to have a regular, delimited occupation of territory. If they move, they must do so cyclically, like transhumant pastoralists or kularing sailors' (Tsing, 1993, p. 123). Since the second

half of the twentieth century, however, mobility and mobility-related topics have gained a prominent place in anthropology.

Mobility entails much more than mere movement; it is infused with meaning and experiences lived and produced by people in space as they move (Cresswell, 2006; Greenblatt, Županov, Meyer-Kalkus, Paul, Nyíri, & Pannewick, 2009; Ingold, 2011; Knowles, 2011; Salazar, & Smart, 2011). Cresswell (2010, p. 19) defines mobility as 'the entanglement of movement, representation, and practice' such that it is about physically getting from one place to another, the different sorts of meanings that travel and movement take on, and the 'experienced and embodied practice of movement'. Human mobility has been extensively described, analysed, understood and explained in many disciplines, including geography, sociology, history, demography, political sciences, economy and anthropology. According to Caroline Brettell (2000, p. 98), anthropology distinguishes itself from other social sciences concerned with mobility through its attention to ...

> the articulation between the place whence a migrant originates and the place or places to which he or she goes. This includes exploration of how people in local places respond to global processes. Equally, anthropology's focus on cultures, which includes the study of the interaction between beliefs and behaviour, of corporate groups, and of social relationships, has resulted in an emphasis in migration studies on matters of adaptation and culture change, on forms of social organization that are characteristic of both the migration process and the immigrant community, and on questions of identity and ethnicity.

What would be added to this today, fifteen years after Brettell's publication, is more attention to what happens during the journeys between places of departure and arrival.

Whereas ethnicity was a prominent topic of interest for the anthropology of the 1970s and 1980s (Barth, 1969; Epstein, 1978), since the early 1970s, transnationality has become its foremost topic of interest (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton-Blanc, 1995; Bauböck, & Faist, 2010; Georges, 1990; Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1992; Grasmuck, & Pessar, 1991; Kearney, 1995; Mazzucato, 2004; Rouse, 1991). This approach criticised previous, rather localised assumptions about identities, and focused on the relationships between places migrated from and to. A seminal example is the work of Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc in 1992, which drew attention to the fact that migrants' social practices occur almost simultaneously on the territories of more than one national state. This anthropological work has catalysed a paradigm shift in migration studies.

Whereas transnationality scholars first stressed the growing number of people who live dual lives (Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999), focusing only on a country of origin and a country of arrival, more recent literature takes multiple places and locations into account (Levitt, & Jaworsky, 2007). Research that built further on these insights has demonstrated that migrants very often participate in social networks that are stretched across multiple locations. For example, many sustain family relations or support across national borders (Parreñas, 2001), contribute to socio-economic development in their homeland and/or their country of residence (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Faist, 2008; Nijenhuis, & Broekhuis, 2010; Nijenhuis, & Zoomers, 2015), participate actively in communities that span the globe (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton-Blanc, 1995), or enact their political engagement in multiple states (Smith, 2007). This approach criticised previous, rather localised assumptions about identities, and focused on the relationships between places migrated from and to.

Transnational studies put much emphasis on transnational engagements and networks, but pay less attention to different forms and experiences of mobility and spatial frictions in mobility processes, let alone to the journeys between places of departure and arrival (Burrell, 2008; Schapendonk, & Steel, 2014). Thus, the transnational paradigm does not question the rooted and static notion of human movement that typified much anthropological research, approaching migrants as mov-

ing from one state of fixity (in the place of origin) to another (in the place of destination), assuming that people want to remain in the place to which they move (Cirtautas, 1957; Tuan, 1977). As such, 'migration' was equated with settlement migration, whereby 'building up a new life elsewhere' and 'integration' are seen as key (Schrooten, Salazar, & Dias, 2015).

A research field has emerged that goes beyond embodied migrations to an understanding of mobilities more generally. Whereas in migration studies the actual interest is not in movement, but in departure and/or arrival (involving issues of uprooting and integration), 'mobility' has become a keyword of the social sciences, delineating a novel domain of debates, approaches and methodologies that seek to understand contemporary processes of movement (Adey, Bissell, Hannam, Merriman, & Sheller, 2013; Amelina, & Vasilache, 2014; Cresswell, 2006; Glick Schiller, & Salazar, 2013; Salazar, & Jayaram, 2016; Urry, 2007). Whilst mobility itself is not a new idea in the social sciences (Cresswell, 2010), the idea of a mobilities 'paradigm' (Sheller, & Urry, 2006) or a 'mobility turn' (Faist, 2013) has gained considerable momentum over the last decade. As will be more elaboratively discussed in the final chapter of this PhD, the conceptual framework developed within mobility studies has the potential to enrich our understandings of the dynamics that constitute contemporary mobile people's experiences and to give insight to the mobilities under study in this research.

Research objectives and research questions

Theoretically, this thesis brings together insights from many social science disciplines, including anthropology, social work, communications, sociology, linguistics and interdisciplinary fields such as mobility studies, border studies and migration studies. The thesis explores different aspects of Brazilians' contemporary mobility. Firstly, it looks at the history of mobility in Brazil and to the relevance of present-day (internal) mobility within the country. By doing so, it situates the intra- and international mobility of Brazilians in a broader perspective.

Secondly, the thesis focuses on the trajectories that Brazilians who currently reside in Belgium have pursued. Three aspects with regards to these trajectories are highlighted:

(1) International mobility of Brazilians often already starts within Brazil. The Brazilian case shows how unproductive it is to split up mobility in internal versus international movement, as their trajectories often imply both.

(2) The experiences of many respondents are, for a variety of reasons, marked by ongoing mobility.

(3) Trajectories cannot be explained by looking only at its physical aspects. The thesis shows how the virtual comes together with other facets of trajectories by investigating the roles social network sites play with regards to mobility.

Thirdly, the thesis explores how mobility influences daily life. It investigates the experience of crossing borders and how mobile Brazilians construct, view and transform boundaries between themselves and other residents of the local space they inhabit. Moreover, it looks at the welfare needs they experience due to their mobile lifestyle and the difficulties and opportunities they encounter when they turn to their (transnational) networks to ask for support.

The objective of this study is threefold. The first objective is an empirical one. By investigating the dynamics of trajectories of Brazilians and the influence of mobility on their daily life, this thesis challenges the classical picture of migration as an intentional movement from one place of origin to a single place of destination, including a perspective of 'settling' or 'uprootedness', and offers instead a more nuanced view on mobility. Instead of a simple journey from A to B, the respondents' mobility consists of a multiplicity of potential trajectories, which are often unstable and may be accompanied by changes in status, thus forming a complex concatenation of destinations and positions.

Rather than following a straight, predictable, and individually-chosen strategic movement from one of Brazil's international airports to a specific end destination with the aim of building up a new life, the testimonies of these informants refer to personal choices or circumstances that keep them on the move. Together with Sophie Withaeckx and Dirk Geldof (Schrooten, Geldof, & Withaeckx, 2015), I propose to use the term 'transmigrants' to refer to these people on the move who come and go, not always being sure how long they will stay in the different stopovers on their trajectories or if they will ever stop moving. Migratory plans are constantly adjusted, depending on external circumstances as well as on internal factors (Adler, 2000; Oosterbaan, 2014; Withaeckx, Schrooten, & Geldof, 2015). Moreover, in the case of the Brazilians I studied, leaving home can become a strategy of staying at home, as the focus of living abroad is still—at least initially—building up a better life 'back home'.

The second objective of this study is to make anthropological migration research more sensitive for mobility and borders, not only as an empirical object but also as an analytical starting point. By analysing the empirical insights from a mobilities perspective and by taking mobility and borders as building blocks of my methodological framework, I hope to contribute to the further cross-fertilisation of migration, borders and mobilities studies (Anteby-Yemini, Baby-Collin, Mazella, Mourlane, Parizot, Regnard, & Sintès, 2014; Richardson, 2013; Vertovec, 2013; Wilson, 2014; Wilson, & Donnan, 2012a). The thesis challenges (anthropological) migration research in a number of ways:

(1) By mapping the trajectories of Brazilians who currently reside in Belgium, the thesis draws attention to a group of people whose experiences are marked by ongoing movement. I question the applicability of the discourse that is associated with 'migration' for the mobility of Brazilians, as their movement within or beyond Brazil mostly does not imply a unidirectional and intentional movement from one place of origin to a single place of destination, including a perspective of 'settling' or 'uprootedness', which is typically defined as 'migration'.

Instead of an exclusive sedentarist focus on building up a new life elsewhere, many of these Brazilians intend to keep moving, at least for a while, until reaching the goals they had set when they left Brazil. Defining themselves as 'sojourners' (Margolis, 2013), who will spend between one and five years working in foreign countries, they treat their migratory movements as temporary. As such, these Brazilians are exemplary for a group of people who challenge the focus that takes the sedentarist way of life as self-evident (if not outright natural) while problematising practices of mobility as being exceptional. Rather than following a linear trajectory from one country of origin to a desired country of destination, the majority had passed through other locations before arriving in Belgium. Their presence in third countries ranged from some weeks or months to numerous years. The testimonies of the Brazilian respondents also highlight the complexities of their mobilities and the continuous shifts of trajectories and changes of 'position' that may occur during these trajectories.

(2) The thesis draws attention to different forms of human movement. This diversity is notable between different respondents as well as within the trajectory of each respondent: a small minority of their mobility movements were single, unidirectional journeys, but most were continuous, circular or return journeys. Mobility may have different purposes and can, consequently, present different features. In fact, there is a continuum of population mobilities, ranging from short-term temporary movements to permanent migration.

(3) Despite a growing body of literature on the use of Internet and other social media, most studies of migration and mobility are often still exclusively situated in the 'offline' social world. The ethnographic practice of following social groups online has not yet been strongly established within migration research. Theoretical contributions and empirical research focusing on transnational communities have a tendency to neglect the influence of the increasing virtual mobility that marks the life of many peo-

ple today. I argue that online research sites must be understood as mundane and as a defining and integral part of how people live today. Researchers who ignore this reality will find their work more and more outdated and not rooted in contemporary reality.

Thirdly, by applying an ethnographic approach, I also attempt to critically enrich mobilities studies.

(1) Whereas most mobilities studies focus on hyper-mobile and elitist worlds (Bryceson, & Vuorela, 2002; Levitt, & Jaworsky, 2007; Schapendonk, 2012), this research aims to show that 'the lived condition of straddling borders, whether by choice or by necessity' (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010, p. 223) can be experienced by a wide range of people, either as a permanent way of life or as a passing or recurring stage in the life cycle.

(2) With some notable exceptions (Amoore, Marmura, & Salter, 2008; Heyman, & Cunningham, 2004; Richardson, 2013), mobilities studies have devoted little attention its interrelations with the field of border studies. Yet, it is difficult to conceive of moblities without confronting the ways in which mobilities are constrained and regulated by borders and bordering practices (Cresswell, 2012; Richardson, 2013). Anthropological research may benefit from engaging borders and mobilities together.

The central question that derives from the research objectives is as follows:

What are the lived experiences of Brazilians that cross physical borders and metaphorical boundaries?

Rather than concentrating on the macro perspective of the strategic aspects of borderwork and regulation of mobilities, I start from an everyday life perspective, looking at everyday practices of mobility and border / boundary making and crossing. I explore how Brazilians form their mobility plans, how these plans changes

during the course of their trajectory, how social network sites affect the nature of their mobility and how boundaries are (re)created in contact zones. By doing so, I aim to provide a more complete picture of what it means for these Brazilians to cross borders. I purposively start from the perspective of those on the move to better understand their motivations and frustrations, the challenges and opportunities they meet, and to know more about how these different aspects change along the way.

Methodological framework of the study

This doctoral research is based on a multi-sited ethnographic research (Amelina, Nergiz, Faist, & Glick Schiller, 2012; Falzon, 2009; Hannerz, 2003; Marcus, 1995), combining a fieldwork period in Palmas, Brazil (2007), an ethnographic study on Brazilians based in Belgium (2009-2015), an online ethnography (2010-2015) and a PWO-research[1] that I conducted together with three other colleagues at the Odisee University College (2013-2015). Data collection and analysis are typified by a qualitative approach, inherent to the anthropological method of ethnographic fieldwork, which was conducted in the urban settings of Antwerp, Brussels, Palmas and on the Internet.

In 2004, after obtaining my bachelor degree in social work, I enrolled in a post-graduate on intercultural social work course. The one-year program included an internship of six months in a 'developing country'. On September 24, 2004, I arrived in Palmas, the capital of the Brazilian state Tocantins, where I was going to work in a *Centro de Direitos Humanos* (Human Rights Centre) and a *Conselho Tutelar* (Guardianship Council). Palmas is a very young city, constructed in 1989 to become the capital of the newest Brazilian state, Tocantins.[2] Because of its recent creation, Palmas is an example of a city where internal migration has heavily influenced the composition of the population. The city attracts Brazilians from almost

[1] 'Praktijkgericht wetenschappelijk onderzoek', profession-oriented research.
[2] For more information on Palmas, see Schrooten, 2008, pp. 65–66

all Brazilian states (Schrooten, 2011a). During my stay in the city, I developed links with many of the city's inhabitants and with ethnic associations such as the black and indigenous movements in the city. It was thanks to these contacts that I became interested in anthropology and in human mobility. Upon my return, I signed up for studies in Anthropology at Utrecht University (the Netherlands).

In 2007, I returned to Brazil for my master's thesis fieldwork, which focused on the (re)creation of ethnic boundaries (Schrooten, 2008, 2011a). The aim of the research was to study internal migration and the reproduction of Brazilian racial boundaries in the city of Palmas.

The main methodology used was participant observation (Dewalt, & Dewalt, 2002), during informal meetings between the city's inhabitants, during religious gatherings and during meetings and activities of several movements, in order to explore the race relations in the city. I also participated in a number of meetings at the public university that discussed the problems faced by the indigenous undergraduate students and the use of quotas for these students (Schrooten, 2012b) and joined the weekly history classes in a public secondary school to grasp the discourse that was used when discussing 'race' in the history of Brazil. During this participant observation, I had many informal conversations, which gave me the chance to gain a broad impression of Palmas' city life. I also resided with a host family and participated in their daily activities and in those of other key informants. Moreover, I held twelve in-depth interviews (Boeije, 2014) with selected key informants I had met during participant observation or through snowball sampling, 'accessing informants through contact information that is provided by other informants' (Noy, 2008, p. 330). The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed. I also analysed written sources, such as history books, scientific literature, statistical material and local newspapers.

Table 1: Research sample in Brazil

Age	Sex	Length of stay in Palmas	Employment status	Total
> 25: 2 25-45: 7 < 45: 3	Male: 5 Female: 7	0-1 y: 2 2-5 y: 6 6-10 y: 3 + 10 y: 1	Employed: 9 Unemployed: 1 Studying: 0 Retired: 2	12

After obtaining my masters in anthropology, I built further on the findings of my master research. Geographically, I moved my focus to Europe, more specifically to Belgium. Although trans-Atlantic migration forms an important part of the new migration flows to Europe, Rodríguez (2004) demonstrates that the contemporary trans-Atlantic relationships between Europe and Latin America are still underrepresented in academic research. The studies that have been conducted on Brazilian migration are strongly focused on Brazilian migration towards the United States (Margolis, 1994, 2013) and Japan (Tsuda, 2003). Within Europe, research on migration is mainly investigating trans-Atlantic migration to countries with a former colonial tie, as is the case for Latin-American migrants in Spain or Brazilian migration to Portugal (Albuquerque, & Malheiros, 2014; Dolabella, 2015; Frangella, 2013; Iorio, & Albuquerque, 2013; Padilla, 2006a; Silva, 2013).

The choice for Belgium allows dissociating the trans-Atlantic migration of Brazilians from a former colonial tie (as is the case of Brazilian migration to Portugal or Latin-American migrants in Spain). Within Belgium, the research mainly took place in Brussels and Antwerp, the two Belgian cities that count the most Brazilian inhabitants (Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken, 2009; Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009). The choice for Brussels was also based on its role as capital of Europe, which gives the city a significant position within the trans-Atlantic relations. Moreover, Brussels displays the characteristics of a border or contact zone at the national level due to its socio-political position within the Belgian state, reinforced by the

international position of the city and the presence of an ethnic heterogeneous population (Geets, & Timmerman, 2010; Geldof, 2011; Jacobs, 2006).[3]

The ethnographic fieldwork in Belgium built on the findings of the research conducted in Brazil and on an explorative study that I had carried out among Brazilians in Brussels. The exploratory study served as an ethnographic study of the Brazilian migratory scene in Brussels and to identify and categorise different (social) media used by Brazilians in Belgium. Given that I was researching an often hidden population of undocumented individuals, this initial phase was essential for enabling me to meet what is otherwise an elusive population. Apart from these more ethnographic encounters during this initial phase, I also conducted in-depth interviews with key informants such as pioneer migrants - those who blaze a trail for others to follow -, migrant associations, migration related businesses, local authorities and NGOs.

Research in Belgium consisted of ethnographic research, combining (1) participant observation (using note taking, pictures and audio recording), (2) 27 semi-structured in-depth interviews, (3) focus group interviews and (4) life stories. To improve external validity, informants were selected deliberately to maximize heterogeneity with respect to socioeconomic background, region of origin and residence status. The micro level fieldwork was complemented by data at the meso and macro level. Throughout the whole research period, attention was paid to the role of meso-level institutions (migrant associations, churches and NGOs) and the policy of the Brazilian and Belgian government with regards to migration and mobility. In addition to document analysis (policy documents, newspapers, and scientific literature), I met and interviewed representatives of migrant organisations and governmental institutions.

Interviewees were contacted using gatekeepers such as churches and migrant organisations and through snowballing, a well-recognized means of contacting 'hidden' populations that are partly composed of undocumented individuals.

[3] For more information on Brazilian migration to Belgium, see Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009; Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2012; Rosenfeld, Marcelle, & Rea, 2010; Schrooten, 2012b, pp. 92–96; Schrooten, Salazar, & Dias, 2015, pp. 6–8.

Aside from these interviews, I talked informally to dozens of other Brazilians while engaging in participant observation. I tried to immerse myself within the life of the Brazilian communities, visiting people's homes and attending numerous cultural and social events. Understanding the field site as a network of interlinked encounters (Hine, 2006), I soon added the social network site Orkut, and later also Facebook, as a research location. Initially, I had underestimated the importance of these online research locations. The original research proposal did not even mention the Internet as a possible research site. However, within the variety of Brazilian websites, magazines and satellite channels I encountered in the course of the research, Orkut – and later also Facebook and Whatsapp – was often mentioned as the most important medium to keep in touch with other Brazilians inside and outside Brazil. Therefore, in addition to reconstructing migration histories on the basis of 27 in-depth interviews, I followed my interviewees through Internet conversations at different times throughout their trajectories.

Table 2: Research sample in Belgium

Age	**Sex**	**Length of stay in country**	**Employment status**	**Total**
> 25: 2 25-45: 20 < 45: 5	Male: 9 Female: 18	0-1 y: 7 2-5 y: 11 6-10 y: 6 + 10 y: 3	Employed: 12 Unemployed: 12 Studying: 2 Retired: 1	27

Moreover, I conducted online ethnographic research on two social network sites, namely Orkut and Facebook. At the beginning of my Phd, I studied Brazilians' online togetherness in the two largest Orkut communities that were referred to by Brazilian migrants in Belgium, namely *Brasileiros na Bélgica* (Brazilians in Belgium) and *Brasileiros em Bruxelas* (Brazilians in Brussels), as well as one smaller community, *Brasileiros em Leuven* (Brazilians in Leuven). The integration of qualitative data-

gathering methodologies both online and offline turned out to be an important research strategy. Ethnography solely based on online research could not be the sole source of data as it offers only a partial picture of Brazilians' mobility in everyday life; a pure offline ethnography would not have provided me with detailed information on the important associations between the online and offline world (Schrooten, 2012a).

The research related to Orkut consisted of an analysis of at least six months of web-based discussion among members of each community, personal interviews with the community founders, online participant observation, and personal and email interviews with members of all three Orkut communities, as well as with Brazilian migrants who did not participate in any of these communities. I also tried to meet as many Orkut community members as possible in person. This gave me the chance to verify information gathered online. It was also an opportunity to fill gaps in online data collection and to extend my focus from migrants' participation in Orkut communities to my other fields of interest. In the course of my research, the popularity of Orkut has strongly declined in favour of Facebook, so I continued my research on both social network sites.

In 2013, I decided to translate the insights of my doctoral research to the context of social work, the area in which I was teaching since 2010. Together with three colleagues, I wanted to investige the effect of mobility on social workers and on social work practices, a topic that is still under-investigated, despite the current scientific interest in mobility on the one hand and international social work on the other hand (Schrooten, Geldof, & Withaeckx, 2015). Between February 2014 and July 2015, we interviewed 54 Brazilian, Ghanaian and Moroccan transmigrants through semi-structured in-depth interviews and organised 4 focus groups with more than 20 social workers.[4] I was responsible for the interviews with the Brazilian respondents and the focus groups. All interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed and analysed in NVivo 10.

[4] For more information on the research and on the methodologies used, see Schrooten, Geldof, & Withaeckx, 2015; Schrooten, Withaeckx, Geldof, & Lavent, 2015; Withaeckx, Schrooten, & Geldof, 2015.

Table 3: Brazilian research sample of the social work research

Age	Sex	Length of stay in country	Employment status	Total
> 25: 1 25-45: 11 < 45: 3	Male: 4 Female: 11	0-1 y: 6 2-5 y: 6 6-10 y: 3 + 10 y: 0	Employed: 3 Unemployed: 10 Studying: 1 Retired: 1	15

During the whole research, results from each step of interviewing and observation shaped the questions posed in each subsequent step. For this reason, data analysis already started in the beginning of the research, using the NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software.

A limitation in the research's design is the relative low mobility of the researcher. Although the research had a multi-sited focus, fieldwork in Brazil only took place in the beginning of the research. It would have been interesting to go back to Brazil in a later stage of the research. Moreover, as I focus on mobility, the research would have gained from following informants to other places they moved to, apart from Belgium and Brazil. Instead, the research took the form of a site-specific, intensively investigated scene of fieldwork that was framed and investigated by a multi-sited imaginary (Falzon, 2009) through the online research, which allowed for the interconnection of the locally oriented fieldwork and the global context.

Secondly, Schensul, Schensul and Lecompte (2012) refer to participation as meaning almost total immersion in an unfamiliar culture to study others' lives through the researcher's participation as a full-time resident or member. I was not able to do this, as I combined my research with a full-time position of lecturer and researcher at Odisee University College (Brussels, Belgium). Therefore, participant observation was, even though it was carried out during several years, limited. Moreover, researchers have noted the limitations involved with using participant

observation as a tool for data collection. Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) note, for example, that the gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and theoretical approach of the researcher may affect observation, analysis, and interpretation. The combination of different types of data collection and observation, and the cooperation with other researchers active in similar researches has been an attempt to overcome this potential bias and to lead to richer understanding of the topics at focus.

Organisation of the thesis

This thesis consists of 8 chapters, composed of 6 articles and 1 book chapter, published between 2011–2016, and of an introductory chapter that place those publications into a broader theoretical frame of reference.

The second chapter looks into the history of large-scale international migration to Brazil and the way the country has dealt with the resulting ethnic diversity of its population. This chapter also refers to the high internal movement intensity that typifies Brazil and focuses on the city of Palmas, the capital of the Brazilian state Tocantins. Given the fact that the city was only founded in 1990, internal migration has heavily influenced the composition of the city population. This chapter focuses on the (re)creation of ethnic boundaries in this city, raising questions related to the possibility that the planned creation of a city such as Palmas would not reproduce the pattern of race relations that characterize the rest of the country, as the city was built during a period in which the Brazilian state recognized the existence of racism and started to implement anti-racism measures such as race based affirmative action. The research has demonstrated that the ethnic divisions existing in the rest of Brazil are also reproduced in Palmas. Rather than being purposefully erased, boundaries between ethnicities appear to be as strong as in the rest of the country.

The third and fourth chapter focus on the role of online encounters and online togetherness in the migration experience. While there are many studies of

globalisation and transnationality, at the moment of my research on Orkut and Facebook, relatively few had addressed the impact of new media on the everyday lives of people on the move. Theoretical contributions and empirical research focusing on transnationality have a tendency to neglect the influence of the increasing virtual mobility. However, the 'methodological transnationalism' that results from the multi-sited approach that is often used within migration research also generates 'new' research locations that are important for researchers to take into account. The way in which mobile people maintain long-distance relationships and organise their daily life at their new place of residence has been revolutionised by the emergence of a plethora of Internet and mobile phone-based platforms such as email, instant messaging, social network sites, as well as webcam via voice over Internet protocol (VOIP) and digital broadcast (Madianou, & Miller, 2012; Miller, 2011). People can consult others who are already living abroad and ask for assistance in their mobiilty. After having moved, a person can achieve a sense of co-presence by calling his left-behind relatives and friends several times a day, perusing social network sites and leaving the webcam open for many hours. Chapter 3 looks into the way this online connectivity affects the nature of mobility and the conditions of being mobile.

In chapter 4, I discuss some of the ethical issues I encountered in my research on the use of social network sites by Brazilians in Belgium in order to provide an understanding of the challenges that are related to online research, and, consequently, to the ethical responsibilities of online researchers. Although in the emerging literature some concrete guidelines can now be found of how to conduct ethical research using social network sites (Bull, Breslin, Wright, Black, Levine, & Santelli, 2011; Hesse-Biber, & Leavy, 2010; Wilkinson, & Thelwall, 2011), an internationally accepted framework for online ethnographic research ethics does not as yet exist. Without these guidelines, I found that the onus was on the individual researcher to make ethical decisions in the course of her or his research.

The fifth chapter introduces a 'border perspective' in this research. In this chapter, I make a case for applying the insights of Border Studies to cosmopolitan

cities, which are privileged places of migrant settlements and, as such, cultural crossroads par excellence. I demonstrate how 'neighbourhoods of arrival' (Oosterlynck, & Schillebeeckx, 2012; Saunders, 2011) in Brussels have been influenced by the arrival of Brazilians. Moreover, I discuss how these Brazilian migrants construct, view and transform boundaries between themselves and other residents of the local space they inhabit.

Chapter 6, 7 and the concluding chapter 8 engage with the changes in and current methodological approaches to migration studies. These chapters further complicate previous linear and unidirectional models of migration to move beyond a classical and potentially deterministic model of studying migrant trajectories. Chapter 6 demonstrates how the trajectories of many Brazilians are marked by multiple border crossings and ongoing mobility and explores their lives across borders. In this chapter, I propose to use the term 'transmigration' to distinguish these 'mobile migrants' as a specific group of migrants. I discuss how transmigration manifests itself in migration trajectories, what practical and juridical complexities result from multiple border crossings, and to which transnational and local networks transmigrants turn to ask for support.

Chapter 7 situates transmigration within the shift towards superdiversity and demonstrates how this mobility challenges social workers to take the multiple locations that are relevant to transmigrants into account and to understand the complex legal, cultural, social and political contexts than push and pull people across national and local borders. Today, there is still an important difference in perspective between the translocal and transnational lives of transmigrants on the one hand versus the locally rooted practices of social workers on the other hand. In this article, me and my colleagues also highlight six embryonic research themes related to social work with transmigrants.

In the concluding chapter, I bring the insights of the earlier chapters together in a discussion on how the testimonies of the Brazilians I met during my PhD challenge what is usually evoked by the concept of 'migration'. Whereas the experiences of a large number of respondents are marked by an ongoing physical or

geographical mobility, 'building up a new life elsewhere' and 'integration' are classicaly seen as key to 'migration'. The majority of these Brazilians tend to stay mobile as long as it takes, in order to improve or maintain the quality of life at home. Leaving home thus becomes a strategy of staying at home, as the focus of living abroad is still—at least initially—building up a better life 'back home'. For the respondents in this research, trajectories were often unpredictable and new mobilities unexpected and sometimes even unwanted, transforming their status from relatively 'settled' into an alternative and distinct re-location. I also argue that research on migration does not fully grasp the complexities of time and space found in the more varied forms of mobility in the respondents' trajectories and that the conceptual framework developed within mobility studies has the potential to enrich our understandings of the dynamics that constitute contemporary mobile people's experiences and to give insight into the mobilities under study.

List of original publications

Schrooten, M. (2016). Writing eFieldnotes: Some ethical considerations. In R. Sanjek, & S. Tratner (Eds.). *eFieldnotes: The makings of anthropology in the digital world* (pp. 78-93). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Schrooten, M., Geldof, D., & Withaeckx, S. (2015). Transmigration and urban social work: Towards a research agenda. *European Journal of Social Work*, art.nr. 10.1080/13691457.2014.1001725.

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Schrooten, M. (2011). Internal migration and ethnic division: The case of Palmas, Brazil. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology, 22*(2), 203-219.

Chapter 2

Internal migration and ethnic division: the case of Palmas, Brazil

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Internal migration and ethnic division: the case of Palmas, Brazil

Abstract: Starting from the observation that Brazilian history has led to the development of a very distinct system of race relations, this paper focuses on the (re)creation of ethnic divisions in a new city, Palmas, the capital of the Brazilian state Tocantins. Because the city was only founded in 1990, internal migration has heavily influenced the composition of the city's population. The research shows that residential proximity and interaction between whites and non-whites is largely limited to the poor neighbourhoods of the city. Subtle racism continues to exist, deriving from a way of thinking that naturalises the racial hierarchy. The absence of clearly defined racial categories and the centrality of miscegenation to the Brazilian identity complicate the further dismantling of this racist culture.

Introduction

'You cannot force anyone to love the Indians, but we deserve at least a little bit of respect'. With these words, Javaé opens a two-day meeting on the 22nd and 23rd of March 2007 that will focus on the problems faced by the indigenous undergraduate students of the public university of Palmas, the capital of the Brazilian state Tocantins. Javaé is one of the thirty-two indigenous students studying at the university. He studies economics, a choice based on his dream to help his village with the skills he is learning. 'And this respect is sometimes hard to find', he continues. 'It is a good thing that we are having this meeting today, to see how we can change the current situation'.

In 2005, the *Universidade Federal de Tocantins* (Federal University of Tocantins, UFT) implemented quotas for indigenous students. Like other Brazilian universities, the UFT organises a *vestibular*, an entrance exam, in order to select its stu-

dents. Only the highest ranked candidates gain access to undergraduate courses. The main reason behind this system is that there are more students than vacancies in the universities. When the UFT implemented the system of racial quotas, the university decided to reserve five per cent of the available vacancies for indigenous students. After the entrance exam of 2005, sixteen indigenous students entered the university through this system of racial quotas. In 2006, another group of sixteen students was selected.[1]

The implementation of racial quotas has caused a controversy over public policies that benefit Afro-Brazilians and Indians. The debate on affirmative action goes hand in hand with a debate on national identity. Until recently, the idea of a racial democracy was the official ideology of the Brazilian government. Brazil believed it had constructed a nation free of public racial conflicts, and celebrated the interracial intimacy during slavery and the existence of fluid and ambiguous racial categories (Agier, 1995; Reichmann, 1999, pp. 1–7). Minorities in other countries also looked to Brazil as a beacon of hope. Additionally, several North American and European scholars have written about Brazil's racial 'solution' of miscegenation and social integration (Bastide, 1978; Hellwig, 1992, pp. 123–133).

The implementation of anti-racism measures like race-based affirmative action contradicts the idea that Brazil is a racial paradise. Several authors (among others, Guimarães, 2006b; Hasenbalg, & do Valle Silva, 1999; Telles, 2006; Twine, 1998; Venturi & Bokany, 2005) have shown, however, that the idea of the racial democracy is still reproduced in daily discourses and practices. At the same time, these authors documented the existence of pervasive, although regionally variable and informal, racial differences in Brazilian society.

This paper is based upon the outcome of ethnographic research on ethnicity and identity that took place from 2006 to 2007. The aim of the research was to

[1] Despite the implementation of a five per cent quota for indigenous students, not all of the preserved vacancies in the courses were filled in 2005 and 2006. Few indigenous students had applied for the entrance exam and not all the candidates had passed. Although a minimum number of vacancies are reserved for the indigenous students, they must also meet the prerequisite of a high score on the entrance exam. In 2010 there were 126 indigenous candidates for the different courses provided by the university, but only 48 available positions (Universidade Federal do Tocantins, 2010).

study the reproduction of Brazilian race relations in Palmas, a new, fast-growing frontier city. The research raised questions related to the possibility that the creation of a 'planned city' such as Palmas would not reproduce the race relations that characterise the rest of the country. This question is inherently interesting as an example of the interrelationship between social planning and urban development, since Palmas is a city that was built at the end of the twentieth century, a period in which the national government officially recognised the existence of racism in Brazil and started to implement measures to combat racial discrimination.

The results of this research will be presented in the second section of this paper. This section will sketch the contours of race relations in the city of Palmas, showing how relations between Afro-Brazilians, white Brazilians and Indians have been established, discursively and structurally, and how they are being reinforced. But first, I provide a general outline of early international migration to Brazil and the consequences this has for the relations between the different populations involved.

Race and ethnicity in Brazil

> We are mixed, you know. The Portuguese came to our country, and they were white, and after them came the *negros*, who are black. Then there was this fondness of the whites for the *negros* and they mixed. My father told me that some of the *senhores* slept with the domestic servants, who were slaves. And they had mixed children. These are very beautiful stories, don't you think? We are all mixed, it's our culture. We don't worry too much about colour.[2]

Throughout history, human populations have constantly constructed their cultures in interaction with one another, crossing and levelling out borders. Largely due to these processes of interaction, most contemporary societies are characterised by

[2] Paulo, 19-04-2007

ethnic diversity. At the same time, however, significant levels of segregation along ethnic lines can often be found in these same societies. This is the case in Brazil. Present-day migration, which is typified by a complex pattern of intercontinental migration flows, is adding up to the ethnic diversity that was produced by early international migration from Europe and Africa (Durand, 2009; Lesser, 2005). During the course of history, Brazil has dealt with the ethnic diversity of its population in a unique way. State interventions into racial boundaries have been very different from those of the United States or South Africa, whose racial systems are often opposed to that of Brazil.

The Portuguese first landed in Brazil in 1500. In response to the intensive labour demands of the sugar cane industry that they subsequently established, the colonisers started to enslave the indigenous population on a large scale. Later, in response to the decimation of the indigenous population, the Portuguese looked for an alternative labour supply in Africa, which brought some 3.6 million Africans to the country (Scheper-Hughes, 1992; Wolf, 1997). Slavery was only officially abolished in 1888, making Brazil the last country in the western hemisphere to legally put an end to this system.

Even during the period of slavery, the Brazilian answer to the ethnic variety of its population was very different from that of other countries, and it set the stage for the development of a distinct racial system after its abolition. In Brazilian society, a tradition of race mixture was established during slavery. Although often highly unequal, relationships and intermarriage between white colonisers and black women were common, due to the much greater predominance of men over women among the colonisers (Degler, 1986; de la Fuente, 2010; de Senna, 1938; Nabuco, 2000; Paixão, & Gomes, 2008; Tannenbaum, 1992). This common acceptance of miscegenation was totally different to what happened in other countries, where a strict boundary was maintained between the colonisers and the colonised.

Miscegenation continued to be promoted by the Brazilian government after slavery was officially abolished in the late nineteenth century. At that time, it was seen as part of a project to whiten the population and to diminish the influence of

non-whites. The idea that miscegenation would eventually eliminate the black population was introduced by the scientific discipline of eugenics, which aimed to improve the human species by studying the practice of selective breeding and applying it to humans. Eugenics defined blacks and mulattos as inferior to whites and held that white genes were dominant over non-white genes (Seyferth, 1985, 1997; Skidmore, 1993, 2010; Telles, 2006).

These ideas were expressed in the writings of Cornelius de Pauw (1739-1799), a Dutch philosopher and geographer who was considered an expert on the Americas. In his book *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains, ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l'histoire de l'espèce humaine* (Philosophical research on the Americans, an interesting treatise to further the history of human species) (1770), de Pauw demonstrated that the process of racial mixture and hybridization would not last. He showed how, after five generations, the dominant race completely recovered its purity, making hybridisation a temporary condition (Audinet, 2004).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a radically different perspective on miscegenation was introduced. Largely due to Gilberto Freyre's book *The Masters and the Slaves / Casa Grande e Senzala*, published in 1933, a different view of the black and indigenous population was launched. According to Freyre, Brazilian society was a haven of racial reconciliation and affinity, a society that had known a much more benign slave system than other slave societies (Freyre, 2005). He transformed the concept of miscegenation into a positive national characteristic and celebrated Brazilian miscegenation as a harmonic fusion that created the true Brazilian and led to an equal valuation of all races. Freyre stated that African and indigenous blood gave Brazilian hybridity its resilience (Skidmore, 1974, pp. 201–203). Following Freyre's discourse, the Brazilian government began to promote a self-image of a racial democracy that was based on miscegenation, African culture and an aversion to racism.

In his writings Freyre refers to the symbolic model of the 'fable of the three races' that was defined by the Brazilian Historical and Geographic Institute, and inspired by Carl Friedrich Philip von Martius (1764-1868). It involves the idea that all

Brazilians descend from three racial groups, namely white Europeans, black Africans and the native American Indians. During the course of history, these three groups would have mixed, giving rise to a unique Brazilian population, predestined by Divine Providence to be a harmonious integration of races (Bailey, 2004, p. 729; Da Matta, 1990; Valente, 2001).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, this perspective of *mestizaje* was embraced by other Latin-American countries as well. It was expressed, for example, in the concept of *la raza cósmica* (the cosmic race), which was introduced by the Mexican philosopher and politician José Vasconselos for the *mestizo* population, and in the Venezuelan *café con leche* of poet and politician Andrés Eloy Blanco (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 77; Audinet, 2004; de la Fuente, 2010; Pansters, 2005; Wimmer, 2002, pp. 138–140). The citation at the beginning of this section illustrates that today, more than seventy years after the publication of Freyre's book, the idea of *mestizaje* still influences popular discourse. However, instead of talking about the 'three races', the Indians are no longer explicitly referred to.

Racial democracy was thus the official ideology of the Brazilian government until the end of the military dictatorship in 1985. In the post-World War II period, however, social scientists and ethnic movements demonstrated that racial democracy was a myth. In the late 1950s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored a number of studies on racial dynamics in Brazil. While these studies were originally conducted in an effort to better understand how Brazil had succeeded in creating a society free of racial hostility, social scientists, led by Florestan Fernandes, exposed the colour-based stratification of Brazilian society and questioned the idea that Brazil was a racial paradise (Azevedo, 1966; Bastide, & Fernandes, 1959; Cardoso, 1962; Fernandes, 1978; Harris, 1964; Ianni, 1972; Wagley, 1952).[3] Inspired by them, a new generation of scientists arose who claimed that racism was pervasive throughout Brazilian society. While the earlier generation of scholars had placed emphasis on racial mixture, these scholars accentuated exclusion.

[3] On the UNESCO studies, see Marcos Chor Maio, "UNESCO and the Study of Race Relations in Brazil: Regional or National Issue?" Latin American Research Review 36 (2001): 118–136; Peter Wade, (1997). Race *and Ethnicity in Latin America* London, pp. 51–57.

Social scientists have played a central role in shaping the scholarly, popular and governmental view of the country's racial dynamics. In the mid-1990s, in the context of Brazilian democratisation in general, the Brazilian state began to recognise the existence of racism and started to implement anti-racism measures such as race-based affirmative action (Bernardino, 2002; Brandão, 2005; Burdick, 1998b; Caldwell, 2007; Htun, 2004).

Nonetheless, the existence of racial intolerance in Brazil is still demonstrated by several contemporary authors, who have conducted a series of studies about the way in which racial inequality pervades several dimensions of Brazilian life (among others, Guimarães, 2006a; Hasenbalg, & do Valle Silva, 1999; Twine, 1998; Venturi & Bokany, 2005). They claim that the distribution of wealth in Brazil, which is among the most unequal in the world, is largely divided along racial lines. Non-whites tend to occupy the lowest social positions. The existence of an informal discriminatory glass ceiling, which obstructs blacks and browns in their aspirations for upward social mobility, reinforces the existing imbalance. In addition, the few blacks and browns who do succeed in entering the middle class experience a persistent racism, which demonstrates that racism exists independently of class.

As a response to the findings of these authors, Telles (2006, p. 5) warns that 'rejecting the ideology hypothesis does not require us to accept the counterideology ... Like the race-mixture ideology, that counterideology is dangerous to social analysis because it may also blind analysts to reality'. He proposes that we acknowledge the possibility of a coexistence of miscegenation and exclusion and introduces the concepts of 'vertical race relations' and 'horizontal race relations' to refer to dimensions of racial exclusion and inclusion respectively.

On the one hand, Telles agrees with his colleagues that non-whites are economically excluded in Brazil through very subtle acts of discrimination. Non-whites are accepted, their culture is even promoted, but only on the condition that they remain inferior. Thus, in Brazilian society, a racist culture is present, maintained by widely shared informal rules about social interaction and the appropriate place for members of each racial category (Telles, 2006; Twine, 1998).

On the other hand, Telles (2006) urges us to recognise that racial inclusion also exists in Brazilian society. For example, the concept of miscegenation continues to be fundamental for understanding ethnic and race relations in Brazil. Ambiguity has always been and continues to be preferred over clear definitions. The way blackness is understood in Brazil is illustrative of this phenomenon. In Brazil, the notion of racial classification may change depending on the situation, region or the classifier (Kottak, 2006, pp. 298–300). This is in contrast to the 'hypo descent' (Harris, 1964) or 'one-drop' (Davis, 2002) rule of the United States which automatically places children of parents with a different skin colour in the minority group.

This absence of clearly defined racial categories and the centrality of miscegenation to Brazilian identity illustrate that Brazilian race relations are not merely exclusive. Racial socio-economic inequality coexists with sociable interracial contacts, substantial intermarriage and residential proximity between non-whites and whites. Data reveas that horizontal relations are less tense and comparatively mild in comparison with other countries (Telles 2006). In the following sections I will focus on the (re)creation of these existing national ethnic and racial divisions in Palmas. Before elaborating further on the establishment of racial relations in Palmas, I first situate the research site, Palmas, within the Brazilian state and give a brief history of the city's establishment.

Palmas, the research location

> In recent urban history, Palmas, the last Brazilian planned city of the twentieth century, emerged as a new city amid the landscape of savannah. It is situated in the heart of Brazil, where development and hope are spreading, where cities are growing and spreading an image of progression.[4]

As I mentioned earlier in this article, the year 1500 marked the start of large-scale international migration to Brazil. Historically, the countries of Latin America and the

[4] Igor, 13-02-2007

Caribbean were receiving countries, being the migration destination for about twenty million people from all over the world (Durand, 2009). Starting in the fifties, a radical change took place. The flow of immigrants almost dried up and gradually the migration patterns reversed. By the end of the twentieth century Latin America, including Brazil, had turned into a place of emigration (Durand, 2009; Pellegrino, 2004). Internal migration, from rural to urban, to capitals and metropolises, and between countries in the region took on great proportions as well, when compared to international emigration to the United States, Canada, Europe and other parts of the world.

Comparing internal migration propensities and trends across fifteen countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the 1999 United Nations World Monitoring Report concluded that the propensity to migrate was higher in Latin America and the Caribbean than in Asia (United Nations, 2000, p. 57). Brazil is no exception. Bell and Muhidin (2009) found that the country has high internal movement intensity between municipalities, with about ten per cent of the population, more than fifteen million people, moving over the previous five years. Lifetime migration intensity is even consistently higher, with about two-fifths of Brazilians living outside their municipality of birth.

Palmas, capital of the state of Tocantins, is an example of a city where internal migration has heavily influenced the composition of the population. Established after the promulgation of the new 1988 Brazilian Constitution, Tocantins is the youngest of the twenty-six Brazilian states. By dividing the state of Goiás into Goiás and Tocantins, the government intended to help populate the northern area of the state. While it is geographically located in the centre of the country, Tocantins is officially part of the Northern region of the country.[5] The construction of Palmas began on the 20 May 1989. On 1 January 1990 the city was officially inaugurated as the capital of Tocantins.

[5] The Brazilian government has grouped the country's states into five regions, large geographic and statistical units that are each composed of states with similar economical, social and historical backgrounds: North *(Norte),* Northeast *(Nordeste)*, Central-West *(Centro-Oeste)*, Southeast *(Sudeste)*, and South *(Sul)*. The Northern region is constituted by the states Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima and Tocantins.

The city of Palmas is characterised by its high level of planning and organisation. Its urban zoning is modelled on the *Plano Piloto* of Brasília, the Brazilian capital. The city consists of large neighbourhoods, which are separated by major intersecting roads. The different neighbourhoods each have the character of a small village, with their own shops, churches, schools and houses (Schrooten, 2008). Because of its recent creation, Palmas' population consists entirely of migrants. The city is a destination for people from almost all Brazilian states. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*, IBGE), Palmas is the fastest growing city in Brazil, with a population increase of 213.68 per cent between 1996 and 2008. In 2008 the city numbered some 184,010 inhabitants.

The development of the city immediately led to the spatial segregation of different socio-economic groups. According to an employee of the Secretariat of Urban Development, this economic segregation in the city is the result of economic forces, rather than being planned by the government.[6] As a reaction to the centralisation of the middle class and peripheralisation of the poor that has roughly characterised the structure of Latin American cities (Telles, 2006, p. 200), the policy of the government of Tocantins aimed at a controlled expansion of the city of Palmas. The neighbourhoods would be constructed gradually. Social integration was a key value, and the infrastructure was to be spread equally throughout the city.

However, as in Brasília and other metropolitan cities in Brazil, the poor have migrated from the centre of Palmas to squatter settlements at its outskirts, due to a lack of affordable accommodation. As a result, the periphery is mostly populated by the lower class, while middle and upper-class residents mainly live in the city centre. The inhabitants of Palmas even speak of two cities: one city for the rich (the centre) and another for the poor (the periphery), or *'uma cidade de luxo, outra cidade de lixo'*, 'one city full of luxury, another full of trash'. The two 'cities' are separated by uncultivated areas, which enforces the idea of a divisive border.

[6] Igor, 13-02-2007

The current government has made the reduction of the segregation in the city a priority, for instance, by trying to physically connect the periphery with the centre.

Palmas' racial democracy

One day in April 2007, I was invited by Paulo to talk about my research. Paulo is a Catholic priest from the state Ceará who had moved to Palmas after his ordination in 2000. Someone had told him that I was conducting research on racism, and this really troubled him. During our conversation, he tried to convince me that the inhabitants of Palmas had cordial relations, regardless of their skin colour. He told me some anecdotes to support his claim:

> Last week, I was invited to the birthday party of the mayor of a village nearby. It was amazing. The party took place at a beautiful location nearby his house. Three thousand people were invited. If you want to do research on racism, you better go elsewhere. It doesn't exist over here. On this party rich and poor, black and white were having a wonderful time. And no one was feeling discriminated against.[7]

When I talked to people in Palmas about my research interest, many of them admonished me by saying that all Brazilians share an African heritage and, thus, had some 'black blood' in their veins. Although nearly everyone recognised that racial prejudices and racial discrimination existed in Brazil, hardly anyone admitted to being prejudiced him/herself. As Florestan Fernandes (1972, pp. 23–26) states, the Brazilian '*tem preconceito de não ter preconceito'* [is prejudiced that he doesn't have any prejudices]. The subtitle of the report of a national survey conducted in 1995, '*Brasileiro não assume racismo que afirma existir'* [Brazilians deny the racism that they know exists], clearly captures this simultaneous denying and affirming of racial discrimination (Datafolha, 1995, p. 2; Reichmann, 1999, pp. 2–7).

[7] Paulo, 19-04-2007

Some people were even confident that racial discrimination didn't exist in Palmas. They told me that in their neighbourhoods whites lived side by side with blacks, Indians and mulattos. During my research, I also found residential proximity to be quite common in some neighbourhoods in Palmas. This residential proximity allows relatively high levels of interracial interaction, including interracial friendship and intermarriage (Kamel, 2006, pp. 21–22; Telles, 2006, pp. 173–214). The inhabitants of Palmas often expressed the view that interracial contacts were very cordial. The concept of cordiality, of the '*homem cordial'* [the cordial man] was originally coined by the popular historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda in his classical analysis of Brazilian society *Raízes do Brasil* (1937). In the 2002 edition, Holanda (2002, p. 146) defined the term with greater precision:

> [A] contribuição brasileira para a civilização será a cordialidade – daremos ao mundo o 'homem cordial'. A lhaneza no trato, a hospitalidade, a generosidade, virtudes tão gabadas por estrangeiros que nos visitam, representam, com efeito, um traço definido do caráter brasileiro.
>
> [The Brazilian contribution to civilization will be cordiality – we will give to the world the 'cordial man'. Sincerity, hospitality and generosity, virtues so exalted by foreigners who visit us, represent in effect a defined trait of the Brazilian character.]

One of my informants even took the cordiality discourse to a more intimate level. One night, when we were having a drink, Henrique, the 25-year old womaniser of the neighbourhood, told me:

> Look, black and white are sitting here together in a bar. There is no problem at all! Besides, we live in the north. Over here, racism isn't as bad as in the south. This region is a "hot region". Everybody has sex with everybody, colour

> doesn't matter. How can there be racism, if everyone sleeps with everyone?[8]

According to Rebhun (1999), this discourse is often used by Brazilians living in the northeast. They express love in terms of temperature. According to this argument, there is more sensuality amongst people who live in a hot and humid climate, because these conditions encourage nudity and passion. Both Gilberto Freyre (2005) and Ali Kamel (2006) also see a link between sensuality and the absence of racism. They state that one fact, miscegenation, excludes the other, racism.

Several sources show that interracial marriage rates for Brazil are far higher than those for the United States or South Africa (Kamel, 2006, pp. 21–22; Sue, 2009, p. 1063; Telles, 2006, pp. 173–193). While it is common to see Brazilians of all colours associate among themselves without apparent regard to race, there is relatively little interracial marriage among the middle class, who are mainly residents of the Palmas city centre. Because whites live in the various neighbourhoods of the city, depending on their class, while the large majority of non-whites live in the poorer periphery, the extent to which they are likely to come into contact with each other differs by residence, and thus, by class, which in turn may affect intermarriage. As a result, intermarriage is most prevalent among poor whites. But, as Telles (2006, p. 192) argues: 'Although race continues to be a significant variable in determining partner choice, the very real possibility of such marriages in Brazil suggests that, in comparative terms, Brazil's miscegenation is real and indicates relatively widespread interracial sociability'.

The presence of significant residential proximity and intermarriage in Palmas demonstrates that social interactions are comparatively benign and that interracial sociability, captured by Telles' concept of 'horizontal relations', is less tensioned in relation to other countries. There are, however, several clarifications that should be made for understanding the residential proximity and intermarriage in Palmas.

[8] Henrique, 27-04-2007

First, regional differences are fundamental to understanding Brazilian society. Despite the socio-economic status of the country as a whole (as one of the BRIC-countries) and the rise of Brazil's Human Development Index (HDI) to 0,813 in 2007, the country is still ranked among the top ten most unequal countries in the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). The Brazilian Atlas of Human Development, which disaggregates the HDI by state and municipality, demonstrates that the Southern part of the country is characterised by a high development index, while the Northeast and North regions have significant low scores for all HDI indicators vis-à-vis the entire country (United Nations, 2006a). It is striking that non-whites are a numerical minority in the seven southernmost states, the majority tending to reside in the less developed regions of Brazil.

Palmas is no exception to these regional tendencies. As I said earlier, Palmas is officially located in the Northern region of Brazil. IBGE statistics show that 62 per cent of the inhabitants of Palmas define themselves as black or brown. The city of Palmas also attracts numerous Indians, who are emigrating from the many Indian parks in the region. Whites are a numerical minority. It is thus not surprising that intermarriage and residential proximity are prevalent in this city.

Second, intermarriage and spatial proximity between whites and non-whites are largely limited to the poor neighbourhoods in Palmas. The white residents of the centre explicitly express their desire to minimise their contacts with non-whites. Although they assured me that they weren't racist, many middle-class whites expressed a strong dislike of the non-white residents of the periphery. When I told Josué, a 40-year-old architect from São Paulo, that I was residing with a family in the peripheries, he warned me:

> Mieke, you better be careful! None of us wants to live over there. Do you even feel save in that neighbourhood? You really should be careful with these people. They are not only very lazy, but dangerous too. You said that there was an Indian living in that house as well, didn't you? I wouldn't stay there if I were you. I know someone who has tried to help the Indians. He has

had several projects in the villages. But in the end, they kidnapped him, and they locked him up for almost a week. He doesn't want to have anything to do with these Indians anymore. None of us does, actually. It is impossible to teach these Indians anything. What's more, they are very brutal as well, because of all the privileges they enjoy. You better stay away from them, as far as you can.

His wife Kaíca, who heard what we were talking about, agreed:

There are a lot of prejudices against the people living in the neighbourhood where you are staying now. But that has also to do with the fact that most of these people come from the north. And people from the north are lazy, that's their biggest problem. People from the centre who need an employee don't want any lazy workers. And so, they don't hire any blacks. White people, people from the south, they know how to work. So they belong to the middle class as well. Because the true problem is class, you know. But class also has a colour, which is caused by the laziness of the people from the north. It won't be easy to change that attitude.

The two 'cities' within Palmas are thus not only spatially segregated. The border between the centre and the periphery also has a social dimension. While professional relationships may cross from periphery to centre, social contacts are mostly restricted to the district of residence. This spatial and social segregation is accompanied by the use of stereotypes. Many residents of the centre attribute a label of badly educated people to the residents of the periphery. Although most of them have never visited the periphery, they associate it with poverty, insecurity, violence and alcohol abuse. These stereotypes lead to several discriminatory practices such as teasing children coming from these neighbourhoods or discriminating against job candidates. Maria, a single mother with four children, living in the periphery, illustrates:

> My oldest son came to talk to me yesterday. He will soon be fifteen years old and he realises that he will have to start looking for a job to support our family. I told him that, no matter what, I want him to look for a job in our neighbourhood. I won't let him go and work in the centre. If they'll know that he comes from down here, they will never hire him. Or they'll say all kinds of terrible things to him. I won't let my son go through all that.[9]

Josué's, Kaíca's and Maria's comments show that in daily life colour-based distinctions are omnipresent. The next section will demonstrate how these divisions continue to divide the population of Palmas.

Racial divisions in Palmas

When the inhabitants of Palmas talk about discrimination in the city, they focus on discrimination based upon the neighbourhood one lives in and on class rather than on ethnicity and skin colour. The discourse that class, rather than racial discrimination, reproduces racial inequality is often used to defend the idea of a non-racist city. According to this discourse, the lower starting position of non-whites with regards to human capital is the main reason for their unequal position in comparison with whites. In this context, the idea that 'money whitens' is often expressed. A black person who becomes rich would not be confronted with racism anymore. Nevertheless, several authors (among others Guimarães, 2006a; Hasenbalg, & do Valle Silva, 1999; Telles, 2006; Twine, 1998; Venturi & Bokany, 2005) have shown the existence of racial discrimination beyond other inequalities such as class.

In Brazil, racial discrimination has been illegal since the inauguration of the republican regime in 1890 (Fry, 2000, p. 86). In 1989 law *Lei no. 7.716* was signed, which criminalized racism (Burdick, 1998b, p. 136; Htun, 2004, p. 66; Twine, 1998, pp. 3–4). None of the Afro-Brazilians or Indians I interviewed told me they had been the

[9] Maria, 20-03-2007

victim of any formal violation of this anti-racist law. Instead, the absence of state-sanctioned racism in Brazil and, more specifically, in Palmas, was emphasised. People's 'front stage behaviour' (Goffman, 1987) is rarely explicitly racist. Nevertheless, as I showed earlier, there is a big difference between the opinions people expressed when I was interviewing them and their day-to-day practices and discourses.

In Palmas, the large majority of discriminatory practices, attitudes and prejudices is quite hidden or silent and thus generally not recognised as discriminatory. This is a general tendency in the rest of Brazil as well. The subtle racist practises derive from a way of thinking that naturalises the racial hierarchy. In this context, Anthony Giddens' (1984) distinction between practical consciousness and discursive consciousness is very insightful. Giddens (1984, p. 375) defines practical consciousness as: 'What people know (believe) about social conditions, including especially the conditions of their own action, but cannot express discursively; no bar of repression, however, protects practical consciousness as is the case with the unconscious'. In other words, the practical consciousness consists of 'the stock of knowledge that one implicitly uses to act in situations and to interpret the actions of others. It is this knowledgeability that is constantly used, but rarely articulated, to interpret events – one's own and those of others' (Turner, 1991, p. 531).

Nevertheless, when people don't reflect upon their daily actions and thoughts, it quite often happens that people speak or act in a racist way. Because this stems from unconscious mental schemes, people are not aware of it. That is why their behaviour doesn't always correspond to the opinions they consciously articulate, the discursive consciousness. Giddens (1984, p. 274) defines this concept: 'What actors are able to say, or to give verbal expression to, about social conditions, including especially the conditions of their own action; awareness which has a discursive form'. Because the discursive consciousness appeals to the reflexive level, people rationalise their own behaviour.

An example of an unconscious mental scheme that naturalises the racial hierarchy is the idealisation and appreciation of everything that is associated with white aesthetics. As in many other countries, there is a widely held sense in Brazil

that the favoured positions of the whites in society are a natural fact and that subordinate positions are the proper place for browns and blacks. Even people who define themselves as black are influenced by the thought that white is better than black. Many of my informants who self-identified as black or brown entrusted me with the information that they hoped their children would marry a lighter-skinned partner. They saw intermarriage as a way to improve their status.

An example of this can be taken from the following occurrence. During an earlier stay in Palmas in 2004, I had met a European girl who had a relationship with an Afro-Brazilian. Soon after my return to Palmas in 2006, the mother of this Brazilian young man invited me over for a barbeque. She told me that she was very proud that her son had a European – white – girlfriend: 'Their children are going to be so beautiful! The *padre* has told me already. Their children will be *negrinhos branquinos*. They will be less black than Leandro [her son]. And the girls will have beautiful hair. Luckily, they won't have my fuzzy hair!'

The negative associations with non-whiteness were even more explicitly pronounced by Rita, a 43-year-old black woman who works at the town hall. We were talking about appearances when she told me:

> If everything what is white is beautiful, and everything what is black is ugly, you have to change your appearance to be beautiful. What does a teenage girl have to do when a boy doesn't want to date her because she has ugly hair? The first thing people do, is to straighten their hair. That's the most important, your hair. The black woman, she straightens and she dyes her hair. Something else – nobody really talks about it, because it's expensive – is plastic surgery. I've had my nose done as well, they've taken away half of it. It was ugly, you could almost put your hand in my nose. Taking away a big part of it has made things a lot better.[10]

[10] Rita, 24-02-2007

Next to the white ideal, informal but widely shared rules about social interaction and the appropriate place for members of each racial category are responsible for the maintenance of a racist culture. These stereotypes can sometimes function as self-fulfilling prophecies. By systematically spreading a negative image of a dominated group, the dominant group can make the dominated believe in this image as well (Eriksen, 2002). In addition, discrimination and stereotyping can lead to the diminution of the aspirations of black people, who subsequently submit themselves to a culturally stipulated norm for non-whites. Similar processes take place in Palmas. Rita explains:

> I've heard mothers telling their daughters: "My baby, this boy isn't your type. Look, he's white; you have to know your place". And what's a black girl's place? In the kitchen and doing the laundry. People are ashamed to be black and if they are being discriminated against, the mother says: "Know your place". Their place is at the background![11]

This racist culture is reinforced, naturalised and legitimated through different mediums (Telles, 2006). I want to emphasise especially that racial humour and racist jokes are a way of transmitting racist stereotypes (Goldstein, 2003). Humour is an important part of Brazilian culture. Twine (1998) shows how racist jokes, which are a part of this culture, constantly reproduce the advocated white superiority and the black and Indian inferiority. She emphasises that '[p]assive responses to these routine racist practices fail to effectively challenge either the racist content of this joke or the practice of engaging in jokes that reflect and circulate racist ideologies' (Twine, 1998, p. 137). Krahô, an Indian student at the University of Palmas, describes an incident that illustrates the nature of racist jokes:

> Thanks to the system of the quotas, I can study at the university. One professor once asked me when I entered the classroom: "What are you doing

[11] Rita, 24-02-2007

here? Aren't you supposed to be with the rest of your tribe?" Everybody was laughing, but I felt terrible.

'Sometimes it's better to close your eyes rather than offending someone', he replied when I asked him how he responded to this situation. 'It is of no use anyway. If you say something about it, they always reply like "that's not what I meant", or "it was just a joke, you have a bad sense of humour."'[12]

Conclusion

While globalisation is a reality that is merging economies and cultures through world trade, new forms of mass media and ever more mobile populations, internal divisions continue to divide populations throughout the world. Early migratory movements towards Brazil have led to an ethnically diverse population. While other countries stress the differences and the distance between the different populations involved, Brazilian official discourse has promoted miscegenation and the disappearance of rigid distinctions between whites and non-whites. Originally, the purpose of this policy was to whiten the Brazilian population. Later, influenced by the work of Gilberto Freyre, the practice of miscegenation itself became the key characteristic by which the Brazilian state defined its population.

In Palmas, which has a population consisting entirely of recent migrants coming from all over Brazil, social divisions are, however, often based upon skin colour. Although ethnic segregation is not as rigid as in other countries, with whites and non-whites living side by side in poorer areas, the richer centre of the city is largely inhabited by white residents. This distinction is remarkable, given the large majority of blacks, *mulatos* and Indians in the city.

Living in the periphery influences various aspects of the lives of its inhabitants, like social contacts and professional possibilities. Still, this duality is often not perceived as a form of racism. The absence of extreme segregation and the impor-

[12] Krahô, 02-05-2007

tance of class-based mechanisms for reproducing racial inequality have made racial discrimination more hidden and indirect in Palmas. Like Brazilian racism in general, racial and ethnic discrimination take place largely through social 'rules' about the appropriate place for whites and non-whites.

The relatively warm interracial relationships on the interpersonal level go hand in hand with processes of racial exclusion at the socio-economic level. In Palmas, I found the same omnipresence of changing colour-based boundaries as in the rest of Brazil. Everything that is associated with white aesthetics is idealised and appreciated. Non-whites are accepted, their culture is even promoted, but only on the condition that they remain inferior. The absence of clearly defined racial categories as in the United States and the centrality of miscegenation to the Brazilian identity complicate the further dismantling of the existing subtle racist practices and discourses in the country.

In Brazil, non-whites are simultaneously included and excluded. While explicit racial discrimination is hardly visible in Brazilian society, racial 'tolerance' and interracial interaction seldom lead to strong interracial ties or non-white upward economic mobility. Palmas is no different in this matter from other Brazilian cities. Although the government has consciously tried to promote social integration, the internal migration towards Palmas has not changed the existing patterns of ethnic divisions that are observable in the rest of the country. Rather than being purposefully erased, boundaries between ethnicities appear to be as strong as in the rest of the country.

Chapter 3

Moving ethnography online: researching Brazilian migrants' online togetherness

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Moving ethnography online: researching Brazilian migrants' online togetherness

Abstract: This article contributes to recent scholarship on the changing nature of fieldwork practices within migration research, focusing on the practice of online ethnography. It makes a case for the significance of the Internet and, more specifically, social network sites, in the experience of many migrants. I state that online togetherness is an integral part of the lives of many migrants which also interrelates with 'offline' aspects of their social lives. Therefore, I argue that current research on migration would benefit from a more balanced combination of offline and online ethnography, taking into account how online connectivity affects the nature of migration and the conditions of being a migrant. Methodologically, I suggest that ethnography is well suited for generating understandings of the significance of the Internet in the experience of migrants, but that a number of adjustments in methods of data collection and analysis must be made.

Keywords: Migration studies; transnationality; online ethnography; social network sites; online togetherness; Brazilian migrants

Introduction

Throughout history, human populations have constantly lived in interaction with one another, crossing and levelling out territorial borders. Today, global relationships between people, capital, commodities and ideologies have even intensified, leading to a globalised world that is typified by a 'proliferation of cross-border flows and transnational networks' (Castles, 2002, p. 1143). A strong illustration of this transnational reality is the growing number of international migrations. In the year

2005, there were 191 million people living outside their countries of birth, more than ever before in history (United Nations, 2006b). By 2007, estimates approached 200 million or approximately 3 per cent of the world's population, marking what former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan described as a 'new era of mobility' (Adey, 2010, p. 1).

The current 'age of migration' (Castles, & Miller, 2009) is urging social scientists to rethink the study of migration. The classic migratory picture that conceptualised migration as a (temporary) sharp break from the home community is no longer tenable. Rapid technological development, worldwide trade and a revolution in communication are increasingly interconnecting individuals and places, giving a new impetus to human mobility (Audebert, & Doraï, 2010; Bauman, 2000; Castles, & Miller, 2009; Urry, 2007).

In recent years, there have been a number of stimulating studies that have attempted to bridge the gap between theory and this globalised reality, resulting not only in a re-evaluation of a number of long-standing conventions and assumptions but also in a gradual transformation of classic research practices (Amit, 2004; Faubion, & Marcus, 2009; Gupta, & Ferguson, 1997; Marcus, 1995; Tsing, 2005). The subject of this article – the research of migrants' online togetherness – can be situated in one of the key transformations of this discipline, namely the shift away from 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer, & Glick Schiller, 2003) towards a theorising that is rooted in the concept of transnationality (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton-Blanc, 1995). Criticising the taken-for-granted equation of society with the nation state, contemporary scholars recognise that 'national organization as a structuring principle of societal and political action can no longer serve as the orienting reference point for the social scientific observer' (Beck, & Sznaider, 2006, p. 4).

Instead, the social sciences have been transformed by the emergence of a transnational paradigm, referring to processes whereby people structurally operate in social fields that transgress national borders (Faist, 2000; Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1992). Migrants very often participate in social networks that are stretched across multiple locations. For example, many sustain family relations or support across national borders (Parreñas, 2001), contribute to socio-economic

development in their homeland and/or their country of residence (Brinkerhoff, 2009), participate actively in communities that span the globe (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton-Blanc, 1995) or enact their political engagement in multiple states (Smith, 2007).

This focus on transnational communities urged researchers to adapt their research strategies to the globalised world and to escape the established practice of using the national geographic level as the spatial unit of reference. The development of a transnational approach on migration was accompanied by the introduction of 'multi-sited fieldwork' (Marcus, 1995), a new form of data collection that allowed researchers to investigate transnational units of reference. Differing from a mere comparative study of localities, the 'multi-sited fieldworker' quite literally follows people and their connections and relationships across space (Falzon, 2009; Hannerz, 2003; Marcus, 1995, p. 97).

In this article, I demonstrate that the 'methodological transnationalism' that results from a multi-sited approach also generates 'new' research locations that are important for social scientists to take into account. The shift from the study of the 'uprooted migrant' to that of transnational and fragmented networks involves more than a simple multiplication of the physical locations at which social scientists should conduct research, but also involves researching new types of data and research sites. The focus of this article is on one specific 'new' fieldwork site, namely the Internet, and, methodologically, on the application of online ethnography to migration research.

In what follows, I seek to expand the discussion of Internet use among transnational migrants by exploring the example of Brazilian migrants' online togetherness on the social network site 'Orkut', which is enormously popular among Brazilians, both among those residing within Brazil as well as among Brazilian migrants. I argue that migration researchers should adapt their fieldwork locations and research methods to the environment in which today's interconnected migrants live.

Migrants' move online: transnational social networks

On February 5, 2011, the *New York Times* published an article titled 'Movement began with outrage and a Facebook page that gave it an outlet'. The article focuses on the revolts that have sprouted in Egypt and Tunisia and shows how Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and cell phones have offered a way for the discontented population to organize and mobilize and to spread the word about the demonstrations against the regime (Preston, 2011). The digital public sphere was not only useful for the Egyptians and Tunesians to spread information within an oppressive regime, but also allowed them to build support in the transnational community. As Benhabib noted: 'What we have witnessed is truly revolutionary, in the sense that a new order of freedom – a *novo ordo saeclorum* – is emerging *transnationally* in the Arab world' (2011, emphasis in original).

The cases of Egypt and Tunisia are illustrative for the fact that more and more people are increasingly engaged in what have come to be called 'transnational social fields' (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1992). Advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the rapid evolvement of applications for using and accessing these technologies have strongly contributed to the creating and maintaining of these transnational fields, enabling ideas, information and social networks to flow quickly through and across geographical and political borders (Wilding, 2009). Various communication modes, such as mobile telephony and SMS texting, the Internet and email, as well as digital broadcast have become increasingly and undeniably central for global communication, thus affecting the lives of migrants as well as non-migrants. At the same time, it is clear that, despite the fact that global access to these technological advances is continuing to grow, certain groups are under-represented online and that some individuals are more readily able to access ICTs than others (Mann, & Stewart, 2000; Murthy, 2008).

The impact of new technologies on the everyday lives of people has received considerable attention among scholars in many disciplines, including anthropology, communications, sociology, linguistics and interdisciplinary fields such

as marketing and consumer research. Already in 1994, when research on these issues was still in its infancy, Arturo Escobar suggested that researchers should pay more attention to how the integration of new technologies into daily life modified and negotiated the social construction of reality (Escobar, 1994). Addressing Escobar's challenge, several studies have since been launched on this issue.[1]

In 1999, Lyman and Wakeford noted that 'the study of digital and networked technologies is one of the fastest growing fields of research in the social sciences' (1999, p. 359). Today, this statement is even more true than it was more than a decade ago. As Consalvo and Ess noticed: 'What began as a scattered series of first efforts to come to grips with the Internet has now matured into a body of literature that represents not only a wide range of extensive and increasingly fine-grained findings and discoveries – but also an increasingly sophisticated set of theoretical regarding appropriate methods and research ethics' (2011, p. 2).

After an initial surge of excitement as to the boundless possibilities for the creation of online identities, the discussion in the literature has moved to more nuanced accounts of the meanings of the Internet. Early studies of the Internet tended towards a technological determinism perspective, suggesting that the Internet provided a poor foundation for cultural and social activity. Moreover, initial research often radically distinguished between online and offline worlds, and between real-world and virtual communities (Boyd, & Ellison, 2007). More recently, many scholars have moved beyond the assumptions and frameworks that guided much early research and have, for example, demonstrated the complex interactions between online and offline. The recent revolts in Tunisia and Egypt have provided another example of the multiple ways in which the Internet is intimately interwoven with people's offline lives. Furthermore, the scientific debate focuses more and more on the ways in which individuals make use of the technology, rather than investigating the technology itself.

During the past decade, the field of Internet studies has seen an explosion in scholarly interest (Wellman, 2011). In this article, I argue that research on migration

[1] For example: Bakardjieva, 2007; Diminescu, & Pasquier, 2010; Hine, 2000; Landzelius, 2006; Mann, & Stewart, 2000

would also benefit from a more explicit focus on the way this online connectivity affects the nature of migration and the conditions of being a migrant. The rise of ICTs has strongly changed the world of many migrants. As the example of the social network site Orkut will demonstrate, we are no longer in the age of the uprooted migrant, but have instead entered the age of the 'connected migrant', who is both internationally and digitally mobile (Diminescu, & Pasquier, 2010; Kissau, & Hunger, 2010). On a large scale, migrant communities are experiencing new forms of connectedness through acting in and occupying digital territories.

There are many existing studies of migrants' use of the Internet, looking among others into the use of the Internet by migrants for civic engagement (Kim, & Ball-Rokeach, 2009), enabling freedom of self-representation (Landzelius, 2006), putting themselves on the global stage (Miller, & Slater, 2000), maintaining their affiliation with the local community in which they grew up (Komito, 2011), and having an impact on international affairs (Brinkerhoff, 2009). Despite this growing body of literature, it would be too strong to state that the ethnographic practice of following social groups online has been established within migration research (Kozinets, 2010, pp. 1–3; Murthy, 2008, p. 838). Studies of migration are often still exclusively situated in the 'offline' social world.

Theoretical contributions and empirical research focusing on transnational communities have a tendency to neglect the influence of the increasing virtual mobility that marks the life of many contemporary migrants. There have even been a number of discussions about the appropriateness of the Internet as a field of study for migration research (Beaulieu, 2004, p. 142). But when one starts looking at how people enact transnationality on a daily basis, it becomes apparent that migrants' use of the new technologies is deeply embedded in their transnational lifestyle. Especially the way social network sites (SNS) (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Orkut) affect the nature of migration and the conditions of being a migrant needs more scientific attention. As the next section will show, online togetherness on Orkut is as important to many Brazilian migrants as their offline togetherness. Moreover, there are many similarities, connections and overlapping between both.

Brazilian migrants' online togetherness

The research presented here is part of a larger study on migration and transnationality among Brazilian immigrants in Belgium (2008–2013). The study makes use of a multi-sited research design. Besides geographical research sites at points of departure and points of arrival, the social network site 'Orkut' also became one of the central sites of the ethnographic fieldwork. Launched in January 2004, Orkut was named after Orkut Büyükkökten, the Google employee who developed the service. Although the site traces its roots to the United States, originally having an English-only interface, Portuguese-speaking Brazilians quickly 'invaded' the site and became the dominant user group (Boyd, & Ellison, 2007). Today, the social network site is one of the most widespread online communities in Brazil. According to Orkut's own data, 50.6% of the more than 100 million users worldwide come from Brazil, followed by India with 20.44% and the United States with 17.78%. Pakistan, fourth in rank, only has a share of 0.86% (Orkut, 2011).

During the research I studied Brazilians' online togetherness in the two largest Orkut communities that were referred to by Brazilian migrants in Belgium, namely *Brasileiros na Bélgica* (Brazilians in Belgium) and *Brasileiros em Bruxelas* (Brazilians in Brussels), as well as one smaller community, *Brasileiros em Leuven* (Brazilians in Leuven).[2] The largest community, *Brasileiros na Bélgica*, was created in 2004. At the time of the research, the community was already well established and was attracting many new members. In September 2010, already 4,369 people had joined this Orkut community. Currently, even more people have become member (4,822 in July 2011). The founder of this community, a Brazilian man who lived in Belgium,

[2] I use the term 'community' in this article because it is the name used on Orkut. Even so, defining people's social activities online as an 'online community' is not unproblematic, as these so-called 'communities' often have low barriers to entry and to exit, and members can easily ignore other members they don't like (Brinkerhoff, 2009), and as not all of people's online activities live up to the value-laden name of 'community' (Bakardjieva, 2007). Bakardjieva (2007) proposes instead to use the term 'virtual togetherness', as a collective noun for the many variations of people's social activities online. Although I agree with her view about the inappropriateness of the term 'community', I also argue that the term 'virtual' does not contribute to a better understanding of people's online activities, as it suggests a sharp distinction between the 'real' world and the 'virtual' world. In contrast to this view, I argue that the Internet and its many communication modes have become increasingly and undeniably central for its many users. Therefore, I propose to speak of 'online togetherness' rather than 'virtual togetherness'.

wanted to create a place where Brazilians who (had) lived in Belgium or were thinking about moving to Belgium could meet and exchange ideas and experiences. By the time of the research, the community founder had left Belgium and another Brazilian man had become the moderator of the community. Despite this change of moderator, the objectives of the community stayed the same.

In 2006, the community *Brasileiros em Bruxelas* became the second Orkut community that addressed Brazilian migrants in Belgium. Counting 1,077 members in September 2010 (1,164 in July 2011), it was also a popular community among Brazilian migrants. The explicit reference to Brussels – the region where most Brazilians in Belgium live – in the name of the community was an important reason for many of the members to join the community. Like the *Brasileiros na Bélgica* community, the founder of this community created the community for the exchange of ideas and experiences. In addition, he explicitly invited people to announce parties or other Brazilians events in order to allow people to meet offline.

The third community, *Brasileiros em Leuven*, was smaller than the other two. At the time of the fieldwork, 212 members joined this community (233 in July 2011). Unlike the other two Orkut communities, the *Brasileiros em Leuven* community resulted from an already existing offline group of Brazilians residing in the Belgian city of Leuven. In 2002, a group of Brazilians had founded a non-profit organization, that aimed among others to provide useful information to Brazilians living in Belgium. The founder of the community Brasileiros em Leuven originally used the online community to promote the activities of the offline organisation. At the time of the research, however, the number of activities of the non-profit organization was very low. Still, many members continued to use the Orkut community to be informed about events they could attain. But a lot of them also started to look for other information or help, trying to resolve some problems they encountered in Belgium.

For most Brazilian migrants I met, computer-mediated communication via Orkut was already embedded in their daily life practices before they migrated to Belgium. In Brazil, they mainly used the site to connect with friends and relatives. Also after migrating to Belgium, many found the Internet to be a valuable tool for

helping them in maintaining social, political and cultural connections to their home country. SNSs such as Orkut facilitate the maintenance of continuous personal (transnational) contacts through the blending of many interconnecting activities, such as email, diaries, photo albums, video and messaging. Orkut members can create personal profiles, keep these updated and network with familiar and new contacts through the scrapbook. Orkut also offers the opportunity to send private messages to other Orkut members and to chat with friends who are online.

All Orkut members can also create communities in which other Orkut members can participate. Within Orkut communities, members can create polls, vote on polls that interest them, or start a topic in the forum. This last application in particular is quite popular since it allows members to post upcoming events or discuss certain topics with one another over a period of time. In many cities all over the world with a significant number of Brazilian migrants, Orkut members have formed online migrant communities, creating opportunities for online togetherness. The functions of these communities vary from providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, to providing solidarity among Brazilian migrants, pursuing purposive objectives relate to their homeland identity, and helping them to become embedded in their place of residence.

In the Orkut communities I studied, I found that the key functions of these communities were different in each stage of the migration process. Also, the degree of users' involvement varied, ranging from consumption or lurking – a loose online togetherness – to a strong social life online – an intense online togetherness.[3] For those who are planning to migrate or who have recently migrated, the Orkut communities often play a significant role as bridges between Brazil and Belgium. The communities often provide a variety of social capital, both online and offline, which assists in the migration transition. Many of the forum topics in the migrant communities are questions from recently arrived Brazilians who ask for information or assistance with the challenges they are confronted with during their settlement

[3] Although some Orkut members in the Orkut communities I studied were non-migrants, I will not elaborate on the role of the online migrant communities for non-migrants in this article.

in the city and their day-to-day life. Sônia, a woman who participates in two of the three Orkut communities I studied, told me during an interview:

> People find me in the community and ask me for information about Belgium because they are arriving here and don't have a lot of information. What also happens: someone wants to resolve some problems over here in Belgium, but doesn't know where to go. So they ask. I think it is also to try to get some help, help from the other Brazilians who are already living here. So one helps one another. Those who are already here help out those who are arriving. (Sônia, personal interview, 13/07/2010)

Among the Brazilians who have already lived in Belgium for some time, the Orkut communities also serve as a way to keep in touch. On the forum, many posts can be found that announce upcoming events and the location of (new) Brazilian meeting places. Many other topics in the forum are commercially oriented, trying to sell products or services. Most of these are posted by already established Brazilians who have set up small businesses, like Rone, a 36-year old Brazilian who mainly uses Orkut to promote his language courses:

> I know them [recently arrived Brazilians] because I advertise my Dutch introduction classes. They are open to Brazilians who have recently arrived. And to their partners as well, who are married to Brazilians but never wanted to learn Portuguese. Sometimes they do want to learn Portuguese now. So I earn money with these people. I advertise on Orkut. So they know me, they contact me. (Rone, personal interview, 30/12/2010)

Orkut is also a means by which Brazilians reaffirm themselves as Brazilians and construct a shared imagination. Besides references to Brazil in the uploaded pictures or videos in the profiles of the members, much of the content of the online discussions

concerns expressions of nostalgia for Brazil and the performance of 'being Brazilian', as defined by the self-ascription of the participants. This is illustrated by many discussions on the cultural differences between Belgians and Brazilians, where community members discuss 'typical Brazilian behaviour' and compare this with situations with which they are confronted within Belgian society. The Orkut communities are thus also instrumental to Brazilian migrants' ability to reinforce and recreate their identity in order to retain psychological links to the cultural identity of their homeland. Moreover, community members also use Orkut to disseminate and discuss information about Brazilian politics and/or news and events. As such, Orkut has become a social basis for cultivating national subjectivity and discourse across borders.

Nevertheless, not all of the potential effects of the Orkut migrant communities on the lives of participants are necessarily positive. Participation in such communities can, for example, result in increased expectations to exchange other forms of support. Rone, who first told me about the opportunities Orkut gave him to promote his language classes to newly arrived Brazilians, said later during the interview:

> I often receive emails from people I have never heard of. "Hi Rone, you don't know me, but I know this and this of you. Give me your opinion, how hard is it to find a job in Europe?" I even have an e-mail over here, that I saved. This girl said: "I graduated in biology. I would love to go to Europe to study English and to work as a tourist guide. What is the job market like for tourist guides for someone who studied biology? Because I read on Orkut that you are a tourist guide." (Rone, personal interview, 30/12/2010)

Many other members of the communities I studied also told me that they were often contacted by other Brazilians with requests for help. Even though most respondents acknowledged that they themselves also benefited from the many forms of economic or emotional social support that can be found in the Orkut communi-

ties, some of them also associated their presence online with an increased obligation to help other Brazilians. Others complained about the gossiping that took place online or even distanced themselves from the other participants in the communities.

Moving ethnography online: methodological and ethical challenges

In my research, I had initially underestimated the importance of online togetherness for Brazilians in Belgium. The original research proposal did not even mention the Internet as a possible research site. However, within the variety of Brazilian websites, magazines and satellite channels I encountered in the course of the research, Orkut was often mentioned as the most important medium to keep in touch with other Brazilians inside and outside Brazil. Therefore, it quickly became one of the central fieldwork locations. However, I chose not to restrict my methodology to online research. Instead, I adopted a dialectical research praxis, trying to understand how different research sites were interrelated. The research related to Orkut consisted of an analysis of at least six months of web-based discussion among members of each community, personal interviews with the community founders, online participant observation, and personal and email interviews with members of all three Orkut communities, as well as with Brazilian migrants who did not participate in any of these communities (41 in total). I tried to meet as many Orkut community members as possible in person. This gave me the chance to verify information gathered online. It was also an opportunity to fill gaps in online data collection and to extend my focus from migrants' participation in Orkut communities to my other fields of interest.

However, choosing to include online research in the study required a number of methodological adaptations. In this section, I will focus on two critical differences I was confronted with between the face-to-face and online ethnography, namely gaining access into the fieldwork location and the question of gaining informed consent. First, an obvious difference with physical ethnography was the way I had to find an entrée into the Orkut communities I wanted to study. Al-

though the problem of how to present oneself also exists within traditional ethnography, in gaining access to the online research setting, I could not rely on my physical presence and interactional style (Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff, & Cui, 2009, pp. 68–73; Mann, & Stewart, 2000). In my research, I gained access to the online communities through offline research. In the course of my fieldwork in Belgium, many of my informants added me to their list of friends on Orkut, informed me about the existence of online migrant communities, and invited me to become a member. This strongly facilitated my entrée.

Soon after joining the Orkut communities, I introduced myself as a researcher to the moderators and asked to meet them in person. After explaining the intentions of the research, I requested and obtained their permission to conduct participant observation and to contact members for research purposes. The reactions of the moderators to my request were very positive.

Among researchers, a debate revolved around the question of whether or not researchers must do this: to ask for permission to conduct online ethnographic fieldwork and to use comments that are posted online. Some researchers have argued that all cyberspace postings are in the public domain and thus imply an implicit permission for their use by others (e.g. Finn, & Lavitt, 1994; Magnet, 2007; Schaap, 2002; Thomsen, Straubhaar, & Bolyard, 1998). Many of these researchers have explicitly chosen to conduct physically 'invisible' research, maintaining a covert position in their research site. A major advantage of this approach is its entirely unobtrusive character and the chance this provides to research naturally occurring behaviours.

There seems to be, however, a continuum of private to increasingly public online communities, but with continuation of earlier methods. Many early scholars studied reasonably private online communities such as listservs that were password protected or discussion forums or Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) with chosen usernames often de-linked from personal or distinct offline identities. Today, the distinction between public and private domains in the online world is more and more blurred as multiple forms of online togetherness co-exist in cyberspace. Some of these sites are still private, but many others, including SNSs, are much more public,

with profiles that often explicitly connect online and offline identity. The various types of current online communities pose dramatically different ethical implications for research and pose different challenges and opportunities for the ethnographer. In the case of SNSs especially, I urge online researchers to communicate who they are and to ask for permission to use online data for their research.

Another line of argument that is often used against announcing one's presence to ask for consent focuses on the fact that 'the lurker' is a socially acceptable and sometimes even routinely used position in the setting (Schaap, 2002). Although lurking was also a common behaviour in Orkut, I argue that the subject position of an ethnographer does not map that of a common member of a social network site. Most obvious is the difference in intentions and consequences of lurking: 'The instrumental stance and consequences of ethnographic lurking are problematic to participants, in a way that other forms of "lurking" may not be' (Beaulieu, 2004, p. 147).

Moreover, overtly participating in the online setting allowed me to check my interpretations and gain the informed consent of research participants, another cornerstone of ethical research. However, given the number of participants in the online communities, obtaining consent was more problematic than in my offline fieldwork. Also, I was already a member of Orkut before I started my PhD project. Therefore, at the moment my research started, I introduced myself in my new role as a researcher, presenting the research topic and announcing my online presence. After this introduction, I did not continue to regularly post messages on forums introducing myself as a researcher, in order to maintain the naturalness of the conversation. Instead, I chose to make sure that the fact that I was conducting ethnographic research was appearing permanently in my user profile.

Nevertheless, despite this overt presence as a researcher, many participants may not have been aware of my study. For this reason, before using quotes in publications, I asked for the permission of research participants. Whenever possible, I tried to meet the community members whose quotes I wanted to use, in order to gain their trust, and to ask for permission to share their scraps for the study. Research participants that were geographically dispersed were provided with an in-

formation sheet sent via Orkut-mail. All participants were also informed that they could withdraw their participation from the study at any given point and that they would be properly masked in order to protect their privacy.

This representation of participants' data in publications is another important privacy aspect. Because names and textual fragments obtained online are easier to retrieve, the masking of contributors to online websites is often more complex than guaranteeing anonymity to offline research participants. The blurring of the private / public distinction adds another dimension to the matter of anonymity. Not all Internet users necessarily want to remain anonymous. Instead, they may have chosen to deliberately publish in the public domain and should perhaps be treated as authors (Bassett, & O'Riordan, 2002). I chose to give the actual name of the online community I study, but to alter online pseudonyms, names, and other means of identifying the participant. Even though this denies credit where it is due, I found the omission of potentially damaging information more important.

Conclusion: migration research in a globalized world

Contemporary life is marked by an increasing virtual and geographic mobility (Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff, & Cui, 2009, p. 53). A rapid technological development and a revolution in communication are interconnecting individuals and groups, making it increasingly easy for migrants to maintain close links with their regions of origin and with other migrants around the world. For many migrants, it is not only possible to return home more often for physical visits, it is also possible to maintain continuous contact by virtual visits (Hiller, & Franz, 2004, p. 735). Therefore, I suggest that it is of little use to think of the 'virtual' world as a different social space than the 'real' world. Rather, I state that 'online' activities are part of how people live today and are thus strongly interrelated with 'offline' aspects of social live.

Because of the possible important role this online togetherness can play, I argue that contemporary migration researchers should adapt to the environment

in which today's interconnected migrants live and include online research sites in the definition of their fieldwork sites. For research that takes a particular social phenomenon such as migration as its focal area of interest, an ethnographic study on the Internet can play an important supporting role. It can raise new questions or hypotheses that orient the offline fieldwork, deepen the understanding of offline events, or lead to unexpected insights into the life of our research participants. The surge of new forums where migrants discuss different aspects of their migration experiences, find news and information, and work in solidarity on a variety of issues directs our attention to the fact that we have to think about the changing multi-sitedness of ethnographic research.

Although the transformation of classic research practices is already well under way, multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork will have to broaden its scope to include online and offline research sites, following connections across different media. 'Because information and communications technologies have permeated so many areas of contemporary social life and to such an extent, we have reached the point of no return' (Kozinets, 2010, p. 2). A balanced combination of offline and online ethnography, including data gathered in face-to-face as well as online interaction, can provide a fuller, more comprehensive account of the phenomena of interest and of transnational processes.

Also in my research, the integration of qualitative data-gathering methodologies both online and offline turned out to be an important research strategy. Performing one without the other would have resulted in a significant amount of information, but would certainly have missed critical elements. Ethnography solely based on online research could not be the sole source of data as it offers only a partial picture of the migrants' transnational activities; a pure offline ethnography would not have provided me with detailed information on the important associations between the online and offline world. The use of complementary methodologies of data-gathering, online and offline, has enabled me to collect comprehensive information on the transnational practices of Brazilian migrants in various realms.

In this article, I make a case for the significance of the SNS Orkut in the experience of Brazilian migrants to Belgium. Despite my focus on social network sites in this article, these form only one possible site of online culture and community. SNSs should therefore be placed within the wider spectrum of mediations that affect people. Studying only one medium of communication that certain migrants use may blind us to the fact that people draw on different media in order to communicate with each other. Therefore, I recommend that current migration researchers – depending on the question(s) they ask – pay explicit attention to technologically mediated communication in their research, either through an online ethnographic study or in a different way. Such a rethinking of the notion of 'the field' – the place where the ethnographic research is ought to take place – might open the way for both a different kind of research knowledge and a different kind of research subject.

Chapter 4

Writing eFieldnotes: some ethical considerations

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Writing eFieldnotes: some ethical considerations

Introduction

Many ethnographers have emphasized the central place of writing, not only in their own research but in ethnographic fieldwork in general (Clifford, & Marcus, 1986; Geertz, 1973; Sanjek, 1990). Ethnographic research is at the core of what Stocking has called anthropology's fundamental 'methodological values' – 'the taken-for-granted, pretheoretical notions of what it is to do anthropology (and to be an anthropologist)' (1992, p. 282). Exemplary anthropological research is widely understood to be based on experience 'in the field' (Gupta, & Ferguson, 1997, p. 1), and fieldnotes play an important role, therefore, in 'doing anthropology'. As Jean Jackson, one of the contributors to *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*, stated: 'If "the field" is anthropology's version of both the promised land and an ordeal by fire, then fieldnotes symbolize what journeying to and returning from the field mean to us: the attachment, the identification, the uncertainty, the mystique, and, perhaps above all, the ambivalence' (1990, p. 33).

Since the publication of *Fieldnotes* in 1990, much has changed within anthropology. Globalization, defined by Castles as a 'proliferation of cross-border flows and transnational networks' (2002, p. 1143), has profoundly changed the anthropological research context, urging this field science to expand its boundaries. Owing to significantly increased human mobility and a revolution in communication, the everyday lives of many individuals often transcend the geographical locations in which classical fieldwork took place, challenging ethnographers to include these social spaces in the demarcation of their fieldwork sites. Not only the choice of fieldwork sites, but also the issues that are being researched, the methods used, and the way fieldnotes are taken have all been impacted by these changes.

One of the most compelling new fieldwork sites ethnographers encounter today is the Internet. The continuing growth of global Internet access lies at the root of new and diverse kinds of imagination that link together people living in various geographic locations (Schrooten, & De Brouwer, 2012; Schrooten, & Lamote, 2013). It has become a commonplace that twenty-first century migrants maintain transnational lifestyles, keeping in close touch with their regions of origin and with other regions around the world in which significant others have settled (Schrooten, Geldof, & Withaeckx, 2015). Transnational contacts are gaining in importance and many transnational spaces and communities are developing (Faist, Fauser, & Reisenauer, 2013; Vertovec, 2007). Most migrants can therefore no longer be characterized as cut from their existing social ties or 'uprooted'. On the contrary, various means of long-distance communication, such as mobile telephony, the Internet, and digital broadcast, have strongly facilitated interaction across geographical and political borders (Kissau, & Hunger, 2010; Schrooten, 2011b).

These new media are being used for several purposes on macro, micro, and meso levels. The Internet has, for example, played an important role in several recent protests, such as the 2011 protests in Egypt and Tunisia, the 2013 protests in Turkey, and the worldwide mobilization of Brazilians in the spring of 2013. But social media are also of great importance for many globally dispersed families as they allow them to have contact on a daily basis and to share news in real time. The research of Madianou and Miller (2012) demonstrates, for example, how parents and children who are separated because of migration use new media to maintain long-distance relationships (between the Philippines and the United Kingdom, in this case) and care for each other. In my own research with Brazilians living in Belgium, I also found that many migrants frequently make use of social media, not only to remain connected with their durable networks all over the world but also to forge new connections in their new place of residence (Schrooten 2012a).

Following the connections of the people they study, migration researchers are challenged to expand the scope of their fieldwork to include online research sites as well, extending ethnographic traditions of fieldwork into the virtual world. The willingness to incorporate the Internet both as part of 'the field' and as a

method of data collection is tinged, however, with anxiety about how far existing research methods are appropriate for technologically mediated interactions (Hine, 2006).

When online phenomena are studied, there are adjustments in data collection and analysis that must be made. Ethnographers who decide to conduct research in an online environment are faced with several challenges: To what extent are the procedures and assumptions that are currently taken for granted in ethnography suitable for online research? How does one take ethnographic fieldnotes on a social network site (SNS), a multi-user dungeon (MUD), or a community blog? How do we deal with the large amount of data available online?

Another obvious difference with conventional ethnography is the way researchers have to find an entrée into the community they want to study. Although the problem of how to present oneself also exists within traditional ethnography, the challenges involved in obtaining access differ, as ethnographers cannot rely solely upon their physical presence and personal interactional skills (Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff, & Cui, 2009; Mann, & Stewart, 2003).

Online ethnographic research, moreover, has raised a number of ethical questions. The fact that participation on social network sites leaves online traces offers unprecedented opportunities for researchers. Even so, the specificities of this research setting also necessitate a re-examination of the institutionalized understandings of research ethics. Ethnographers must learn how to apply standard principles of human subject protection to a research environment that differs in fundamental ways from the face-to-face research contexts for which they were conceived and designed. The easy access to online data, the ability of a researcher to record these data without the knowledge of participants, the complexities of obtaining informed consent and the question of guaranteeing the respondents' anonymity fuel the need for directive guidelines for ethical online ethnographic research. In this chapter, I discuss some of the ethical issues I encountered in my own research on the use of social network sites by Brazilian migrants in Belgium in order to provide an understanding of the challenges that are related to

online research and, consequently, to the ethical responsibilities of online researchers.

Discovering the online field

In 2004, after obtaining my bachelor's degree in social work, I enrolled in a postgraduate intercultural social work course. The one-year program included an internship of six months in a 'developing country'. On September 24, 2004, I arrived in Palmas, the capital of the Brazilian state Tocantins, where I was going to work in a *Centro de Direitos Humanos* (Human Rights Centre) and a *Conselho Tutelar* (Guardianship Council). I promised my family and friends to keep in touch through email and letters, and, I hoped, an occasional Skype conversation. At that moment, I did not yet have an account on a social network site, nor did most of my friends and relatives. It was only earlier that year that Mark Zuckerberg had created Facebook (then still called 'The Facebook'). This social network site already provided access to several college and university networks, as well as some high-school networks, but was not open to everyone.

During the first weeks of my stay in Palmas, one of my roommates asked if she could add me as a friend on Orkut. My question about what she meant by 'Orkut' was met with considerable astonishment, and she immediately introduced me to this social network site. I soon learned that Orkut was enormously popular in Brazil. Although the site was only launched in January 2004, and originally had only an English-language interface, Portuguese-speaking Brazilians quickly 'invaded' and became the dominant user group (Boyd, & Ellison, 2007, p. 214).

Later, when I spoke about the widespread popularity of Orkut in her home country with Sônia, a Brazilian woman I met in Belgium upon my return from Brazil in April 2005, she told me:

> I know! I entered in the very beginning. I went to Brazil and someone told me 'Look, there is this new website in Brazil and everyone is becoming a mem-

> ber.' But I didn't know it, so I asked them what it was. 'It is Orkut.' So I entered, in the very beginning. So everyone was becoming a member and today everyone in Brazil is on Orkut, really everyone. If you get to know someone on the street, you always ask: 'Are you on Orkut? Give me your Orkut. I'm going to add you on Orkut.' ... Everyone has it, because nobody wants to be left out. Everybody wants to participate. And it is a lot easier to keep in touch.

After my return from Palmas, I continued to use Orkut to keep in touch with my friends from Brazil. Of the many features of interpersonal communication that Orkut offered, I mainly used the scrapbook that was linked to everyone's personal profiles, which I regularly read, and on which I left public comments or 'scraps'. I also chatted with friends who were online and looked at the information they shared on their personal profile, such as pictures and messages they posted on their own scrapbooks.

In 2007, I returned to Brazil for my master's thesis fieldwork, which focused on the (re)creation of ethnic boundaries (Schrooten, 2008, 2011a). The aim of the research was to study internal migration and the reproduction of Brazilian race relations in the city of Palmas. Palmas is a very young city, constructed in 1989 to become the capital of the newest Brazilian state, Tocantins. My Palmas research explored the possibility that, during an era in which the national government began to implement measures to combat racial discrimination, the creation of a 'planned city' could avoid reproducing the pattern of race relations that characterized the rest of the country.

Although nearly everyone I met during this fieldwork used the social network site Orkut on a daily basis, at the time I never considered utilizing this online environment as a research location. I did not yet realize how much impact these new technologies had on the everyday lives of people, nor how useful this 'fieldwork location' was for the study of the construction of ethnic boundaries. To me, as to

many Brazilians, Orkut was just an easy (and cheap) way to keep in touch with the people I met.

When I wrote my Ph.D. research proposal in 2009, I decided to shift my focus to international Brazilian migration. After my return from fieldwork in Brazil, I had met several Brazilian migrants in Belgium. Because I was surprised by the growing number of Brazilians I encountered, I decided to look for quantitative data on their presence in the country. I soon found out that Brazilians represented a significant portion of the total current migration flow into Belgium (Schrooten, 2012b). Although Brazilian migration constituted a relatively recent phenomenon for Belgium, it had been acknowledged as an important trend by Brazilian policy makers (Pedroso, 2011), the Ministry of the Brussels Capital Region (Ministerie van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, 2008), and the International Organization for Migration located in Brussels (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009).

Again, when I wrote my 2009 research proposal, I did not refer to Orkut, or even to the Internet in general, as a possible research site. However, soon after my fieldwork in Belgium started, I decided to make it one of my central fieldwork locations. Within the variety of Brazilian websites, magazines, and satellite channels I encountered in the course of the research, Orkut, and, more recently, Facebook and WhatsApp, were often mentioned as the most important media for keeping in touch with other Brazilians, both inside and outside Brazil.

Social media use by Brazilian migrants in Belgium

For most Brazilians I met during my research, computer-mediated communication via social network sites was already embedded in their daily life practices before they migrated to Belgium. In Brazil, they mainly used these sites to connect with friends and relatives. After migrating to Belgium, many also found social media to be a valuable tool for maintaining continuous personal and transnational contacts. When I started looking at how people enact transnationality on a daily basis,

it became apparent that migrants' use of new media affects the nature of migration and the conditions of life as a migrant (Schrooten, 2012a).

SNSs allow migrants to remain connected with their durable networks all over the world (Faist, 2004; Horst, 2006; Madianou, & Miller, 2012). But there is more. Computer-mediated communication in general helps migrants not only in maintaining relationships with their networks back home, but also in tracing and contacting other migrants from the same place of origin in their new place of residence (Hiller, & Franz, 2004). Thus, as Diminescu argues, 'The paradigmatic figure of the uprooted migrant is yielding to another figure – one that is as yet ill-defined but which corresponds to that of a migrant on the move who relies on alliances outside his own group of belonging without cutting his ties with the social network at home' (2008, p. 567).

Most of my informants told me that they had frequent contact with their relatives living beyond Belgium. Dije, for example, who left her four daughters in Brazil when she migrated to Belgium in the beginning of 2010, spoke with them nearly every day:

> We talk to each other every day on MSN. I also call about three times a week. I have that VoIP, do you know it? Two cents a minute to call there. So I call almost every day, to talk to them. And if I don't call, we talk on MSN. So we talk to each other every day. It hardly ever happens that we don't talk.

When I was invited to my informants' homes, I was often introduced to family members or friends in Brazil through Skype. In many homes, the webcam was left on for nearly the whole day, creating a sense of co-presence.

Mobile phones, social network sites, and emails all provided opportunities for maintaining these long-distance relationships. In the course of my research, there was a shift in the social media that were most often referred to. Whereas in 2010, Orkut and MSN were by far the most popular, by 2014, Facebook and WhatsApp had become the most used social media, not only to keep in touch with those left

behind but also to organize one's migration journey and to find an entrée into the Brazilian community in Belgium. Since 2008, the Brazilian Internet population has strongly increased, but the popularity of Orkut has strongly declined in favor of Facebook. In September 2014, Orkut has even officially shut down.

On SNSs such as Orkut or Facebook, members can create groups and invite others to become members. In cities all over the world with a significant number of Brazilian migrants, these newcomers have formed online migrant groups related to their presence in the city, as well as to the country in which their city of residence is located. Many of my informants told me that the first place where they 'met' other Brazilians was on one of these social network sites.

The story of Amélia, who migrated to Belgium in 2006, is illustrative of that of many other Brazilians I talked to:

> So, when I came here in 2006, it was already starting. Orkut already existed. Orkut started working. And it was through Orkut that small [online] groups were formed. These small groups transformed into larger groups. And there, people started to meet and started to get to know each other. Friendships and relationships were made. The group that I mainly visit today on Facebook was originally created on Orkut. The first activity of this group was a party that was organized in the city of Ghent... When I arrived in Belgium, I didn't know any Brazilian here. It was through Orkut that I started to build a network.

The following words of Sônia, the moderator of one of the groups I studied, illustrate how the existing online networks make it possible for migrants to forge new connections with people they do not know, building new individual 'weak tie' networks (Haythornthwaite, 2005):

> The people who are in Brazil already think, `Ah, I'm going to participate in the community of Antwerp or Brussels or Leuven or Ghent ... because I'm going to that city.' So they enter the community, they already start looking for information among those who are already living in that city. So when they arrive here, they already know everyone, they already make arrangements to meet and have a drink, they already know where there will be a party. This is a very good thing, when I came here there was nothing like this. But nowadays, it is very easy, someone who didn't even leave Brazil already knows everyone over here. So it helps a lot.

Besides offering a possibility to trace and contact other migrants from the same place of origin in their new locale, the online groups on social network sites also have several other important functions. In an earlier article (Schrooten, 2012a), I described how these functions are different in each stage of the migration process, ranging from finding information that assists in the decision to migrate to sharing stories of the difficulties faced, giving each other material advice, or even reaffirming themselves as Brazilian. Also, the degree of users' involvement varies, ranging from consumption or practical advice, to 'lurking' (observing online without making themselves known), to pursuing a strong social life online.

Ethics in online ethnography

Because people's lives increasingly are shifting into the digital domain, which is becoming more and more public, emergent technologies offer many interesting research opportunities. In contrast to the field of consumer and marketing research, for example, anthropologists seem to have been rather slow and reluctant to follow social groups online (Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2010). Although the Internet is an efficient means for gaining access into subcultures, social movements, and many other groups, it is only recently that social researchers in significant numbers have begun examining the Internet as a meaningful research space and conduct-

ing ethnographic work on social network sites, blogs, and other online media (Murthy, 2013).

I have used and continue to actively use digital technologies in my qualitative research on Brazilian migrants in Belgium. However, my fieldwork is not conducted wholly online; it also involves face-to-face ethnography. Whereas many researchers use digital methods to provide an access point to respondents who would have been inaccessible or much harder to reach through 'conventional' ethnographic approaches (Miller & Sønderlund, 2010; Murthy, 2013), I initially gained access to the online groups I studied through my traditionally conceived offline fieldwork. It was my respondents who then invited me to become a member of the online groups for Brazilians in Belgium. Because the Internet was intimately interwoven with my respondents' offline lives, the integration of both offline and online qualitative data-gathering methodologies turned out to be an important research strategy.

From the moment I decided to include the social network site Orkut in my research, I found that research ethics were one of the most important differences between traditional ethnography and online ethnography. As I posed it then:

> Does the posting of things on the Internet makes these public property, available for researchers to use without asking permission? Some researchers would answer affirmatively to this question, arguing that all cyberspace postings are in the public domain and thus imply an implicit permission for their use by others (e.g. Denzin, 1999; Finn, & Lavitt, 1994; Magnet, 2007; Schaap, 2002; Sharp, & Earle, 2003; Slater, 1998). Many of these researchers have explicitly chosen to conduct physically "invisible" research, maintaining a covert position in their research site. One of the major advantages of this approach is its entirely unobtrusive character and the chance this provides to research naturally occurring behaviours... [On the other hand], other researchers (e.g. Döring, 2002; Kozinets, 2010; Roberts, Smith, & Pollock, 2004; Schrum, 1995; Walther, 2002; Waskul, & Douglass, 1996) ... argue that some

> Internet locations are inherently private. They urge online researchers to communicate who they are and to ask for permission to use the online data for their research.
>
> [W]hile there may be advantages to immediately announcing one's presence as an online researcher, in some cases disclosing one's presence to ask for consent may disturb the normal activity of the site (Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff, & Cui, 2009, pp. 58–60). An inappropriate entrée into a community can also cause a hostile reaction towards the researcher (Kozinets, 2010, pp. 74–94). For this reason, some ethnographers have chosen to begin a participant observation study of online phenomena by lurking in order to familiarize themselves with the setting before asking questions. Still, while this silent lurking can give the researcher important information about the norms of the online setting, participating immediately in the online setting can give researchers a more authentic experience. Moreover, this allows online researchers to gain the informed consent of research participants, another cornerstone of ethical research (Sveningsson, 2004, pp. 50–51). Given my stance that respect for the expectation of privacy overrides the distinction between public and private spaces, I found it important to obtain informed consent from people to be interviewed in the environment of Orkut. (Schrooten, 2010)

Although in the emerging literature some concrete examples can now be found of how to conduct ethical research using SNSs (Bull, Breslin, Wright, Black, Levine, & Santelli, 2011; Hesse-Biber, & Leavy, 2010; Wilkinson, & Thelwall, 2011), an internationally accepted framework for online ethnographic research ethics does not as yet exist. Without these guidelines, I found that the onus was on the individual researcher to make ethical decisions in the course of her or his research.

As my fieldwork began, I had specific questions related to many aspects of my fieldwork ethics: Could I use all the data I found on the Orkut and Facebook groups I studied for analysis? How should I write fieldnotes in an environment where

all the data were automatically stored and always available? Did I have to ask for informed consent before using quotations? Should I announce my presence as a researcher, and if I did, would this disturb the naturalness of the activities of the online group?

One of the first concrete dilemmas I encountered was precisely how to obtain informed consent. How could I give the online group members the opportunity to decide whether they wanted to take part in my research? In my offline fieldwork, I informed my respondents about the purpose of the study, confidentiality and privacy protocols, their rights as research subjects, the possibility of withdrawing, and how the information during the face-to-face interview would be used. The lack of face-to-face contact with Brazilian online group members, however, impeded me from using the same study consent procedures. What is more, in the online research environment I also studied the interactions among members of these lively online groups. This is a totally different research context than the individual face-to-face interviews during which I had obtained informed consent.

There were two more aspects of online environments that made it difficult to secure such consent. First, the data I use in my research are gathered from Orkut and Facebook groups that require membership. For that reason, I cannot consider such data as being gathered in a public space where the individuals who have posted messages have no expectation of privacy. Second, the online groups can have a large number of members, ranging from two hundred to almost four thousand, and new participants join on a frequent basis. Therefore, during my analysis of the discussion threads of the groups I study, I know I will encounter postings of some group members who know that I was doing research but also of other group members who do not. As all posted messages are parts of ongoing conversations, it would become quite difficult and problematic to include some messages within the same thread in my analyses but to exclude others (Flicker, Haans, & Skinner, 2004).

The first thing I did to obtain informed consent was try to meet each group moderator in person. After explaining the aims of my study, I requested their permission to conduct participant observation and to contact members for research

purposes. This has been of great importance for my work, as these moderators turned out to be influential 'gatekeepers' who strongly eased my access to their group, to its individual members, and to offline gatherings. Not only did all the moderators approve my presence in their online groups, they also encouraged people to participate in the research.

Next, I introduced myself as a researcher on the discussion threads of each group I participated in, and I always announced my presence when going online. I described the study aims, provided information about what data would be collected and how they would be used, and invited people to participate in online and in face-to-face interviews. I also posted my university email address as a way to authenticate my identity as a researcher.

Still, these efforts were insufficient to obtain consent from all participants in the changing, fluid online groups. My strategy, therefore, has been to use the postings on each forum only to make general observations about the uses of social network sites by current and prospective migrants. If I want to quote anyone verbatim, I approach that person to ask for consent. Also, I try to meet as many group members as possible in person. Not only does this give me the chance to verify information gathered online and to extend my focus to my other fields of interest, it is also an opportunity to seek informed consent in a more explicit way.

Besides the question of obtaining informed consent, another ethical dilemma I faced was how to fully utilize online data in my publications. The profiles on social network sites often explicitly connect online and offline identity information. This presented radically different challenges than those online environments that de-link users from any personal or distinctive offline identifiers. Furthermore, as Keenan (2008) states, 'on the Internet, things never go away completely.' Data placed by individuals on the Internet, including discussion thread posts on social network sites, continue to persist in cyberspace. This poses specific challenges to not revealing the identities of research participants (Bull, Breslin, Wright, Black, Levine, & Santelli, 2011; Zimmer, 2010), and, consequently, it is not always possible to guarantee complete and total anonymity through pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information (Murthy, 2013).

To maximize protection of the identities of online group members in the dissemination of my research results, I quote only those postings of members who have consented to be part of my study. I also replace all names with pseudonyms so that people's real names are never tied to any quotations. The fact that online membership in the groups I study is required to view the message board also makes it more difficult for outsiders to find the actual quotation that I use in my writing.

To further assure as much anonymity as possible within these online groups, I translate the Portuguese-language postings into English so that both Google and Facebook searches cannot connect the quotation to the identity of the individual who posted the message. The anthropologist Tom Boellstorff, who conducted virtual fieldwork on the Second Life site (2010), similarly used pseudonyms for Second Life residents, paraphrased their quotations to make them difficult to identify by using a search engine, and in some cases also combined quotations from more than one person.

Conclusion

The fact that there has been a lack of clarity in terms of ethics forces online researchers to carefully think through the implications of their research, not only for the dynamics of the sites they study, but also for their respondents. As Murthy cautions, 'researchers should take care to specify storage of ethnographic material, anonymization, and risks regarding identification of respondents through web searches in informed consent agreements' (2013, p. 31).

Online activities are part of how people live today, and they affect offline aspects of social life. Fieldworkers must include technologically mediated communication in their research agendas, either through online ethnographic study or by placing such communication within the wider spectrum of communicative modes people employ in living together. Because Internet media are 'continuous with and embedded in other social spaces' (Miller, & Slater, 2000, p. 5), we should

adopt a dialectical research praxis, trying to understand how our different research sites are interrelated. A balance between offline and online ethnography, including data gathered in both face-to-face and online interaction, can provide a fuller, more comprehensive account of the increasingly transnational and mediated phenomena we seek to understand.

Chapter 5

(Trans)Forming boundaries in a contact zone: the experience of Brazilian migrants in Brussels

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(Trans)Forming boundaries in a contact zone: the experience of Brazilian migrants in Brussels

Abstract: International migration leads to an increased cultural diversity and societal complexity at the local level. As people cross borders, they meet and live together in ethnic diverse contexts or 'contact zones'. This article focuses on such a 'contact zone', namely the city of Brussels, capital of Belgium and of Europe, and demonstrates how it has been influenced by the arrival of Brazilian migrants. Moreover, it is demonstrated how these Brazilian migrants construct, view and transform boundaries between themselves and other residents of the local space they inhabit.

Keywords: Brussels; boundaries; Brazilian migration; contact zones; migration studies

Introduction

Although migration has been an inherent part of human existence ever since our ancestors left Africa to populate the rest of the world (Wolf, 1997), mutual contacts have strongly intensified throughout the last decades. Rapid technological development, worldwide trade and a revolution in communication are increasingly interconnecting individuals and places, giving a new impetus to human mobility (Audebert, & Doraï, 2010; Bauman, 2000; Schrooten, 2011b; Urry, 2007). These developments have profound implications for contemporary and future migration research. In this article, I argue that the introduction of a 'border perspective' in migration studies offers an excellent tool to research the everyday experiences of today's migrants in the local spaces they inhabit. As Wilson and Donnan (2012b, p. 1) argue,

> [t]he proliferation of borders, and the many forces that have created and fostered their development, together have drawn scholars from all the humanities and social sciences to a mutual interest in what happens at, across and because of the borders to nations and states, and in extension to other geopolitical borders and boundaries, such as those of cities, regions and supranational polities.

As demonstrated in the research of these scholars, borders function as a grand motif in everyday life. On the one hand, many recent events that revolve around changing borders, such as the creation of Mercosul, the expansion of the European Union, the rise of new global forces and new engagements between emerging countries have all made borders and borderlands new sites of processes of localization and globalization in the face of so many forces of change. On the other hand, the current 'age of migration' (Castles, & Miller, 2009) also leads to an increased cultural diversity and societal complexity at the local level. As people cross international, state and other borders of polity, power, territory and sovereignty, populations mix and metaphorical borderlands of personal and group identities are negotiated (Alvarez, 1995; Anzaldúa, 1987; Barth, 1969; Donnan, & Wilson, 1999; Horstmann, & Wadley, 2006; Kearney, 1995; Lamont, & Molnár, 2002). I argue that in the current globalized world these ethnic diverse contexts or 'contact zones' (Pratt, 1991) with a hybrid population are the norm, not only in the regions bisected by the boundary line between states, which traditionally have been at the focus of Border Studies (Wilson, & Donnan, 2012b), but also in the cosmopolitan cities, which are privileged places of migrant settlements and, as such, cultural crossroads par excellence.

In an earlier article (Schrooten, 2011a), I presented the results of a research conducted in such a contact zone, namely the city of Palmas, the capital of the Brazilian state Tocantins. Because the city was only founded in 1990, internal migration has heavily influenced the composition of the city's population. Palmas is a city with a population that consists entirely of (mainly internal) migrants, and, as such, displays the characteristics of a contact zone. My research focused on the

(re)creation of ethnic boundaries in this city, raising questions related to the possibility that the planned creation of a city such as Palmas would not reproduce the race relations that characterize the rest of the country, as the city was built during a period in which the Brazilian state recognized the existence of racism and started to implement anti-racism measures such as race based affirmative action (Bernardino, 2002; Brandão, 2005; Burdick, 1998a; Caldwell, 2007; Htun, 2004; Schrooten, 2008). The research has demonstrated that the ethnic divisions existing in the rest of Brazil are also reproduced in Palmas. Although the government has consciously tried to promote social integration, the internal migration towards Palmas has not changed the existing patterns of ethnic divisions that are observable in the rest of the country. Rather than being purposefully erased, boundaries between ethnicities appear to be as strong as in the rest of the country.

In this article, I focus on another contact zone, namely the city of Brussels, the capital of Belgium and of Europe. I researched how Brazilian migrants residing in this city construct, negotiate and view boundaries between themselves and other residents of the local space they inhabit. I will demonstrate how the arrival of Brazilian migrants in Brussels has influenced these local spaces and how these migrants interact with other migrant communities and with the Belgian population. The research presented here is part of a PhD study on Brazilian migration to Belgium (2008-2013). Data collection and analysis of this research are typified by a qualitative approach, inherent to the anthropological method of ethnographic fieldwork. The study makes use of a multi-sited research design, with data-gathering taking place both online and offline (Schrooten, 2012a). Data were collected through participant observation, analysis of web-based discussions and personal and e-mail interviews with Brazilians residing in Belgium (forty-one in total). The age of the interviewees ranged from 23 to 56 years. Twenty-nine of them were women and eleven men. Similar to findings of recent research amongst Brazilians that more than 57% of Brazilians in Belgium are coming from the Brazilian states of Goiás and Minas Gerais (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009, pp. 38–41), most of the interviewees indicated these states as their region of origin. More than half of them had a high school degree, while some also had obtained a uni-

versity diploma, and others had none or only primary education. Although most Brazilians in Belgium are undocumented (see later in this article), twenty-seven out of forty-one interviewees had a legal status in this country. The length of stay in Belgium varied between 6 months and 35 years. All were first-generation migrants.

The choice for Brussels as a research location was based on its role as capital of Europe, which gives the city a significant position within the trans-Atlantic relations. Secondly, Brussels displays the characteristics of a contact zone at the national level due to its socio-political position within the Belgian state, reinforced by the international position of the city and the presence of an ethnic heterogeneous population. Since the 1960s, migrant populations have increased to the point of outnumbering local populations in several municipalities (Corijn, Vandermotten, Decroly, & Swyngedouw, 2009; Geets, & Timmerman, 2010; Jacobs, 2006). Furthermore, because of the indigenous bilingual complexity that is specific to the region, Brussels is an area where symbolical boundaries are continuously renegotiated. Belgium is divided into a predominantly Dutch-speaking region in the northern part of the country (Flanders), a French-speaking region in the southern part (Wallonia), a German-speaking region in the south eastern part (within Wallonia), and the bilingual region of Brussels, although French is clearly the dominant language in the capital city. Fourthly, the choice for Brussels allows dissociating the trans-Atlantic migration of Brazilians from a former colonial tie. Finally, as the next section will show, the Brazilian community in Belgium is largely concentrated in Brussels (Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken, 2009; Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009).

Brazilian migration flows to Belgium

Historically, Brazil was a receiving country, being the migration destination of numerous migrants from all over the world. 20th and 21st century migration from Asia and Europe, typified by a complex pattern of intercontinental migration flows, has added up to the ethnic diversity that was caused by the Portuguese settlement and the African slave trade (De Prins, Stols, & Verberckmoes, 2001; Durand, 2009;

Lesser, 2005). The historical experience regarding migration thus makes Brazil a classic receiving country. However, starting in the fifties, a radical change took place. The flow of immigrants almost dried up and gradually the migration patterns reversed. The migratory flow of Brazilians, which started as a sporadic movement in the 1970s, intensified in the 1980s, a period in which Brazil was faced with economic stagnation, inflation and crisis, leading the country to experience for the first time a negative net migration flow (Pellegrino, 2004). By the end of the twentieth century, Brazil had turned into a country of emigration.

The role of Brazil as an emigration country is thus relatively recent, beginning in the 1980s and increasing in the last decades. The number of international Brazilian migrants today is estimated by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2011) at approximately 3.1 million at a population total of 190.732.694 (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2011). The continuing growth of Brazilian emigration is remarkable, given the current socio-economic status of the country, which is rapidly evolving to become a major hegemonic key development player. Since the early 2000s, the Brazilian economy has started to grow more rapidly, and today, Brazil is considered one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world. In December 2011, Brazil even supplanted the United Kingdom as the world's sixth largest economy, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR). The socio-economic status of the country as a whole contrasts, however, sharply with the persisting intra-national inequalities, which make Brazil one of the most uneven countries in the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2009), a reality that is likely to influence the Brazilian migration pattern.

Although Brazilian migration was for a long time restricted to internal, intracontinental and certain extra continental destinations, starting in the 1980s, migration flows have also changed direction to Europe. Of all Brazilians abroad, some 912 000 are currently estimated to live in Europe (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2011). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the growth of Latin American migrants in Europe can be related to, among others, historic ties between Europe and Latin America, to changed European and

American migration policies and to pre-existent communities of Latin American migrants in European cities.

While the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal are the European countries with the highest number of Brazilian migrants, Brazilians represent a large amount of the recent migration flows towards Belgium as well. Brazilian immigration into Belgium started in the 1960s with the arrival of a small number of political refugees who fled the military regime, as well as some artists, football players, and students. Due to political changes in Brazil, many of these migrants returned to Brazil from the 1980s on, where they contributed to the image of Belgium as an interesting migration destination. The economic crisis in Brazil around the 1990s encouraged a second Brazilian migration wave to Belgium. This wave intensified in the past decade, possibly as the result of the changed immigration policies of the United States after 9/11 and, subsequently, of the United Kingdom after the terrorist attacks in London in 2005 (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009; Rosenfeld, Marcelle, & Rea, 2010, pp. 121–122).

Although Brazilian migration towards Belgium constitutes a relatively recent phenomenon, it has been referred to as an important trend by Brazilian policy makers (Pedroso, 2011), the Ministry of the Brussels-capital region (Ministerie van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, 2008) and the IOM (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009). Statistics of the Belgian government reveal that between 1995 and 2010 the number of Brazilians residing in Belgium has significantly augmented, from 1312 officially residing Brazilians in Belgium in 1995 to 5324 in January 2010 (Université Catholique de Louvain & Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en voor Racismebestrijding, 2011). To the relative growth of documented Brazilians in Belgium should be added the plausible growth of undocumented Brazilian migrants. Recent data of the IOM illustrate that the official numbers largely underestimate the real size of the Brazilian community, which is estimated between 10000 and 60000 migrants, a number that is expected to further increase in the future (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009; Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2011). The presence of a significant number of Brazilian migrants in Belgium is facilitated by bilateral agreements between Belgium and Brazil, allowing Brazilian na-

tionals to enter Belgium without previously having to request a visa. Many among them remain within the Schengen associated countries after the allowed tourist stay of 90 days (Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken, 2009; Oosterbaan, 2010).

In recent years, we can also observe the opposite movement: a lot of Brazilians are returning to Brazil. Although it is impossible to present exact numbers on return migration, as a lot of Brazilians residing in Belgium are undocumented, Fedasil – the government body which oversees the voluntary return of migrants – and the IOM – which organizes the return trip to one's country of origin – have registered an increased demand by Brazilians residing in Belgium for the Assisted Voluntary Return programs they offer. With 770 voluntary returns in 2011 (Federaal Agentschap Opvang Asielzoekers, 2012b) and 232 voluntary returns in January to April 2012 (Federaal Agentschap Opvang Asielzoekers, 2012a), Brazilians form the main nationality of returnees in Belgium. Ongoing research on the economic crisis and return migration is showing how the image of Brazil as a country that is growing while the rest of the world is in crisis is of great importance in this decision to go back to Brazil. The lack of job opportunities in the countries of residence, combined with an improvement of the life conditions in Brazil is motivating many Brazilians to return (Fernandes, Faria, & da Silva, 2012).

Yet, the re-emigration of Brazilian nationals from Belgium goes accompanied by the arrival of new Brazilian migrants. Although for many of these newly arriving migrants, Belgium was their final migration destination, this is certainly not the case for all Brazilians residing in and arriving in the country. For some, Belgium was originally just a country of transit on their way to the United Kingdom. The increased border controls at the airports after the terrorist attacks of 2005 have forced many Brazilians to choose an alternative destination. Yet others have migrated to Belgium because they were living in a European country that was strongly affected by the current economic crisis. The post of Aparecida, a Brazilian woman living in Spain, on the forum of an online community created by Brazilian migrants in Belgium is illustrative for the migration motivation of these latter:

> People, I would like to hear your opinion, you who are living over there... This is what is going on; the only country I migrated to until now is Spain. I have been here for 8 years already, but I lost my job now, just like 5 million Spanish. Things are really bad over here now and I feel very discouraged. The thing is that I have the Spanish nationality and that I don't know if it will really help me to find a job over there, because I speak neither English nor French, and even less Flemish. Only Portuguese and Spanish. Do you think it is an illusion to leave Spain and try to find something over there without even knowing the language? Please, I need you to be realistic in your answer. Lots of thanks to everyone who will respond.

Many Brazilians residing in Southern European countries such as Portugal, Spain or Italy, reorient their migratory projects within the European continent, rather than returning to Brazil without having obtained their goals (Fernandes et al., 2012). Those Brazilians that decide to come to Belgium often explicitly mention the presence of family members, friends or acquaintances as an important incentive to choose Belgium as a migration destination. These networks facilitate the migration process as migrants get support in finding a residence and work via relatives, friends and acquaintances (Padilla, 2006a; Pellegrino, 2004).

Within Belgium, Brazilian migrants are living strongly concentrated in the region of Brussels, with some smaller groups living in the Flemish and the Walloon region of the country. Many research participants averred that the Brazilian immigrants living outside Brussels are mostly students or migrants with a Belgian partner. Undocumented Brazilians and Brazilians without a Belgian partner would prefer to live in Brussels because of the already established Brazilian community in this city and the larger employment opportunities. Moreover, the ethnic diversity of Brussels is also referred to as something positive by many Brazilians, for example by Silvana, a Brazilian artist who has been living in Brussels for 17 years:

> I feel great here in Brussels, because of this [the many different nationalities living in Brussels]. It feels like, like a very, very small Brazil. There are people from anywhere. I feel great here, and I think this is the reason. Because when I went, when we went ... We sometimes go to some small places in Flanders and I sometimes get scared of the people over there. [...] When you arrive in a region that is really Flemish, in a place where people refuse to talk French, you have to be really careful. [...] In these more distant cities they have this concern with "the invasion". The invasion of immigration. (Silvana, personal interview, 15 April 2010)

Especially the area around the South station of Brussels – the place where a lot of Brazilians first step foot on Belgian soil, when they arrive with the high-speed train from Paris – is of importance to these migrants. Not only do many Brazilians live in the nearby municipalities of Sint-Gillis, Anderlecht, Vorst and Elsene, it is also the area where a lot of Brazilian meeting places, such as churches, shops and bars can be found. The next section of this article looks deeper into the visibility of Brazilians in this contact zone and into their interactions with other inhabitants and visitors of this area. The focus will be on the processes of crossing, creation and transformation of boundaries that take place in this local space. I will demonstrate that the interactions between Brazilians and other migrants are ambivalent and that there are no, or at least very limited interactions between Brazilians and Belgians.

(Trans)forming boundaries in the contact zone

The neighborhoods of Elsene, Sint-Gillis, Anderlecht and Vorst, where most Brazilians live today, used to be known as the 'Portuguese neighborhoods' of Brussels (Regionaal Integratiecentrum Foyer Brussel vzw, 2011, pp. 18–31). The presence of the Spanish and Portuguese community, combined with the proximity of the train station and the housing price, has been an important incentive for Brazilians to choose the abovementioned neighborhoods as their place of residence. Hence,

many Brazilians approached the more experienced Portuguese community for information and for work in the construction business or the cleaning industry (Rosenfeld, Marcelle, & Rea, 2010).

Today, the Brazilian influence in this contact zone within Brussels is very visible. During special occasions, such as carnival or the World Championship, it is impossible not to notice all the Brazilian flags hanging out of the windows in the neighborhood. There are also a lot of Brazilian churches in the area, ranging from Catholic to Evangelical or Pentecostal (Mareels, 2010). Moreover, several bars and restaurants have a Brazilian name or display references to Brazilian identity in their decoration, such as the Brazilian flag, or pictures of Brazilian football players or artists. Additionally, the Brazilian associations that are active in the neighborhood contribute to the visibility of the Brazilian presence in the city. The goals of the existing associations are very diverse, ranging from providing socio-juridical help to Brazilian migrants to organizing cultural events (Zavataro, & Schrooten, 2012).

The Brazilian influence in the area around the South station is also noticeable in the ethnic bars and shops, which are mainly owned by Portuguese and Spanish entrepreneurs. The arrival of Brazilians has encouraged shop keepers to adapt their strategy to better fit the expectations of their new customers. Many entrepreneurs are able to address their Brazilian clients in Portuguese. Some shop owners are even competing over the Brazilian clients, trying to find products other shops do not offer. Many have started importing Brazilian products from wholesalers in Portugal, the Netherlands and Germany and are advertising in the magazines that are spread around Brazilians living in Belgium, such as 'ABClassificados', 'Brasil Etc.' and 'Brazuca'. Silvana has witnessed the changes within the neighborhood during the past 17 years:

> The Portuguese are fond of everything that is Brazilian. Because the Brazilian community is enormous. And they consume a lot more than any other community. So they sell Brazilian products. There are many shops, shops where you can buy clothes. And I remember when this business started

> where you could send money to Brazil. The first to organize this was a Spanish company. [...] Now you find Brazilian products everywhere. The night shops, the cybercafés, everybody is selling products from Brazil. (Silvana, personal interview, 15 April 2010)

Some bars and restaurants also adapted their music, food and drinks to the Brazilian public, especially to migrants coming from the states of Goiás and Minas Gerais (Moraes, 2010). These bars also play an important role in providing social capital to recently arrived Brazilians – as business owners often give support to people struggling to find work or housing – and in crossing boundaries between Brazilians and other migrants living in the neighborhood, as some bars are frequented not only by Brazilians, but also by Portuguese, Spanish or Moroccan customers. During the World Cup in 2010, several of these customers of other nationalities joined the Brazilians to watch the matches of the Brazilian national football team, dressed up in the colors of the Brazilian flag.

However, this does not mean that there are no ethnic boundaries between Brazilians and other migrant groups in Brussels. In fact, the relationship between the different migrant communities is rather ambivalent. Similar to the findings of Feldman-Bianco (2001) and Machado (2009) in their work on Brazilians in Portugal, I also discovered antagonisms and colonial feelings behind the apparent friendly relationships between Brazilians and Portuguese in Brussels. As Wislane, a 45-year-old Brazilian woman who is married to a Portuguese man, describes: 'Portuguese and Brazilians have a bigger history together. My whole life ..., if you had told me that I would meet a Portuguese here, I would have said: "God, help me".' (Wislane, personal interview, 27 March 2011).

Many Portuguese maintain a certain distance from Brazilians and many Brazilians are quite suspicious of the Portuguese. In their research on Brazilian construction workers in Brussels, Rosenfeld, Marcelle and Rea (2010) found that a lot of Brazilian men working in construction had Portuguese bosses. The Brazilians often complained about exploitation and some of them perceived their situation as a reproduction of colonial boundaries. Also within the private atmosphere, the same

feelings of exploitations are present, as illustrated by Dije, who migrated to Belgium in the beginning of 2010:

> There are a lot of people here, not only Brazilians but a lot of others as well, who marry ... or rather, who buy marriages. There is also a market out there. They generally marry Portuguese. But this is also complicated because you get married, you pay. In general, it costs some 5000 euro, they charge it for the wedding. So you pay. And then this person, you don't know this person, you don't know if it is a good person. There are some cases I've heard of, of people who ask for money all the time. And if you don't give to them, they report you to the police or the town hall. So you lose your papers. Or if this person has debts, you also have to pay his debts. There are a lot of issues, it's very complicated. (Dije, personal interview, 22 April 2010)

Despite the fact that one cannot walk around in Brussels without bumping into Brazilians, until recently the presence of Brazilians remained largely hidden to the Belgian population. When I talked to other Belgians about my research on Brazilians, many were surprised about the high number of Brazilians living in the country and had never really noticed their presence in Brussels. However, during the last years, Brazil is getting more and more attention in the Belgian media. In 2010, a television program, called *'Brazilië voor beginners'* (Brazil for beginners), in which ten famous Belgians travelled to Brazil to report on the Brazilian situation with respect to their area of expertise, was broadcast on the Flemish television. Moreover, in 2011, Europalia, an international arts festival held every two years to celebrate one invited country's cultural heritage, turned its spotlights on Brazil. From October to February, the festival offered a program consisting of Brazilian music, fine arts, photography, cinema, theatre, dance and literature. The upcoming events of the World Youth Days (2013), the World Cup of Football (2014) and the Olympic Games (2016) that will all take place in Brazil, as well as the economic growth of Brazil are also regularly discussed in the Belgian media. Still, most Belgians continue to associate Brazil

with carnival, football, exotic food, partying people, sensual women, samba, beaches and violence.

It is interesting to notice that those shop keepers and restaurant owners that want to attract Belgian customers often reify and reduce the 'Brazilian identity' in order to fit this exotic image Europeans have of Brazil (Machado, 2009) and giving their products an aura of a 'Brazilian experience'. When looking deeper into this 'Brazilian experience', we see however that they promote a superficial consumption of Brazilian products rather than a real introduction to Brazilian culture. We can ask ourselves to what extent these shop keepers and their customers are really interested in boundary crossing or are only enjoying Brazil's 'five minutes of fame' on the international panorama.

Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that the introduction of a 'border perspective' provides a different way to think about the influence of migrants on a local space and the (trans)formation of symbolic boundaries that takes place. The international character of Brussels as the capital of Europe and its ethnic diversity due to the high proportion of foreign residents make Brussels exemplary for the fact that cosmopolitan cities are important cultural crossroads. In local spaces such as the area around the South station in Brussels, symbolic boundaries that crisscross the daily lives of its residents are constantly renegotiated and (trans)formed.

Conceiving of the symbolic boundaries that divide people into different categories at different times as something that is constructed, negotiated and viewed from 'below', in and through everyday practice, provides a way to present a more nuanced view on migrants' experience of belonging or non-belonging (see also the analysis of Barth, 1969). As we have seen, the contact zone where many Brazilian migrants residing in Brussels live, is a site of real and intense 'transformations' and cross-cultural interaction. Yet, at the same time, existing boundaries are not completely erased, and new boundaries are also formed.

Most Brazilians I talked to said for example that they had very few relationships with Belgians. With the exception of Brazilian students, who meet Belgians during their university classes, the network of most Brazilian migrants consisted almost exclusively of other Brazilians.

Also within the Brazilian immigrant scene, several fault lines are observable. Therefore, it would be too strong to state that these migrants have formed a Brazilian 'community' in Belgium. On the contrary, existing fault lines in Brazil, such as class and educational differences, are reproduced in Belgium. The confrontation with 'boundaries' is thus not an experience that is only limited to the relationship of migrants with other migrant communities or the autochthonous population of their new country of residence. Also within the own immigrant scene, social constructions about insiders and outsiders are present.

Chapter 6

Living across borders: the everyday experiences of Moroccan and Brazilian transmigrants in Belgium

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Living across borders: the everyday experiences of Moroccan and Brazilian transmigrants in Belgium

Abstract: Based on research amongst Brazilian and Moroccan temporary residents of the cities of Brussels and Antwerp (Belgium), this article engages with the changes in, and current methodological approaches to migration studies. By demonstrating how the trajectories of many contemporary migrants are marked by ongoing mobility, it further complicates previous linear and uni-directional models of migration to move beyond a classical and potentially deterministic model of studying migrant trajectories. The authors illustrate how many contemporary migrants come and go, not always being sure how long they will stay in the different stop-overs on their trajectories, when they will stop migrating, or where they will eventually settle. Because of the temporality of their residence in a certain country, many of these so-called 'transmigrants' are not only faced with the same problems and challenges as other migrants, arriving newly in another country and rebuilding social networks, but are additionally confronted with a number of risks that are related to their mobile lifestyle. Although globalization and the porosity of nation-state borders facilitate transmigration, they also result in juridical and practical complexities, reflected in transmigrants' everyday struggles. The authors explore these struggles and the difficulties and opportunities transmigrants encounter when they turn to their (transnational) networks to ask for support. Transmigrants' social life is not only oriented towards their country of residence, but consists of complex networks beyond boundaries. Through visits, telephone calls and the use of social media many transmigrants create, sustain and (re)discover transnational as well as local social networks. While many address their transnational networks to partly alleviate their needs, the development of local networks still appears as indispensable.

Keywords: Belgium, Brazilian transmigrants, Moroccan transmigrants, social networks, transmigration, transnationality

Introduction

The classical picture of migration as a unidirectional movement, whereby migrants 'uproot themselves, leave behind home and country, and face the painful process of incorporation into a different society and culture' (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1995, p. 48), is no longer tenable today. Contemporary migration scholars have amply recognized that present-day migration takes place in a globalized world, characterized by the gradual development of 'economic, cultural, social and political interconnections and processes which routinely transcend national boundaries' (Yeates, 2001, p. 4). Rapid technological development, interconnected trade relations and a revolution in communication are increasingly interconnecting individuals and places, giving a new impetus to human mobility (Audebert, & Doraï, 2010; Bauman, 2000; Castles, & Miller, 2009; Urry, 2007). In this context, migration has come to be seen as an ongoing and complex process, whereby migrants remain connected to multiple localities, forging relations, spaces and networks which transcend the confines of local and national borders. This article engages with these changes in, and current methodological approaches to migration studies. By exploring the narratives of Brazilian and Moroccan migrants in Belgium, it demonstrates how the trajectories of many contemporary migrants are marked by ongoing mobility. Not only do these migrants often cross geographical nation-state borders, they must also negotiate a variety of other borders – geographic, racial, oceanic, linguistic, cultural, institutional and familial. Through an exploration of these people's lives across borders, the article further complicates previous linear and uni-directional models of migration to move beyond a classical and potentially deterministic model of studying migrant trajectories.

The mobile conception of migration has been captured by newly developed concepts, which stress the transnational character of migrant experiences and focus on the impact of ongoing mobility and border-crossing activities in migrants' daily lives (Adey, Bissell, Hannam, Merriman, & Sheller, 2013; Beck, & Beck-Gernsheim, 2014; Cresswell, 2006; Glick Schiller, & Salazar, 2013). In our research, we use the term 'transmigration' to distinguish our respondents as a specific group of migrants. 'Transmigration' is generally used to describe two characteristics of contemporary migration patterns. The first characteristic (also captured under the concept of transnationality), refers to migrants' maintenance of durable ties across boundaries, resulting in the establishment of transnational spaces, communities and networks (Faist, 2010). Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc (1995, p. 48) define transmigrants as those migrants who, in their everyday lives, 'forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement'. The maintenance of transnational connections is highly facilitated by advances in transportation and in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and by the rapid evolvement of applications for using and accessing these technologies. Various communication modes, such as mobile telephony, the Internet (including Skype and social media) and digital broadcasts, have become increasingly central for trans-border interaction (Schrooten, 2012a).

A second important characteristic of transmigration is the multiple border crossings and permanent mobility of many present-day migrants who come and go; not always being sure how long they will stay in the different stop-overs on their trajectories, when they will stop migrating, or where they will eventually settle (Schrooten, Geldof, & Withaeckx, 2015; Schrooten, & Lamote, 2013). Motivations for this temporality may be intrinsic (e.g. returning to the country of origin, joining relatives in another country, finding work in another country) or extrinsic (this includes legal barriers which only allow a temporal stay in the country, such as being on a student visa, rejection of a claim for refugee status or the granting of a temporary status). The term transmigrants can also be used to refer to transient migrants who follow an essentially linear migration trajectory with a specific destination in mind, but who for a variety of reasons spend some time in other locations

before moving on to their actual destination (van den Ameele, Keygnaert, Rachidi, Roelens, & Temmerman, 2013). In sum, transmigration may be defined as 'the lived condition of straddling borders, whether by choice or by necessity' (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010, p. 233). It can be experienced by a wide range of migrants, either as a permanent way of life or as a passing or recurring stage in the life cycle. Transmigrants comprise a large variety of migrants, differing in their motives of migration, their residence statutes, the nature of their migration trajectories, and the intensity to which they engage with their transnational contacts.

To delineate the scope of our research, we chose to include a third aspect to this definition of transmigration. This article therefore also focuses on those transmigrants who find themselves in socially vulnerable situations. To this extent, we wanted to retain the 'class distinction between "migrants" and "cosmopolitan nationals"' or expats (Bryceson, & Vuorela, 2002, p. 11), whereby the latter – often higher educated and financially well-off – possessing more agency in their migration decision-making, are often actively sought after by receiving countries, and benefit from financial and residential privileges. We thus follow Pries (2004, p. 31) when he states that many transmigrants 'are not the new sovereign cosmopolitans who move freely and voluntarily between different locales, places and opportunities without problems'. The transmigrants we examine have less agency and limited privileges.

This article discusses the everyday experiences of Brazilian and Moroccan transmigrants currently residing in Belgium, with a focus on their day-to-day anxieties and struggles and the strategies they use to meet their needs. It discusses how transmigration manifests itself in their migration trajectories, enquires into the increasing practical and juridical complexities resulting from multiple border-crossings, and explores the transnational and local networks to which transmigrants turn to ask for support. The article draws on interview data collected during ongoing research on urban social work with transmigrants in Belgium. The research made use of a qualitative, mixed-methods research design, as this allowed for a profound exploration of individual transmigrants' migration histories and experiences. From February to December 2014, semi-open in-depth interviews were held

with 31 Moroccan and fifteen Brazilian respondents, in addition to sixteen interviews with Brazilian transmigrants that earlier took place for the PhD research of one of the authors.[1] We selected respondents who were recent residents of Belgium (and who were within a maximum period of five years in residence), living in the cities of Antwerp or Brussels (two relatively large and diverse cities in Belgium). Topics discussed in the interviews concerned the respondents' migration trajectories, the impact of multiple border crossings on their daily life and the strategies they used to face their day-to-day anxieties and struggles, including the use of social media. In conjunction with these interviews, we organized focus groups with social work organizations and discussed their experiences with transmigrants. Brazilians and Moroccans form two markedly different migrant communities, each with a specific migration history in Belgium. Therefore, before discussing the results of our research, we briefly contextualize Moroccan and Brazilian migration to Belgium. Comparisons between these populations bring to light differing and corresponding patterns of transmigration and problem-solving strategies.

A focus on Moroccan and Brazilian transmigrants in Belgium

Moroccans constitute the largest immigrant community in Belgium with an estimated 429,580 persons of Moroccan descent (or 3.9 per cent of the total population) residing on Belgian soil (Schoonvaere, 2014, p. 12). Moroccan labour immigration was formally organized by the Belgian government in the 1960s. The recruitment of foreign – Moroccan and Turkish – labourers was seen as a temporary measure to meet the demands of the booming industry in the 1960s. Temporary and circular migration turned into permanent settlement when in the 1970s European countries started adopting stricter immigration policies. Unwilling to return to unpromising political and economic conditions in Morocco, many labour migrants chose to settle permanently in Belgium. Although the so-called 'migration stop' decreed in the 1970s closed the doors to further labour migration, the Moroccan

[1] In-depth interviews were also conducted with fourteen Ghanaian transmigrants, but as the analysis of these interviews is still ongoing, they are not included in this article.

presence in Belgium further increased via family reunification and marriage migration (De Haas, 2007; Reniers, 1999). Since the start of the economic crisis in 2008, an important – but as yet unregistered – influx of Moroccans from Spain, Italy and Greece has been reported (Dierckx, & Van Dam, 2013). The number of South European Moroccans arriving in Belgium has yet to be captured in census statistics. Moreover, many of the emigrating Moroccans have obtained a European passport, which makes it difficult to ascertain how many incoming South Europeans were of Moroccan descent. Recent research reveals however that a significant number of emigrating Spaniards were born in Morocco (Vanduynslager, Gonzalez Garibay, De Cuyper, & Wets, 2013).

Existing research on Moroccan migration in Belgium often focuses on questions of integration and identification, enquiring into (changing) social, cultural and religious (Muslim) values among the settled Moroccan population (Smits, Ruiter, & Van Tubergen, 2010; Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, & Crul, 2003). More recently, scholars have begun to explore transnational activities and identifications among Belgian Moroccans (Saaf, Sidi Hida, & Aghbal, 2009; Vancluysen, & Van Craen, 2011). Nevertheless, the differing experiences of recent Moroccan immigrants to Belgium and the impact of multiple border crossings on their needs and well-being remain as yet largely unexplored.

Along with Moroccans, Brazilians constitute the second group we focus on in this article. Although Brazilian migration was for a long time restricted to internal, intra-continental and a few trans-continental destinations, starting in the 1980s, Europe also became an important migration destination for Brazilian migrants (Marcus, 2008; Padilla, 2006b). Brazilian immigration into Belgium started in the 1960s with the arrival of a small number of political refugees who fled the military regime, as well as some artists, football players, and students. Due to political changes in Brazil, many of these migrants returned to Brazil from the 1980s onward. The economic crisis in Brazil around the 1990s encouraged a second Brazilian migration wave to Belgium. This wave gradually intensified, possibly as the result of the changed immigration policies of the United States after 9/11 and, subsequently, of the United Kingdom after the terrorist attacks in London in 2005 (Góis,

Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009; Rosenfeld, Marcelle, & Rea, 2010; Schrooten, 2012b).

The presence of Brazilian migrants in Belgium is facilitated by bilateral agreements between Belgium and Brazil, allowing Brazilian nationals to enter Belgium without previously having to request a visa. Many among them remain within the Schengen associated countries after the allowed tourist stay of 90 days. Although Brazilian migration to Belgium is relatively recent and much smaller compared to Moroccan migration figures, with an estimated 10,000 to 60,000 Brazilian migrants living in Belgium (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009), Brazilian policy makers, the Ministry of the Brussels-capital region and the International Organization for Migration have all referred to this migration as an important trend (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009; Ministerie van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, 2008; Pedroso, 2011).

Trajectories of transmigration

Our respondents' narratives reveal the increasingly complex migration trajectories manifest in their transmigration experiences. Rather than following a linear trajectory from one country of origin to a desired country of destination, the majority had passed through other locations before arriving in Belgium. Their presence in third countries ranged from some weeks or months to numerous years. The reasons for this ongoing mobility were diverse. Although some transmigrants explicitly chose a mobile lifestyle, the patterns of transmigration in many respondents' narratives showed that transmigration is often an unintended process and a phase which might end, but could just as well start over depending on their circumstances. These circumstances could relate to work, but also to financial, legal or social matters.

Among our respondents, numerous migration trajectories reflected the growing importance of internal movements within the European Union. Many of these movements were instigated by the economic crisis: for these migrants, who initially

settled in Southern-European countries, further migration was prompted by the need to seek better opportunities and life circumstances by a subsequent move further north. For many of them, this new migration was unintended, as they had lived in Southern Europe for numerous years and had expected to settle there permanently. The unexpected new migration to Belgium thus turned previously settled migrants into transmigrants, and their previous locations into 'transit places' (Schapendonk, & Steel, 2014). Several of the Moroccan respondents, for example, had left Spain, fleeing the devastating effects of the economic crisis. The Moroccan presence in Spain was largely initiated by geographic proximity and relatively easy access (visa requirements were not installed until 1991), making Moroccans the largest and fastest growing immigrant community in Spain. As the economic crisis worsened, they were also the first to be affected by the growing unemployment and poverty (Arango, & González Quiñones, 2009). Their ensuing move to Belgium was often influenced by the advice and promised support of transnational networks of family and friends in Belgium, thereby reinforcing patterns of family reunification and chain migration which have historically characterized Moroccan settlement in Europe (De Haas, 2007).

Thouriya's story exemplifies one of the complex transmigration trajectories which numerous other Spanish-Moroccans may experience. Thouriya emigrated as a young girl from Morocco to Spain, joining the increasing work force of female labour migrants employed in the Spanish service sector (De Haas, 2007). After meeting and marrying her Moroccan husband in Spain, her stay there seemed to have become permanent, although she had spent her first years as an illegal resident:

> I was working as a nanny with a mixed couple, Arab and German. They lived in Morocco and I worked for them, I looked after the children. But every year they went to Spain, because he has a house in Marbella, on the beach. And I came with them. And I found a job in Marbella, and I stayed. I worked for them for nine years. And I stayed in Spain, I found my husband there (Moroccan woman, 42 years old).

Although Thouriya and her husband lived through the economic crisis in Spain relatively well – both were still employed – they moved to Belgium following the advice of her husband's relatives. For Thouriya and her husband, the decision to move was largely determined by the social networks they had in place in Belgium, which facilitated their settlement in the new country.

This process of 're-orientation' (whereby migrants engage in further migration across different host countries in Europe rather than returning to their homeland) also took place among Brazilians. A number of Brazilians residing in Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain or Italy), also chose to re-orient their migration within the European continent, rather than returning to Brazil, while not having met their original goals (Fernandes, Faria, & Da Silva, 2012). Another woman by the name of Aparecida, a Brazilian transmigrant living in Spain, posted the following comment in an online community primarily focused on Brazilian migrants in Belgium. The post is illustrative of the concerns she has in Spain around unemployment, which is also complicated by her anxieties about a possible imminent departure to Belgium to find job opportunities:

> People, I would like to hear your opinion, you who are living over there... This is what is going on; the only country I migrated to until now is Spain. I have been here for 8 years already, but I lost my job now, just like 5 million Spanish. Things are really bad over here now and I feel very discouraged. The thing is that I have the Spanish nationality and that I don't know if it will really help me to find a job over there, because I speak neither English nor French, and even less Flemish. Only Portuguese and Spanish. Do you think it is an illusion to leave Spain and try to find something over there without even knowing the language? Please, I need you to be realistic in your answer. Lots of thanks to everyone who will respond (Brazilian woman living in Spain). (Schrooten, 2012b)

Besides economic- or employment-related reasons, a migrant's decision to migrate can also be influenced by differences in national immigration laws. Other factors include the strength of a migrant's transnational networks, which may also guide choices to leave one destination and to resettle in another. Transnational marriage, for example, may prompt cross-border relations and activate stronger social ties between families and friends who may in turn be located in different parts of Europe. Migration may also reflect a person's conscious strategies to avoid stringent laws on marriage and family reunification in EU-member states. As these laws may considerably differ between EU-member states, movements across nation-state borders may form a solution when the procedures in one locality appear insurmountable. Until 2011, legalities around bringing family members from one country to another were less rigid in Belgium than in the neighbouring country of the Netherlands. In 2009-2010, the Netherlands introduced income conditions for marriage and family reunification (Pascouau, & Labayle, 2011). This encouraged a number of Dutch-Moroccan residents to move to Belgium where the facilitation of migration was less encumbered by such conditions (until 2011). This particular migration trend became informally known (somewhat cynically and facetiously) among Dutch-Moroccans and in political debates as 'the Belgium-route'.[2] This 'route' took the form of migration from the Netherlands to Belgium with many Moroccans moving to Belgium as EU-citizens to marry a Moroccan partner (still residing in Morocco), who because of this marrage was allowed to live in Europe. Aya for example, had migrated from Morocco to the Netherlands when she was 15 years old but, following the advice of her Belgian nieces, decided to emigrate to Belgium to marry her future husband, who was living in Morocco. She states:

> Actually, it was not my choice [to move to Belgium]. I was still studying in the Netherlands and we thought it would be easier through Belgium, because in

[2] The term 'Belgium-route' was first coined by the Dutch association Stichting buitenlandse partner (Association Foreign partner), which defends the right of Dutch nationals to marry a foreign partner and bring him/her unencumbered to the Netherlands. In 2005, the association first published a 'Handbook for the Belgium-route' on its website, specifying how Dutch citizens could facilitate their marriage with a foreign partner by moving to Belgium. The term was consequently adopted in political as well as popular discourses on migration.

> the Netherlands there are a lot of rules, you really need to have a good salary to get your husband in. So me and my nieces, we thought to do it through Belgium, my nieces really helped me a lot (Moroccan woman, 24 years old).

Moreover, marriage migration appeared not to be limited to partners residing in Morocco. As the social and familial networks of Moroccan migrant families span the whole European continent (and beyond), marriage partners may often be found in other European countries. Transmigration thus may be the logical consequence of the transnational life-style of many present-day migrants, and reflect the intensive ties maintained across national boundaries. At the same time, many patterns of transmigration are often not that well planned. Transmigrants often combine different strategies, or sometimes settle 'by accident'. Their migrations patterns are influenced by their social networks in Europe, and sometimes the decisions are less clear-cut.

> I came to Belgium as an au pair. My sister lived in Spain, and I visited her when my niece was born. From Spain, I searched a job as au pair. I had selected several countries, like Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria… […] Actually, Belgium chose me. The family contacted me, I was speaking with an English woman, but the Belgian family already sent me the contract, they were faster. I hadn't even heard about Belgium (Brazilian woman, 24 years old).

> I had been in Germany before. […] Last year, I wanted to go to Europe for a longer time. I have a sister who was living in Spain then, and before she was in Portugal. She married a Brazilian with Portuguese residence status, they married and went to Spain, where they opened a bar. […] I had already resigned from my job in Brazil, when she suddenly said "I think we'll go back to Brazil […] because there's a crisis in Spain and we'll have to close the bar".

> And I thought "Oh no, now what?" And then, I asked a Brazilian in Belgium if I could come there… (Brazilian man, 26 years old).

While most respondents had passed through (many) other locations before arriving in Belgium, their settlement in Belgium was not necessarily the end of the migration trajectory. Some respondents considered migrating to other destinations, for a variety of reasons, such as seeking better opportunities if circumstances in Belgium proved too hard, or simply out of a sense of adventure and curiosity. For some, Belgium was originally just a country of transit on their way to the United Kingdom or another country. Nevertheless, staying in Belgium sometimes seemed a more attractive option to those who hoped to be able to finally settle down for a more stable life. Furthermore, the presence of children was a strong incentive to strive towards permanent settlement. Some respondents expressed being tired of migrating, and hoped that Belgium could be their 'final stop'.

The influence of transmigration on everyday life

Transmigration may give rise to a host of practical, administrative and juridical problems, which, especially for socially vulnerable transmigrants, adds more hardship and complexity to their migration experience. When asked about their day-to-day experiences, many respondents enumerated several difficulties they encountered, such as family separation, the difficult search for (official) jobs and housing, the barrier constituted by an unknown language, experiences of racism and discrimination and, especially for undocumented migrants, the stresses and fears resulting from their legal status or lack thereof. They also faced additional difficulties related to their position as transmigrants. In this article, we highlight two key themes that our interviewees emphasized as sources of worry and anxiety, namely the insecurity of their residence status and the juridical complexities related to their border-crossing trajectory. Both these themes were often intertwined.

Many of our interviewees discussed their residence status as a source of anxiety. Many did not possess a legal residence permit. This finding corresponds with earlier research on Brazilian migrants in Belgium, which illustrates that the official census statistics largely underestimate the actual size of the Brazilian community, which is (unofficially) estimated between 10,000 and 60,000 migrants, compared to a population of 5,324 officially registered as resident Brazilians in Belgium in January 2010 (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009; Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2011; Université Catholique de Louvain & Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en voor Racismebestrijding, 2011). The number of Moroccans residing illegally in Belgium is equally difficult to estimate, but is said to comprise 'a few thousand' (Schoonvaere, 2014, p. 23). The lack of a legal residence status makes it difficult for these transient migrants to find decent jobs, and gain access to appropriate housing, medical care and social support. Some informants also shared their fears about being arrested and deported.

Undocumented transmigrants have almost no social rights and support. Yet obtaining legal residence status does not automatically protect them from suffering severe hardships. Transmigrants moving from other EU-countries to Belgium often find themselves in a precarious legal and social position, due to the peculiar status accorded to 'long-term residents'. Non-EU nationals who acquire a permanent residence status in EU-countries benefit from acquiring a 'free movement for workers', and this effectively allows them to settle in any member state on the condition they are employed or pursuing studies. However, depending on their residence status and the circumstances surrounding their social rights in the former country, transmigrants may be excluded from welfare and unemployment benefits in the receiving country. Some working transmigrants have found it difficult to obtain entitlements, such as unemployment benefits. This is because different national administrative bodies within a country require specific information about employment status in other countries and this may take time to obtain. As a result, EU-transmigrants who move to Belgium and who may, after a time, lose their job may find themselves in the unfortunate situation of being without any financial or

social support. This was the case for Fouad who did not qualify for unemployment benefits in Belgium:

> I have no unemployment benefit, no social support, no income. I get nothing. Nevertheless, I have worked in Spain for 15 years, here I worked 1 year and 2 months, and I get nothing. They said I need to work more. At first they gave me child benefits, and now they took that away too (Moroccan man, 50 year old).

The lack of formal financial and social support puts these transmigrants under pressure to find work and maintain their employment for a sufficient time in order to acquire an income and strengthen their social rights. Excluded from social services and provisions, finding a job and an independent income source is of paramount importance for transmigrants, yet simultaneously forms a source of incessant stress.

Our respondents also raised other administrative and juridical problems related to their voluntary or involuntary multiple border-crossings. For example, transnational couples could face a range of juridical complexities as a consequence of differing matrimonial laws, which could impact on their circumstances differently depending on their nationality, the location of marriage and their place of residence (Sportel, 2011). Paula, a Brazilian woman of 37, for example, had difficulties with her documents when she divorced her Swedish husband whom she had met during an earlier stay in Europe. They had married in Brazil but moved to Belgium because of a job opportunity he was offered:

> When we came here, I had a residence permit on the grounds of family reunification. When I divorced my ex-husband, the city council refused to change my residence permit, although I had the right to obtain other documents. We had lived in other places as well when we were married and this complicated things enormously. It also resulted in many other problems (Brazilian woman, 37 years old).

This example illustrates how enduring links in other countries may produce additional problems. Transmigrants may be obliged to travel back and forth between countries in order to settle administrative issues. Noor, for example, lost a job in the process of doing this as she had to return to Spain to arrange her divorce.

> Before, I was married with a Spaniard. The lawyer told me: "Noor, on January 17, you need to be here to sign". I paid this lawyer 1500€, and I wouldn't go? [...] My employer told me "If you go, you will not return to your job here." What could I do? I went, I signed, I stayed for five days. When I came back, I found out he had fired me (Moroccan woman, 40 years old).

Even after settling in a new country, transmigrants may 'commute' between multiple locations, which may sometimes facilitate but also complicate their everyday life.

Finding support

In our research, we asked our respondents about their transnational and local social networks, and the extent in which these networks could help them deal with their everyday struggles. In other studies on migration, social networks are generally considered an important form of social capital for migrants, allowing access to different types of information, resources and support (Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008). While the temporality and insecurity which characterizes transmigration hampers the establishment of solid local networks, transmigration may also be an asset. For instance, in the absence of local resources, transnational networks can offer indispensable support and hence are considered an important form of social capital. It is not surprising, therefore, that many respondents referred to their transnational networks as an important source of support. Most of them had extended networks spanning national boundaries and maintained them through regular contact on (mobile) phones, social media or through visits (Schrooten, 2012a). In

many ways it could be said that this familial support was simultaneously distant and close. The use of media technologies at once assisted and strained the maintenance of transmigrants' social ties between geographically disparate families and individuals.

Of course, media technologies are a universal tool and not just confined to transmigrants' everyday uses. A study by Madianou and Miller (2012) demonstrates how parents and children who are separated, due to migration, use new media to maintain long-distance relationships (in this case between the Philippines and the United Kingdom). Amongst our respondents, transnational networks were crucial in times when emotional support was necessary. Our respondents often expressed feelings of loneliness and homesickness. While communication and social contact through visits and on social media helped to ease these feelings, these networks were also a source of practical and financial support. Parents, siblings, relatives or friends represented important contacts as they were able to assist with handling administrative issues in the transmigrant's former country, including sending and delivering documents to relevant organisations. Paula, a 37 year old Brazilian woman who faced many relational, financial and emotional difficulties in Belgium, relied on her friends and relatives abroad as a strong source of support:

> In the beginning I mainly talked to them through Skype and I sent them e-mails. But now, I use Facebook. It's ridiculous. Every day, every day we talk. When I need emotional support, I get it from the people abroad. Not from the people here, but from abroad. And technology helps a lot. It's so easy, very easy, you can do it all on your phone. I received a lot of psychological help through the phone (Brazilian woman, 37 years old).

Transnational contacts were also significant for Moroccan migrants in Belgium. Vancluysen and Van Craen (2011) report that 46 per cent of Moroccan migrants have weekly contact with their family in Morocco by phone or Internet, and that 60 per cent return to Morocco for visits at least once a year. Most Moroccan re-

spondents in our research maintained intensive contact with close relatives in other countries, making use of new technologies and social media like Skype and Facebook, or benefiting from the special offers of telephone providers in Belgium who specifically target the Moroccan population. Visits were also commonplace, but conditional on financial availability and whether their residence status permitted mobility. Despite these contacts, emotional support across boundaries also had its limits, as respondents were often reluctant to fully disclose the hardships they encountered in Belgium to prevent upsetting relatives or friends. Some claimed others would not understand their situation, and therefore they avoided such discussions. Research also suggests that the usefulness of transnational ties may be limited, as these connections ultimately cannot replace the 'practical, hands-on support and assistance' which only local networks can provide (Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008).

Despite their temporality, transmigrants often develop local social networks in their countries of arrival and/or transition. Studies point to the ways ethnic ties are considered an important form of social capital for recent migrants. In the absence of formal support, these local ties can become the most important form of social capital, as they provide access to necessary resources, advice and contacts (Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008). For transmigrant Brazilians, the call upon informal networks of relatives or upon the larger community (cultural or religious) was quite strong. This call for assistance sometimes even started prior to arriving in Belgium. In their considerations to migrate to Belgium, many Brazilians used social networking sites such as Facebook to trace and make contact with other Brazilian migrants who were already in their new place of residence. Schrooten (2012a) describes how, in many cities all over the world with a significant number of Brazilian migrants, these migrants have formed online migrant communities on social networking sites such as Facebook. These communities often provide a variety of social capital, both online and offline, which assists in the process of transition to a new community. In online migrant communities, it is often recently arrived Brazilians who raise many of the forum topics about their circumstances and the challenges

they are confronted with during their settlement in the city and their day-to-day experiences.

We found that the reality was starkly different for Moroccan transmigrant communities. Moroccan respondents' online engagement was practically non-existent. This was primarily suggestive of their contrasting circumstances to Brazilian transmigrants. Research indicates that Moroccan migrants' patterns of mobility can be categorised as a form of chain migration (Heering, van der Erf, & van Wissen, 2004), referring to the social processes where families follow one another from one country to another, and whereby contacts are mostly pre-established with known relatives and friends. For our Moroccan respondents, we found that their local networks were restricted to a small number of acquaintances. This situation often underscored their vulnerable circumstances, particularly in cases where promises of support prior to their migration were then withdrawn upon arrival. As one research participant explains:

> I wanted to stay in Spain, but my husband said "no", because he has a lot of family here [in Belgium]. But when we arrived here, no family. As long as we were there, they were like "Come here, blablabla". And when we came here, nothing. There's nobody to help you (Moroccan woman, 42 years old).

Both Brazilian and Moroccan transmigrants expressed ambiguous feelings about their ethnic networks in Belgium. On the one hand, these networks could offer different kinds of support, including financial, material as well as emotional. Assistance of a material nature, such as sharing a house, seemed especially indispensable for migrants who would otherwise be considered 'illegal' in the country and therefore without any form of residence status or social position. These migrants' exclusion from all formal sources of support and employment meant they were forced to rely on the goodwill of family and friends. As one respondent describes:

> I remember that the father of my daughter shared his apartment with three other persons. There were always minimum eight people sleeping there, because one always brought another one home out of pity. "This one has nowhere to live, this one needs it." (…) No Brazilian sleeps on the street, there's always someone taking him in (Brazilian woman, 37 years old).

Local networks were especially useful in the process of acquiring information and advice concerning administrative requirements, educational opportunities or employment. In this way, these networks functioned as social capital, allowing transmigrants to gain the necessary knowledge, connections and financial resources to meet their basic needs. Despite this assistance, however, solidarity within ethnic communities has its limits. This is because previously existing mechanisms of reciprocity among ethnic communities can also be placed under pressure. Such relations can be constrained by the rise in immigrant statistics and the associated welfare and social support services immigration necessitates. Dierckx and Van Dam (2013) argue that this burden on familial social relations is exacerbated by an increasing individualization and the disrupture of traditional patterns of care and solidarity. The lack of support from ethnic networks was a recurring theme in the interviews, and the need for self-reliance was evident in many of the respondents' comments. Some of our participants also rejected the idea of receiving charity, expressing their desire to make it 'on their own'. Their sense of pride and self-respect prevented them from asking for help and from revealing the real extent of their problems within their social circles.

Moreover, we discovered that social relations with their peers (from a transmigrant's own ethnic group) may also be fraught with suspicion and distrust, and this finding is supported in the literature (Anthias, 2007; Margolis, 1994). In some cases, transmigrants discussed how they felt they had been exploited by people within their own ethnic social networks. These respondents had found employment with people in their ethnic community through their social networks, but faced long working days, and were paid low salaries or no over-time wages. They highlighted instances of insecurity and unpredictability, having to work in precarious

environments, where guarantees of long-term stability were non-existent. Respondents also called attention to examples of internal ethnic prejudice, innuendo and discrimination in their social circles. These examples formed their justification for maintaining their distance from specific networks and for limiting contacts to a restricted circle of acquaintances. In this way, Ryan (2011) has suggested how these ethnic networks may be viewed as 'truncated' and as an impediment, rather than as a form of support, for upward social mobility. A respondent describes what this process meant for her:

> I used to be very involved in the Brazilian community, but I distanced myself now, because I didn't get any support. There's no use talking to them. (...) The European and the Belgian help you from the heart. The Brazilian wants money (Brazilian woman, 37 years old).

Yet, establishing ties with people outside of their immediate ethnic and social environment was difficult for some of our respondents. Language posed the most obvious barrier, but respondents also found it challenging to diversify their networks as they often lived in 'ethnic' neighbourhoods, or were simply too immersed in the struggle to find or keep a job. Contacts outside the ethnic community were therefore often non-existent or limited to superficial contacts with colleagues at work or co-students during educational activities. In addition, some respondents found Belgian people in particular an insular community and therefore difficult to approach.

In some instances, transmigrants also turned to social welfare associations for support and advice. In the absence of well-developed local networks, local welfare associations functioned as key actors in promoting transmigrants' upward social mobility through the variety of support, resources and information they offered (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010). However, several respondents were often not aware of their rights to formal assistance, nor of the existence of the variety of (official or charitable) associations they could approach for support. Some interview-

ees discussed instances where they chose not to contact particular social services for fear of being turned down from welfare assistance, as well as on the basis of their personal negative experience with the service or based on others' hearsay. The lack of formal social support could sometimes be compensated by resorting to informal and ethnic associations. Some social service providers work outside of formal institutional frameworks, and many of these associations offer basic resources, like food and clothes, to those in need, sometimes acting as an intermediary between transmigrants and other institutions. A respondent explains their experience with one service provider:

> These people [a charity association of Morrocan immigrants] visit me from time to time and they help me. They talked to the electricity provider, 'Please be patient, she has problems and will pay when she works'. And also at school, for my daughter, I have to pay a lot of money, they told them 'This lady has problems' (Moroccan woman, 43 years old).

While these assocations are an indispensable source of support for those excluded from social support elsewhere, these associations are also under-financed, often overwhelmed by the demands of those most disadvantaged in society, and rely largely on the assistance of volunteers. Hence, they have been found to only partly and temporarily alleviate transmigrants' welfare needs (Dierckx & Van Dam, 2013).

Conclusion: transmigration and its challenges

This article discussed how the new reality of transmigration manifests itself in migration patterns and the everyday life struggles of Brazilian and Moroccan transmigrants in Belgium. Transmigration is characterized by the maintenance of durable social ties across boundaries, as well as by a condition of permanent cross-border mobility. Although transmigration can be a chosen lifestyle for some, numerous

transmigrants exercise their choices within a macro-context of economic, political and legal frameworks which shape their decision-making. Transmigrants may therefore be socially vulnerable, as temporality and mobility create additional complexities, compounding the 'classical' problems migrants experience in their day-to-day social realities. Migration trajectories are also shaped by transmigrants' embeddedness within transnational networks, which may guide migration decisions towards certain destinations and open up opportunities for support after resettlement.

For the Brazilian and Moroccan respondents in our research, transmigration was manifest in their unpredictable trajectories and unexpected migration, which often transformed their circumstances from relatively 'settled' immigrants in their own right into an alternative and distinct transmigrant re-location or re-orientation. Despite their differing migration histories, transmigration affected both of these communities in unique ways. While Moroccan transmigration grafted itself upon established patterns of chain migration, Brazilian transmigration appears as a new form of migration flow that revealed their pursuance of better opportunities. Although globalization and the relative porosity of nation-state borders – as exemplified by EU-regulations allowing for flexible movement across borders – facilitate transmigration, they also result in juridical and practical complexities, reflected in transmigrants' everyday struggles. While transnational networks can partly alleviate these needs, the development of solid local networks still appears indispensable. Formal and informal welfare associations, as well as the use of social media, play an important role in extending and diversifying these networks.

Transmigration is played out in a globalized context, in which European societies are rapidly transforming into 'migration societies' and cities emerge into 'majority-minority-cities' (Crul, Schneider, & Lelie, 2013; Geldof, 2013b). Adding complexity to this increasing diversity, transmigration poses new challenges, not only for transmigrants themselves, but also for the societies which (temporarily) receive them. The reality of transmigration prompts questions around received notions of migration and integration. It also calls attention to how social service frameworks and social policies are being developed to respond to transmigrants'

specific needs and experiences. As migrants (and citizens) are characterized by multiple and layered identities, transmigration adds multiple geographical spaces and networks to already established national and mainstream identities. In this context, transmigrants can be viewed as contemporary citizens of society, without as yet full and official (contemporary) citizenship to one.

Chapter 7

Transmigration and urban social work: towards a research agenda

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Transmigration and urban social work: towards a research agenda

Abstract: Many Western European countries, and especially the larger cities within these countries, are making a transition towards super-diversity. This shift towards superdiversity is also characterised by a growth of the phenomenon of transmigration, whereby people frequently move back and forth across borders. The social life of transmigrants is not only oriented towards their country of residence, but also consists of complex networks beyond boundaries. Transmigrants constantly shift between different modus operandi and between different visible and invisible, local and global networks. Many transmigrants face a high risk of social vulnerability and are overrepresented in the client population of urban social services. Although much research has been done on transmigration on the one hand, and on international social work on the other hand, the effect of transmigration on social workers and on social work practice is still under-investigated. Based on social work research in Brussels and Antwerp, the authors research the challenges transmigration poses to social work. They demonstrate that there is a difference in perspective between the translocal and transnational lives of transmigrants on the one hand versus the locally rooted practices of social workers on the other hand. Using this analysis as a springboard, they identify a number of avenues for additional inquiry in this field.

Keywords: transnationalism; translocality; transmigration; super-diversity; social work research

Introduction

In what way are transmigrants challenging social work in today's super-diverse cities? What is the impact of transnational networks and temporality of stay on the

relationship between social workers and their clients? What do we know so far, and why do we still know so little about social work with transmigrants? The article attempts to analyse the tension between the translocal and/or transnational lives of transmigrants and the locally rooted and -oriented practices of social workers.

Therefore we first describe the growing importance of transmigration for (Western) European countries and cities in this era of super-diversity. Secondly, we disaggregate the catch-all term of transmigration to be of use for research on the impact of transmigration on social work. In the third section, we explore the challenges transmigrants pose to social work organisations in urban areas, based on our own explorative research in the two largest and super-diverse Belgian cities of Brussels and Antwerp. Finally we propose a research agenda for future research on the relationship between transmigration and social work.

Transmigration in a context of super-diversity

Most West-European countries in the 21st century are making a transition towards super-diversity, especially in the larger cities (Crul, Schneider, & Lelie, 2013; Geldof, 2013b; Vertovec, 2007). First of all this implies a quantitative shift. In the western part of Europe, urban areas continue to serve as the main destination of international migrants. The strong acceleration of migration since the Second World War, and especially since the 1990s due to globalisation and the enlargement of the EU towards the east, has confronted most West-European cities with an increasing diversity. A growing number of these cities are becoming 'majority-minority-cities', where the majority of its inhabitants have roots in migration (measured as inhabitants who were born in another country, or whose mother and/or father is born abroad). Some of them might already live for decades in the city, others might just have arrived.

Furthermore, super-diversity results in an increasing diversity within the diversity. During the last two decades European societies have gone through a crucial change in their migration patterns. Half a century ago, migration towards West-

European countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, France or Germany was initiated by the national authorities. So-called temporary foreign workers were recruited as guest workers in a rather limited number of countries of origin. In today's era of super-diversity, migration comes from all over the world. As a consequence, Western societies and certainly majority-minority cities are characterised by an increasing diversity in nationalities and countries of origin of their inhabitants, an increase of the different languages spoken, religions practised, and so on. We also see an increasing diversity in migration motives, statuses of migrants and socio-economic positions.

Crucial characteristics of super-diversity are the increasing importance of transnational contacts and the development of transnational spaces and communities (Bauböck, & Faist, 2010; Faist, Fauser, & Reisenauer, 2013; Perrin, & Martiniello, 2011; Vancluysen, & Van Craen, 2011; Vertovec, 2007). Many urban residents have roots in migration and are involved in networks that transcend the borders of their country of residence, or even of Europe. It has become a commonplace that 21st century migrants maintain transnational lifestyles, keeping in close touch with their regions of origin and other regions around the world in which significant others have settled. As Schrooten (2012a, p. 1795) argues, 'many migrants sustain family relations or support across national borders, contribute to socio-economic development in their homeland and/or their country of residence, participate actively in communities that span the globe, or enact their political engagement in multiple states'. The rise of world-families is part of this transnationalism (Beck, & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Karraker, 2013).

The development of transnational migration, networks and families has been seen as inherent to the broader phenomenon of globalisation. In its broadest sense, globalisation refers to 'an extensive network of economic, cultural, social and political interconnections and processes which routinely transcend national boundaries' (Yeates 2001, p. 4). Transnational interaction across geographical and political borders is now strongly facilitated by the advances in transportation and in information and communication technologies and by the rapid evolvement of applications for using and accessing these technologies. Various communication

modes, such as mobile telephony, the Internet (including Skype and social media) and digital broadcast, have become increasingly and undeniably central for trans-border interaction (Madianou, & Miller, 2012; Schrooten, 2012a).

Simultaneously, globalisation allows for and produces the development of the phenomenon of transmigration, which implies a continuous movement of people back and forth across borders and further complicates super-diverse societies. Transmigration has been described as a corollary of the changing demands of globalised capitalism, which benefits more from a supply of mobile and flexible migrants than from the permanent settlement of large groups of labour immigrants, as was the case in previous eras (Tarrius, Missaoui, & Qacha, 2013; van Wormer, 2010). Moreover, faced with deteriorating economic and social conditions in sending as well as in receiving countries, these contemporary migrants may be further discouraged to settle permanently, or find full incorporation in their destination countries themselves undesirable (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1995, p. 52). Hence, many contemporary migrants come and go, not always being sure how long they will stay in the different stop-overs on their trajectories, when they will stop migrating, or where they will eventually settle. They travel back and forth as permitted by money, immigration status, and family and employment obligations. Transnational links and networks enable these flexible migration strategies. It is this group of mobile migrants or transmigrants that lies at the focus of this article and of our research.

Transmigration as a new context for urban social work

In order to be able to discuss the challenges of transmigration for urban social work, a definition of this term is required. The term ‘transmigrants’ was first coined by Nina Glick Schiller and her associates (1995), who contended that there was something qualitatively different about present-day immigrations compared with their late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century counterparts. According to Glick Schiller and her colleagues (1995, p. 51), these latter were ‘forced to abandon, forget, or deny their ties to home and in subsequent generations memories of

transnational connections were erased'. Although many migrants in these earlier eras tried to maintain some networks across boundaries, communication over a long distance was difficult and slow.

During the last two decades transnational connections have considerably gained in intensity and significance. The networks, activities and patterns of life of today's immigrants manifestly encompass multiple societies. To capture this novelty, Glick Schiller and her associates introduced the terms 'transmigrants' and 'transnationalism'. While the former refers to migrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state, the latter refers to the process by which migrants build social fields that link these multiple locations (Faist, Fauser, & Reisenauer, 2013).

Thus, in their definition, the main characteristic that distinguishes transmigrants from other migrants is the fact that transmigrants' networks, activities and patterns of life encompass multiple locations. Transmigrants are defined neither by the cause of leaving their country of origin nor by the endpoint of their journey, but rather by 'the lived condition of straddling borders, whether by choice or by necessity' (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010, p. 223). In contrast to the traditional image of migrants as people who stop shifting country boundaries after a while and reinforce their rootedness in the region of arrival, the concept of transmigrants focuses on how present-day migrants adopt a strategy of shifting between and engaging in lives in different places, countries, and cultures.

This multiple international environment is integral to the life of transmigrants. Yet, when using this broad definition of transmigrants, the stage of transmigrancy can be experienced by a wide range of migrants. Many migrants frequently operate beyond the borders of nominally sovereign states. When conceptualising the experiences of transmigrants, it is imperative to account for diversity among different groups. For some, transmigrancy is a (temporary) financial necessity. For others, transmigrancy will only be a temporary stage in their migration process, during which they have intense interaction with their home region before they finally settle abroad. Still others will maintain those connections with the hope of returning

home permanently in the near future. Finally, transmigration may be intentional or the result of failing strategies to settle in a certain country. It might imply long term perspectives, such as is the case for diplomats, expats and religious workers, or short time cross-border activities, such as temporary jobs or projects. Hence, transmigrants represent a diverse assembly of individuals who experience various levels of acceptance in their countries of origin and of residence. Influenced by their ethnicity, class, economic status and gender, 'transmigrants may find equality and even privilege in some areas of their life while experiencing injustice in others' (Mohan, & Clark Prickett, 2010).

Transmigration is a catch-all term which must be disaggregated in various ways to be of use. If we want to analyse the impact of transmigration on social work, we need to use a more narrow definition of transmigrants. First, we keep a clear distinction between transnational contacts or lifestyle on the one hand and transmigration on the other hand. Transmigration implies serial cross-border migration, either between two countries (circular migration between the country of origin and the migration country) or more countries, as is the case with migration trajectories. Transmigration not only differs from more classical migration patterns because it is a form of multiple migrations, but it also implies a higher degree of temporality from the point of view of the migrant. Although transmigrants may settle and stop migrating at a certain moment, for many their actual intention or expectation is not to stay where they live today. Motivations for this temporality may be intrinsic (returning to the country of origin, joining relatives in another country, etc. or extrinsic (legal barriers which only allow a temporal stay in the country, e.g. student visa, a temporary regularization for medical or humanitarian reasons).

Second, to explore the challenge of transmigration for social work, we refer to the international definition of social work (International Federation of Social Workers, 2002), which states that 'the social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being'. Therefore, we limit the scope to those transmigrants who find themselves in a vulnerable position. Not all transmigrants are in vulnerable positions or would benefit from a social work intervention. Expats

or civil servants working for international institutions are mostly not very vulnerable or call for other professionals (lawyers, doctors, therapists, etc.) if they encounter personal problems. We agree with Furman, Negi, & Salvador (2010, p. 5) that, as social work has always been 'the profession that has helped the poorest and most vulnerable people to adapt to major social shifts', contemporary social work should be geared toward those who have been negatively affected by globalisation. The increasing interdependence of nation-states calls for a recognition of the global scope of social problems and their impact on the daily lives of those in need. The altered global context and the changed nature of the nation-state mean that social workers will be increasingly confronted with vulnerable immigrants living transnational lives.

Although many European countries welcome highly skilled migrants, they are much less hospitable to poorly educated migrants. Whereas professional migrants 'have the human and cultural capital to take advantage of opportunities in two settings and voluntarily adapt transnational livelihood strategies' (Levitt, & Jaworsky, 2007, p. 133), these vulnerable migrants 'are pushed into transnational lifestyles' (Levitt, & Jaworsky, 2007, p. 133) because they cannot gain a secure economic foothold neither in their home country nor in their country of residence.

Thus, as Pries (2004, p. 31) correctly states, many transmigrants 'are not the new sovereign cosmopolitans who move freely and voluntarily between different locales, places and opportunities without problems'. On the contrary, they do not only experience the traditional problems other migrants are faced with – such as family separation, marginalization, discrimination, downward social mobility, exploitation and social disruption (Ghorashi, 2003; Jokisch, & Kyle, 2010) – but also are additionally confronted with a number of risks that are specifically related to their mobile life style. Being transmigrant, the possibilities they have to solve such problems might be more limited. For example, the lack of a long-term residence can prevent transmigrants from developing strong support networks. Even more than other migrants, transmigrants often lack support and a safety net in their place of residence.

Because of their flight history and exceptional living circumstances, asylum seekers are possible transmigrants who face a number of specific risks, such as mental or physical health problems (Chantler, 2012; Hadgkiss, & Renzaho, 2014; Schrooten, Van der Sypt, Thiers, & De Decker, 2015). In addition, for those transmigrants who do not have a legal residence status or who are uncertain about securing their residence status, this uncertain legal status is another important potential stressor (Devillé, 2008). This is especially the case for those who often cross national borders and are thus more frequently exposed to the risk of border controls (Martinez-Brawley, & Gualda, 2006). Moreover, legal status also has an impact on housing opportunities and on access to the labour market, health services, public services and social services. Many undocumented transmigrants fall between the cracks of the social safety net and therefore cannot rely on these services.

Finally, in order to analyse the impact on social work, we focus on transmigrants who have only recently – during the last five years – arrived. Research among recently-arrived migrants demonstrates that the types of support required by and available to newly arrived transmigrants are importantly different from those who are well settled. Not only are many recently arrived migrants facing a poorly developed local social network, their transnational contacts are also often limited to affective and emotional ties (Boccagni, 2010; Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008). Although these transnational ties may be resorted to for emotional support and advice, they can less easily provide for 'practical, hands-on support and assistance' (Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008, p. 684). Furthermore, although upward social mobility contributes to an ethnic middle class, many recently arrived transmigrants still face a high risk of poverty and social vulnerability. As a consequence, they are often overrepresented in deprived neighbourhoods and in the client population of social services in most European cities.

Transmigration as a challenge for urban social work

Migrants often find themselves in a vulnerable position regarding economic and social security and are therefore likely to be in need of social welfare assistance.

Research demonstrates that in Belgium, 37% of all migrants of non-European descent are at risk of poverty, compared with 12% of the native-born population (Van Haarlem, Coene, & Lusyne, 2011). It is therefore not surprising that the ethnic diversity of those asking for help at social services has strongly increased in the last decades (Geldof, 2013a). Despite this changing reality, the social sector is underprepared for the large group of clients with roots in migration.

Transmigrancy adds even more complexity to this situation. The reality of transmigrancy presents social work practitioners in contemporary European immigration societies with important challenges. To explore these challenges, we organised two focus groups with social work organisations about their experiences with transmigrants. We selected organisations based on their location and their service user group: we looked for organisations that were based in the two main and super-diverse Belgian cities of Brussels and Antwerp, and whose service user group included transmigrants. We initially approached 34 social work organisations in Flanders and Brussels for an interview. In this interview, we explained our research goals and gained information about the aims and scope of these organisations, and about the range of their service user group. Not all organisations turned out to work with transmigrants as we had defined them, so we selected 15 social work organisations for the focus groups. Out of the 15 social work organisations, 9 were based in Brussels and 6 in Antwerp. The type of services they provided varied strongly, from creating opportunities to allow service users to show their artistic abilities, to offering legal, financial or social support. Some organisations worked exclusively with clients with a non-Belgian nationality, while the service users of other organisations included both Belgians and people with other nationalities.

During the interviews and the focus groups, it became clear that the growing number of transmigrants is posing new challenges to social workers. They struggle with various questions: How can social workers reach these (temporal and mobile) clients? How should they deal with transmigrants' specific welfare needs? In what ways can they take account of the multiple international environments of their clients? How could or should they evaluate the importance of their clients'

networks across borders and include them in their social work practice? How can they provide aftercare services to clients who are so mobile?

While transmigration is becoming an important reality for social work practice in super-diverse contexts, many social work professionals are still unfamiliar with transmigrants and are looking for suitable methods to work with this new target group (Schrooten, & Lamote, 2013). Hunter and her colleagues (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010, p. 222) have argued that the context of transmigration calls for a paradigm shift. They state that in working with transmigrants, social workers 'can no longer pay attention to relationships, resources, structures, laws and history in one locale and not consider the same in another country where the systems may be informed by a significantly different world view for their clients'. The social life of transmigrants is not only oriented towards their new country of residence, but consists of complex networks and contacts beyond boundaries. In order to provide effective social work for this unique population, social workers can no longer solely focus on local and regional problems, but should instead take into account the multiple locations that are relevant to these transmigrants' networks and activities.

For example, should budget and debt counsellors working with transmigrants consider the role and importance of remittances when developing a customised budget and action plan? Their clients' wages may be split between different family members across borders, making the actual income they dispose of, insufficient to cover their expenses (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010, p. 222). How should these social workers evaluate the necessity of the remittances and the consequences on relatives when these remittances diminish or stop?

Legal service providers may be confronted with very complex situations, arising out of differing, sometimes conflicting jurisdictions in the different countries that are of relevance to their clients. Moreover, current laws may not be adapted to the actual transnational lifestyles increasingly led by their clients (Beck, & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Vuille, Bolzman, & Durrett, 2013, p. 415). For example, 'mixed-status families' (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010, p. 226), families in which family members have different legal statuses or are subjected to differing legal jurisdictions, may be faced with competing, and sometimes downright conflicting legal

systems. Think of a Moroccan woman for example, divorcing her Belgian husband, and considering to move with her children to her sister in a small city across the Dutch border, 50 km from where she and her ex-husband were living. Would her ex-husband be able to accuse her of child abduction if he didn't agree with her decision? And what about the different legal systems involved when mixed-status couples want to marry or divorce? Different matrimonial regimes may be applicable, depending on nationality, the location of the marriage and the place of residence of the couple. As Sportel (2011) describes in a case-study on the contradictions between Dutch and Moroccan family law, the application of one or the other legal regime may have important consequences for those concerned.

Cases of domestic violence may not only be complicated by competing jurisdictions, but also by conflicting views concerning gender and family relations across borders. Sustaining transnational ties with families and communities left behind, or the need to reciprocate the support provided by these, has been identified as a motive for forced marriages involving overseas spouses (Werbner, 2007, p. 169). Family members' involvement across borders may also affect the decision-making of victims of spousal violence, when divorce would bring shame on a whole family, or when victims whose transnational marriage has been 'sponsored' by family members, risk to lose their support as a divorce might mean the loss of residence rights (Chantler, Gangoli, & Hester, 2009).

New is also the emergence of social work organisations from countries of origin of transmigrants, which are recently recruited by local authorities in the 'destination' countries of transmigrants. An interesting case in the focus groups was the Polish organisation Barka. Barka organises support programs for homeless Middle and Eastern European migrants in Antwerp. The project started in February 2014 in Antwerp after an invitation from the municipality. Barka tries to help homeless Polish and other Central and Eastern European people who are not coping with life in Antwerp to return to their home countries, either to enter rehab treatments, go back to families, or to Barka Network programs (educational programs, community programs, creating work places and accessible housing programs) in Poland. The demand of the authorities was inspired by the activities of Barka in the Nether-

lands. The first homeless migrants support projects of Barka outside Poland started in 2007 in London, where they were invited to help Polish rough sleepers there. Similar projects started in Copenhagen, Dublin and Hamburg. In 2011 Barka was invited by the municipality of Utrecht in the Netherlands to work with the homeless migrants there. Nowadays Barka is active in the Netherlands in Amsterdam, Eindhoven, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht (http://www.barkanl.org; http://www.barka.org.pl/).

It is rather unique so far that social problems of vulnerable transmigrants are not only, and perhaps not sufficiently tackled by local social organisations alone, but require the help of social work organisations from the country of origin of the transmigrants. They are hired in to reach the groups and guide them towards regular local services and/or to rehab programs in the country of origin. Transmigration thus leads to new actors in the social field in European cities, with social work organisations developing transnational social work provisions.

As these cases and examples illustrate, the reality of transmigrancy requires an enhanced understanding of the multiple spaces inhabited by transmigrants, and of the complex legal, cultural, social and political contexts that push and pull families across national and local borders (Webster, Arenas, & Magaña, 2010, p. 208). This is a very challenging shift for social work in an urban context. One could say that the practices of most social workers are still locally rooted, whereas transmigrants constantly shift between different modus operandi and between different visible and invisible, local and global networks. They balance themselves atop the tight rope, vacillating between maintaining 'some functional sense of local "rootedness" while at the same time gaining access to opportunities that are more transnational, even global, in scope' (Simone, 2001, p. 36). Almost all transmigrants maintain social ties with people located in more than one national territory. Even so, rather than the national level, the local level is often more important for transmigrants, as their social relations are situated in specific localities, involving a network surrounding their local community of origin (Boccagni, 2010; Guarnizo, & Smith, 1998; Waldinger, & Fitzgerald, 2004). To grasp this perspective 'from below' it is therefore important for social workers to look at the articulation of global and

local dynamics in local contexts such as neighbourhoods, homes and families (Greiner, & Sakdapolrak, 2013).

Towards a research agenda on social work with transmigrants

Research on the impact of transmigration on social work practice is as yet scarce. Indeed, as is argued in a ground breaking edited volume on the topic, the notion of transnational social work itself is 'very, very new' and unfamiliar to most (Furman, Negi, & Salvador, 2010, p. 3). It is remarkable how little research has been done on this subject, despite a growing recognition of the global scale of social problems and of the need for internationalisation of the social work curriculum (Powell, & Robison, 2007; Ramanathan, & Link, 1999; Schrooten, & Lamote, 2013; Stoesz, Guzzetta, & Lusk, 1999). Although much research has been done on transmigration on the one hand, and on international social work on the other hand, the effect of transmigration on social workers and on social work practice is still under-investigated (Furman, Negi, & Salvadro, 2010). Moreover, as Collins (2012, p. 321) points out, 'questions of temporariness versus permanence are rarely the subject of theoretical inquiry'. Neither is the impact of this temporality on social work. We address this omission by highlighting six embryonic research themes related to social work with transmigrants.

First, and the most general, is the need for further empirical information on the growing importance of transmigration within super-diversity. The enlargement of the EU on the one hand, but also organised migration from outside the EU on the other hand, are contributing to the growing number of migrants moving across borders and not settling themselves definitively in their current country of residence. The social workers we interviewed also noted this growing importance of internal movements within the EU: because of the economic crisis, immigrants who initially settled in Southern-European countries increasingly move up north hoping for better opportunities and life circumstances (Schrooten, 2012b, p. 95). Social workers have thus been increasingly confronted with a clientele composed of Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians or Greeks from Moroccan, Brazilian or other origins.

Secondly we need further research on the specificity of the welfare needs of these transmigrants. As we discussed earlier, transmigrants will often meet the same problems and challenges as other migrants, arriving newly in another country or society and rebuilding social networks. Additionally, they are confronted with a number of risks that are related to their mobile life style. These risks need to be further explored.

Thirdly, a related research topic concerns the strategies transmigrants themselves use to cope with their welfare needs. From what kind of social networks or (self) organisations do transmigrants seek help? Our research revealed the increasing role taken up by informal immigrant associations in meeting the needs of transmigrants. These associations are often more accessible to transmigrants who are unable or unwilling to access formal social support institutions. Moreover, such associations are often willing to take on tasks that fall outside the scope of formal social work, but which nevertheless respond to real welfare needs of transmigrants. For examples, such volunteers may be prepared to track down family members in case of decease, or to collect funds in order to repatriate the deceased's body to the country of origin.

On the one hand, at present, the social sector has little insight into the kind of support transmigrants find in religious institutions and migrant associations and the way these organisations relate to the formal social sector (Boujebbar, De Boeck, De Greef, El Kaddouri, Goossens, Mollaert, & Schrooten, 2014). On the other hand, little is known about the relationship between transmigrants' translocal networks and the welfare needs they experience: What forms of trans-local networks do transmigrants maintain or develop? To what extent and how do their translocal networks play a role in the creation and/or solving of welfare needs in their host localities? What kind of support do transmigrants give to their translocal networks and what kind of resources do they receive? What other strategies do they generate to cope with their welfare needs?

Fourth, we know very little about current social work practices with these groups of transmigrants in European cities. In our explorative research on urban social work with transmigrants, social work organisations signal that the group of

transmigrants is gaining importance in their daily practice. Even so, their recent arrival and the temporality make it more difficult to reach these groups, but also to develop an empowering long-term-relationship with them. Still, social workers already have a great deal of experience working with travellers and Romas. It would be interesting to research to what extent these experiences can provide guidelines for working with transmigrants.

Fifthly we need to explore the phenomenon of 'insourcing' of social work organisations from countries of origin to work with the transmigrants in the cities where they live today. To what extent are such new partners able to complement local social work organisations in their work with transmigrants?

Finally we consider it necessary to compare different national and urban settings in their work with transmigrants. The degree of super-diversity is expected to have an impact on the number of transmigrants in social work, but also local policy regimes will have an important influence on the possibilities social workers have to work with transmigrants. We expect large differences between cities that accept their super-diversity and develop their (social) policies starting from that reality on the one hand, and cities that are still struggling with this transition and that try to slow down the migration by minimising social service provisions for new migrants on the other hand. In order to compare, multi-sited research is crucial.

Chapter 8 (Conclusion)

Living in mobility: trajectories of Brazilians in Belgium and the UK

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Living in mobility: trajectories of Brazilians in Belgium and the UK

Abstract: Within the social sciences, migration has traditionally been conceived of as a unidirectional, purposeful and intentional process from one state of fixity (in the place of origin) to another (in the destination). By mapping the trajectories of Brazilians who currently reside in Belgium or the UK, this article draws attention to a group of people whose mobile practices do not fit this definition. On the contrary, their experiences are marked by an ongoing mobility that consists of a multiplicity of potential routes, which are often unstable and which may be accompanied by changes in status. These Brazilians tend to 'live in mobility' in order to improve the quality of life at home. As such, leaving home becomes a strategy of staying home, which challenges what is usually evoked by the concept of 'migration', whereby 'building up a new life elsewhere' and 'integration' are seen as key. Whereas our respondents themselves have a more circular or mobile perspective, the receiving society discursively frames migration as one-way, and thus as a 'threat' that calls for social integration, control and the maintenance of national identity.

Keywords: Brazilians; migration studies; trajectories; mobile people; policies of integration

Introduction

Border-crossing human movement is the focus of a range of social science disciplines, including geography, sociology, political sciences, demography, and anthropology. It took a relatively long time, compared to other disciplines, before the study of movement became integrated into mainstream anthropology. Most anthropologists portrayed societies across the globe as bounded, territorialized, rela-

tively unchanging, and homogenous units (Brettell, 2003; Salazar, 2013a; Tsing, 1993). Since the second half of the twentieth century, however, research on mobility has increased significantly within anthropology. Still, many of the studies remained based on a territorialized conception of belonging and culture (Clifford, 1988; Malkki, 1992). Moreover, as 'sedentism' (people living for a long time in one place) was seen as the norm, most migration scholars approached migrants as moving from one state of fixity (in the place of origin) to another (in the place of destination), assuming that people want to remain in the place to which they migrate (Cirtautas, 1957; Tuan, 1977). With the exception of early contributions on circular migration (Hugo, 1982; Prothero, & Chapman, 1985), stepwise migration (Conway, 1980; Riddell, & Harvey, 1972) and return migration (Brettell, 1979), most migration researchers relied on a rather 'rooted' and static notion of migration.

The publication of Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc's seminal work on transnational migration in 1992 drew attention to the fact that migrants' social practices occur almost simultaneously on the territories of more than one national state. This approach criticised previous, rather localised assumptions about identities, and focused on the relationships between places migrated from and to. Still, the focus of the transnational paradigm was not on identifying different forms of mobility. As such, it did not question the narrative of stasis and sedentism in regard to international migration. More recently, mobilities studies have emerged as a critique of the academic tendency to ignore either past or present histories of human movement. As such, mobilities studies have made scholars aware of contemporary forms of mobility.

A sedentarist lens, however, is still omnipresent in the media as well as in policymaking. Authorities typically encourage the internal mobility of their citizens while they discourage incoming resettlers, except when people with a particular kind of expertise or profile are needed. The crisis regarding the so-called 'boat people' in the Mediterranean is a present-day example of this. Many European member states have raised objections to the proposal of the European Commission to introduce a so-called emergency relocation quota system and an EU-wide resettlement scheme, whereby each country would be obliged to resettle a cer-

tain number of people according to its capacity. A main reason for these objections is the perception of these people as an extra burden, based on the conviction that they will stay (forever) in their country of resettlement. This is seen as the main danger, because citizens will have to 'share' (some of) their benefits with new participants to their society. Correspondingly, resettlers are often portrayed as a potential threat not only to the welfare state, but also to the cultural integrity and security of destination societies.

This image is reinforced by the popular media. In the UK, for example, daily TV programmes, newspapers, and UK right-wing political parties convoke the British population to support the national government to get back control over the British frontiers in order to stop the so-called 'migration invasion' into the island.[1] This representation of newcomers may be crucial in determining the kind of reception immigrants are accorded because, in this logic, migration calls for social integration control and the maintenance of national identity (Faist, 2013, p. 1642). In reality, not all newcomer stay: contemporary mobility patterns are much more diverse and include many other forms next to settlement migration. What's more, tight border restrictions have an unintended side-effect: they tend to push people into permanent settlement, as they have less possibilities to be mobile, which brings down return migration (Czaika, & de Haas, 2014).

This article aims to contribute to the field of migration studies and mobility studies and to policy debates by drawing attention to the complexities of present-day mobilities, the continuous shifts of trajectories and the changes of 'position' that may occur during these trajectories. By mapping the routes of Brazilians who currently reside in Belgium or in the UK, we draw attention to a group of people whose experiences are marked by ongoing movement. Instead of an exclusive

[1] In early 2009, demonstrations at the Lindsey Oil Refinery demanding 'British jobs for British workers' revealed a dramatic picture of the economic crisis lived in the EU to foreign workers in the UK. This slogan, coined by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown in 2007, has been taken up by the media and nationalists. Since 2010, for example, due to the strong presence of the Conservative Party in the Parliament, the British government has adopted a radical posture regarding the 'historical presence' of migrants in the UK and 'multiculturalism in London'. Complementary to that, TV programs such as UK Border Forcer, daily presented on Sky1, help to create the panic picture of the United Kingdom as being invaded by a wave of migrants who flock together at the borders to invade the country and to live at the expenses of the State. See also Leo Chavez (2001, 2008) for a similar account on the 'invasion language' for the US.

focus on building up a new life elsewhere, many of these Brazilians intend to keep moving, at least for a while, until reaching the goals they had set when they left Brazil. Defining themselves as 'sojourners' (Evans, 2007; Margolis, 2013), who will spend between one and five years working in foreign countries, they treat their migratory movements as temporary. Moreover, instead of a simple journey from A to B, their mobility consists of a multiplicity of potential trajectories, which are often unstable and may be accompanied by changes in status, thus forming a complex concatenation of destinations and positions. Rather than following a straight, predictable, and individually-chosen strategic movement from one of Brazil's international airports to a specific end destination with the aim of building up a new life, the testimonies of our informants refer to personal choices or circumstances that keep them on the move and that sustain migration circuits (Lindquist, 2008). As such, these Brazilians are exemplary for a group of people who challenge the focus that takes the sedentarist way of life as self-evident (if not outright natural) while problematizing practices of mobility as being exceptional. Before analysing the dynamics of the migration trajectories under study, we explore in the next section how some main theoretical principles of mobility studies add meaning to the analysis of these trajectories.

The empirical data at the basis of this article come from two ethnographic studies, one multi-sited research that took place in the UK and another one that was conducted in Belgium, two countries in which Brazilians have a large and growing presence. Research took place between 2009 and 2014 in Belgium and between 2010 and 2013 in the UK. In addition to reconstructing migration histories on the basis of in-depth interviews (27 in Belgium and 11 in the United Kingdom, see table 1), we followed our interviewees by way of a mobile methodology, consisting of Internet conversations at different times throughout their trajectories. Interviewees were contacted using gatekeepers such as churches and migrant organisations and through snowballing, a well-recognized means of contacting 'hidden' populations that are partly composed of undocumented individuals. This allowed us to interview 10 undocumented and 28 documented Brazilians.

Table 1: Research sample

	Age	Sex	Length of stay in country	Employment status[2]	Total
Belgium	> 25: 2 25-45: 20 < 45: 5	Male: 9 Female: 18	0-1 y: 7 2-5 y: 11 6-10 y: 6 + 10 y: 3	Employed: 12 Unemployed: 12 Studying: 2 Retired: 1	27
UK	> 25: 0 25-45: 11 < 45: 0	Male: 6 Female: 5	0-1 y: 0 2-5 y: 3 6-10 y: 6 + 10 y: 1 Unknown: 1	Employed: 10 Unemployed: 1	11

Aside from these interviews, we talked informally to dozens of other Brazilians while engaging in participant observation. We tried to immerse ourselves within the life of the Brazilian communities, visiting people's homes and attending numerous cultural and social events. Moreover, in the Belgian study, we conducted online ethnographic research on two social network sites, namely Orkut and Facebook. Brazilians frequently make use of these social media, not only to remain connected with their networks all over the world but also to forge new connections in their new place of residence (Schrooten, 2012a).

Mobilities and borders

In the 1990s, discourses of globalisation and cosmopolitanism questioned the previous neglect of border-crossing movements within the social sciences and, in-

[2] Respondents were employed in several sectors, ranging from cleaning, catering and construction to IT and social profit.

stead, highlighted and celebrated global 'flows' of people, objects and ideas. Within this scholarship, globalisation was promoted as the norm, even to the extent that the hydraulic metaphors of 'flows', 'fluidity' and 'scapes' came to monopolise the discussion of new forms of global mobility (Rockefeller, 2011; Salazar, 2013b) and that mobility was celebrated as characteristic of the globalised world (Appadurai, 1996; Ong, 1999). However, over the last decade a number of researchers have begun to question the dominance of the concept of 'flow' by foregrounding cases that seem better described by other concept-metaphors. They argue that, from a globalization perspective, mobility is mistakenly summarised as mere movement and that the meaning and experiences lived and produced by people in space as they move are discarded (Cresswell, 2006; Ingold, 2011; Knowles, 2011; Lindquist, 2008). As Ferguson (2006, p. 47) argues, the concepts of 'scapes' and 'flows' insufficiently reveal the trajectories of today's mobilities:

> Rivers really do flow. [...] A river goes from point A to point B only by traversing, watering, and connecting the territory that lies between the two points. But [...] the "global" does not "flow", thereby connecting and watering contiguous spaces; it hops instead, efficiently connecting the enclaved points in the network while excluding (with equal efficiency) the space that lie between the points.

Moreover, traditional accounts of migration have been found inadequate for understanding contemporary mobility processes. Although research on migration, which addresses more permanent forms of relocation, is a closely associated body of research to explore human movement, it does not fully grasp the complexities of time and space found in the more varied forms of mobility in our respondents' trajectories. Traditional migration-related research has strongly focused on the beginning and (assumed) end points of the journey, paying specific attention to the decision-making process before departure on the one hand and integration in

destination countries and the maintenance of transnational contacts on the other (Fitzgerald, 2009; Piore, 1980). The 'lived condition of straddling borders, whether by choice or by necessity' (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010, p. 223) that typifies the lives of many of our respondents is, however, not captured by the concepts currently employed in migration research. We may even ask whether we can refer to our respondents as 'migrants' at all as there is a tension between the mobile practices that characterize them and the common issue that is evoked by the concept of 'migration'. Mobility and the capacity to be mobile play an important part in the strategies of these Brazilians. Rather than trying to migrate and settle in a target country, they tend to live in mobility, 'staying mobile "as long as they can" in order to improve or maintain the quality of life at home' (Morokvasic, 2004, p. 11).

A research field has emerged that goes beyond embodied migrations to an understanding of mobilities more generally. Whereas in migration studies the actual interest is not in movement, but in departure and/or arrival (involving issues of uprooting and integration), 'mobility' has become a keyword of the social sciences, delineating a novel domain of debates, approaches and methodologies that seek to understand contemporary processes of movement (Adey, Bissell, Hannam, Merriman, & Sheller, 2013; Cresswell, 2006; Glick Schiller, & Salazar, 2013; Salazar, & Jayaram, 2016; Urry, 2007). Whilst mobility itself is not a new idea in the social sciences (Cresswell, 2010), the idea of a mobilities 'paradigm' (Sheller, & Urry, 2006) has gained considerable momentum over the last decade. The conceptual framework developed within mobility studies has the potential to enrich our understandings of the dynamics that constitute contemporary mobile people's experiences and to give insight to the mobilities under study.

In what follows, we discuss two aspects that are at the core of our empirical analysis of the trajectories and projects of Brazilians who are 'living in mobility'. Firstly, the research field, rather than celebrating mobility as necessarily transgressive or resistant, interrogates the politics of mobility and immobility, both in terms of the legal framework that regulates human movement and in terms of the embodied politics of identity and difference (Blunt, 2007; Cresswell, & Merriman, 2011; Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007). Mobility researchers have become in-

creasingly sensitive to the power dynamics and differentiated meanings attached to migration processes and, thus, articulate that the mobility potential of people depends very much on their positionality in time and space (Massey, 2005; Sheppard, 2002). As Salazar and Smart (2011, p. iv) remind us, 'transnational borders are not singular and unitary, but are designed to encourage various kinds of mobility (business travellers, tourists, migrant workers, students) and discourage others (illegal migrants, refugees)'. The same border, thus, acts differently for different kinds of migrants. Highly skilled migrants are encouraged to move across borders (Goldin, Cameron, & Balarajan, 2012), whereas lesser-skilled migrants and refugees spur a host of technologies for monitoring and controlling border crossings (Bigo, 2002; Hyndman, & Mountz, 2007). What's more, labour migrants are understood as immigrants that need to be connected to social integration, whereas the highly skilled often are not. Their spatial movement is generally considered economically efficient and thus desirable. Allegedly, they are not defined as minorities that need to be 'integrated' (Faist, 2013). Borders have even gained in strength and significance in the post 9/11 era. The instauration of stringent laws on the border controls which, according to the USA, EU and other governments, were originally designed to stop terrorists are being applied to various kinds of mobile people, including migrants (Adey, 2004; Curry, 2004). Moreover, temporality (temporary contracts) serves as a means to control labour migration.

A second important contribution from mobility studies is that mobility scholars draw attention to the existence of many different forms of movement. Mobility may have different purposes and can, consequently, present different features. In fact, there is a continuum of population mobilities, ranging from short term temporary movements to permanent migration. Bell and Ward (2000), for example, attempt to conceptualise different forms of physical mobility by comparing temporary mobility with permanent migration. They define temporary mobility as a non-permanent move of varying duration, which assumes a circular return to a usual residence, whereas permanent migration is seen as a permanent change of usual residence. Temporary mobility and permanent migration are furthermore distinguished through key dimensions of duration, frequency and seasonality. Cohen,

Duncan, and Thulemark (2015, p. 158) extend Bell and Ward's comparison by adding 'lifestyle migration' as a third category of corporeal mobility. They define lifestyle mobility as 'ongoing semi-permanent moves of varying duration', with multiple 'homes' to return to. Lifestyle mobility, they argue, differs from temporary mobility in that it is sustained as an ongoing fluid process, carrying on as everyday practice over time. As such, it places a higher significance on the consistent intention to move on, which, again, challenges the sedentarist lens that is present in the integration discourse. The trajectories of the Brazilians under study also reflect a variety of mobilities. This diversity is notable between different respondents as well as within the route of each respondent. Also, as we will demonstrate, it is important to distinguish between what people originally envision and what they actually end up doing. Migratory plans are constantly adjusted, depending on external circumstances as well as internal factors (Adler, 2000). Before we look deeper into these trajectories, we briefly situate Brazilian mobility to the European Union.

Brazilian mobility to the EU

Historically, Brazil has been a country of immigration, not emigration. However, after the military coup in Brazil in 1964, thousands of Brazilians left Brazil to neighbouring countries, the United States and Europe (Lima, & Siqueira, 2007). The migratory flow of Brazilians, which started as a sporadic movement in the 1970s, intensified in the 1980s, a period in which Brazil was faced with economic stagnation, hyperinflation and crisis (Pellegrino, 2004). Research among Brazilian pioneers who emigrated in the 1980s shows that the initial movers were middle class white-collar workers who had faced a massive devaluation of their standard of living during the 'Lost Decade' in the 1980's (Margolis, 1994; Martes, 2011). These Brazilians opted to move to the United States, Japan and European countries, and to work as blue-collar workers in tertiary services and industries in order to send remittances back home. The large majority of them faced their movement as a temporary solution, while their country was in economic crisis. Their perspective was thus not to migrate and integrate elsewhere, but to be on the move until the situation in their home-

land would allow for a return. As we will discuss later, this 'temporary' perception on mobility still applies to many Brazilians who live abroad today.

Although Brazilian migration was restricted for a long time to internal, intra-continental and a few trans-continental destinations, in recent decades, Brazil has witnessed a profound transformation in its geography of migration. Since 9/11, the established migration routes connecting Brazil to the Northeast of the USA, Florida and California – traditionally main migration destinations to Brazilians – have become less popular in favour of new destinations, among which Europe. Several catalysts re-oriented many Brazilian immigrants away from the USA and towards Europe (Dias, 2013). Informants in both Belgium and the UK highlighted the increased difficulty in securing tourist visas for travel to the United States following September 2001. The demand for documents attesting to possessions and financial resources by the US consulate and the militarisation of borders became important obstacles to temporarily moving to the USA (Margolis, 2008). Along with the increased control at US borders and the requirement of visas to travel to Mexico after November 2005, this led to a reorientation to Europe. Margolis (2013) also refers to the strength of the euro and the pound vis-à-vis the US dollar as a relevant factor, as the values of remittances sent back to Brazil were enhanced when sent in currencies of the European Union.

In 2012, Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated that 2,521,576 Brazilians lived outside Brazil, as outlined in Table 2 (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2012). The figures shown here represent the midpoint of estimates of the size of the Brazilian population in any given continent, as accurate numbers are difficult to come by, particularly in countries in which many Brazilians are undocumented.

Table 2: Brazilians living abroad

Continent	Number
North America	1,102,559
Europe	752,132
South America	369,040
Asia	22,037
Middle East	29,683
Oceania	25,123
Africa	16,091
Central America and the Caribbean	6,291
Total	**2,521,576**

Within Europe, Portugal and Spain are the countries with the highest number of Brazilian migrants (see Table 3, Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2012). Still, the economic crisis has encouraged Brazilians to explore other countries than Portugal and Spain, which have become less popular, in favour of Western European countries such as Belgium or the UK. Based on the numbers confirmed by the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations (2012), there are roughly 118,000 Brazilians living in the UK alone. Brazilians have become an important migrant group in the UK since the beginning of the 2000s (Vertovec, 2007). In 2001, the British Office of National Statistics documented 8,000 Brazilians living in London. However, unofficial estimates speak of between 130,000 and 160,000 Brazilian residents in London (Evans, 2007). The power of the British pound compared to the Brazilian real is an important attraction to these migrants, who accept the difficulties of British weather, the English language, and the challenge of the UK Border at Heathrow airport in order to work and send remittances back home (Evans, Tonhati, Dias, Brightwell, Sheringham, Souza, & Souza, 2011).

The majority of Brazilian migrants in the UK comprise a lower middle class who were not cast out of Brazil by poverty. Instead, the main reason to migrate to the UK is a search for jobs that can provide good financial return. Most Brazilians in the UK expect to stay in the UK for a period of between one and five years, during

which time they want to save money to invest in improving their life in Brazil (Martins Junior, & Dias, 2013). As such, their initial focus is still on 'home', rather than on their country where they currently live.

Table 3: Main European countries with Brazilian residents

Country	Number
Portugal	140,426
Spain	128,238
United Kingdom	118,000
Germany	95,160
Italy	67,000
France	44,622
Sweden	44,089
Belgium	43,000
The Netherlands	27,097
Ireland	18,000

Brazilian migration to Belgium started in the 1960s, with the arrival of a small number of political refugees who fled the military regime, as well as some artists, football players and students. Due to political changes in Brazil, many of them returned to Brazil from the 1980s onwards, where they contributed to the image of Belgium as an interesting destination (Schrooten, 2012b). The economic crisis in Brazil around the 1990s again encouraged many Brazilians to move to Belgium. Their presence strongly increased in the last decade, possibly as the result of the changed immigration policies of the USA after 9/11 and, subsequently, of the UK after the terrorist attacks in London in 2005. Today, some 43,000 Brazilians are estimated to live in Belgium. Unofficial numbers even suggest the presence of 60,000 Brazilians (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009). Research among Brazilians in Belgium has demonstrated that the typical Brazilian residing in Belgium is a labour migrant without legal residence documents, who came to Belgium with the

intention of staying for only a few years (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009; Regionaal Integratiecentrum Foyer Brussel vzw, 2011). Similar to the Brazilians in London, most want to save a certain amount of money to finance a particular project in Brazil. The aspects of adventure and a personal enrichment through the experience of living abroad are also often mentioned as incentives. Finally, some Brazilians also stress that they wanted to escape the increasing violence in their country.

In recent years, a lot of Brazilians have returned from Belgium, mainly for reasons such as the much anticipated improvements of social and economic conditions in Brazil and issues linked to finalising the mobility process and reaching the goals set. But also re-joining the family at home or not having employment or not earning enough income help explain the return (Góis, Reyntjens, Lenz, Coelho, & Gouveia, 2009). Yet, the re-emigration of Brazilian nationals from Belgium is accompanied by the arrival of new Brazilian migrants, as will be discussed in the next section.

Living in mobility

> Fellow Brazilians, I'm very curious to hear your migration stories. For how long are you living in Belgium now? Where did you live before? Why did you decide to come here? What are your experiences and thoughts about living in Belgium as a migrant? Let's share our stories here!

Selma, a 60-year old Brazilian woman living in Belgium since 2005, posted this message in a closed Facebook group for Brazilians in Belgium. In many cities all over the world with a significant number of Brazilian residents, these Brazilians have formed online migrant groups on social networking sites such as Facebook. These groups are often used to trace and make contact with other Brazilians in the same place of residence (Schrooten, 2012a). Dozens of people replied to Selma's message and wrote their story down. What was remarkable about their testimonies

was the variety of mobility movements: a small minority were single, unidirectional journeys, but most were continuous, circular or return journeys. The same applied to the narratives of the interviewees in our research, many of whom referred to other important forms of movement that took place before their move to Belgium or the UK, ranging from short term tourism-related mobilities to longer periods of residence in another nation. In this section, we take a closer look at some of the trajectories of this growing proportion of people who, for various reasons, move and keep on moving from one place to another, and, as Schuster (2005) demonstrates, sometimes from one migration status to another.

In February 2014, one of the authors was invited by João, a 46-year-old Brazilian man, to an apartment in Brussels that he shared with his daughter and with a 26-year-old acquaintance. In the living room, he and his flat mates had put a large world map on the lateral wall. On the map, several places around the world had been marked in different colours. João explained that these marks illustrated where he, his daughter, and their flat mate had already lived around the world. João himself was born in a city in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais. As a teenager, he moved with his family to Mato Grosso do Sul, another Brazilian state. For most of our interviewees, as well as for most Brazilians who posted their story on the Facebook group, their international mobility was not their first migratory experience. Although five of our respondents came directly from Brazil and did not move beyond Belgium or the UK apart from returning home for visits, all other people we spoke to had frequently moved from one place to another, within as well as outside Brazil. Four out of the five respondents who had come directly from Brazil, had also moved within Brazil prior to their international movement. The many testimonies on mobility within Brazil are not surprising, given the fact that Brazil exhibits high levels of internal migration. As Brito and de Carvalho (2006, p. 441) argue,

> There are only few Brazilians who never migrated at least once in their life. It is no exaggeration to state that migrating is part of Brazilian culture, that it is considered a possibility in the life project of every citizen. For a large part of the population, emigration eventually became the only alternative offered

> by society for social mobility. Leaving your municipality, travelling short or long distances, in search of a better life, which you don't even always achieve, has become the destiny of millions of Brazilians. [authors' own translation]

The testimonies of our other respondents show how unproductive it is to split up mobility in internal versus international movement, as their routes often implied both. Internal and international movement can be part of a circuit as Jeffrey Cohen (2004) points out for the Valley of Oaxaca in Mexico. As in the cases of the other Brazilians we met, João extended the habitus of mobility that exists within Brazil outside the country. At the age of 19, João left his parents' house and went to live by himself. Despite having a fulltime job, he faced financial difficulties, due to inflation. When he was 21 years old, he decided to leave Brazil and move to the USA.

> I really wanted to go to the United States. At that time, Brazil was a very closed-off nation; it was at the time of the military regime. Brazil has always been influenced by the United States, much more than by Europe. Every stranger was an American to me. And I really wanted to learn English. I was really obsessed with the United States. I was able to get a visa and I had saved more or less 200 dollars. So I took this money and I left. I had booked a ticket to Miami, because it was the cheapest destination, and I left. When I arrived in Miami, I didn't know where to go. I arrived at 2 am. I had brought a list with me with the contact details of some people in the United States. The only person I dared to call at 2 in the morning was somebody I knew personally. This person lived in Boston. So I called him and I said I was in Miami. He invited me to come to his house, so I went to Boston.

Although he left Brazil, João's intention was to stay abroad for only a limited period of time. His goal was to live the experience of spending time in the USA and at the

same time gain enough money to improve his quality of life in Brazil. He had expected to stay in the USA for about five years. Morokvasic (2004), who studied Central and Eastern Europeans in the context of post-communist transition, demonstrates how many of these Europeans engage in short-term mobility in order to resist the decline of their social condition at home. She argues that these men and women 'settle within mobility'. Their capacity and readiness to stay mobile for a (long) time allows them to maintain or improve their quality of life at home. Similar motivations for mobility are typical for Brazilians around the world (Margolis, 2013).

João spent four years in Boston, where he played music in a band. He then moved to Los Angeles as new career opportunities presented themselves. Things did not work out as planned though, so after three months, he moved again, this time to San Francisco, where he lived for another four years. He then moved to Miami. While he was living in Miami, he went on a holiday to Mexico, to meet a French friend of his, who he had met a few years earlier in a youth hostel in San Francisco. In the hotel where his friend was staying, he got in touch with a Belgian woman. She introduced him to her sister, with whom João started a relationship. His girlfriend lived in Mexico, so for the first few months of their relationship, João and his girlfriend often travelled between Mexico and the USA. In 1998, after some months of moving between these two locations, they decided, however, to move elsewhere. João had already been thinking of leaving the USA to return to Brazil before he met his girlfriend, as his intention had always been to live abroad for only a limited period of time. But his girlfriend was offered a job in Belgium, so they moved there. He lived in Belgium with a legal residence permit, as the partner of a Belgian woman. A year later, they married and then moved to Brazil, where their daughter was born in 2000. In 2001, his wife and his daughter came to Belgium for Christmas, while João stayed in Brazil.

> My wife called me during that month, to tell me that she wanted to leave me. So she stayed in Belgium, with our daughter. And I stayed in Brazil. In 2002, I came to visit my daughter. In the beginning of 2003, I came to Bel-

> gium once more, this time to take my daughter with me to Brazil. My wife was not well psychologically, so I came to pick up our daughter, so that my wife could heal and rest a little bit.

A month later, his wife [they hadn't officially divorced] committed suicide. In 2004, João decided to take his daughter to Belgium for a month, to visit her relatives from on her mother's side. Once in Belgium, he decided to stay there for a couple of years, even though after 90 days his tourist visa would expire. He tried to obtain a legal residence permit in Belgium, as the widower of a Belgian woman, but only succeeded in obtaining this permit in 2005. Yet, in 2007, he and his daughter again returned to Brazil:

> I had this idea about Brazil that made me want to go back. I was nostalgic. I wanted my daughter to be able to walk around without shoes, to eat fruit from the trees, to know her grandfather, and so on. I would also receive a pension as a widower from the Belgian state, even if I were living in Brazil, which I thought would give me some opportunities in Brazil. There were many reasons, not one single reason. But when I arrived there, it wasn't like I had imagined. The family wasn't that united anymore. And Brazil had become very expensive. Although I had a job there, I couldn't buy a house like I would be able to buy in Europe. I had the smallest car you can buy in Brazil, I also had to pay for the school of my daughter as well, and I just couldn't do it.

In 2013, after having spent 5 years in Brazil, he decided to leave again:

> I found out that my statute of American resident was still valid. To apply for a new green card, I had to fill out a form and pay 275 dollar at the American embassy. But when I discussed this with my daughter, she said that she

> would prefer to go back to Belgium. Because her family lives in Belgium, she speaks French, she had lived there before. To her, it would feel like going back home. So we came back, in June 2013.

João then had to apply for a residence permit once again. What he did not know was that in 2011, the law on family reunification had changed in Belgium, meaning that he could not apply for the same type of permit he had obtained before. At the time of the interview, João didn't yet know whether he could obtain a legal residence status in Belgium again.

The story of João is exemplary for that of many other respondents. Out of the 33 respondents that passed through other locations before arriving in Belgium or the UK, 13 had moved to more than one other country outside Brazil. If we include the internal movements in Brazil, nearly all respondents had moved at least twice prior to their arrival in Belgium or the UK. But also within their new countries of residence, the experiences of many respondents are marked by ongoing mobility, not only between different locations, but also within cities. Some move from one house to another very frequently, especially within the cities of Brussels or London. As a means of budgeting, housing is not a top priority for many sojourners. Some informants view their use of the housing sector, and issues such as standards, management, and overcrowding, as less critical factors to the choices they make about work, income, and expenditure on accommodation. Their temporary accommodations are chosen based on basic amenities that an economic migrant needs in his/her everyday life, such as access to Internet, rent with a reasonable price, and proximity to public transport and their job (Dias, 2010). Being close to the workplace 'is a matter of saving money and gaining few more hours of sleeping during the week', in an informant's words. Therefore, these residences are temporary dwellings where 'unattached' Brazilians can change residency relatively easily according to their priorities (Mendoza, 2001).

Still, Laerte, a 42-year-old Brazilian, who moved back and forth between Alta Paranaiba in Brazil and London in the United Kingdom several times, recounts that he spent a considerable amount of money moving from home to home:

> I used to rent rooms in houses where other Brazilians were living. But I think that I was unlucky. Every time there was some issue and I had to move from one house to another. And you know what happens: Each time you have to move, a good sum of money goes with you…

Moreover, he had provided financial help for friends back in Alto Paranaiba who also wanted to move to London. Unforeseen circumstances such as in the case of Laerte can lead to a shift of plans. Although most Brazilians arrive in Belgium or the United Kingdom with the intention of staying for a few years and then returning to Brazil with their savings, some signs of greater permanency often begin to surface after some time. Not having been able to save the amount of money they had set out for, many Brazilians extend their stay in their current location. Others decide to move again due to financial difficulties, policies of transit or destination states or events within their personal network. As such, the initial plan of many respondents is changed along the way.

Among our respondents, numerous migration trajectories reflected the growing importance of internal movements within the European Union because of the economic crisis: for these migrants, who initially settled in Southern-European countries, further migration was prompted by the need to seek better opportunities and life circumstances by a subsequent move further north. This was confirmed by Father Luíz, a Brazilian priest in Costa da Caparica, a parish located in the municipality of Almada (near Lisbon), well known for the large presence of Brazilians:

> They [Brazilians] are leaving this place. Some of them even had small businesses and employed other Brazilians, but due to the crisis their situation became awful. A few months ago I visited that parish as I normally do to see

how they are managing their lives. The saloon where our meeting took place was almost empty. No doubts, the locals said that the crisis had spurred people to other countries. It seems that those who successfully managed to get a Portuguese passport move to countries in North Europe or even to the United States.

For many of these Brazilians who leave Portugal or other Southern European countries, this new movement was unintended, as they had lived in Southern Europe for numerous years. Jaqueline, the president of a charity organization that provides social assistance to Brazilians in Lisbon, has witnessed how high unemployment and cuts in social benefits have driven a large number of Brazilians to other countries: 'I tell you, few have returned to Brazil, but a large number have moved to other European countries. I know that, because I am still in touch with them.' Rather than returning to Brazil without having fulfilled their goals, these Brazilians reorient their migratory projects within the European continent. The unexpected new movement to Northern Europe, thus, turns their previous locations into 'transit places' (Schapendonk, & Steel, 2014).

What is more, as the examples of many of our respondents demonstrate, geographic mobility is often paralleled by mobility between different documented and undocumented statuses. Fifteen of our respondents have moved from documented to undocumented (and sometimes back to documented) throughout their mobilities. Those who were undocumented at the moment we met them had all entered Europe legally, as Brazilian nationals are allowed to enter the Schengen area without previously having to request a visa. Many among them had remained within the Schengen associated countries after the maximum tourist stay of 90 days, and thus became undocumented. Others, such as João, had regularized their status temporarily and then subsequently found themselves again without a residence permit. These shifts from a documented status to an undocumented could also happen because of an inability to maintain the conditions that made their permits valid. Separating from one's partner, losing one's job or going through prolonged periods of unemployment can all lead to a shift to a less secure

migration status. Schuster (2005) refers to this shifting between categories as 'status mobility'. Although the status of many Brazilians often changed from a higher or more secure status to a lesser status, the opposite also happened. Marrying a European partner was a typical example of a change from an undocumented to a legal residency status. Another way of 'positive status mobility' that was mentioned among our interviewees was applying for European citizenship. Portugal, Spain and Italy allow citizenship through an extended ancestral line, giving Brazilians the possibility to acquire a European passport because of their ancestral roots.

Conclusion

The mobility trajectories of the Brazilians under study help us to question the linear and binary logics on which many migration conceptualizations are built. Migrants are not 'the signifier of a particular conceptualization of mobility: the individualized subject laboriously calculating the cost-benefit ratio of his/her trip and then starting an itinerary with fixed points of departure and arrival' (Papadopoulos, & Tsianos, 2007, p. 225). Border crossings are easily depicted as conscious and successful efforts by ordinary people to escape control and domination from above, by capital and state, to circumvent boundaries and obstacles of all kind. But, at the same time, nation-states control the movement of people across its borders.

> The legal status and the state of origin are essential in discriminating who can and who cannot pass, who can have access to the labour market and who needs an extra work permit, and who has no other option but to work illegally (Morokvasic, 2004, p. 21).

As the changes in the geography of Brazilian mobility have demonstrated, the state influences mobility directly and indirectly, for example by tightening or loosening visa regimes.

The experiences of a large number of our respondents are marked by an ongoing physical or geographical mobility. Rather than following a linear trajectory from one country of origin to a desired country of destination, the majority (33) had passed through other locations before arriving in Belgium or the UK. Although similar migratory movements have been described by the concept of step migration – migration to Belgium or the United Kingdom that occurs in stages – these Brazilians' movements are not fully captured by this concept. Their presence in third countries ranged from some weeks or months to numerous years. The reasons for this ongoing mobility are diverse. Although some respondents explicitly chose a mobile lifestyle, many respondents' narratives show that this ongoing mobility is often an unintended process and a phase which might end, but could just as well start over depending on circumstances (Withaeckx, Schrooten, & Geldof, 2015). The move of many Brazilians from Portugal and Spain to the UK and northern European countries in search of better opportunities, because of the financial crisis, is a fascinating example of this mobility, which may have generated even more of the kind of mobility described in this paper than in less precarious times. People move, and keep on moving, from one place to another and from one migration status to another for various reasons. Internal migration, transnational travel or other forms of mobility might occur before, during and after international mobility takes place, and the original intention can be changed along the way. For the respondents in our research, migration trajectories were often unpredictable and new mobilities unexpected and sometimes even unwanted, transforming their status from relatively 'settled' into an alternative and distinct re-location. As these Brazilians moved around from country to country, their legal status sometimes changed as well.

We question the applicability of the term 'migration' for the mobility of the Brazilians we focus on in this article, as their movement within or beyond Brazil mostly does not imply a unidirectional and intentional movement from one place of origin to a single place of destination, including a perspective of 'settling' or 'uprootedness', which is typically defined as 'migration'. Instead, their migratory movements need to be understood through a different lens. As Paula, a 37-year-

old Brazilian, said: 'I couldn't call myself a migrant. I never left with the intention of migration. It was always with the intention of going back.' Rather than relying on transnational networking for improving their condition in the country of their settlement, the majority of these Brazilians tend to stay mobile as long as it takes, in order to improve or maintain the quality of life at home. As such, they use mobility as a strategy and a resource. Mobility may also reflect increased dependencies and lack of choice, though, as some are 'forced' into a mobile life (Schrooten, Geldof, Withaeckx, 2015). We could ask ourselves to what extent people are on the move because they want to (agency) or, rather, because current limitations (structure) force them to.

This article has demonstrated that, in the case of the Brazilians we studied, leaving home becomes a strategy of staying at home, as the focus of living abroad is still – at least initially – building up a better life 'back home'. Most respondents left Brazil with the intention of a temporary stay abroad, which would enable them to improve their quality of life in Brazil. Similar patterns of mobility have been noted amongst Brazilians in the USA (Margolis, 2013; Siqueira, 2009). This challenges what is usually associated with 'migration', whereby 'building up a new life elsewhere' is seen as key. Not only do we challenge this sedentarist view, we also dispute a celebration of nomadism, as the accident of birthplace, the position of that country in the global inequality scale, and individuals' distinctions with respect to economic utility and social adaptation make a difference to their mobility chances. Further analysis of trajectories similar to those we presented in this article has the potential of challenging this classic approach to migration as 'a simple move between two sedentarities' (Tarrius, 2000), that exists inside as well as outside the academic world and enables a move toward a more dynamic understanding of various forms of mobility. Policymakers should take the continuum of population mobilities into consideration instead of focusing solely on migration. The reality is that different forms of physical mobility are parallel and simultaneous. This asks for a differentiated integration policy that takes the many patterns and their mutual relationships into account. For future consideration, the question even arises to

what extent a focus on integration is relevant for those who live in mobility and don't intend to become long-term residents.

Samenvatting

Dit werk verkent verschillende aspecten van hedendaagse Braziliaanse mobiliteit. Ten eerste gaat het in op de geschiedenis van mobiliteit in Brazilië en op de relevantie van hedendaagse (interne) mobiliteit in het land. Op die manier situeert het de intra- en internationale mobiliteit van Brazilianen in een breder perspectief.

Ten tweede focust deze thesis op de trajecten die Brazilianen die momenteel in België verblijven hebben afgelegd. Hierbij staan drie aspecten met betrekking tot deze trajecten centraal:

(1) Internationale mobiliteit van Brazilianen start vaak al binnen Brazilië. De Braziliaanse casus toont aan hoe onproductief het is om mobiliteit op te splitsen in interne versus internationale mobiliteit, aangezien hun trajecten vaak beide omvatten.

(2) De ervaringen van veel respondenten worden, omwille van uiteenlopende redenen, gekenmerkt door voortdurende mobiliteit.

(3) Trajecten kunnen niet verklaard worden door enkel naar hun fysieke aspecten te kijken. Deze thesis toont hoe ook de online omgeving, met name sociale netwerksites, een belangrijke rol spelen in de mobiliteit van de Brazilianen.

Ten derde onderzoekt deze thesis hoe mobiliteit een invloed uitoefent op het dagelijkse leven. Het gaat in op de ervaring van het oversteken van fysieke grenzen en op de manier waarop Brazilianen symbolische grenzen tussen henzelf en andere bewoners van hun verblijfplaats construeren, ervaren en transformeren. Daarnaast licht het ook de welzijnsnoden toe die deze Brazilianen ervaren omwille van hun mobiele levensstijl en bespreekt het de moeilijkheden en mogelijkheden die ze ervaren wanneer zij steun zoeken bij hun (transnationale) netwerken.

Het doel van deze studie is drieledig. Het eerste doel is een empirisch doel. Door de dynamiek van de trajecten van Brazilianen en de invloed van mobiliteit op hun dagelijkse leven te onderzoeken, daagt deze thesis het klassieke beeld uit

van migratie als een intentionele beweging van één plaats van oorsprong naar een enkele plaats van bestemming, met daarbij een perspectief van permanent verblijf op de nieuwe verblijfplaats. Het biedt een meer genuanceerd beeld van mobiliteit. In plaats van een eenvoudige reis van A naar B bestaat de mobiliteit van de respondenten uit een veelheid van mogelijke trajecten, die vaak onstabiel zijn en gepaard kunnen gaan met veranderingen in status. Bovendien kan het verlaten van 'thuis' ook een strategie worden om thuis te blijven, zoals dit onderzoek aantoont. De focus van veel Brazilianen die in het buitenland verblijven is immers – ten minste initieel – een beter leven 'thuis' te kunnen opbouwen.

Het tweede doel van deze studie is om antropologisch migratieonderzoek gevoeliger te maken voor mobiliteit en grenzen, niet alleen als een empirisch object maar ook als een analytisch startpunt. Met deze studie hoop ik bij te dragen aan de wederzijdse uitwisseling tussen wetenschappelijke stromingen die focussen op migratie, grenzen en mobiliteit. Het onderzoek daagt migratieonderzoek uit op een aantal vlakken:

(1) Ik stel de toepasbaarheid in vraag van het discours dat geassocieerd wordt met 'migratie' op de mobiliteit van Brazilianen. Hun beweging binnen of buiten Brazilië is namelijk geen intentionele eenrichtingsbeweging vanuit één plaats van oorsprong naar één plaats van bestemming, met als doel daar permanent te blijven. Veel Brazilianen beschouwen hun migratiebeweging als tijdelijk. Hun mobiliteiten zijn vaak zeer complex en hun trajecten en posities veranderen geregeld.

(2) Deze thesis vestigt de aandacht op het bestaan van verschillende soorten menselijke beweging. Deze diversiteit is merkbaar tussen verschillende trajecten, maar ook binnen de trajecten van elke respondent. Mobiliteit kan verschillende doelen hebben en kan uiteenlopen van kortdurende, tijdelijke bewegingen tot permanente migratie.

(3) Ondanks een groeiende aandacht voor het belang van internet en andere sociale media, is een online etnografie nog niet sterk ingeburgerd in migratieonderzoek. Ik stel dat online onderzoek meer toegepast zou moeten worden in deze discipline, omdat internet en sociale media een

deel geworden zijn van de manier waarop veel mensen vandaag de dag leven.

Ten derde wil ik ook een kritische bijdrage leveren aan mobiliteitsstudies:

(1) De meeste mobiliteitsstudies focussen op zeer mobiele en elite werelden. Dit onderzoek toont aan dat mobiliteit, vrijwillig of uit noodzaak, deel kan uitmaken van het leven van heel wat mensen, als een permanente levenswijze of als een tijdelijke of wederkerende fase in hun levenscyclus.

(2) Een aantal uitzonderingen nagelaten hebben mobiliteitsstudies weinig aandacht besteed aan mogelijke gemeenschappelijkheden met studies die focussen op grenzen. Een focus op mobiliteit confronteert onderzoekers echter meteen met de manieren waarop deze mobiliteiten beperkt en gereguleerd worden door grenzen en begrenzende praktijken. Antropologisch onderzoek kan dus winnen aan een focus op beide onderwerpen.

De centrale onderzoeksvraag die voortkomt uit deze onderzoeksdoelstellingen is de volgende: Wat zijn de ervaringen van Brazilianen die fysieke en symbolische grenzen overschrijden?

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