International Migration Institute
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UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Working Papers

Paper 66, February 2013

The differential role of social networks

Strategies and routes in Brazilian migration to Portugal and the Netherlands

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The IMI Working Papers Series

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- analyse migration as part of broader global change

- contribute to new theoretical approaches

- advance understanding of the multi-level forces driving migration

Abstract

This paper draws on qualitative and quantitative data on the migration experiences of Brazilians living in Portugal and the Netherlands to reflect and expand upon the existing knowledge on the role of social networks in migration processes. We consider different migrant profiles based on principal migration motives to identify differentiated socio-demographic profiles and relate these to migration strategies. We show that differences in the ways migrants access and use social networks in their migration projects can be related to these different migration motives and profiles. Simultaneously, we compare two distinct immigration contexts both in terms of contemporary immigration regimes and working opportunities and historical links to Brazil. Our findings demonstrate that migration scholars need to move beyond the narrow conceptualisation of social networks based on community or kin relationships, to consider multiple configurations involving different agents – both in the origin and destination countries – at different stages of the migration process. In addition, we show that future analyses would benefit from taking into account the differences between migrants driven by distinct motivations in different places.

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1 Introduction

The migration literature has a well-established body of research on the role of social networks in the constitution and continuation of migration flows across time. Studies have mostly focused on family or community networks and their role in mediating between particular origin and destination areas. Owing to the large influence of Massey's theory of cumulative causation which focuses on migrant networks, scholars have largely neglected to systematically study the role of other actors involved in the perpetuation of migratory flows such as employers or institutions (Krissman 2005). In addition, while much is known about the role of social networks in explaining labour migration, less is known about the explanatory power of social network theory for other forms of migration.

We are at present witnessing more complex and diverse migration flows – comprised not only of labour migrants but of other types of migrants as well (King 2002). Such migration flows may be difficult to explain using theories that originate in research on labour migration. Moreover, with internet access becoming more widespread and people increasingly gaining access to all kinds of migration mediators, those wishing to migrate are likely to be able to use more sources to get information and assistance than in the past. As a result, the role of family and community networks may have become less central in explanations for the origination and the perpetuation of current migration flows, and they are likely to be increasingly complemented by other agents at different stages of the migratory trajectory. Simultaneously, the use of social networks and the types of social networks that exist may differ in relation to the context of destination (Zell and Skop 2011).

In this paper, we illustrate the current complexity of migration flows by showing that labour migration constitutes an important share of the migration flow from Brazil to Portugal and the Netherlands, but that other forms of migration are also important. In addition, we demonstrate that for different types of migration different mechanisms of assistance come into play, which are important to study. Furthermore, in our analysis we look at a wide variety of actors that participate in such networks. We specifically differentiate between the locations of these actors (origin or destination), and between different types of actors (friends, family, institutions, and also internet communities and social media).

2 Social network theory in migration studies

Social network theory is well established in migration research. Following the initial migration moves of a country's pioneers, non-migrants in the origin areas become connected to migration destinations, where better employment opportunities as well as increased chances for socio-economic upgrading are thought to be found. Given the desirability of the destination and the access gained through social networks with previous migrants, the flow continues beyond the 'pioneers', as previous migrants mediate the migration of friends and family. Migrant networks facilitate the moves of newcomers by providing information about the new society and assistance, for example with housing and employment. The ways in which migrant networks contribute to reducing the costs of migration over time, reduce selectivity and perpetuate migration has been well documented in migration research (e.g. Massey et al. 1993; Massey et al. 1998; Gurak and Caces 1992; Fawcett 1989; Tsuda 1999; Pellegrino 2004). In Brazilian migration, the importance of social

networks has also been identified, for example in the case of *Valadarenses* going to the United States (Fusco 2002; Margolis 1994), Brazilians going to Spain (Solé et al. 2011), Brazilians moving to Japan (Zell and Skop 2011), or Brazilians migrating to Portugal (Padilla 2006).

Scholarly thought on the role of networks in the growth of international migration is strongly influenced by Massey and colleagues' study of Mexican migration to the US (Massey et al. 2005) and their theory of 'cumulative causation'. According to Massey and colleagues (2005, 42), sustained growth in migration flows is strongly rooted in migrant networks as 'sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrant and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin.' Although reference is made to the relevance of other migrant-supporting institutions in facilitating migration, within social network theory, migrant networks are central to theorising and as a result also to most of the empirical research that has been undertaken within this research strand (Garip and Asa 2012). Recent critiques of this approach have pointed at the relevance of ties beyond kinship, friendship and community, such as employers, government officials, traffickers and other migration brokers (Krissman 2005). Studying Polish migrants in Germany and Italy, Elrick and Lewandowska (2008, 718) for example, find that 'agents are significant actors in migrant networks who can be regarded as perpetuators of migration within these networks'. In the United States, scholars have also pointed at the importance of the 'visa and passport industry' which is believed to have spurred clandestine migration from Brazil (Margolis 1994, 41).

Whereas research has demonstrated the importance of institutional brokers and personal networks as facilitators of migration, few studies have examined and provided strong empirical evidence of the actors involved and the details of their participation (Garip and Asad, 2012: 4). With internet-use becoming more widespread, there may be a crucial role for people who supply information on the internet. Like migration brokers, they are usually not located in hometown communities and they do not necessarily originate from the same hometown community as the persons seeking the information. Through the internet and various social media, prospective migrants may get in touch with unknown immigrants in the destination country of their choice. While some scholars have pointed at the role of the internet and social media for community life among migrants at the destination (Oosterbaan 2010; Schrooten 2011), few have studied their role in facilitating migration. Clearly, nowadays, it is important to look at a much broader scope of actors that may be involved in supporting migration.

Furthermore, many studies have focused on the role of social networks in labour migration flows, but it is still unclear to what extent social networks are also important for explaining other types of migration, and if so, in what way. Colyer (2005) for example, shows that social network theory cannot explain migration flows of asylum seekers. In addition, the mechanisms underlying the theory of cumulative causation are less likely to come into play in the case of student or marriage migration. Furthermore, research shows that migration policies also affect the role social networks play for specific types of migration (Zell and Skop 2011), and that migrant networks can be considerably gendered (Hagan 1998, Curran and Rivero-Fuentes 2003). What is missing then is comparative research that takes

such factors into account and that strives to work towards a more contextualised theory of the role of social networks in facilitating migration.

In this paper, we aim to provide a preliminary step towards such a contribution by developing an understanding of Brazilian migration to Portugal and the Netherlands that includes: (i) migrant profiles beyond the usual profiles of low skilled labour migrants and their family members; and (ii) the diverse social networks that migrants have access to and receive assistance from with their migration. Our findings reflect the complex patterns of contemporary relationships and include not only kin or community members, but also nationals of other countries such as the destination country, online-based virtual communities, and institutional actors that facilitate international migration. Simultaneously, we take into account not only the intersections between migrant profiles and their use of social networks but also how these take shape in two contexts of destination.

3 Data and methods

This paper draws on data collected for the research project – *Theorising the Evolution of European Migration Systems* (THEMIS) – funded by Norface – through a multi-sited, mixed methods approach. This involved semi-structured interviews in Portugal, the Netherlands (destination countries) and Brazil (origin country) using strategic snowball sampling, and a survey in Portugal and the Netherlands using Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS). In this way we conducted: (i) 30 interviews with Brazilian immigrants in the Netherlands (Amsterdam) and 32 in Portugal (Lisbon Metropolitan Area); (ii) 38 interviews in Brazil (Campinas, Rio de Janeiro and Governador Valadares) with returned migrants from Portugal (26) and the Netherlands (12); (iii) 15 interviews with family members of migrants in these two countries (12 in Portugal, 3 in the Netherlands); and (iv) a survey of 400 Brazilian immigrants in Portugal (Lisbon Metropolitan Area) and 206 in the Netherlands (Amsterdam). The complementary nature of these different sources of information has been fundamental in accessing a great diversity in migrant profiles as well as different details of their migratory trajectories. For example, while the use of RDS enabled us to get easy access to low skilled labour migrants (including undocumented migrants, particularly in the Netherlands), it was particularly through the semi-structured interviews that we were able to get in touch with highly skilled professionals in both countries or marriage migrants in the Netherlands. The survey data will be used to quantify the trends and the structure of the immigrant groups while the semi-structured interviews will serve to illustrate migration processes.

The interview and survey guidelines used attempted to capture the migration experiences of the respondents with a clear focus on the information sought and assistance received throughout the migratory trajectory. Additionally, we enquired about contacts with the destination country prior to migration. In doing so, evidence was collected on the heterogeneity of migration experiences within the Brazilian group and across the two countries. By looking at these differences we propose to present a more nuanced understanding of migrants' experiences, within the same national origin and in a cross-country comparative perspective, particularly in relation to their access and use of social networks in their migration projects.

4 Background: Brazilian migration to Portugal and the Netherlands

In Portugal, Brazilian migration is engrained in the historical relationships that exist between the two countries. However, before the 1980s, immigration from Brazil was not particularly significant and was constituted mainly of political expats, married women, and executives. During the 1980s the flow grew, and was mainly constituted of skilled and highly skilled professionals (dentists, marketing, advertising and IT experts, engineers, etc.) who arrived in Portugal to work in their respective professions, and descendants of previous Portuguese emigrants in Brazil (Malheiros 2007).

At the end of the 1990s, a flow with different features emerged, and became known as the 'second wave of Brazilian immigration' (Casa do Brasil/Acime 2004). This flow was much stronger, involving a large number of immigrants, and set the basis for the constitution of the largest group of foreign nationals since 2007 (data from SEF – Aliens and Borders Service). This 'second wave' consisted mostly of workers for low skilled occupations in the hotel and catering sector, construction and domestic work. These immigrants were predominantly from the southwest of Brazil and nearby regions: mostly Minas Gerais and Paraná, but also Espírito Santo, São Paulo and Goiás (Casa do Brasil/Acime 2004, 8). They settled principally in the Lisbon metropolitan area, but also in other parts of the country. The character of 'counter-current' to the previous wave was attenuated.

Unlike other flows that tend to be dominated by male pioneers, the flow from Brazil has included, from the start, a high percentage of independent women who do not migrate within family reunification schemes (Padilla 2007). The 'second wave' of Brazilian immigration also included a large proportion of undocumented migrants. In 2003, the survey conducted by Casa do Brasil (Casa do Brasil/Acime 2004) found that 36% of respondents were undocumented. However, Portuguese governments have put in place a number of general regularisation programmes (2001, 2004 and 2008) that have benefited Brazilians and one that targeted only undocumented Brazilians ('*Acordo Lula*' in 2003). Data from SEF show that the number of registered Brazilians increased from 22,411 to 111,445 between 2000 and 2011. Simultaneously, the inflow from Brazil has also included a rising number of students mostly at postgraduate level, but there are also exchange programmes with Portuguese universities at the undergraduate level.

Less is known about Brazilian migration to the Netherlands, let alone the first migrants. Statistics Netherlands counted 39 Brazilians in 1930 and 139 in 1972. These were probably migrants who fled persecution resulting from the military dictatorship. Other motives of these early migrants were probably work, family or study related (Van Meeteren et al. 2013). In the 1980s, a change in migration motives took place with an increase in economically driven migration, which continued throughout the beginning of the new millennium. Like other Latin-American migration to the Netherlands, this is partly a result of stricter immigration controls in the USA following the terrorist attacks in 2001. Since 2001, there has been an enormous increase in the Latin American population in the Netherlands (Sandoval 2008, 9).

Numbers from Statistics Netherlands show that the Brazilian population residing in the Netherlands grew from 3,933 immigrants in 1996 up to 11,929 in 2012. When looking at the Brazilian population in the Netherlands, one feature is particularly striking: 68% of all

Brazilians are female. Brazilian migration to the Netherlands is therefore female dominated. In addition, there are many irregular Brazilian migrants who live in the Netherlands and who are not included in these official statistics. Estimates state that there are an additional 3,000 to 20,000 Brazilian migrants in the Netherlands, most of them residing in Amsterdam (Van Meeteren et al. 2013).

5 Migrant profiles: differentiated migration motives

By combining the qualitative and quantitative material gathered in Brazil, the Netherlands and Portugal, we are able to get an encompassing picture of who these Brazilian migrants are, and of their migration processes. We chose to analyse the heterogeneity within the two migration flows by looking at the differentiated motives migrants have to migrate to Portugal and the Netherlands. By doing so, we are able to identify not only labour migrants, drawn by the perspective of work in the destination countries, but also those who move to join family members or other persons they care about, students, and migrants seeking to experience life and culture in another country. While acknowledging that diversity within migration flows may be approached from a variety of angles, we argue that distinguishing between these principal motivations allows us to distil the distinct socio-demographic profiles that underpin them. In addition, it allows us to demonstrate that these are accompanied by differences in the routes and strategies followed, and access and use of social networks throughout the migratory trajectory. As such, they constitute a useful analytical framework for the study of the participation of social networks in migration processes.

The combination of quantitative survey data and qualitative data from in-depth interviews enabled us to delve into these main motivations and make further distinctions, which we have systematised into different profiles (see Figure 1). Within the category of migrants who migrated to work, a further distinction can be made between low skilled labour migrants and professionals, and within the group of migrants who indicated they moved in order to be close to somebody there is a difference between those who migrated to marry a Dutch or Portuguese person and those who joined other Brazilians. Their relative importance in the survey sample is diverse. In addition, some motives are more prominent in Portugal than in the Netherlands and vice versa.

Figure 1: Migration motives in Portugal and the Netherlands

Main Motivation	Portugal	Netherlands
WORK	Low skilled labour migrants	Low skilled labour migrants
	Professionals	Professionals
STUDY	Students	Students
EXPERIENCE/CULTURE	Adventurers	Adventurers
FAMILY	Family reunification with Brazilians	Family reunification with Brazilians
		Marriage migrants

The largest share of migrants in both Portugal and the Netherlands are labour migrants. In addition, in the case of Portugal there is an important percentage of students

and in the case of the Netherlands an important number of migrants who moved to enjoy life and culture in another country. Family migrants make up the smallest share in both countries. Though less expressive in the survey sample, the experiences of marriage migrants in the Netherlands were by and large captured in the qualitative interviews and are illustrative of a different migration process with particular strategies and routes. For this reason, we will also include them in the analysis of the next sections.

Table 1: Distribution of migration motives per country of destination (survey sample)

	Portugal	**The Netherlands**	**Total**
Work	161(40%)	76 (37%)	237
Student	87 (22%)	42 (20%)	129
Experience	76 (19%)	47 (23%)	123
Family	70 (18%)	41 (20%)	111
Other*	6 (1%)		5
Total	400 (100%)	206 (100%)	606

* This includes 'learning a language' (5) and 'don't know' (1). This is a marginal group whose profile is unclear (it is uncertain whether they went to Portugal to study another language or if there was some misunderstanding, only 1 of them indicated to have completed any education in Portugal and they do not seem to fit well with the 'students' since only one referred that 'opportunities for studying' was an important motivation to move to Portugal).

We shall see that these main drivers of migration are related to different socio-demographic profiles as well as to differentiated resources available and used to engage in migratory projects. We will first discuss the four socio-demographic profiles connected to the main motivations that are summarised in Table 2 at the end of this section.

5.1 Work-driven migration

Migrants who indicated in the survey that 'opportunities for work' were their most important motivation to migrate, have largely found semi-skilled or low-skilled occupations. Only a minor percentage of them engage in professional occupations or had these as their main occupation in Brazil. In Portugal, the majority of those who were professionals in Brazil migrated, not to join the labour market, but in search of opportunities for studying. The working objectives of most of these immigrants go hand in hand with the desire to earn money to send back home, particularly in the case of the Netherlands (83% in the Netherlands, 58% in Portugal), such as with Vitoria:

> I worked, but I earned little. I saw the difficulties of my mother, sometimes we didn't even have gas at home. I earned a minimum wage, my mother had no pension and sometimes we didn't make it until the end of the month with the money we had.

This profile is dominated by females in the Netherlands, while in Portugal there is a gender balance. This is likely to be a reflection of the opportunities in the local labour markets, which in Portugal provide opportunities for both female and male migrants, while in the Netherlands mostly female occupations are available, such as domestic work in Dutch households or for other Brazilians (usually women who married Dutch men). In addition, a

major difference between labour migrants in Portugal and the Netherlands is that in the Netherlands, 82% are undocumented, while in Portugal these constitute only 14%.

While Portugal is more commonly assumed to be 'the' final destination for Brazilians, in the Netherlands some migrants were there en route to other countries (usually the UK), but failed to get there, and instead ended up staying in the Netherlands:

> '...as we could not go directly to England we decided to go to the Netherlands because I had friends and acquaintances here. (...)There were work opportunities coming up in the Netherlands. I brought a hair drier with my luggage and some hair creams (...) I had plans to use that in case I needed to provide money for us to survive here. And when we arrived in the Netherlands it was really needed.' (Juliana)

Labour migrants often indicated that it is difficult to get into the UK. Moreover, they often stay in the Netherlands because they were able to get a job in the UK.

5.2 Study motivations

Brazilians that chose Portugal as a destination on the basis of educational opportunities are mostly female, young and unmarried (the highest percentage of all groups in the survey). They also show the highest education levels of all the profiles, which is mainly related to the fact that the majority of them attend undergraduate or postgraduate levels. In spite of their overarching studying objectives, some of them (44%) had at least one work experience in Portugal and interestingly, despite their high qualifications, the majority of their first jobs in the country did not differ substantially from other groups. For example Paula, a Portuguese descendent with Portuguese citizenship did an exchange programme in Portugal and she worked in a Pizzeria to help fund her stay in the country.

From both the survey and the qualitative material it becomes evident that Brazilians have always sought to study in Portugal's higher education institutions and have also benefited from bilateral agreements between the two countries. Artur, interviewed in Lisbon, came to Portugal in 1967 to study medicine at the University of Coimbra. However, the majority of Brazilians surveyed are recent arrivals, having arrived from 2009 onwards. This is not surprising as it is very likely that the vast majority of students return to Brazil or migrate elsewhere after their studies have been completed in Portugal. Bilateral agreements between Brazilian and Portuguese institutions as well as funding options increasingly available for Brazilian students wishing to study abroad are important facilitators of this mobility. The recently created Ciência sem Fronteiras ('Science without borders') funded the exchange of 12,193 Brazilian undergraduate students abroad. The majority of them chose Portugal as their destination (2,343).

In the Netherlands, the group surveyed included people who indicated that they came to study or to learn a language. For the Netherlands, we discuss these two groups together because they are very similar with regard to their socio-demographic profile, the routes they take and the assistance they receive with their migration. In addition, from the qualitative material we gather that their motives are in fact quite similar (see also Martes 2011): they have come to the Netherlands to learn something.

Like in Portugal, they are relatively young and unmarried but the number of women is only slightly higher than the number of men. Brazilians who came to the Netherlands to

study are less highly educated than in Portugal. Moreover, 81% have work experience in the Netherlands, a much higher proportion than in Portugal. Many people who indicate that they came to study were in fact working during the first year after arrival and only 33% actually mentioned that studying or taking language courses was their primary activity during their first year. Like in Portugal, they do the same type of jobs low skilled labour migrants do. With domestic work ranking high it is likely that those who came as au pairs (to learn English) are found within this category of respondents.

5.3 Seekers of life experiences and culture

Respondents who indicated they have come to experience life and culture in a different country have usually come because they want to 'see the world'. They do not plan to migrate permanently but want to experience what other countries are like for a while. As Miguel says, 'I just came to have a look.' They see it as an adventure or an experience. They do not stress about work, study or family issues but talk about how they need an experience:

> *I told my bosses "I want to leave Brazil. I need this experience. I am almost 30 years old, I need to experience this. I cannot live another year without doing anything, going to work, going back home, paying bills. I need an experience, I need to live". (Juan, Netherlands)*

In Portugal as in the Netherlands, these migrants express a wish to travel and experience life in Europe. Jonas, a medical dentist indicates that:

> *That idea came already since university…. I already had that desire, I always enjoyed travelling, discovering. So I waited for my graduation, I travelled a lot in Brazil, in South America and so on but I had never been to Europe. So I came here. As I said the initial idea was to work, travel and get to know. (Jonas, migrated to Portugal in 1992)*

For some of these immigrants, Portugal functions as point of entry in Europe, while for others it is a destination because of the shared language. Bernardo, 57 years old, migrated to Portugal in 1990, says that his main reasons to migrate to Portugal were:

> *'My wish was to discover Europe. Portugal because of the language and also because I already had a friend here, also a photographer…'*

In the Netherlands, there are also some respondents who were especially attracted by the tolerant attitudes towards homosexuality:

> *…the first problems I encountered were with the family. You hear your mother and your father tell you that homosexualism is a disease, which is unacceptable in the family. (…) And I could not get married in Brazil. The homosexual partners have some rights in Brazil, but for health insurance, retirement and inheritance purposes it is complicated. So that was a motivation to come to the Netherlands. (Luiz, Netherlands)*

In addition, some were attracted by the Dutch cultural climate in general. This is the group with the highest percentage of movers before 1999 (23%). This early migration flow to the Netherlands is probably related to people from the cultural scene in Brazil attracted to the Dutch cultural climate as Debora explains:

> *In my time, I came here in 1987, there were more artists or intelligentsia or people who came here to study or came for a vacation. (…) We didn't leave Brazil with the idea to migrate. (…) we played in a lot of theatres, also in Belgium. We decided to extend our tickets,*

over and over again. (…) We stayed, even though our aim wasn't to stay. (…) It was an adventure. We were young, we liked it. (Debora)

In parallel, conditions in Brazil for artists were not favourable then, which also played a role in the migration of artists to the Netherlands. Debora elaborates:

… we had a horrible president. (…) Fernando Collor de Mello. It was very strange for people who were concerned with culture and art. I think it has to do with that. People wanted to take some distance. I don't feel like an asylum seeker. Unconsciously, I think it plays an important role.

There is an equal gender division in the group of migrants who came to experience another culture in both countries in the survey sample. Similarly, the majority of survey respondents are aged between 26 and 55 and have finished at least upper secondary school or have undergraduate education. In the Netherlands the proportion of writers or creative professionals is striking, a professional category which is not relevant in any of the other profiles and is in tune with data found in the interviews about the attractiveness of the Netherlands for artists. Regarding their immigration status, there is a high number of undocumented in the Netherlands but also an important percentage of citizens, just like in Portugal.

5.4 Migration to join family or loved ones

The wish to join family members or other persons that respondents care about is overwhelmingly a female motivation for migration, particularly in Portugal. In both countries, the person they came to join are mostly their partner or mother. In Portugal, 44% were married at the time of migration (the highest of all profiles) and they joined mostly male partners of Brazilian origin. In the Netherlands, this profile is also influenced by the number of marriage migrants among them; 23% had a non-Brazilian partner and today, out of 42 respondents, 10 are married to someone who is born in the Netherlands (data from survey sample).

Brazilian women who get married to Dutch men have met in diverse ways. Some have met their husband in Brazil (on a holiday or doing business there), while others met travelling or studying in the Netherlands or other European countries. Beatriz even talks about how she met her husband online:

'I would sometimes go in chat rooms, practice my English. Then one day I met this Dutch man, he was also a lot online, so we were always in touch. After some months he travelled to Brazil. And the whole story began. (…) It was getting too expensive all the travelling. We thought, if we want to be together one of us has to move.' (Beatriz)

As a result, and contrary to the patterns found in Portugal, family migrants in the Netherlands have often been in the Netherlands before largely as women visited their future husband in the Netherlands before deciding to migrate. In addition, some marriage migrants met their partner during a previous stay in the Netherlands.

Moreover, among family migrants in the Netherlands, there are also respondents who follow their partner from country to country and have migrated not directly from Brazil but from other countries (around half of those with international migration experience).

The majority of these surveyed migrants have also entered the labour market at some point (97% in Portugal, 95% in the Netherlands), mostly having low-skilled jobs in the services sector as their first occupation. This profile also shows the highest access to remittances before migration, particularly in Portugal where 28.6% received them regularly and 14.3% from time to time (in the other groups the vast majority did not receive any remittances), which indicates a close relationship with contacts at destination (most likely parents or 'partners').

Table 2: Profiles, main characteristics (survey sample)

		Work	Study	Experience	Family
Gender (female)	PT	50%	71%	53%	80%
	NL	63%	55%	51%	61%
Age	PT	26-55: 93%	18-40: 89%	26-55: 88%	26-55: 80%
	NL	18-45: 81%	18-40: 91%	30 or older: 75%	26-55: 68%
Education level at departure	PT	Medium	High	Medium/high	Diverse
	NL	Medium	Medium/high	Medium/high	Diverse
Married at time of migration	PT	37%	14%	26%	44%
	NL	42%	29%	32%	29%
Time of arrival	PT	Mid 2000s	2009 onwards	Mid 2000s	Mid 2000s
	NL	Mid 2000s	2009 onwards	2004 onwards Before 1999	2004 onwards
Permit	PT	Employment: 68%	Study: 63%	Employment: 50%	Employment: 54%
	NL	Citizenship: 11%	Other permit: 14%	Citizenship: 20%	Citizenship: 24% Family: 17%
Undocumented	PT	14%	2%	13%	16%
	NL	82%	50%	52%	46%
Last job in Brazil	PT	Sales/clerk/shop Other manual	Education Professional Higher education teacher	Sales/clerk/shop Hairdresser./beauty Education	Education Sales/clerk/shop
	NL	Sales/clerk/shop Voluntary work Education	Education Sales/clerk/shop	Creative Professional Education	Education School teacher Sales/clerk/shop
First job in destination country	PT	Skilled/unskilled construction Domestic/child care	Cleaner Waiter/bartender Sales/clerk/shop	Skilled construction Child care	Cleaner Waiter/bartender Sales/clerk/shop
	NL	Domestic/cleaner Unskilled construction	Domestic/cleaner Baby sitter	Domestic/cleaner Child care Unskilled constr. Creative Prof.	Domestic/cleaner Baby sitter
International migration	PT	6%	29%	20%	4%

		Work	Study	Experience	Family
experience	NL	12%	36%	30%	27%
No previous visits to destination	PT	98%	77%	93%	97%
	NL	91%	76%	94%	71%
Received remittances	PT	No: 76%	No: 89%	No: 91%	No: 47%
	NL	No: 67%	No: 73%	No: 77%	No: 50%

6 Access to and use of social networks in the migration process

The vast majority of our respondents already knew someone in the destination country before they migrated, meaning they had access to social networks in Portugal and the Netherlands. These contacts are overwhelmingly Brazilian but not to the same extent for each category. In Portugal, Brazilians seem to be more networked with other Brazilians than in the Netherlands, where contacts with a mixed group or Dutch natives are more frequent, particularly for migrants who came to join loved ones. This is largely related to the migration of women who marry Dutch men and their family members who followed later, such as their children.

However, the fact that they knew someone does not automatically imply that they were in contact with these people. In fact, the degree of interaction with these contacts prior to migration is variable. Unsurprisingly, family migrants show the highest frequency of contact in both countries. On the other extreme, those who migrated to experience life and culture in another country have the least access to social networks in the destination country and their contacts also do not appear to be very strong.

Furthermore, having contact with people in the destination country does not mean that these were the main sources of information or assistance in the country of destination. In the next section, we analyse the information sought and the assistance received by migrants, which shows that they receive assistance from different actors – both individual and institutional – for different types of needs, and that there are also differences between the profiles and countries of destination.

6.1 Information

Overall, migrants who moved to the Netherlands sought more information than those migrating to Portugal, which is probably related to the higher degree of familiarity with Portugal, given the historical relationship between the two countries. In Portugal, students sought most information, particularly on visas, immigration procedures and housing. In both countries workers sought most information on how to find a job.

If we look at who provided such information, we see that most information respondents received before migrating came from a person or organisation in the destination country. The exception is students in Portugal, who received most information from friends (e.g. previous exchange students) or institutions (mostly the Portuguese

embassy or consulate) in Brazil. In addition, students retrieved a lot of information from websites with information on Portugal. In the Netherlands, students received information primarily through friends and some the Dutch embassy or consulate in Brazil, as well as through agencies that recruit students.

Apart from institutions, we see that information is provided mostly by friends, not family members, except in the case of family migration, where family appears as an important source of information both in Portugal (most important) and the Netherlands (combined with other sources). All in all, we see that the different profiles of migrants make use of different types of sources and at different locations to get their information.

6.2 Assistance

If we look at how migrants funded their trip to the destination country, we see that family migrants are the category that benefitted most from funding by others, mainly through family members that were already in the destination country. In Portugal, they are closely followed by students who rely on family members located in the origin country, and on institutions to pay for their trip. Borrowing money is more important for workers in both countries than for other profiles, and also for students that migrate to Portugal. Workers that received or borrowed money to pay for their trip also relied more on funding from family members in the origin country. Migrants who moved to experience life and culture in another country mostly received money from their parents in Brazil, particularly those that migrated to the Netherlands; yet four individuals received financial aid from migrant organisations or cultural organisations in the Netherlands, which is probably related to the fact that they are artists. In our qualitative material we have some stories about artists who were invited and paid to come to perform, as Leticia, who was invited by the Portuguese government:

> We were a very good dance group in Brazil and we were invited. Sometimes festivals in Portugal would invite groups from Brazil to take part and they did so with us. They paid everything, they gave us tickets and everything. (Leticia, dance teacher, The Netherlands).

As we have seen before, Brazilians usually enter on tourist visas and then overstay their validity. In Portugal, legalisation opportunities have existed for those able to present a valid working contract and respective social security and tax payments. Therefore, employers in Portugal are most frequently cited by respondents as a source of assistance with obtaining documents. For example, Fabiana, a domestic worker in Portugal, recalls how she went to Sevile with her employer to get her visa. With students, agencies that fund or recruit international students (including international departments at universities) based in Portugal were most frequently mentioned. Family members have often been assisted by their 'husbands' or parent who they came to join. These family members have usually arranged the necessary paperwork or asked a friend or family member to take care of it:

> ... he spoke with a friend who had the same case, with a foreign girlfriend. Actually I don't even know exactly how the procedure really is because he did everything, and he checked everything. (Carolina, The Netherlands)

Assistance with housing upon arrival is also central to the migrant experience. The vast majority of migrants in both countries either received assistance or stayed with someone who already had a house (see Table 3). The latter option was more important in

the Netherlands than in Portugal, probably because of the tight and highly regulated housing market in the Netherlands, which makes it especially difficult for undocumented migrants to find a place to stay (Van Meeteren 2010). In addition, in the Netherlands, Brazilians face a language barrier which makes it more difficult to find housing on their own than in Portugal. As a result, workers in the Netherlands strongly rely on their social networks and they often make sure they have a place to stay before they arrive. Alice, an undocumented migrant who came to work in the Netherlands explains how important the help she received has been:

> *Before I came he tried to find a room for me. He told others: there is a cousin of mine coming and she is looking for a room. (…) I think that upon arrival I didn't encounter many barriers because my cousin was here and he was a very important bridge for me in making it possible for me to come. He was the one who arranged a place for me to stay, you know, so this went very well for me.*

Family migrants received most assistance with housing and were mostly helped by family members. In case of marriage migrants in the Netherlands, most partners had a house in which they went to live together. One respondent recalls buying furniture on the internet before she arrived. In the case that a respondent's husband did not have a house, it was not difficult to find using the husband's social network.

Most immigrants have also received assistance to find their first job (particularly workers and family members in both countries). As with housing, Brazilians in the Netherlands more frequently indicated they had received support finding their first job, than in Portugal. The most important source of this kind of help was friends, for all groups and in both countries. Employment and recruitment agencies did not appear to be very relevant in either of the countries. The role of friends is likely to reflect the specificity of this kind of assistance. Studies have indeed pointed at the significance of weak ties in finding employment (Granovetter 1973), also for undocumented migrants (e.g. Van Meeteren et al. 2009). The experience of Dinorá in Portugal illustrates friendships made in Portugal as a result of Portuguese migration in Brazil. Through a Portuguese immigrant in Brazil she got in touch with his family in Portugal who provided assistance upon arrival. She recalls:

> *… The lady [his aunt] was amazing with us, she took us to find work. She would take us to a café and say: 'Look, these two Brazilians just arrived, last week, and they need a job.' She did that several times, in several cafés and restaurants.*

Furthermore, it may also be that family members mediate the contact of the migrant with others that are better positioned in the labour market to find them a (suitable) job. Sometimes it is also through new friends made in the destination country that migrants find jobs. For example, Carolina, from Minas Gerais, (a returned migrant from Portugal), who joined her brother who already lived in Portugal, says:

> *Then I got to know more Brazilians of the group that worked with him [the brother] in the firm, that's where I got more help to find work. One said: 'Ah, Carolina, this place is looking, has vacancies to work in a Cafe', others would say 'there are some vacancies in a snack-bar or a restaurant'.*

In the Netherlands, undocumented workers also find their first jobs through their network of weak ties, or have family members mediate for them. This type of mediation has sometimes already taken place before the migrant arrives. Jobs in the Netherlands are not

necessarily freely passed on to Brazilians but sold at a price. As a result, Brazilians who receive family members or friends have sometimes bought a job already for the migrant they receive. Juliana says 'Nowadays one only brings a relative if they can buy work. They announce they are bringing a relative and ask who can sell their work. It is now like this.'

Table 3: Access to and use of information and assistance (survey sample)

		Work	Study	Experience	Family
Knew people in destination country	PT	87%	84%	84%	100%
	NL	91%	88%	72%	88%
Percentage of which Brazilians	PT	93%	81%	86%	90%
	NL	78%	84%	69%	64%
Borrowed money to fund trip	PT	27%	28%	18%	24%
	NL	24%	10%	11%	17%
Individuals or organisations paid for travelling costs	PT	13%	31%	12%	37%
	NL	16%	26%	30%	32%
Received assistance with documents	PT	54%	67%	46%	63%
	NL	13%	26%	11%	19%
Received assistance with first house	PT	85%	74%	84%	96%
	NL	100%	100%	94%	100%
Received assistance with finding first job	PT	79%	71%	76%	75%
	NL	90%	74%	84%	85%
Received information from	PT	Destination	Origin	Destination	Destination
	NL	Destination	Destination	Destination	Destination
	PT	Friends	Institutions/friends	Friends/institutions	Family
	NL	Friends	Friends/institutions	Friends/institutions	Mixed
Received help with travelling cost from	PT	Origin	Origin	Origin	Destination
	NL	Origin	Balanced	Origin	Destination
	PT	Family	Family/Institutions	Family/friends	Family
	NL	Family	Family	Family/institutions	Family
Received help with documents from	PT	Institutions	Institutions	Institutions	Institutions/family
	NL	Family	Family	Family/institutions	Friends/family
Received help with first housing from	PT	Friends	Friends	Friends	Family
	NL	Friends	Friends	Friends	Family
Received help with finding first job	PT	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
	NL	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends

We have seen that social networks play an important role for Brazilians who migrate to Portugal and the Netherlands, yet in different ways in the two destination countries and for the different migrant profiles. While the majority of respondents had access to social networks in the destination country, the extent to which these networks consisted primarily

of other Brazilian migrants or if they also included natives of the destination country varied, and so did the frequency with which these contacts were maintained. In addition, institutions constituted relevant sources of information and travel funding for students and those who migrated to experience life and culture abroad, but they were not found relevant for other profiles. These institutions are independent from the migrant experience (Garip and Asad, 2012: 24) but are rather related to the policy framework. For students, the internet, embassies/consulates and agencies that participate in the recruitment of international students or organise exchange programs are fundamental resources to access information and therefore this is the profile less dependent on personal networks to access information.

Employers were important sources of help with documentation in Portugal but not in Netherlands (see Zell and Skop 2011 for similar findings elsewhere) and they were also not actively engaged in the recruitment of Brazilian workers and therefore have not been considered sources of assistance in this domain as has been found in other studies (Krissman 2005). Family members are important sources of information for family migrants but not so much for other profiles where friends assume a more prominent role. Family members are fundamental resources for funding. Family migrants benefit from the migration of others who usually fund their migration, while workers, students and seekers of experiences abroad depend on the resources available within their families in the origin country. We have also seen that social networks are important finding a first house and a first job, and that these are even more important in the Netherlands than Portugal. The latter is probably related to the more informal nature of the jobs Brazilians do in the Netherlands. In parallel, friends, sometimes found in the country of destination through previous contacts, not family members, are essential to enter the labour market.

7 Conclusion and discussion

Like many other studies, our findings have confirmed the relevance of social networks in facilitating migration. At the same time, we have been able to provide a more nuanced understanding of the role of social networks in migration by adopting a comparative approach in terms of destination countries and by considering the involvement of multiple actors throughout different stages of the migratory process and for different migration profiles.

The empirical results and discussion presented here demonstrate that it is misleading to consider Brazilian migrants as one large homogeneous group, based on the unique experiences of labour migrants. Given the multiple migration motives involved in the decision to migrate, including also the pursuit of consumption or self-realisation projects, combined with new space-time flexibilities and globalisation dynamics (King 2002: 89), the modes assumed in the organisation of migration are also increasingly complex and diverse, as is the role of social networks as 'social facilitators' of migration (Garip and Asad 2012). For example, marriages or relationships with Dutch natives give access to different sources of information and assistance than what is traditionally thought. Simultaneously, those that move seeking to experience life and culture abroad are also less networked than labour migrants and less dependent on those contacts to arrange their migration.

Studies have increasingly pointed at other actors that are also involved in migration processes, but following Krissman (2005), they have usually analysed the role of agents or other institutions in migration. In our study, we found that institutions play a role in providing information and assistance to obtain documents, and that some students and migrants who moved to experience life and culture in another country benefitted from their assistance. They did not play a major role in helping migrants to find a place to live or a job. Elrick and Lewandowska (2008) argue that immigrants in specific economic sectors especially rely on agents, such as elderly care work. Apparently, the economic sectors in which Brazilians in Portugal and the Netherlands are active are not controlled by agents.

While we expected an important role for the internet in facilitating contemporary migration moves, we found that the internet was used as a source of information primarily by students. The other groups mostly relied on other sources of information. In terms of assistance with housing and finding a job, all groups heavily depended on their personal contacts or on institutions. Only very few respondents relied solely on the internet for information and then managed to find a house and a job on their own. This was more common among qualified professionals. The internet and web based contacts were present in a different dimension that also pertains to migration and should be explored further: the development of 'love' relationships across countries.

Like in other research (e.g. Zell and Skop 2011), we found differences that can be traced back to the different contexts of reception. For example, migrants in the Netherlands – who are often undocumented – depend more on social networks than in Portugal, where migrants are more often able to find their first job or house on their own. Other research has likewise found that social networks are more important for undocumented migrants than for other migrants (Zell and Skop 2011).

Overall, our findings show that migration scholars need to move beyond the once common interpretation of the role of social networks, based solely on community or kinship relationships, or the 'migration industry', to consider multiple configurations involving different agents (both in the origin and destination country) at different stages of the migration process, as well as distinctions for different migrants moving to different places. In doing so, our comparative empirical research indicates that the study of mechanisms related to the theory of cumulative causation, which focus on migrant networks and labour migration, should be expanded to include different forms of migration and a wider variety of actors. This way, we will be able to uncover more of the underlying mechanisms related to the cumulative expansion of migration flows over time.

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