SSIIM UNESCO CHAIR

On Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants – Urban Policies and Practice

The right to adequate housing of migrants factsheets

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LIVING IN-BETWEEN. NOTES ON THE SOCIAL GENESIS OF PENDULAR MIGRATION OF PORTUGUESE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS TO SPAIN

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SOCIAL AND SPATIAL INCLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTSURBAN POLICIES AND PRACTICE

The right to adequate housing for migrants - factsheets

The right to adequate housing for migrants is a series of thematic factsheets on migrants' level of access to adequate shelter in different urban contexts. Written by academic researchers and experts solicited by SSIIM UNESCO Chair, the factsheets were aimed at providing background information for the 2010 Report of UN-Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Dr. Raquel Rolnik.

Besides presenting the picture of the overall housing situation of migrants in the concerned contexts, authors were asked to highlight what the conditions of international migrants (regular and undocumented) are with respect to
- access to public housing and/or government subsidies
- access to housing loans
- access to the private housing market (discriminatory attitudes)
- inclusion into regularization and land tenure policies (if any, highlighting whether it is a local or a central government policy)

Authors were also invited to underline whether differences in policies/attitudes between local (poor) population (including rural-urban migrants) and international migrants are put in place and if any particularly interesting policy is being implemented that could be pointed out as innovative example.

Through the network of the partner universities, research centres and other relevant actors, SSIIM UNESCO Chair on Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants - Urban Policies and Practices aims at:
- Identifying policies and practices that promote the urban inclusion of international migrants
- Supporting local governments in shaping adequate actions to foster effective urban governance and the social/spatial integration of international migrants
- Disseminating the experiences that can provide ground for effective policy exchange (good practices)
- Raising the awareness of policy-makers and the civil society at large, on the importance of international migrants' urban social and spatial inclusion

Abstract

Our paper discusses some of the results of a sociological research on the transformations of work and work-related mobility in Northwest Portugal.

The research focuses on the case of Portuguese "pendular" migrants working in construction and construction-related activities in Spain. Although in Northwest Portugal emigration has always been the strategy of a relevant number of families facing unemployment and low income, never like in the last few years had this weekly or fortnightly commuting of Portuguese workers to Spain been so intense, in result of declining economic growth rates and growing unemployment (we mustn't forget that the region's main industrial activities – textiles, clothing, footwear, furniture – are facing intense international competition).

Setting out from this general context – and after confronting ourselves with the results of other researches we were conducting in Northwest Portugal, all pointing out the growing social relevance of this "pendular" migration –, we decided to study these migrants' everyday experience, through a multi-sited and diachronic, though always "contemporary", ethnography. By doing research both in the migrants' communities of origin and in their worksites in Spain (we lived for a week with a group of construction workers in O Carballiño, Galicia), we were in better position to analytically reconstruct the set of social relations underlying this apparently rational "choice" to migrate and to better understand how migration is experienced in everyday life, and what kind of real personal and social consequences it implies.

But this grounded approach we propose is not only about getting to know the Portuguese migrants' everyday life. In fact, what we wanted to do was to construct a perspective on the recent economic and social changes in Portugal *from below*, using ethnography to set out from the real spatial and temporal experience of Portuguese migrants in Spain and explore its global context and what it represents as for the transformation – and public representation – of the contemporary Portuguese working class.

Key words: "Pendular" migration; construction workers; social and economic precariousness; peripheral social condition; invisibility.

1. From the "rise of immigration" to the "return of emigration" (with the "crisis" as the background)

In 2001, when the data from the general population census confirmed the population living in Portugal had grown – and that the 1990s population growth was almost entirely explained by a positive net migration only comparable with that recorded in the 1970s, when the country saw a volume of entrants of over 700 thousand individuals, most of them returning from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa –, the ones defending the idea Portugal had become an "immigration destiny" (rather than an "emigration country") were finally able to statistically attest the change in the Portuguese migratory profile that the transforming ethnic and social mosaic of the main urban centres of the country suggested was happening.

The data then published allowed an accurate measurement of the extent of this transformation: between 1991 and 2001, Portugal experienced a net volume of immigration of over 400 thousand individuals, the vast majority of whom coming from the Portuguese-speaking African countries, from Brazil and from eastern Europe – an area which, not without some surprise, given the novel and unusual intensity of the flow of immigrants originating therefrom, became one of the main areas of foreign labour supply to the Portuguese economy.

The study of emigration as such was outmoded. The decline in the importance of the emigration flows, in absolute terms (so it seemed) and, more importantly, by comparison with the growing importance of immigration, and the lack of reliable statistical information on the evolution of Portuguese emigration throughout the 1990s, contributed significantly to the gradual elision of this issue, not only from the political agenda, usually very influenced by short-term socioeconomic fluctuations, but also from academic enquiry, which largely shifted its focus to the study of the growing immigrant communities in our country.

Figures recently published point, however, to the fact that, even in the period in which immigration was most intense, between 1997 and 2002, Portugal never ceased to be a point of outward migration flows of some quantitative significance. According to the *International Migration Outlook*, published in 2007 by the OECD, the number of Portuguese living abroad registered a surprising growth in several European countries. The Portuguese population living in the United Kingdom, for example, more than tripled between 1997 and 2002, growing from 27 thousand individuals at the beginning of the period to 85 thousand at its end (OECD, 2007).

Despite these numbers, the truth is that the "immigration surge" recorded in the late 1990s seemed to have changed, in an unprecedented manner, the Portuguese migratory balance, appearing to many as the corollary of a cycle that, following the economic progress of the country, was finally closing, with the return to Portugal of many emigrants and the import of an increasing volume of foreign workers.

The "crisis", though, would quickly shake this conviction, relocating emigration in the centre of the reproduction strategies of thousands of Portuguese families.

Revealing the fundamentally episodical status of the unusual immigration growth registered in previous years, the worsening economic situation in the period after 2001 and the sharp rise in unemployment that has since then been felt underlined the precipitate nature of the analyses that had taken for granted the fact that Portugal had definitely abandoned its traditional status as an "emigration country" to become an "immigration destiny". In some cases, migration studies have wrongly generalised to the entire country the very specific case of Lisbon and its surrounding area; in other cases, the analyses didn't probably resist the seductive and politically comforting idea of a Portuguese "leap" concerning the country's general social and economic development, a "leap" which would be making Portugal converge with the more developed economies (labour force "importers").

Either way, the truth is that much of what has been said about the recent changes in the Portuguese migration profile and the future trends of international migration originating in or bound for Portugal came to reflect, if not a desire (wishful thinking?), then a partial and momentary vision of reality, rather than a distanced and critical discussion on the structural evolution of the Portuguese economy and society.

Since 2002, with the Portuguese economy growing at minimal levels and unemployment rising sharply, not only has the country gradually lost its appeal regarding immigration movements – as revealed by the data issued in the abovementioned OECD study, which point to a decrease of about 8% between 2004 and 2005 in the volume of foreign population living in Portugal –, but we are also seeing the revival of the phenomenon of emigration – with renewed and somewhat surprising intensity, again seeming to act as a "safety valve" for thousands of jobless workers, or for workers with no prospects of fulfilling, at home, their expectations of social mobility.

If, accepting the suggestion of Peixoto (1993: 858), and taking into account the analysis of the recent changes in Portuguese migration flows, we ask what is after all Portugal's positioning concerning this issue, then we must agree that the country has largely maintained its role as a semi-peripheral European

supplier of unskilled labour to the more developed countries. The reproduction of the semi-peripheral condition of our country reflects, moreover, the disparity, deepened in recent years, between the rates of economic growth, income levels, purchasing power and workforce qualification in Portugal and the European Union.

Domestically, the inter-regional development disparities explain, on the one hand, the extremely unequal distribution throughout the country's territory of the points of origin of migration flows and, on the other hand, the unusual fact that Portugal has been, in recent years, simultaneously a "sending" and a "receiving" country of migrants. While the Lisbon region has a somewhat "European" profile, appearing as a pole of attraction for migrants – from other regions of the country and from abroad –, vast areas of the less developed Portuguese regions confirm their statuses as suppliers of the non-skilled labour force that supports the growth of the urban-industrial areas with higher levels of development – in Portugal and, increasingly, abroad.

The North of the country – and especially the areas located beyond the limits of Porto's Metropolitan Area – matches this profile. The decline of traditional industrial activities (textiles, clothing, footwear, furniture), which are presently facing severe international competition, has led to a marked decrease in the region's employment opportunities (sometimes due to technology inputs and the modernisation of production processes, more often because of the closure or relocation of production units). Likewise, a decline in the importance of extractive industries and, above all, a decline in the vitality of construction and construction-related activities, traditionally big employers, have occurred, aggravating the situation even more. According to official figures, unemployment in the North of the country is now near 12% and numbers are expected to increase at least until 2012 (INE, 2009).

2. A biopsy of a "peripheral social condition"

Having to face this "crisis", it is clear for many Portuguese families that emigration is once again "back in favour"[1]. Among other consequences, the recent evolution of the Portuguese economy – diminishing levels of investment and scarce growth, loss of business dynamism, particularly in traditional sectors, rising unemployment and degrading purchase power – has led to important changes in the country's workforce mobility patterns. For some families, in areas traditionally used to face the "crisis" periods through emigration, the big news may have been the current paramount destination – Spain[2] – and,

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[1] See the article in Jornal de Notícias, December 2nd 2006, "Parece que a emigração está outra vez a dar". According to the Secretary of State of Portuguese Communities, the number of Portuguese living abroad didn't cease increasing throughout the last twenty years: between 1987 and 1997, the growth was about 18% (from 3.934.450 to 4.631.482 individuals); between 1997 and 2007, the growth was less intense but still significant, reaching 7% (from 4.631.482 to 4.948.057 individuals). In this last decade, approximately 30 thousand Portuguese have emigrated each year. These figures tend, however, to under-represent the actual volume of Portuguese emigration, since they frequently neglect the numbers of temporary and seasonal emigration, as well as the numbers concerning international commuting (what we here call "pendular emigration"). According to the Portuguese Construction Workers Union, there were more than 70 thousand Portuguese workers working in this activity sector in Spain in the beginning of 2007, most of whom commuting on a weekly or fortnightly basis (see the article in Jornal de Notícias, January 12th 2007, "Milhares de operários do Marco de Canaveses partiram para Espanha").

[2] The intensity and set of destinations of the emigration flows originated in Northwest Portugal should have changed in the last months, as a result of the degrading economic situation of some of the countries that were welcoming Portuguese workers – and especially Spain. In mid-2008, the media informed that around 80 thousand Portuguese workers were registered in the Social Security in Spain; adding to these workers, there were the ones working in this country though employed by Portuguese companies (thus registered – or not – in the Social Security in Portugal). But the fact was that the number of unemployed Portuguese workers was (and is) rising, following the decline of the construction and real-estate activities in Spain (see the article by the news agency Lusa, Abril 28th 2008, "Menos 826 portugueses em Espanha"). Meanwhile, the media are also noticing the rise of some "new" Portuguese emigration destinations, such as Angola, France or Switzerland. It's a change we were able to assess when developing our fieldwork, but it doesn't mean our analysis is somehow

moreover, the unprecedented possibility of being able to return home weekly or fortnightly. For others, the ones with members usually employed in construction, the big news was the replacement of domestic commuting for international commuting. For others still, emigration represented the adoption of a reproduction strategy yet untried − and possibly at odds with − previous career paths and arcs of geographic mobility.

The closing horizon of employment opportunities, in a region where labour force skills are on average quite low, making difficult for the reconversion of careers and the access to economic activities other than traditional ones ("in crisis"), brought over the growth of emigration flows, thus compensating for the weaknesses of the regional productive structures, unable to absorb, on the one hand, the available labour force and unable to compete, on the other hand, with some very attractive features of international labour markets, especially regarding wages[3].

This paper discusses, in a necessarily brief manner, some elements arising from a research on the migration flows which have recently been affecting the daily lives of many families living in Northwest Portugal[4]. In particular, it emphasises three basic conditions that should be present in the sociological enquiry of emigration. Firstly, it emphasises the importance of examining the social production of agents willing to recognise emigration as a "reasonable" alternative. It is, in fact, necessary to consider this social embeddedness to understand the economic strategies mobilised by individuals and families dealing with economic insecurity. Secondly, it stresses the importance of the study of the modalities of everyday living that characterise this kind of "intermittent exile" that's pendular emigration and the immediate conditions of emigrant experience. Finally, it states the relevance of a critical evaluation − deriving from this fieldwork approach to the phenomenon − of what the experience of pendular migration signifies as a process of increasing "peripheralisation" − a geographical and social peripheralisation", but also a theoretical and political one - of social conditions that are already "peripheral" (Pinto and Queirós, 2008).

3. Lives in limbo

The durable and reiterated submission to the circumstances of social and economic confinement ("the situation here is very tight") that are associated to a socially peripheral condition − circumstances that have meanwhile been aggravated by the "crisis" - is at the origin of forms of historically specific interest ("I have to turn to somewhere", "I have to look out for myself") and therefore of the formation of horizons of expectations that are plausible because they are probable[5]. Behind the apparently original economic "options" and "choices" are to be found all the personal and collective histories of gradual familiarisation with the social situations, typical of this particular social group, that generate the "hunches" and "preferences" justifying the reasonableness, and eventually the need, of certain alternatives ("slaving like

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subverted − in fact, what we wished to do was to free migration studies from the mistakes resulting from a merely "episodical" analysis of migration.

[3] When asked about the reasons underlying the decision to emigrate, the Portuguese construction workers we interviewed were almost always unanimous: on the one hand, they mentioned the scarce job opportunities back in the areas of origin ("there are no jobs here", "things are getting very difficult back here"); on the other hand, they underlined the wage differences between Portugal and Spain ("things are bad everywhere, so we rather go abroad, since there we're going to earn more money", "back here we can't make ends meet", "the difference is between earning 400 euro in a month or in a week", "if it was in Lisbon, it wouldn't be that different − and we would earn less" − and examples could carry on).

[4] To know more about this research, see Monteiro and Queirós (2009a; 2009b).

[5] "The mutual understanding between the (re)socialised body and the objectified space naturalises the social distances and limits, inscribing them infra-consciously in postures of deference, in a sense of one's appropriate place and value, and in a sensibility adjusted to the goods and practices plausible and adequate to the 'people of our kind'" (Charlesworth and Monteiro, forthcoming: 4).

a black guy", "you have a good body to work", "you have to make a living") and not of others ("doing nothing", "idling").

In that it represents an extreme case of destabilisation of a "precarious economic balance, shattering the temporal and spatial rhythms that constitute the bonds of all social existence" of a peripheral worker (Bourdieu and Sayad, 1964: 21), pendular migration provides experiences as contradictory as the social conditions on which it is grounded[6]. The "essentialisation" of the relation between spatial (dis)location and social (dis)connection, resulting from pendular migration and accentuated by the characteristics of construction activities, supports and justifies the "dualistic view of the world" shared by these workers (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992: 45), from which is deducible the mode of "thinking in pairs" that shapes the discourse of contrast opposing "here" and "there".

The pendulum of "living in Portugal and working in Spain" provides the axis of articulation for a series of symbolic oppositions, juxtaposed to the ones immediately geographical ("home" and "work") and temporal ("week" and "weekend"), between two worlds of significance: the migrants "have two lives, the life there and the life here", says P., 31 years old, working in Spain for over 7 years. The overinvestment, both physical and temporal, in daily work, the domestic confinement (or, at best, the endogamous sociability within the "team"), and the austerity in consumption during the workweek, define the range of probable experiences during the period spent at work. The weekends represent the (self-)restoration of self-esteem, the unrestricted use of time ("doing nothing", "going for a walk", "sleeping"), the conspicuous spent of money ("spending all the money in booze", "spending the evening with the lads here") and the multiplication of temporarily interrupted or suspended conviviality occasions ("talking freely") – they prefigure, thus, an opportunity to putting to work what Moodie (1991: 29) calls "practices of personal integrity". The alternation that's typical of this bulimic pattern of appropriating time and space is indelibly etched in minds and bodies: "the imaginary, here, becomes body with biography" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992: 55). Only from a position that's open to understand the objectively unstable and contradictory status of these workers is it possible to resist the impression of ambiguity, bad faith or ineptitude transmitted by their duplicitous discourse and attend to the conditions of possibility and the limits of validity of the migrant's vision of the world[7].

The opacity of the personal consequences of migration is reinforced by the internalisation and naturalisation of experiences of exploitation and domination. By offering the appearance of a respite or exception period ("this is just until I get my life back on track", "I was living a difficult situation and then this opportunity arose"), the transitory condition associated to migration contributes to defer the conflicts attributable to the structure of power, disguising them as something specific to a "defensive sacrifice", operating to restore the harmony of collective and personal existence, by "establishing or re-establishing the limits, frontiers and frames legitimately constitutive of these structures of society and culture within which an ordered life can be lived" (Turner, 1977: 215). This variety of migration emerges as an "opportunity" which is accessible and acceptable, but only for workers able and willing to see it as an effective way to cope simultaneously with the necessity ("a guy needs money to pay is dues, to buy his things") and the imperative of maintaining the social honour of the virtuous man ("walking tall", "I could stay out of a job but that's even worse", "I always liked to work"). In these conditions, the mental

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[6] The nature of the migratory experience is decided, precisely, in the dynamic relationship between "the migrant's system of dispositions and the set of mechanisms they are submitted because of their migration" (Sayad, 1999: 57).

[7] The oscillation between the double mode of fantasy and deception coordinates a mechanism of defence and adaptation that tries to give coherence to the vivid experience associated to pendular migration in the midst of the relative corrosion of the temporal and spatial references that structured the ordinary sense of the aboriginal world and the weakness of the cultural and symbolic autochthony that, traditionally, ensured the preservation of a reserved domain for the social value and the oneself worth of these workers: "The magical denegation of the objective reality of migration is part and parcel of its whole objectivity, of its 'double thruth'" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2000: 176).

and physical costs of work are reinterpreted in the logic of masculine stoicism and virtuosity ("many can't stand it", "whoever goes there with ill will, and is always talking, always smoking... is going to get fucked") and justified by the financial compensation ("as long as they comply, I don't mind working... as long as they pay at the end of the month")[8].

De-justification is, however, the most powerful means of justification. The inertia of incorporated structures, transmuted physiologically and practically in the bodily postures and discourses of deference that retranslate collective feelings of inferiority and illegitimacy ("you're in a country that's not yours, you have to enter a scheme that's not yours, it's not they that have to adapt to you, it's you that has to adapt to the system"), explains how these workers contribute to realise in everyday life the asymmetries of power that are present in the social conditions at the root of their schemata of action and thought. The interiorisation of social inequalities in the form of principles of classification (and hierarchisation) of behaviours, attitudes and appearances, by functioning as a "natural" sense of reality, inscribes the moral and physical violence which is experienced daily in the workplace ("you're in pain", "you work till you drop dead", "it was degrading", "they don't respect anyone") within the order of the "normal" and even of the "deserved"[9]. "Because of these perceptions, the migrant body is seen as belonging effectively to the position that it occupies in the system which has meanwhile led to its deterioration" (Holmes, 2006: 1787).

To the extent that they hold for themselves the existing power relations, the charges of subordination tend to systematically ratify appearances ("you are so used to the rhythm that... for you, work is normal... you are there twelve hours almost nonstop") and to be confirmed by the actions and words, apparently spontaneous, of the migrants themselves ("I have enough life experience to know that life is such one can't expect a thing"). "The dominant meanings and practices shape the substance of everyday experiences: our expectations, meanings and lived practices constitute and are constituted by our sense of social relations and reality" (Ong, 1987: 3). The effect of evidence of reality ordinarily determines the unquestionable nature of the social world[10].

The durable exposure to negative social situations, a relatively common occurrence when you are linguistically inept, economically insecure and socially stigmatised, reinforces the personal and collective beliefs concerning the unpredictability and even the malevolence of one's "fate" ("luck", "bad luck", "this

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[8] P.'s words oscillate between the pride of having achieved and exhibiting the signs of virility and work virtuosity and the conscience of the imminent or gradual spending of the single capital that he has and that's capable of producing economic and symbolic value: his body. You get "value" by granting the recognition of your superiors and co-workers ("we showed them... I wasn't used to do that, but I learned fast and meanwhile I already knew as much as they knew; and so this Spanish fellow says: 'I value you because you aren't used to do this'"), by learning the rudiments of an "art", by assuming new "responsibilities", and by demonstrating the most undeniable signs of virile excellence ("when I left, I was huge, I was tough as a brick", "I always put myself to test", "I always enjoyed hard work...").

[9] "The easier, the lighter work... it was them [the Spanish workers] who did it and then... That happens, but... In fact, I didn't tell you that, but... for me, for us, that was normal... I think it was good for us things were like that. You want to know why? That way you could prove to the supervisor you really knew how to do things – and that way you were able to grant his respect, that was the thing that mattered there" (P., 31 years old).

[10] We must note that the *doxa* doesn't simply mean ennui or conformity. "The doxic attitude doesn't mean happiness; it means bodily submission, unconscious submission, which can indicate a lot of internalised tension, a lot of physical suffering" (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1991: 120). It expresses itself and reveals itself fundamentally as "occult transcription" of a state of things experienced as contradictory, hostile, inflexible ("I didn't have the will...", "I wasn't motivated", "I had that bad feeling, the tightening throat [before each journey to Spain]... I didn't even want to go to bed", "when you are there, you think about everything, you turn your life upside down in your head", "I was getting crazy"). Like C., a 25 years old unskilled construction worker in Spain, says: "Things add up and add up and add up... until they reach a point you have to decide – you either handle it and stay there or you let everything burst and you have to return". The "absence of recognised shame" structures, among workers, a pattern of emotional reactions oscillating between "silence" and "aggression" (see Scheff, 2001): between "swallowing it", "handling it", "bending", or "leaving", "blowing up", "breaking".

is cursed", "no one could have guessed", "shit always happens", "it seemed he already knew what was going to happen", "five minutes before and it would have been me, five minutes later and it happened to my colleague") and tends to define a self-image made of helplessness regarding the harshness of reality and marked by the seeming invisibility and insignificance in the "gaze" of others ("no one respects you", "they don't give a damn", "we're just dogs when we're over there", "you're just a number", "you're a machine, a way for them to earn [money] (...): from the moment you stop being useful to the company, you become disposable"). "When the world refuses our efforts to interact with it in a social and reciprocal way it becomes, in our imagination, a place of menacing power. (...) We quickly fall prey to fears that forces, known or unknown, are conspiring against us, when in reality it is only the powerlessness and estrangement that produce this erosion of self-confidence and a pervasive sense of shame, degradation, exclusion or inferiority" (Jackson, 2008: 70-71). The reduction to mere economic value ("they're using you", "here... it's just work") is linked to the loss of symbolic recognition ("they shit in your face") and with the decline of visibility both in the naïve and the erudite representations of social reality[11].

4. Conclusion. Intellectual hierarchies, social hierarchies: the politics of representation of emigration

The various forms of erudite representation of emigration (journalistic, institutional, scholarly) reflect, in an often unconscious fashion, the strong correlation between social and intellectual hierarchies: "the hierarchy of intellectual objects ordinarily reproduces the social hierarchy of such objects", as Sayad puts it (1990: 8). The work of the sociologist is, then, to scrutinise the means by which the object is constructed, means which imperceptibly make a selection that isolates, euphemises, normalises or universalises certain aspects of a social fact – that's necessarily total – according to the "practical philosophy" contained in what can be called the intellectual "collective unconscious". Through this work of "disambiguation", the mediating plan of the individual and collective history of the producers of versions of the world, that frequently act as a-historical rational incarnations (journalistic, institutional and scholarly), is re-inserted, allowing further understanding on the social genesis and historical limits of the spontaneous sociodicy of those who (intellectually) represent social reality.

In addition to this explicit awareness of the conditions and the historical and social conditioning associated with apparently exclusively theoretical choices, sociology can re-encounter itself as an art of social disillusionism by questioning the system of objective determinants that explain the historicity of the (subjective) representation that migrants make about themselves. The denaturalisation of the invisibility and of the silence of the dominated, "the effort to expose the logic of their social practices to try to explain it to those who do not understand it because they do not live it", could be shown to be more advantageous to the dominated themselves – and for sociological research – than to "speak on their behalf" or to "categorically state what must be done to solve their 'problems'" (Noiriel, 2002: iv).

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[11] The migrant worker is highly dependent on his "bodily capital", means of accumulation and virtuous expression (see Wacquant, 2005) – "knowing how to do things", to have "skill", to have the "hands of an artist", a "great physique", "the strength of a bull" – and frequently the single instrument of economic profit. Symbolic and material valuing of the body is crucial within the whole of the working class existence. In this way, no event is as much revealing of the contradictions of migration as the one that partially or fully topples the image of the "strong", "working" migrant: the work accident. The work accident seriously compromises the collusion concerning the migrant status as body-temporarily-working-abroad: the migrant can no longer materialise the reasons according to which he migrated in the first place ("to work", "to make ends meet"); the family and the community of origin can no longer see the migrant as virtuous or an entrepreneur ("he's there to straighten his life", "he did what he had to do", "we were depending on him", "he helped us a lot"); institutions – state institutions or private companies – in destination communities can no longer find the criteria that until then explained the migrant's role and justified the tolerance regarding his presence ("he was working, but now...").