Portuguese migrants in four European countries

Multi-sited ethnography of a transnational social space

Bruno Monteiro / University of Porto

1.

The emergence of the transnational European labour market: the case of the construction sector (1980-2013)

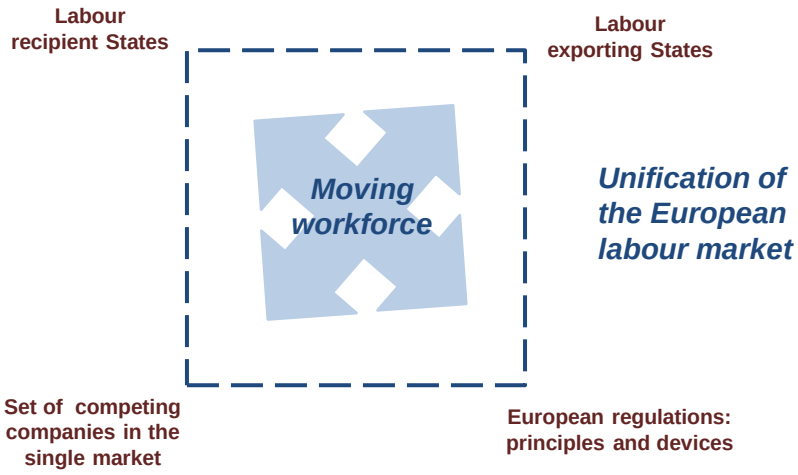
Fundamental vectors in the institutionalization of the European economic space of the construction sector

The progressive integration of markets. Driving force for the European single market turn into the removal of obstacles to the "fair competition", that is, the liberalization (the packet of deregulation, privatization and flexibilization) of the virtual market encompassing the State-members (Cremers, 2013)

The power of naming. Especially important for the construction sector, is the creation of a new figure of worker: the posted worker. (The making of a contingent and mobile proletariat at the European level culminates in the 96/71/EC, aka *Posted Workers Directive*.) However, some of the migrants are just contracted as a "service", without, thereby, any labor contract. Not only an example of the importance of the State (Desrosières & Thevenot, 1996; Bourdieu, 1989) in creating and legitimizing the social and political categories of persons (or workers).

The new spirit of the entrepreneurship, corporate concentration and restructuring, and the emergence of new economic mediators for the European frame in the construction sector. It appeals to the reshaping of the economic strategies of the enterprises, to their re-articulation under a new logic (new legislation, new public and private contracts opportunities, new labor force patterns of recruitment, etc.), and to an intensification of intra-European transactions in the sector (Fligstein, 2008).

The mutual structuration of the social reality across space: the transnational social space of the migrant condition



Five predicaments brought with concretization of the European common space

> Aber unter den Bedingungen, die auf eine Verringerung der Machtdifferentiale, auf eine gleichmäßigere Verteilung, eine allseitigere Diffusion von Machtchancen unter Spielem und Spielergruppen hinwirken, bleibt eine Figuration, die einem einzelnen Spieler oder einer ganz kleinen Gruppe von Spielem außerordentlich große Machtchancen zuganglich macht, dieser latenten Machtstruktur entsprechend hochst instabil; sie stellt sich zumeist in Krisenzeiten her und laßt sich nur schwer für langere Zeit aufrechterhalten.
> Norbert Elias, *Was ist Soziologie?,* 1980.

Strained cohabitation of sovereignty regimes. The liberalization of the European economic transactions cohabits with the national entrenchment of States' welfare system and social contract regulations (e.g. bargaining regimes: wages, working hours, etc.). In general terms, the national State, to use the formula from Max Weber, still ensures the legitimate monopoly of violence (material and symbolic) (Bourdieu, 2013). A *vacuum* for the articulation of citizenship. At the same time, there is a plurality of national regimes.

Recreation of new asymmetries across the European countries. Emergence of new social and economic asymmetries, crystallized in figures like the «working poor» or the «atypical labor relations», in particular the functional specialization separating the host- and departure-countries: concentration of repressive apparatuses vs. externalization of reproduction costs (Burawoy, 1979).

Individualization of contracts ("services"), segmentation of job market, and lowering of wage standards. Some authors have highlighted the possibility of a standing decrease in labor standards fuelled with the possibility of using the mobility of the workforce in another State (Cremers, 2010). That seems to materialize the utopia of a universal market, but it could also propel renewed versions of the *Wandererkonkurrenzargument*, that sustain protective or revanchist topics.

New equilibrium in the State apparatuses. Internal transformations of State: left-right: workfare, dismantling of welfare, provision of a punitive-vigilant apparatuses. The transformation, even if more or less generalized, is not at the same pace and degree, thus creating or enlarging differences. (Privatization of social services and enforcement of labor law; tightening of police; individualization of responsibility of worker: service provider).

The lasting incidences, even if imperceptible, of frontiers. (Newman, 2006). Inside the European Union the nominal disappearance of frontiers is conciliated with the persistence of the principle of national sovereignty. Thus, the frontiers persist in their functioning, even if invisible. In fact, the migrants bring, in a certain sense, the frontiers in them: they had determined their previous socialization (language, etc.). That imprint a certain brand (good or bad "nationality"), which will be assessed with the host-country stigmas or virtues, that is, positive and negative discriminatory practices.

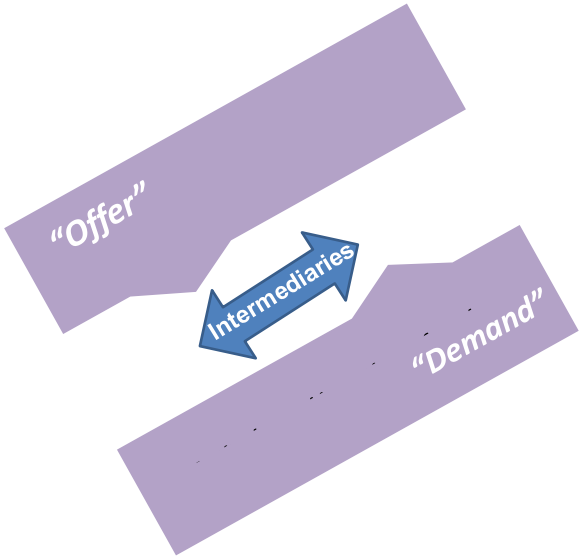
2.

Five urban sociological laboratories: The town as socio-territorial observatory of the migrant condition

Sweden
Norway
Den-
mark
Ireland
United
Kingdom
Nether-
lands
Belgium
Germany
Luxembourg
Czech Republic
France
Switzer-
land
Liecht.
Austria
Slove-
nia
Croatia
Monaco
San
Marino
Bosnia and
Herzego-
vina
Andorra
Portugal
Spain
Italy
Vatican City
Morocco
Algeria
Tunisia
Malta

KIMBAR

Rebordosa: the encounter between intentions and possibilities



6 | Primeiro plano

EMIGRAÇÃO

► Sindicato da Construção do Norte diz que perto de oito mil trabalhadores do Marco estão no país vizinho
► Distrito do Porto está, neste momento, a manter a execução de obras em Espanha

Milhares de operários do Marco de Canaveses partiram para Espanha

"Salto" faz-se em carrinhas sempre cheias

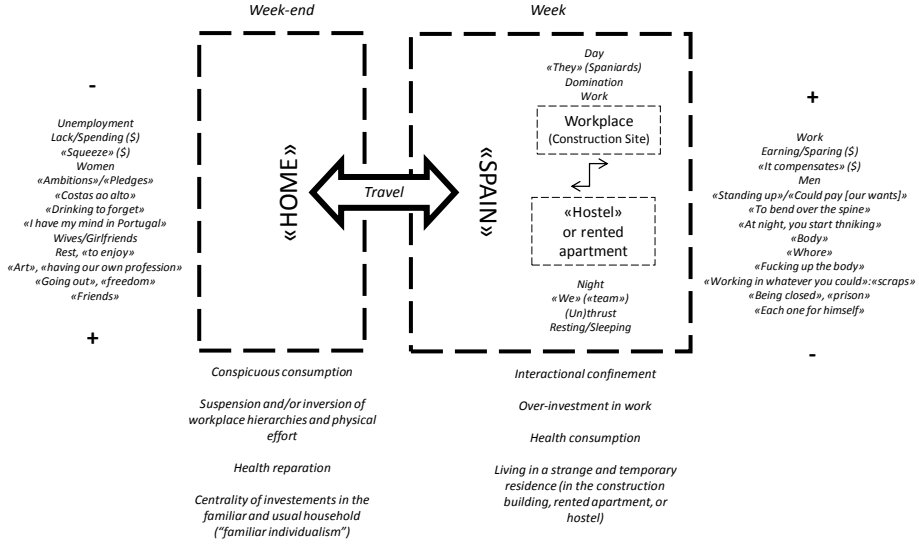
Colocar painéis nas fronteiras

Portugueses em Espanha

70 000 portugueses trabalham na construção civil em Espanha

Aumento da emigração e mobilidade laboral entre os dois países será tema para cimeira ibérica.

O Carballiño: lessons from the life in-between



PR
NOROESTE

Montbéliard: the historical strata of Portuguese migration

The ingrained and the itinerant. Back in the 1960's, a important volume of Portuguese workers arrived to work in the *Peugeot* factories, where they have labor contracts previously accorded between the respective governments. Some managed to have a job career, to marry there (even with French women), and to raise their kids in the town. More recently, arrived also important numbers of Portuguese construction workers, which, however, have much more casual contracts and short stays. The community has a internal structure and is often crossed with an internal competition for prestige and wealth (the unit of pertinence for the personal and familiar behaviors is often the community, not the society of residence at large) (Elias & Scotson, 1982)

Not age- or biological-generations, but sociological *modes of generation*. The constitution of those generations relies on the State policies, the economic strategies of the companies, the features of the conjuncture in the receiving- and departing-countries (Bourdieu, 1984).

Historicization. It is indispensable to understand the consecutive social and economic changes that occurred in the region of emplacement.

Freiburg: the paradox of *assimilation*

Integration, acculturation, deculturation. The increasing difficulties in finding new enthusiasts for the Portuguese football team, in spite of the seemingly local implantation of migrants. As observed for other contexts (Goffman, 1968), the integration in a national reality – with its language and cultural strata, public institutions (school, for instance), and political and economic regime of rights (political, labor-market, etc.) – implies not only a acculturation, but also a deculturation (Scholem, 1991).

The importance of the public and private mechanisms of accomodation and management of migration. The importance of the situated strategies used to recruit and manage the migrants by the companies (installation, building of facilities, etc.) and the local authorities. They include obligatory routines and ideological inculcation channels (e.g. the assimilationist proposals:, for instance companies' paternalistic practices, or the more or less compulsory "integration courses") .

Mit südländischem Temperament

Der FC Portugiesen stellt sich am Saisonabschluß vor

Achtelfinale im Bezirkspokal

Portugiesen setzen sich auch in Bad Krozingen durch

Hochdorf hält Star-Quartett der Portugiesen in Schach

Portugiesen Freiburg jubeln: Die „Multikultis" steigen auf

Jetzt auch Zähringen aus dem Pokal geworfen

sportjournal

FC Portugiesen Freiburg

Mehr als nur ein Fußballverein

Thetford: the appearance of internal lines of tension among the migrants

Racism reloaded. A isolated case or not, it is important to see the rearticulation of the racism regime of justification and the respective mechanisms of violence. This time: "whiteness of a different color" (Jacobson, 1999). Such incidental raptures of violence against strangers, could be, and are, politically articulated in the new right-wing politics inside the European Union.

Inside the secluded groups. However that appears to affect especially groups that are included among the excluded or marginalized population. As a matter of fact, they – native and foreigners - must compete for scarce resources. In order to cope with their economic and social situation. At the same time, it also explains why within the very "communities" there are cases reported of malaise and concurrency among fellow-nationals ("the old" vs. "the new")..

“Tribal war”

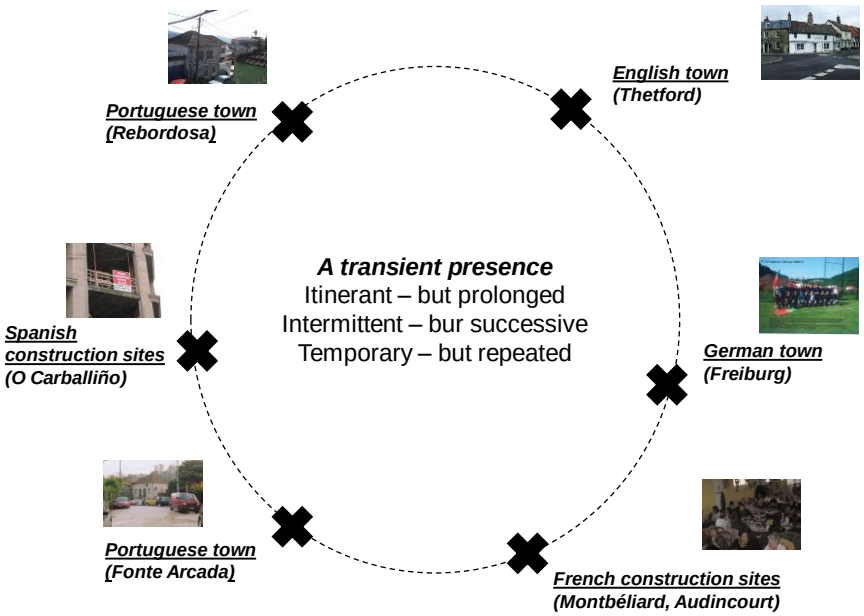
It took the police, who, warned of anti-Portuguese violence in several places had spread their resources, more than an hour before they had enough officers to disperse the crowd. Fifteen were arrested and later released, but the ringleaders escaped.
In the meantime, violence is being seen as a consequence of tensions since the influx of Portuguese began just over five years ago, when the local industries turned to the country as a ready source of cheap labour - finding East Anglians no longer willing to accept the work, although the common misconception is they have taken their jobs.
The events of last Thursday bore out the recent warning of Giles Smith, a local GP, who said the strain on the local infrastructure was "intolerable" and that the resentment in the town could lead to "tribal war". However, until last week, racist behaviour has been limited, apart from one attack on two Portuguese men last year, for which nine people were jailed.
"I'm not a racist," said one man a few yards from the Red Lion, to which he gesticulates with his heavily tattooed arms: "But these fuckin' people come over and they get all the houses and their kids are in the schools and they've got our jobs and they don't want us in their cafés. There's too many of them." He adds: "I didn't come down 'ere on Thursday night, cause I'd 'av been banged up by now. I'd 'av got stuck in."

The Independent, “Norfolk town where football is excuse for attacks on Portuguese”, 30.06.2004

3.

Follow the people: Challenges and opportunities of the multi-sited ethnography

Follow the people: using the multi-sited ethnography



Four challenges for the *ethnography of the contemporary*

> La concorrenza ha per effetto di impedirgli di paragonare posizioni su due diversi sentieri, e di limitare la sua scelta a posizioni dello stesso sentiero o vicinissime. Inoltre gli individui in concorrenza 6Ì muovono sinché siano tutti soddisfatti: uno solo ohe non è soddisfatto costringe gli altri a muoversi.
> Vilfredo Pareto, *Manuale di Economia Politica*, 1919.

The concept of simultaneity. It is necessary to look for the intangible, long-range and interdependent connections that simultaneously constitute the migrant condition (Levitt, 2004; Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004; Pomeranz, 2008). Transnational social space is a configuration of interdependences, that concur to the articulation of the integrated social reality of emigration, even if it is spread over the physical space. On the one hand, it enables the comparison of cases (Steinmetz, 2004) and, on the other, it is a way to know the unitary transnational field where those cases are encased.

Social space and physical place. It enables the reconstruction the constelation of places that are socially connected, even if geographically separated, in the constitution of the migrant condition; in order to circumscribe that circuit it is necessary "follow the people" (Charlesworth, 2007; Rabinow & Marcus, 2008)

The ethnographic approximation to the lived experience. It is important to pay attention to the everyday lives of migrants (Jackson, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2007). Look for the actual conducts of migrants and reading them against the background of the discourses of those who pretend to be their representatives; for instance, comparing the planned with the performed citizenship.

While hearing the narratives, reconstruct also the biographical trajectories of migrants. The inspection of the turning-points (marriage, return), the consequences and conditions (before-and-after the migration), the re-orientations of the migration targets and destinies, and so on, grants us a way to understand the utterances of the migrants in another way besides a simple content-analysis.

Bruno Monteiro / University of Porto
bjrmonteiro@gmai.com