

PARAGUAY MIGRATION IN BRAZIL'S BORDER STRIP: IDENTITIES, CIRCULARITIES AND TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS

Migración paraguaya en la franja fronteriza de Brasil: identidades, circularidades y redes transnacionales

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Publicado: 20-08-2023

Cómo citar

Fiorotti Lima, C.; Cardin, E. G. (2023). Paraguay migration in Brazil's border strip: identities, circularities and transnational networks. *Revista Digital Costa Oriental*, 1, 1. 1-23.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar la construcción identitaria de los migrantes paraguayos en la franja fronteriza brasileña, específicamente en el territorio que abarca la región de confluencia de la frontera entre Guaíra y Salto del Guairá. El propósito fue considerar las relaciones entre trabajo, espacio, tiempo e identidad según las narrativas de estos migrantes. Así, se realizaron diez entrevistas cualitativas con el fin de recolectar historias de vida y trayectorias ocupacionales de los entrevistados. En este marco, el texto expresa dos partes de la investigación: el proceso de aproximación del problema de interés y las percepciones de los entrevistados sobre los temas. Por tanto, analizamos la presencia de identidades fluidas, establecidas a través de relaciones con redes sociales transnacionales derivadas de desplazamientos circulares tradicionalmente desarrollados a lo largo de la región estudiada, pero también por necesidades de los sujetos prácticos en su entorno, así como la búsqueda de espacio en el mercado y en la regulación de la situación migratoria.

Palabras clave: *Franja fronteriza; Migración-Paraguay; Redes transnacionales; Identidades; Circularidad.*

ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to analyze the identity construction of Paraguayan migrants in the Brazilian border strip, specifically in the territory that covers the confluence region of the border between Guaíra and Salto del Guairá. The purpose was to consider the relationships between work, space, time and identity according to these migrants' narratives. Thus, ten qualitative interviews were carried out in order to collect life histories and the interviewees' occupational trajectories. In this context, the text expresses two parts of the investigation: the process of approximation of the problem of interest and the perceptions of the interviewees on the topics. Therefore, we analyzed the presence of fluid identities, established through relationships with transnational social networks derived from circular displacements traditionally developed throughout the studied region, but also due to the practical subjects' needs in their environment, such as the search for space in the market to the migratory situation regulation.

Keywords: *Border trip, Migration-Paraguay, Transnational network, Identities, Circularities.*



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Introduction

The article aims to provide some theoretical and methodological reflections about a type of displacement and inhabit occurrence in the confluence region of the Brazilian, Paraguayan and Argentinean border, characterized simultaneously by the circularity of the flow of workers and by very singular spatial and temporal relations. We could simply call it border migration, but we believe that if we settle this definition, this category fails to consider a wide set of nuances of reality experienced by a vast group of persons who, in their trajectories, have somewhat inaccurate relations to the their own paths.

Border mobility corresponds to a relevant phenomenon in many border municipalities, such as, for example, the confluence region of limits between Mexico and Guatemala (Rojas, 2016), Mexico and U.S. (Stephen, 2012; Dear & Burrridge, 2005; Vélez-Ibáñez & Heyman, 2017), Argentina and Brazil (Wagner, 2016), Brazil, Peru and Bolivia (Valcuende, 2008), Peru, Brazil and Colombia (Oliveira, 2006) and in the investigated region. However, border mobility and border migration are two different phenomena, although they may coexist. The first case involves a periodic displacement that exists in some in regions of international limit, displacement carried out by workers, students and consumers who cross the border daily in search of the usufruct of possible differences in the offer of services between neighboring countries. While the second case is a type of border migration, in which residence fixation occurs.

Michael Dear and Andrew Burrridge (2005, p. 303) highlight the existence of differences between thinking about integration and hybridization. While the first term refers to "mutually-agreeable contact leading to interdependencies that cause little or no change in contact partners and which does not require their geographical proximity, merging, or adjacency", the second concerns the "contact that creates novel forms and practices that exist independently of prior forms and practices and that engaged agents are geographically adjacent to their production to occur". Border mobility produces hybridization with varying intensities, often depending on the types of integration that exist. The ease of movement of people and capital in the Brazil / Paraguay border guarantees the existence of multisite experiences and, consequently, the emergence of hybrid practices.

Although the existence of hybridism can't be denied, the formation of identities on the Brazil / Paraguay border can't be limited to it. The existence of transnational social networks in the region studied guarantees a constant mobility between the different nations. Similar to what has been observed by Lynn Stephen (2012) in U.S. / Mexico reality, the mobility of people makes the border not only a physical and objective aspect. In a way, the border is transported with the cross-border person, which constantly shifts and reconfigures it. In this movement, identities are constructed in a multisite way, because people cross

not only the concrete, geographical and juridical borders, but also the subjective ones, that is, those that, among other things, define the image that I have of the other and of myself.

The studied tri-border area can be considered one of the most important in South America due to its intensity of people flow and goods circulating, but also by the presence of a great cultural heterogeneity and different ethnic communities. However, in the midst of the numerous networks established and dismantled on a daily basis, different social groups composed of migrants from various countries of the Middle East and Asia tend to have greater visibility due to cultural traits and the media appeal than those composed by subjects from neighboring countries. Thus, the presence of Indigenous, Argentines and Paraguayans living in the Brazilian border strip is often unnoticed. Supposedly, the difficulty in recognizing identities contributes to their invisibility.

Development

Historical view of the region studied



Map. Number 1. Brazil-Paraguay Border
Author: Camilo Pereira Carneiro (2019)

Historically, the region studied has always had a strong indigenous presence, mainly of Guaranis groups. To a large extent, the population development of the border between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina is directly related to the way in which such groups were treated throughout local history. During the period of Portuguese and Spanish colonization, we highlight the Jesuit experience which, in order to catechize the natives, built a significant number of reductions in a large territorial area. Still, in the seventeenth century, there was the process of capture of Indians and great massacres, by the “bandeirantes”, with expeditions aimed at the capture and sale of Indians to be enslaved in the agricultural production. During this period, many indigenous people were killed, while some were rescued

for points not yet exploited by the colony and others were assimilated by colonial rule (Monteiro, 1994).

Between the end of nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century, it was the presence of Argentine companies associated with the English capital that explored the natural resources of this region. In the extraction of yerba mate they appropriated and used the indigenous labor force in a servile way (“mensus”). Knowing the climate and the regional vegetation, the workers were contracted through indebtedness relationships, where the “obragero” guaranteed an advance to the “mensu” that should be paid through work. However, living conditions in the so-called “obrages” were subhuman, making it impossible for men to comply with their part of the contract, which made reports of attempts to flee the workplace and reports of mistreatment common. These practices have disappeared since the 1930s, when national governments begin to encourage other forms of occupation and economic exploitation in the region bounded by the border between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay (Packer, 2013).

Sustained by the ideological discourse that defended the existence of a demographic emptiness in the region, the respective governments begin a process of population by means of expansion of the rural border that did not respect the existence of original towns scattered across the border strip. This last stage of formation of border territory radicalized the process of social exclusion of the Guaranis, which were inserted precariously in the national societies, confined in small pieces of land or simply not recognized. In all cases, the consequences were dire. The struggle for land by indigenous peoples is still a manifest issue throughout the region, while the processes of building identities become more complex (Freitag, 2007).

On the one hand, the denial of indigenous identity by descendants of the Guaranis living in parts of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina is visualized in order to seek a less precarious approach and insertion in their respective national societies. On the other, there are conservative groups that deny the right of self-identification of many indigenous people in order to protect their rural properties and restrict their access to basic social rights. The study of identity processes in the situation of border migration needs to observe these aspects, since much beyond national identities there is the presence of a historically marginalized identity that is silenced in everyday life (Matsuzaki, 2015).

The common experience of historical processes related to their territorial formation and their population caused the legal limits not to correspond always to the social borders developed by the inhabitants of the studied border region. The territorial displacements traditionally carried out by the Guarani peoples which do not recognize the demarcations of the nation-states (Silva, 2007), the Jesuit’s reductions present in a wide territory between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina (Schallenberger, 2006) and the exploitation of natural resources by international companies throughout the confluence region of the borders of Brazil,

Argentina and Paraguay (Wachwicz, 1982), correspond to social practices that directly interfered with the region's occupation.

However, situations that are more contemporary also allow one's own use of the shared border area. Thus, the movement of workers and goods on the border between Brazil and Paraguay throughout the 20th century, which has become more "disciplined" and nationalized according to the different nation-state established in their borders (Fiorotti, 2015) denounces the existence of different understandings about the idea of border and illegality, broadening the space of action of the people and the construction of ethnic relations. Just as the circularity of the Brazilian farmers in the border strip of Paraguay, a phenomenon that constituted a new social agent, the "Brasiguai", identity defined in the game of forces of the border, where they are blended, and can even go unnoticed, depending on the political agenda and the interests involved, expressing all the plasticity of the border (Albuquerque, 2010).

The indicated historical processes contributes in different levels to the formation of the population that inhabits the confluence region of the borders of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. A population that circulates and does not share such mobility, a population that interacted intensely before the greater effective presence of the federal control, but which has not yet completely overcome some traditional practices (Dorfman, 2009). Because of this circular mobility, it is evident that within the Brazilian border strip there is a contingent population, composed of Paraguayans and Argentineans, which are counted in the domiciliary surveys as border migrants, but are "naturalized" in daily life due to the regional particularities that can be visualized in the presence of transnational social networks and in traditional mobility.

Using the term "naturalize" is a poor way of saying that Paraguayan and Argentinean migrants, who settled in different historical periods in the Brazilian border strip, are at a higher levels of assimilation when compared to other ethnic groups due to the historic processes aforementioned. However, this does not mean that the interaction between members of different ethnic groups is free of conflict. The precarious insertion of many Paraguayan workers into Brazilian labor market reveals the existence of ethnic differences as mechanisms of control and domination (Farina, 2015).

However, one must escape from a trap. The border worker is not, by definition, a migrant, because his/her practice is a routine and can be understood or absorbed by the movement represented or expressed as we are referring to as border mobility. In a nutshell, he/she can work, study or use social devices in a country and live in another without having to go through the entire migratory process. In this research, we do not focus specifically on these workers, but on a set of processes experienced by border migrants residing in the studied region. We try to emphasize or to discuss the fact that within such a population,

there are many invisible "foreigners", due to a hierarchy that occurred in a long historical process that "naturalized" the relations and, often, the very existence of these people.

To analyze this "naturalization" process or this apparent invisibility experienced by many Paraguayans living in the border strip of Brazil and Paraguay, we will explore the content of ten qualitative interviews conducted throughout 2015. Life histories and, more specifically, the occupational trajectories collected during field research will allow us to discuss many subjects, but since there is a more specific interest, we will highlight the process of interview construction and use only parts of them to problematize the relations between space, time, invisibility and identity within the narratives. The results indicate that efforts to identify interviewee by means of state categories (using national identity, for example) do not allow an adequate understanding of the situation. In summary, respondents may be formally migrants, but the multi-situated existence of these people requires us to think of them as transborder subjects.

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Migration of Paraguayans to the Brazilian border strip

The construction of a network of interlocutors to conduct any investigation of Social Sciences or History corresponds to a significant research stage, since it can reveal characteristics of the subjected universe of research. In this sense, at the beginning of 2015, when we started a study more directly related to the migration of Paraguayans to the Brazilian border strip, we went through curious situations that gradually turned out to be revealing. Among them, the difficulty of understanding how these subjects expressed nationality amid the reports about their experiences of life and work.

To find interviewees, we talked to many persons who indicated to us other persons, establishing a set of social relations. These indications also revealed part of the relations of interaction and perception between subjects of different nationalities or only with different ethnic traits. For this study, the place where the interviews were conducted already showed these characteristics. It is the municipality of Guaíra, in Paraná, which borders Mundo Novo, in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, and Salto del Guairá, in Paraguai.

The elaboration of the interviews aimed to elicit subjective elements related to the perception of these subjects on the places they lived throughout their life trajectories. For this reason, we began with questions regarding the trajectories they and their families have gone through, bringing themes related to places of origin, to the places they lived with their families, work and cultural and ethnic aspects. However, the established conversations did not have a structured script, the questions were elaborated throughout the dialogues, respecting the moments in which they used the interview to denounce situations experienced along their lives. Initially we looked for Paraguayan "migrants" who had been living in Brazil for a longer time and we later expanded the network as new indications occurred.

One of the first interviews we performed was with Domingas Candi Lopes, who was 95 years old at the time. She was indicated by some people who attend the Chapel of Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe, which is almost as an association of Paraguayan migrants in the city of Guaíra, in Paraná, Brazil. Domingas was presented to us as being an authentic Paraguayan and as one of the oldest inhabitants of the municipality. No one knew exactly her address; we obtained only the neighborhood of her residence and her first name.

With this information, we looked up for her. In the first house we arrived, we asked about her and they immediately answered, "The Paraguayan? She lives there!".

At first, we believed we were right. The she spoke in her own language, a mix of Spanish, Portuguese and Guarani, and in many moments, she offered us iced tererê, a typical drink of the neighboring country and present as a habit of many Brazilian residents of Guaíra. At the beginning of our conversation, Domingas told us that she was not a Paraguayan, but that she was born in Mato Grosso/Brazil, also told us that she had lived in that same house for more than 70 years. In other words, she has lived in the region in the period of yerba mate and wood exploitation by foreign capital companies, combined with the expropriation of indigenous lands. Following, we translate some of Domingas' speech:

My father is Paraguayan, he was born in Paraguay. My father worked in the forest, in the farm. I do not know for sure when we came here, I do not even remember that anymore. My mother was also a Paraguayan. I learned Guarani with them, they did not speak Portuguese, only Guarani. It wasn't to be like that before, in Paraguay only Guarani was spoken [I still don't speak Portuguese well. I speak Spanish very little. My mother worked at home, it was like that before, woman did not leave the house. My father worked cleaning the farm. I have no education. I had many siblings, the men are all dead, I'm the oldest. I never worked, my husband wouldn't let me. I'm supposed to stay at home, my job was to have children, I had 8 children. Now I'm alone. That's life, we make lots of children, with difficulties, and when we're old, they all go away. I got married when I was 15, then my husband died and I stayed with the children. He died 40 years ago. He worked in the city hall, he was Paraguayan. When we arrived there was nothing here, just the port. The port of Matte Larangeira, used to trade yerba mate.

Right away, this first interview would have some elements that could lead us to its discard. We were looking for a Paraguayan, but the speaker herself said she was Brazilian. We were looking for more information on the trajectory of her life, but due to communication difficulties and her health conditions, our conversation turned out to be much shorter and more objective than we originally planned. However, these difficulties instigated some possibilities for reflection. Everyone claimed that "Dona Domingas" was Paraguayan, her parents and husband were Paraguayans, but what was the origin of her identification? Or, what was the origin of the interviewees' self-identification?

Would the difficulty in managing Portuguese and the ease with Guarani, the beverage tererê, her family working practices and the family organization itself not indicate elements of her identity? Would the difficulty in remembering or being "out of her mind" to justify the few words used to describe where she was from and the life trajectory of her family reveal only memory weaknesses? All these situations have aroused our attention to some aspects; the formation of the migrant's identity does not correspond exclusively to a spatial but also a temporal shift, and this displacement in time and space can redefine the relation of belonging to the territory.

These observations are reinforced by analyzing the narrative of the second interviewee, Maria Tereza Cabrera, who was 54 years at the time. The conversation was established when she was working with other Brazilian women and men in the kitchen of the Chapel Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe. The food would be sold in the Paraguayan tent of the Festa das Nações that occurs annually in the city of Guairá/Brazil. At first, she answered the questions in Portuguese, but gradually began to mix the languages and ended our conversation speaking in Spanish.

I am Paraguayan. I was born in Porto Morumbi, Mato Grosso. I have been living in Paraguay for 45 years. My parents were Paraguayans, they worked in Matte Larangeira, in Mato Grosso. My father was an accountant and my mother was a cook. They were Paraguayans. They came from Paraguay during the revolution. Many people came in that period, from Concepción, they came on horseback and passed through Ponta Porã. Then we returned to Paraguay. I lived in Salto del Guairá and then I went to La Paloma.

Maria Tereza Cabrera is identified in the community as Paraguayan, and initially even by herself, claiming that she was born in Brazil. All her family environment is made up of Paraguayans and the several years living in the neighboring country would justify her positioning. However, our interview was marked by a peculiar situation. At the moment she was telling us she was Paraguayan the language used was Portuguese, but when she started to talk about her education, professional activity and Brazilian identity the answers were given in Spanish.

I studied and have a degree. I work with human rights and I have Brazilian nationality. Most foreigners want their rights. Everyone living in Paraguay wants his/her right. I fight for human rights and women's rights. Women have many rights. The head was the minister, Cristina Muñoz. She went to the United States to fight for women. I worked in the Public Ministry of Paraguay in

La Paloma. Today I work more in the Brazilian consulate, for the Brazilians. We love them a lot, because I am a Brazilian. My mother was indigenous and my father was from Santa Catarina. Then a Paraguayan family adopted me because my parents died in Puerto Morumbi.

The mixture of languages, the difficulty in specifying the identity and the existence of a mobility that allows them to travel in a concrete, abstract, real or imagined way, throughout an area that corresponds to the old missionary space, using the terminology adopted by Erneldo Schallenger (2006) makes us question whether the term migration is adequate to name these persons' displacement. They walk, reminding us how the Guaraní persons used to travel, and they perform a bricolage with the different cultural tools accumulated in their trajectories. Such a situation was not restricted in these first interviews, they also appeared in conversations that we established with other interviewees.

By another indication, we found Vanessa's house, a Paraguayan of approximately 19 years.

I came from La Paloma, my parents are Paraguayans, he is a locksmith and my mother is a housewife. I have five more siblings, but they still live in Paraguay. I am the only one who came to Brazil. My brothers help my father in the locksmith shop. In Paraguay I did not work. There, I was literate in Spanish. I cannot speak Guaraní, I understand only a little, my mother can speak Guaraní. I came here a while ago, I was already married. It was very difficult to live in Paraguay, there were not jobs, we earned little. My son was born in Paraguay, he is 14 months-old. My husband got a job with the help of his friends. I faced prejudice when I was in Paraguay, they called me a burnt cookie, the children from school were all Brazilian, all white. Now I don't go there too much, we spend a lot.

Vanessa, who was very shy, had difficulty expressing herself in Portuguese. During our conversation, there were rare moments when she raised her head or looked away from the son in her lap. As in many other interviews, moving to Brazil was linked to the search for better living conditions, but always mediated by support networks constituted of friends or family. Despite her short speech, it drew our attention to the existence of two types of "circular displacements" that marks the region stops, displacements developed by the sons and daughters of Paraguayan rural workers and by the sons and daughters of Brazilian rural workers.

Vanessa's speech expresses part of the difficulties experienced by workers of her nationality, mobilized in sawmills or working in the field and living in a Paraguayan region with a strong presence of Brazilian soy producers. The feeling of differentiation of nationality and ethnicity within her own country are brought into her memories by remembering to be among other children in the school, "I faced prejudice when I was in Paraguay, they called me a burnt cookie, the children from school were all Brazilian, all white." Vanessa's experiences, lived throughout her life, among three languages and the strong Brazilians presence in the place where she lived made it possible to establish her perception about her Paraguayan identity. In the same way, the time lived in Brazil reinforced this identification by the own distinction made by the neighbors as to her nationality and estrangement from the cultural habits of the place she lives.

During the interview, we noticed a certain imprecision about the time she came to Brazil. Initially, she stated that she had been in Brazil for a long time. But in the development of the conversation she said she was married almost two years and that her son had been born in Paraguay before they migrated, that is, less than a year and two months. She expressed she missed Paraguay by saying, "it was cooler there, with less concrete." Such situations contribute to the understanding that her notion of time possibly relates to the lack of detachment with the place of origin and the desire for a possible return.

At the end of the quick conversation, she suggested us to talk to her husband later as it would be easier for him to answer our questions. So, we left and came back on a Saturday morning. When we arrived at the residence of Fábio Blas, the neighbors informed us that he was waiting for us at his mother's house, located a few meters from where we were. In that residence, we had the opportunity to talk to him, to his mother and to two of his brothers, which made possible a very different research situation.

His mother was Brazilian, and she had lived in Paraguay during the decade of 1970 with the many Brazilian families who went to live in the neighboring country to take advantage of the incentive policies of the Paraguayan government (Albuquerque, 2010). The three children were born there, who were practically raised with Paraguayan families and, although they were educated with the three languages, were literate in Spanish and Guaraní. Less than two years ago, they decided to move to Brazil and, as a result, they entered the country's labor market in logging and cassava harvesting, activities closely associated with Paraguayans in the region.

Initially, we talked to Fábio's older brother, Gustavo Blas, born in Paraguay, in Minga Guazú. He was 29 at the time we talked. Gustavo began working in the locksmith shop at the age of 14, after his father's death, who was Paraguayan. He described the family's internal migrations in Paraguay in the search for survival, emphasizing the poor working conditions in sawmills, associating them with slavery, to justify the need to move him and his family to Brazil.

I lived there until a while ago, it was good, but the locksmith shop was almost slavery. I started working when I was 14, my mother was by herself with two little ones, I had to help and I stopped studying. Anyone could work there and I started working to help at home. I studied in a big school, with Paraguayans and Brazilians. I was literate in Spanish at school and in Portuguese at home, my mother is Brazilian. I learned Guarani with my aunt, my father passed away and I spent some time with her.

Like Vanessa's speech, he also reports his acquaintance with Brazilians in school, but unlike the previous speaker, he could speak Portuguese, which made communication easier. The language domain was an important element for his socialization in the country where he decided to migrate to with the family. After detailing his working conditions in Paraguay, he spoke about his move to Brazil.

I decided to come here ... my brother, Fábio, came here. He had a friend who worked here and got him a job. He came first, and met a man, Messias. Messias needed more man to work now, we did not know him right, we thought he was a good guy, he paid per day. So, I sold all my stuff I got while working at San Blas (locksmith shop). I got here and started working for this Messias, he paid well, but the company was broken. He promised to pay me a month and help with my paperwork, but he started not paying me when I was going to get paid for the month. Then he said he was not going to give me more, that there was no more work and promised to pay me 1500 Real. He just paid me 200 and said he was going to bring the rest here at home. I'm still waiting. Then they told me to look for a job at the pickup to get the cassava out of the ground, that there was work there. It's a heavy work, under the hot sun. But even the pickup is an OK job, they work at the right time, (he is comparing the work situation he had in Paraguay, where he worked ?? hours and received about 15 Real a day). There is no other work here in Guaíra, for those who have no document there is only this left. In the pickup, there are only Paraguayans. [...] The people who work do not want to go back to Paraguay, they all live somewhere here. [...] The mother has document, but we, the siblings, do not, it's hard. The mother and ours names are

different. But even this is better to deal with here, we can talk to the police, there they understand very badly. I tried to have an identity in Paraguay and they said that I was lying, because I was Brazilian. So, I'm from nowhere (laughing).

The leaving process experienced by these subjects does not imply an easy decision to make. As Gustavo mentioned, "I sold all my stuff I got while working at San Blas." Although giving up material possessions from a lifetime of work and the exercise of the profession have weighed on his decisions, he also made considerations about his family, his mother and younger brother, to migrate with him, even without any guarantee of employment. Besides the possibility of work, he also considered the proximity to the family, the adaptation to the language and some cultural aspects. When there is a set of conditions to move, the change in his lifestyle is also evaluated.

The description of the migration process shows that it is feasible, now there is some work possibility. The displacement is conditioned by the entry into the labor market in Brazil and even if the working conditions are not ideal, according to Gustavo Blas, they are better than those in the origin country. The interview we had with Gustavo and with the other interviewees pointed to a set of occupations that are directed towards the supposed "Paraguayan migrant", manual activities that requires a great physical effort. However, they do not submit to any wearing work offered to them. As he reported in another moment, he has already rejected the work of digging ditches to install a sewage network, as he considered it too heavy for his physical condition.

The set of experiences he brought, by sharing part of his life trajectory, allows us to reflect on how some of the issues experienced in relation to his nationality associate with his social status as a worker. Gustavo, like many persons who live in conditions similar to his, was created in the midst of a cultural and ethnic multiplicity of a border region, where traffic in search of work or better living conditions mark the trajectory of many people. Although he has an identity linked to his country of origin, by saying "I am from nowhere" he refers to the experienced conditions of many of these subjects, in which the statements about this belonging are also based on their survival needs.

The narratives of the interviewees do not demonstrate equality in access to rights among the residents of the region, much less the existence of a full acceptance of the culture and ways of living of Paraguayans living in the Brazilian border strip. The invisibility of these subjects is more related to a labor division and a spatial stratification that naturalized the place of these migrant residents. As it was not enough that almost all the interviewees develop manual and wearing labor activities, all live in poor neighborhoods of the city of Guaira, in Brazil.

Gustavo's brother, Fábio Blas, was 23 years old when the interview occurred. He got his first job in Brazil with the help of a friend. Employed, Gustavo got a job for his brother later. He got his first job in Brazil because of a friend and was responsible for getting a job for his brother. Social networks were also important to find the current house. He rented the house where he lives with his wife, Vanessa, through another friend who worked with him in the locksmith shop in Paraguay. Like Gustavo's narrative, Fábio also explained that the Brazilian labor market situation is better, and he states that he had an excessive workload and a low income in his country of origin.

Fábio complained that he did not have the Brazilian documentation and that he hoped to receive help from his "boss" to regularize the situation. He, his brothers and mother said they had no interest in returning to Paraguay. In general, everyone complained about the previously difficulties and living conditions, where everyone worked in the same locksmith shop, following the company's own displacement. For the interviewee, it is common for Paraguayan workers to wish to move to Brazil, but, according to him, there are some points "they" need to consider. Firstly, it is important to have a job arrangement, then, "it's important to speak Portuguese", as it would make getting into labor market in the country easier.

At the time, we asked about the way they referred to the Paraguayans always in the third person and whether they considered themselves Paraguayans or Brazilians. Immediately, the mother said, "we consider ourselves Brazilians, none of them wanted to be Paraguayan." Gustavo makes a joke saying that during the Soccer World Cup they almost got into fights because they were in Paraguay, born in Paraguay and cheering for Brazil. Not enough, he told us about a situation in which he talked to a Paraguayan police officer to get the Paraguayan documentation and was poorly assisted. At the end of his exposition, he shouted, "these shit Paraguayans, I'm going to get the Brazilian document, I don't want to be Paraguayan anymore."

To reject an identity strategically or as an answer to the circumstances of daily life is possible for the individual who carries the boundary itself. Carlos Monsiváis (2003) points to the existence of a portable frontier, which is something that the transboundary subject carries within themselves and that allows them to pass through the identities in a fluid way. Denying national identities is not indicative of a person without identity, but the demonstration of the existence of a transposed, multisite identity of a transboundary subject. Finally, choosing which national identity one wants to have, finding objective and subjective justifications for the decisions and being able to review them every day, activating identities according to needs, can be a possible action for all people. However, the appropriation and naturalization of such a condition characterizes the transboundary subject.

Population displacement or migration in the border region can be promoted by objective factors such as lack of employment, poverty, difficulty accessing the public health or judiciary system, but particularities of the border region, derived from its social and historical formation, makes it a more favorable transit environment. In this sense, transnational social networks become fundamental in the protection of the subject that walks in the region, networks that protect those who stay and who help those who arrive. Such networks are a tool for logistical and affective support, but can also guarantee some financial and legal aid.

Besides, the narrative of Gustavo and Fábio reinforces the idea that these networks are not part of any conception of the currently constituted State. The old "mission space" does not correspond to any State or Department, it is trinational. The concern with identification is technical and bureaucratic, so the interviewees rationally assume the national identity. For these persons, being Paraguayan or Brazilian is simply a matter of moment or occasion. Within a territory divided between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina, the resource that most synthesizes this situation comes from the difficulties exhausted these people, who in response claims to be from nowhere.

Simone Brizola another interviewee, was 23 years when we talked. She also expressed the little adherence between the legal border and the social border, narrating the presence of Paraguayans and Brazilians in their family and at school. She also talked about the use of languages, experiencing socialization in Portuguese due to paternal dominance and Spanish schooling. Like previous interviews, we observed in the narrative the importance of transnational social networks and technical regularization, as having documents guarantees access to rights.

Before concluding, we would like to present the case of Locivaldo Calixtro, who was 30 years old. The interview occurred in his house. He is another example of circular displacement; his parents were Brazilians employed in the country, and went to Paraguay to work in agriculture during the decade of 1980. Unlike his father, he and his brother, both Paraguayans, followed by their mother, decided to move to Brazil in 2004, searching for better living conditions. In his speech, again, we observed a trilingual formation, where Portuguese, Spanish and Guarani were learned at different levels and in different forms, being used in different circumstances as well. In the same way, the expropriation of the countryside experienced by families involved in agricultural production in small farms in Brazil also occurred with their parents after trying, with the migration to the neighboring country, to keep on working in the country.

You must learn Spanish to talk to your classmates and teachers. I can speak some Guarani, but I understand well. At school there were more Brazilians, but inside the classroom we had to speak in Spanish. The teachers always asked us to speak in Spanish to facilitate the development of the language.

Until I was eight we lived in a farm, my father grow mint, we had an alembic to extract oil, menthol. Then we moved to the city, but my father kept working in the country.

Even though Locivaldo, whose nickname is "Paraguay", had the same complaints about working conditions in Paraguay, such as excessive workload or lack of any kind of regulation, his move to Brazil had social networks as its most important element, in his case, more specifically, the family. In addition, the interviewee collaborates with the statements made by the Blás family and Simone Brizola in reinforcing the need to search for documentation for regularization in Brazil.

In his speech, Locivaldo Calixtro shows that, personally, being Paraguayan or Brazilian does not correspond to something decisive in their daily relations. In the family, at work, in soccer, at dances, the possibility of experiencing the two cultures and of passing through them sounds somewhat natural. Having the Brazilian document does not correspond to a "fetish" or a self-recognition of their "true identity", but an objective way of having access to social rights guaranteed by the Brazilian government.

I started working with woodworking when I was 12, I worked with brick making, in a veneer maker, and then metallurgy. Most of the cousins are carpenters and they invited me to start. I worked but I did not like that. The same thing happened with veneer maker, I knew everything, but I did not like it. Before I worked with metallurgy all my standards were Paraguayan, we had to speak in Spanish to facilitate communication. We worked about 10 hours a day. With short intervals during the morning and in the afternoon for the tererê and lunch time. I did not have a contract, it was just the person's word, and I got always paid. [...] I could work and study. After I came here, I stopped studying. When there was time I played soccer, if I had the entire day, I would have played the whole day, I did not care about getting to work with injured shins. The teams were mixed, with not separation between Brazilian and Paraguayan. During the weekend I went out to the dances with the coworkers, the songs were mixed, Brazilian and Paraguayan, with more Brazilian. [...] I came to Brazil with the rest of the family, everyone started to come and I followed ... because of documentation. The family began to arrive in Brazil in the decade of 1990 and gradually everyone came ... My mother, brother.

The previous work experiences of Locivaldo contributed to get into the Brazilian labor market. Even without the necessary documentation, he was able to stay for a long time in the same job in Brazil, while

waiting for documentation regulation, since he relied on public legal assistance. After obtaining it, he had a partnership on a metallurgical company and, after leaving it, he started as an employee in another company. At the time we did the interview, for example, Locivaldo and his wife were on medical leave, which would not be possible without proper regulation. He had suffered a motorcycle accident while on his way to work, which required several surgeries, thus he was absent from work for more than two years. She developed a spine problem while working in the clothing industry, therefore she was on medical leave through the National Institute of Social Security.

The definition of the legal situation of the migrant is based on concrete situations, as well as being fundamental to the organization of the migratory journey itself:

In the beginning, not having the Paraguayan documentation did not help to obtain the same rights, retirement, credit [...]. The Paraguayans get here and if they do not stabilize, if they get nothing, it is closer for them to turn back. They get here, find a way to obtain the documentation and if they want to stay, they do; otherwise they can't improve life. To go further you need the "permission", and to stay here you don't need it because it's a border city. [...] If I had gone further I think it would not be easy, I would not have known anyone, people would not accept me in any service. Obtaining documentation was not easy because I did not have much money, it took me more than six years to get it.

According to the interviewee, obtaining the "permission" or the necessary documentation to guarantee the presence and possibility of working in Brazil is decisive when the Paraguayan decided his/her destiny in the Brazilian territory. We believe this procedure is important, but not decisive, since the great majority of Paraguayans who are in other urban centers of the country also are not legalized. However, we believe that the proximity to the country of origin and, consequently, to social networks that guarantee a little protection, is a more decisive situation.

All the interviewees of this research are inserted in strong transnational social networks, and they, except Maria Tereza Cabrera, have low education and remarkable financial difficulties. In this sense, cultural, social and economic capital may appear as explanatory variables of migratory projects of the Paraguayans who decide to live in the Brazilian border strip. However, the importance of such elements increase when there are also feelings of belonging to the place, since living in this region is almost like living at home, but considering whether or not there are real possibilities for improvement of living conditions.

Final remarks

At first, the interviews allowed us to visualize the existence of two initial types of Paraguayan migrants in the Brazilian border strip; a type composed of sons and daughters of Paraguayans and, one composed of sons and daughters of Brazilians who moved to Paraguay during the decades of 1970 and 1980. However, this difference is only superficial, since there is a strong interaction between the two nationalities in both cases. Brazilian parents, with Paraguayan mothers, Paraguayan parents with Brazilian mothers, entire Brazilian families with Paraguayan children, in short, the interviews denounce the existence of different family arrangements.

The domain of different languages, learned in spaces of sociability or with different agents, and the presence of transnational social networks denounce the exchange and insertion in different social spaces, regardless of the nationality. Specifically, being a migrant or a foreigner is a problem to the interviewees when they face the need to access the State, more specifically the health, the judiciary and social security system. In all interviews, the word migrant, migration or foreigner was never spoken.

The results obtained reinforce the idea that the concrete frontier, the international limit, is subjectively elasticized by transborder subjects. The border is not limited to a spatial matter, it is transported and worked constantly in the lives of the people interviewed. The maintenance of transnational networks, which guarantee better conditions for border mobility, also help the formation of multi-faceted identities. This fact allows the transborder subject to appropriate different identities in different contexts. This does not mean that there is no identity, but rather that the identity existing in the region is built within these possibilities.

As José Lindomar Coelho de Albuquerque (2010) notes, "identities are often mobile and multiple in the setting of cultural and symbolic borders. The social actors assume certain identifications according to the local political game". Thus, "migratory processes break with the fantasies of homogeneous national cultures and fixed identities" (p. 218). Our interviews confirm the thesis that "many immigrants and their descendants, socialized at the confluence of distinct 'national cultures', feel familiar and strange on both sides of the international boundary" (p. 218).

As stated by Stuart Hall (1999), national identities are not crystallized, eternal or consolidated. In studying the relationship between the experience of the Caribbean Diaspora and the models of cultural identity, Hall points out that the understanding of identities shouldn't be tied exclusively to a specific historical origin. They are fluid, unstable, changing during relationships and social and historical processes. Thus, the understanding of the construction of identities permeates the spatial and temporal contextualization

of the phenomenon, because within each circumstance there are disputes, interests and specific ways of living. In short, our existence, our practices, are the result of the conflict between what we want and the world in which we live.

Largely, reflections on nationality have emerged as a response to our provocations. The flow of narratives does not clearly identify borders and does not express identity blockages. We could affirm and believe in the existence of a harmony between this population around the border strip and the territory, harmony guaranteed by the ease of spatial and temporal displacement. However, the need to design public policies and to guarantee the financial balance in the offer of rights, as well as the coexistence of different processes of economic exploitation, place this population into obstructed and meaningless categories.

In this context, we believe it is appropriate to use the observation of Mariana Winikor Wagner (2016) to consider the relationship between the State and the borders. According to the author:

Therefore, the border cannot be defined as a political-administrative limit, as a line, but as a region of continuous mobility, which allows the emergence of a border culture tending to make the territorial political division invisible and to show the mismatch between the limits of the State and of the nation. The *Portuñol* used by the community that lives on one side and the other side on the river, which impregnate the modality of working the land and to denominate the techniques of work; the music that comes from the radios with its Brazilian imprint; the typical foods that do not allow us to identify which side of the river we are in; the existence of families scattered on both margins – among other things – shows a shared culture that exceeds the state limits.

Defining who the migrant is or who the foreigner is, controlling their actions and regulating their situation in the country is important for the nation-states in the construction of policies and is important for the market in the process of capital exploitation and extraction, mainly by the expansion of the number of workers. The interviewed Paraguayans do not want to be migrants; they want the same things as the national workers and seek access to rights believing in the universality of services. Anyway, it seems to us that those women and men are migrants because this is how we consider them.

Being a Paraguayan in the border strip is different from being Arabic or Chinese. There is no disruption of historical and social processes; there is no distance from social networks, which become transnational due to the limits imposed by nation-states. The mobility and sociability presented in the narratives brings us the inconvenience of questioning, in fact, who is the migrant during the interviews. The supposed

"migratory project" of these persons who circulate in the old "mission space" does not require much investment or detachment; security, regardless the point of view or the margin one is placed, is always on the other side of the river.

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