

“Double Residence”: A Space for Intergenerational Relations. Portuguese Immigrants in France in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

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Introduction: Already Three Generations in France

In the second part of the twentieth century, coming in the wake of the different waves of foreign workers arriving since the start of the century, Portuguese migrants entered France *en masse*. As the largest immigrant community in France today, it is composed of 550,000 Portuguese citizens and 236,000 others who have taken on French citizenship. They have created a new form of sedentariness, built upon bilocalization and residential alternation between country of origin and country of settlement, which in turn has led to strategies making people home owners in each country.¹ Three generations mainly are involved in preserving the family ties typical of northern Portugal, which are also the basic structure adopted by the local authorities and their networks, as studies in the Minho region have confirmed.

The present article reviews the results of several qualitative studies carried out since 1990 by the author and her colleagues,² as well as a selec-

¹ This term refer to sharing one's time between two places, as do many retired Parisians, who own a second residence in the French province from which they or their family originally came.

² The following are studies carried out in four Portuguese villages of the Minho region (counties of Guimarães, Melgaço, Caminha, and Valpaços), from which most of the Portuguese immigrants now living in France and in the Ile de France region originally came. For the results of these field studies, which gave considerable attention to residential itineraries, see Roselyne de Villanova, Carolina Leite, and Isabel Raposo, *Maisons de Rêve au Portugal: Enquête sur des migrants bâtisseurs* (Paris: Éditions Créaphis, 1994); Roselyne de Villanova, “Migrants et propriétaires, nomadisme ou sédentarité? Une citoyenneté bipolaire,” *Annales de la Recherche Urbaine* 65 (Dec. 1994): 68-79; Roselyne de Villanova, “Os emigrantes portuguesas e a auto-reabilitação na região parisiense,” *Sociedade e Território* 25-6 (Feb. 1998): 21-32; Roselyne de Villanova, *Les migrants propriétaires, y-a-t-il des règles d'agrégat*, report (PUCA Ministère de l'Équipement, Paris, Apr. 1996); Roselyne de Villanova and Catherine Bonvalet, “Immigrés propriétaires ici

tion of other scientific publications on the Portuguese; it also relies on French national statistics on immigrant populations, as far as they are available. Qualitative surveys on smaller samples are a must, if one wishes to analyze subtler patterns such as those concerning family relations and interactions or social behavior at certain levels, such as motivations and attitudes. For in the case of immigrant families, quantitative data generally separate family members: on one side, parents and foreign-born children are called immigrants, but on the other, children born in France are counted as French. Thus, usually interrelations and interactions go unnoticed or become stereotyped.

Nevertheless, statistical data have allowed researchers to show that, since the 1960s, the massive move of Portuguese people towards Europe, mainly France, means that the flow that was first directed towards Brazil (and North America to a lesser degree) shifted. Families arriving in France often mention a relative or a father in Brazil. Many migration narratives speak of the suffering caused by a family separation that often became definitive:

I never thought I'd come to France ... When I was very young, I always dreamed of going to Brazil because my father was there. Then one day I got in touch with him by letter ... Since childhood, I had only dreamt about him, I prayed for him, then I got his address, and I wrote him. I thought my dream was going to come true ... But I didn't want my mother to suffer ... She's remarried and they have ten children ...³

When coming to France, these families did, in fact, draw the lessons from the experience that had been lived through collectively over several generations: this time, the women did not let the men come alone, or else

et là-bas: Un système résidentiel?" in Philippe Bonnin and Roselyne de Villanova, dirs., *D'une maison l'autre: Parcours et mobilités résidentielles* (Grâne: Éditions Créaphis, 1999), 213-49. The first monographs on Portuguese immigrants were done by Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade who followed them between the villages they came from and the villages to which they went. See in particular her article, "Comunidades emigrantes em situação dipolar: Análise de três casos de emigração especializada para os E.U.A., para o Brasil e para França," *Análise Social* 12 (48) (4) (1976): 983-97.

³ "Eu nunca tinha pensado vir para França [...] Eu desde garota o meu sonho era ir para o Brasil e a razão era porque meu pai estava no Brasil e depois um dia entrei em contacto com o meu pai por correspondência [...] Eu de garota o meu sonho era só ver o meu pai, nas minhas orações era o meu pai, e nessa altura como eu tive o endereço dele e tive contacto com ele, pensei que meu sonho ia realizar-se [...] mas não quis fazer sofrer a minha mãe. Ela casou com outro homem e onde ela teve dez filhos [...]." Testimony from a couple who owns a home in the Paris region and another in northern Portugal. She cleans houses; he is a mason.

they came to join them as rapidly as possible, in spite of the poor living and housing conditions of the first years (having to live in a slum or in a single, often unhealthy room). Those circumstances often induced them to leave the children with grandparents until their own situation improved.⁴

The families benefited from a period of economic growth that led them to climb up the residential and occupational ladder little by little. During the period that followed (1982-99), Portuguese immigrants reacted to the economic crisis more quickly and efficiently than the French, as Jorge de Portugal Branco explains:⁵

- a) The Portuguese community had the highest rate of activity in all of France, the number of active women rose to nearly 65.5% (while the national average was only 48.7%);

Young people 15-20 years old were active at nearly 12.6% (with a national average of 8%);

Unemployment among Portuguese residents was 11.4% (11.8% for French-born citizens and 24.10% for the foreign population as a whole);

The school careers of dual-national girls (who were French, but retained their Portuguese citizenship) were “long” for 9.8% of them (5.10% for French-born girls). In general, however, Portuguese descendants were mostly young (in the 15-19 age bracket) and had the shortest school careers, but they were also least affected by unemployment;

The overall rate of activity for Portuguese residents over 65 years of age was 3.3% (with a national average at 1.2%);

- b) Starting in 1989, occupational mobility, especially among the men, was quite remarkable. The number of small companies (at least ten employees) created by Portuguese entrepreneurs had multiplied by six since the 1980s, starting one’s own business as an artisan had tripled, and as a merchant quadrupled during the 1980s.

It should be added that the building industry, where most Portuguese immigrants worked, was less affected than others, such as the automobile industry, during the same period. Occupational mobility went along with a noteworthy residential mobility, involving specifics that will be dealt with more precisely and which raise the question of territorial integration when two Nation-States are involved.

⁴ These observations are based on the narratives and surveys published in the literature mentioned in note 2.

⁵ Jorge de Portugal Branco, “Duas décadas de presença portuguesa em França,” document, Portuguese Embassy in France, 2002.

Prior to 1974, when the borders were shut and only family regrouping continued to bring immigrants into France, the Portuguese community was already composed of families, for they were bent on avoiding the errors of previous generations. Statistics confirm this, showing that leaving for France rapidly became a joint venture, the women coming to join their husbands who had gone ahead to look for lodgings. Work was easier to obtain thanks to family contacts and village networks. Not infrequently, an immigrant called a member of the family to come work with him in the company where he was employed. That was the case in small towns such as Pacy-sur-Eure in Normandy, where Portuguese immigrants bought up old houses in the town center; their children later became home-owners in the surrounding areas.⁶ Theirs was straightforwardly a family migration, whereas in France until 1931, migrants were generally seasonal workers and consisted of men alone (“three out of five migrants were men”, according to Jeanne Singer-Kerel).⁷ More recent family migrations, including the schooling of children in the country of immigration, have had considerable impact on migratory patterns. As of 1975, they created what is known as a “settlement immigration” for those who chose to remain in France, backed by a series of specific measures to promote integration, which is not only a matter of low-rent housing.⁸ In 1977, a political measure for “financial assistance to return” was implemented, based on the notion that the foreign work-force was only temporary. André Lebon, Technical Advisor at the Ministry of Labor, explains it this way:

As long as the migratory process implies mainly economic considerations, it includes the notion of returning to one’s country. Contrary to what can be observed in the case of settlement immigration, leaving one’s country is seen as a temporary expatriation, even though its duration cannot be ascertained in advance. Going home is thus clearly a constant and long-established fact.⁹

⁶ Villanova, *Les migrants propriétaires*.

⁷ Jeanne Singer-Kerel, “La population étrangère dans les recensements de 1881 à 1936,” paper presented at Congrès Association Française des Anthropologues, Paris, 9-11 Jan. 1986.

⁸ These measures were mainly due to the policies implemented by the first government of President Mitterrand in 1981. One of them concerned access to low-cost housing. Unlike immigrants from North Africa and Turkey, however, the Portuguese hardly ever applied for low-cost housing, preferring to go directly from old and broken-down housing to private ownership.

⁹ André Lebon, “Préface” to Michel Poinard, *Le retour des travailleurs portugais* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1979).

That was the point of view that drew the most criticism from authors writing about immigration in France, who point out that politicians abstained from doing anything to improve the situation of immigrant workers, particularly their deplorable living conditions (*e.g.*, shantytowns demolished in 1972, unhealthy, overcrowded rooms, bunks in foyers rented at outrageous prices by “sleep merchants”, high rates of accidents at the workplace, *etc.*).¹⁰

But such a vision of the migrant worker as reported by André Lebon echoed the declarations of the Lisbon *Junta da Emigração* in 1961, speaking of the new attitude of those emigrants who left for Europe for short periods in order to improve their situation in the home country by taking advantage of the economic boom. The *Junta* stresses that such an attitude is also in Portugal’s best interests, since the country will be able to recuperate its workers in time, as its situation betters, namely in terms of job offers. However, as Michel Poinard reminds us, a somewhat different situation did in fact develop. Indeed, the return of the Portuguese to Portugal has been neither massive nor rapid. Aside from everything else, the Portuguese community was not very affected by unemployment in France, while Portugal was just at that time receiving people from its former colonies, among whom the returnees (*retornados*), an expendable work-force who made the housing situation even worse.

Portugal took measures to encourage savings and facilitate loans for building a house in the home-country, finding in their citizens abroad an abundant source of income on which it had not counted before.

Today, it is possible to observe the behavior of three generations and how they relate to each other: the ones who emigrated first and are now approaching retirement, their children who settled in France or returned to Portugal, and their grandchildren. We shall analyze their residential strategies as representing not only an economic investment but as being spatial symbols for both mobility and resistance to the dismantling of family structures. They will be presented following the chronology of migratory itineraries. The house in the village of origin stands out as the primary symbolic reparation for a voluntary up-rooting and an inexistent homestead—rudimentary in the village, dilapidated and insalubrious in the new country—as much as the proof of social success. Transmitting property or

¹⁰ See, for example, Albano Cordeiro, *L’immigration* (Paris: La découverte, 1983); Larbi Talha *et al.*, *Maghrébins en France, émigrés ou immigrés?* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1983); Abdelmalek Sayad, *La double absence: Des illusions de l’émigré aux souffrances de l’immigré* (Paris: Seuil, 1999).

properties to one's heirs also signifies a symbolic transmission (of inter-generational ties) as much as a financial calculation.

The House Project: Returning to the Home Country One Day

"Quem casa, quer casa"

To tell the truth, I wasn't at all keen on that Portugal project, it was more my husband and his family. I think that a well-built house, happy and gay, is very important for family life, it makes all the difference. For instance, this room, it's me who chose it with my husband, I wanted a room with a lot of light but also where you can come in and say, right off the bat: it's a dream, it's like a dream in there ... I think we all sort of had that *idée fixe*, to go to France to earn money fast and build our house. I think that's a family thing, handed down from generation to generation, because everyone dreams of building one, it must be in our blood, who knows, because when you think of getting married you immediately think of building a house, doing something (emigrating) 'cause if we stay in our parents' house we'll never manage.¹¹

The project of building a house in the village existed from the very first years of immigration, showing how attached the migrants were to their roots; for young couples, it was also a way of having their own home. The house project, which demanded a good salary, was even often the primary reason for leaving.

To grasp the importance of the house project, which means using one's initial savings to emigrate, one must rapidly return to the situation of the Minho villages, which have been written up several times. Emigrating in the 1960s did in fact trigger an important change not only as to the population's age but also its gender structure. While Caroline Brettell showed the feminization of the population in the villages due to the men's

¹¹ "A bem dizer, eu não tinha posição nenhuma nesse projecto de Portugal, foi mais o meu marido e a família dele. Eu penso que uma casa bem construída, alegre, é muito importante na vida familiar, já dá outro ambiente, por exemplo, esta peça fui eu que escolhi com o meu marido. Eu queria uma peça clara, mas também queria uma peça que uma pessoa pudesse entrar e dissesse assim: um rêve, um sonho, um pouco um sonho aqui dentro. Eu penso que quase todos nós temos essa ideia fixa, de ir para França, para ganhar dinheiro depressa para construir uma casa. Eu acho que isto vem das famílias, das gerações, porque todo o mundo tem o sonho de construir, já deve vir no sangue, não sei, porque quando a gente pensa em casar pensa logo em construir uma casa, fazer qualquer coisa (emigrar) porque se ficássemos em casa dos nossos pais, não conseguíamos." Testimony of a couple who arrived in 1970, and owns a house in the Paris region and another in a village near Ponte de Lima, in Portugal. She cleans houses for a living; he is a mason.

departure for Europe and mainly France during the early period of emigration, after the 1960s, single women also left.¹² Marital behavior patterns also changed: the number of illegitimate births, single mothers and unmarried couples, which had been a permanent feature in those regions, diminished considerably. Colette Callier-Boisvert points this out for the village of Soajo (in the Upper Minho) before the 1960s, explaining celibacy and illegitimate births by economic factors: the women who remained single were the poorest, they became unwed mothers for lack of personal value in the marriage market, but men too poor to acquire independent housing remained single too.¹³

Confronting these studies with the results of our survey on families returning to their villages for the summer, shows how migration has protected family life, allowing couples to set up house, and eradicating situations of demographic imbalance and poverty.

Clearly adventurers during the first period (crossing the border on foot, and without a passport), these migrants thought they would someday return to their village. In the meantime, the village house was where they spent their yearly vacations; it was there that the children found what they lacked in old and overcrowded city dwellings: available relatives (their grandparents in particular), a universe of small, self-sustaining farms with animals, freedom from schoolwork, the possibility of playing outside without adult supervision. Village festivals were postponed until summer to accommodate the migrants, and the youngsters who had been away were reunited with the friends who had stayed behind. Summer is also the season for weddings, baptisms, and other ceremonies that the migrants like to celebrate at home. On the ground-floor near the garage, there is a large, often multifunctional room, good for big parties.

The symbolic value of the house is thus vastly greater than the short time it is lived in, it swallows up all their savings,¹⁴ the resources of the cumulative employment of both the men and the women, including what

¹² Caroline Brettell, *Men Who Migrate, Women Who Wait: Population and History in a Portuguese Parish* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

¹³ Colette Callier-Boisvert, *Soajo entre migrations et mémoire* (Paris: Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, 1999).

¹⁴ Yan Moulier, "Les Portugais, insertion productive et rupture dans le comportement économique," in Jean-Pierre Garson and Georges Tapinos, eds., *L'argent des immigrés: Revenus, épargne et transferts de huit nationalités immigrés en France*, Travaux et Documents, Cahier No. 94 (Paris: INED/Presses Universitaires de France, 1981), 174-218; Michel Poinard, "Remises d'émigrés et transformations du cadre bâti dans le milieu rural portugais," paper presented at Table-ronde C.I.E.M., Poitiers, 5-7 Dec. 1983.

they earned “on the side” by working illicitly on Sundays and holidays, and it is where they invest their know-how about the conception and quality of materials.¹⁵ According to the 1990 Portuguese census, Portugal cashed in 45.4 percent of its immigrants’ savings, the highest rate for all the communities working in France, although Portuguese immigrants are considered well-integrated, a fact confirmed by various statistical indicators concerning their way of life. They usually come third in that classification, after the Italians and the Spaniards, which follows the order of arrival in France.

According to the MGIS survey (data from the 1990 census), 39 percent of Portuguese immigrants in France had a house in the home-country in 1992 and 85 percent of them went there once a year for summer vacations; but qualitative studies on their itineraries show that, already then, many were going as often as twice yearly.¹⁶

Whether finished or still under construction, the house has not been a source of conflict between the generations. Today, like any family house, it is home to every grown-up’s childhood, giving everyone the chance to get over its loss in their own good time. They are truly family homes as one imagines them in France, built to last and be handed down—even if difficulties in sharing them between the heirs do sometimes appear at the death of the original builders.

Criticized for being relatively oversized and ostentatiously visible from afar, due to their often overly ornate and loud façades, they are nevertheless hardly comparable to the houses dubbed “Brazilian”. The latter, built mainly in the nineteenth century, are small palaces made of kitsch materials mocked in Portuguese literature.¹⁷ Above all, most of the Brazilians never returned to their home country, even when they had left a wife and children behind, and the ties with the family left behind were completely distended. That, at least, is what our surveys have shown, though other villages may be exceptions. Thus, many “Brazilian villages” underwent serious population imbalances because of the numerous departures of single men between 1950 and 1959.¹⁸

¹⁵ Villanova, Leite, Raposo, *Maisons de rêve au Portugal*, I.

¹⁶ Patrick Simon, “Le logement,” in Michèle Tribalat, dir., *Enquête mobilité géographique et insertion sociale* (Paris: INED/INSEE, 1992).

¹⁷ Villanova, Leite, Raposo, *Maisons de rêve au Portugal*; Villanova, “Migrants et propriétaires.”

¹⁸ Simon, “Le logement.” See also Brettell, *Men Who Migrate, Women Who Wait*; Callier-Boisvert, *Soajo entre migrations et mémoire*.

Though immigrants are reproached for only occupying their large houses part-time, the rural landscapes in the major zones of emigration in northern Portugal have been totally transformed, due to the houses of the “French”, built later by the 1960s migrants. This occurred in two stages: first, modernizing old houses with earthen floors that had neither water nor sewers. Then the villages expanded with new, partially self-constructed houses at the periphery; these houses were spacious and possessed every comfort.¹⁹

Thanks to the narratives collected during our surveys, particularly on the residential itineraries, we know that the Portuguese have always transferred a part of their savings to the home country in the summer during their homecoming for vacations, without going through the banks. (Later acquisitions in the Paris region were done with bank loans, however.) This dictated the rhythm for building their houses, which usually took years. That is one of the reasons why, according to the INSEE housing survey of 1992, Denise Arbonville and Catherine Bonvalet were able to show that there were more Portuguese than French households who owned a second residence (19.3 percent versus 16.7 percent). The second residence may be rented out or reserved for private use in France or in Portugal.²⁰

Building an Intergenerational Space

It's true that we thought that when we retired we'd either go back to Portugal for good, or for most of the time. For example, now our children are here, my son has taken on French citizenship, but he has both nationalities and my daughter will also become French someday, she's already said so, and often what keeps the parents here is the fact they have children and grandchildren; but nothing prevents people from coming and going, two or three months here. ... It's true that now I feel homesick (“*saudades*”), I know I've spent several years without going to Portugal in the winter, we always go in August when everything is green and I went in March and everything was bare and I really loved that naked landscape It's true that I get *saudades*, and it's true that if I could, I'd go once a month, during the weekend, to Portugal.²¹

¹⁹ Villanova, Leite, Raposo, *Maisons de rêve au Portugal*, ch. 4.

²⁰ Denise Arbonville and Catherine Bonvalet, “La propriété d'après l'enquête logement de 1992,” in Bonnin and Villanova, *D'une maison l'autre*, 1, 19-45.

²¹ “E verdade que nos pensamos na nossa reforma ou estar definitivamente em Portugal ou o máximo em Portugal, por exemplo agora os nossos filhos aqui, o meu filho naturalizou-se francês, embora tenha as duas nacionalidades e a minha filha também vai fazer, já falou nisso um dia destes e muitas vezes o que motiva os pais a ficarem aqui é saberem que têm os filhos e os netos, mas nada tira de a gente ir e

Today, these families' way of life of in the country of immigration has nothing in common with the life of those single men who spent as little as possible and sent their earnings to the family who had stayed behind; the old men living alone in workers' hostels in France today are mostly North African. The evolution of life-styles and consumerism in the country of immigration is inseparable from the presence of children: being in school, they identify with the more modern or more "fashionable" ways of the host country and impose them on their parents, as do also the children of French families in France.²²

At first, parents and children had to manage differentiated identifications: the former were more attached to their own parents' homeland, especially as measures facilitating integration only intervened in French politics in 1981; the youngsters were closer to the patterns of behavior of their French schoolmates. This gender gap of course did not go without conflicts, and difficulties were perceptible in school performance (French scholarship in the social sciences is quite prolific on the topic).

As far as the couples were concerned, migration from the Minho created tensions in social relations, roles, and hierarchies—even creating breaks due to several factors, such as women obtaining employment with salaries superior to their husbands. Their activity, imbedded in conviviality, as described by Carolina Leite for *concierges*²³ (but which could be generalized to other female occupations), was compounded by certain roles shared within the couples, such as contacts with the children's schools. Thanks to all that, women acquired a visible status, whereas in traditional society they were only allowed more discreet roles in the face of the male domination implemented by the marriage market.²⁴ But male domination could conceivably be a matter of social representation in the face of women's implicit power—especially those who, thanks to their dowry, are not devoid

depois vir aqui dois o tres meses, é verdade que eu agora tenho saudades, eu sei que passei uns anos muito grandes sem ir a Portugal na altura do Inverno, a gente vai sempre em Agosto, onde tudo é verde e eu fui lá numa altura, no mês de Março e tudo estava nu, então eu gostei muito daquela paisagem nua, eu adorei (...) e verdade que tenho saudades disso, é verdade que se eu pudesse eu iria uma vez por mês, um fim-de-semana a Portugal." Testimony of a couple with two children; the youngest girl is 14. They were interviewed in their home in the Paris region. They also own a house in Portugal. She does house-cleaning; he works in tiles.

²² They were to be influenced later by the ways that developed in the rural parts of Portugal in the 1970s.

²³ Carolina Leite, "Feminino e singular: espaço doméstico e inserção urbana: o exemplo das porteiras portuguesas em Paris," *Sociedade e Território* 25/26 (Feb. 1998): 129-40.

²⁴ Callier-Boisvert, *Soajo entre migrations et mémoire*.

of personal property—as suggested by João de Pina Cabral.²⁵ This is, of course, an on-going debate.

Among other changes in the family structure, we must also note that weddings are less endogamous among the generation of children born of immigrant parents, compared to the existing village endogamy where marriage between first cousins was frequent.²⁶ While still common among children of immigrant children—as was the case for half of them in 1992—today more and more young people in France choose their future spouses within an enlarged network.²⁷

It must be said too that migration engenders a new domestic unit, revolving around the emigrant couple, with modified roles and statuses, to guarantee the security of aging parents and a roof over their heads, and help the children when it is time for them to acquire their own lodgings. Family solidarity shifted, if compared to tradition, when relatives were supposed to take charge of illegitimate children, widows and widowers, and children, legitimate or otherwise, were conceived in order to guarantee their parents' well-being in their old age. The main place where such a reorganization can be observed is the village house built by the migrant couple (including a wing for their aged parents or the children waiting for their own place), with a matrilineal tendency in the most isolated zones of the Minho region.

The analysis of the residential itineraries collected in the Ile de France region²⁸ (where nearly one out of five Portuguese people resides) shows that acquiring a house in the host country accompanies the birth of grandchildren, when the immigrant couple realizes that their descendants are settling durably or definitively in France. A double residence for the purpose of alternating has often been chosen as a compromise by couples with diverging expectations: the women being more attached to their descendants settled in France, the men more desirous to return to a rural way of life when they retire. When the children have chosen to live in Portugal, the couples return to retire, but often things are complicated by the fact that brothers and sisters are disseminated over the two countries, or because an only child will change his or her mind several times during

²⁵ João de Pina-Cabral, *Filhos de Adão, filhas de Eva: A visão do mundo camponesa no Alto Minho* (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1989).

²⁶ Callier-Boisvert, *Soajo entre migrations et mémoire*.

²⁷ Survey *Mobilité géographique et insertion sociale*, conducted by the INED and the INSEE, dir. Michèle Tribalat, Paris, 1992.

²⁸ Villanova and Bonvalet, "Immigrés propriétaires," 1.

studies and early professional experiences. More than the country, it is the link to their descendants that finally causes parents, and especially women, to make their choices.²⁹

The double residence thus gives families the advantage of handling children's changing projects and other unforeseen circumstances. It gives families the sense of not "putting all their eggs in one basket". And, in the project of buying a house, there are economic considerations involving capitalization and transmission to the children.

The importance of allegiance—"it's my country"—in the first migrants' discourse justified the village house and the idea that going back had always been a part of the plan. For the first migrants, feelings of identity, belonging and trust are very locally bound to the village itself rather than to the country as a whole. The children's influence weighs most heavily in the decision to return when they themselves start founding a family and transform the first migrants into grandparents.

Clearly, that is the tendency that sets the Portuguese in France apart from the Portuguese in the United States, Canada, and Brazil. Among the young people with migrant parents in France, what is prevalent in the family sphere, between brothers and sisters, and between generations is a certain sense of "Europeanness", *i.e.*, a circulation of references and feelings of belonging based on biculturalism and often bilingualism that are usually associated to double nationality.³⁰ In contrast, according to Paulo Filipe Monteiro,³¹ in the United States, a feeling of "Luso-Americanism" has developed instead of "Portugueseness".

The hardships of the first years, risking one's life, living in shantytowns, crossing the border on foot to reach France clandestinely are most of the time largely kept from the youngsters, who reproach their parents for remaining silent about them. Films about immigration done by immigrant authors bear witness to this experience, as do countless personal narratives. Often, when interviewing the emigrant generation, tales of those years of suffering come to the fore. Artistic productions and scientific writing allow

²⁹ Roselyne de Villanova, "Bilingues obligés et devenir des bilinguismes: Langues et identifications dans l'immigration portugaise in quatre communautés immigrées—Africains, Asiatiques, Portugais, Turcs," *Migrants Formation* 76 (1989): 126-38.

³⁰ Because they acquired French citizenship without giving up Portuguese nationality, which they possess by virtue of being born in Portugal.

³¹ Paulo Filipe Monteiro, "Migrantes imigrados: De Lousã ao Connecticut, uma investigação em dois tempos," in Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva *et al.*, eds., *Emigração/Imigração em Portugal: Actas do Colóquio Internacional sobre Emigração e Imigração em Portugal (séc. XIXXX)* (Lisbon: Fragmentos, 1993), 323-48.

us to preserve that memory. The artistic and academic children of first-comers contribute greatly to doing so. Thus, a first generation of women reacted against the old migratory model but chose to leave unsaid, especially in front of the children, the new and sometimes traumatic experiences they sometimes did not even admit to themselves. It is left up to the new generation to reconstruct the past, thanks to films, migration narratives, paintings, personal research, and mobility (for vacations, study, or professional activities).³² With time, through the realities of the family construction of space, a word of explanation may emerge, not devoid of difficulties, family conflicts, misunderstandings, and repressed childhoods—a word will show through a work of art, in the language of creation: in this way, the realities of migration are made known, socially shared, shaped by mainly literary, scientific and artistic productions. In that way, the migration story returns to the family sphere, and relationships can be clarified.

It is currently possible to observe the importance of the village house used as a vacation residence for the family, toward which even mixed couples gravitate (*e.g.*, a young French woman married to a Portuguese man). Indeed, the Portuguese family works like a strong magnet. In this case, it erases the tendency towards the matrifocality that predominates in rural northern Portugal, or the preferential link to the mother's side that is generally the case in France (this would, however, need to be checked in a certain number of cases).

The house initially imagined for retirement may thus become a secondary residence. But what will become of it when its first owners die and it gets divided among the children? The house will have gained unprecedented value in regions that have undergone economic development, mainly thanks to the migrants' industriousness and consumerism, particularly in villages situated near the Minho coastal zones, such as county of Chaves, which are now prized by tourists and from which so many people emigrated in the 1960s. But families no longer have as many children as they used to, couples with an only child are frequent among the immigrants, and often the first-comers acquired several properties to make sure they would have a comfortable enough pension. Three characteristics gleaned from the 1999 French census are pertinent to understanding these migrants' family patterns: the small number of children, the dual working couple, and the numerical importance of marriages between Portuguese.

³² For example, the exhibit of painters of immigrant descent at the Nogueira da Silva Museum in Braga, Nov. 2006, and José Viera's films in France.

Slightly over 28 percent “Portuguese” households contain a single child, over 29 percent have two, and 12.5 percent three or more. A double salary is absolutely general—as mentioned earlier, women’s rate of activity is in fact much higher than that of the overall population in France (65.5 percent versus 48.7 percent). All these characteristics influence, naturally, the living standards and the strategies towards home-ownership. Additionally, the very low rate of intermarriage compared to all other immigrant groups (which is changing for those who were born in France but for whom no recent statistics are available) possibly explains the fact that the house-project could be relatively easily implemented by those couples.

The idea of alternating residences and the practices of the first generation, now retiring, which a survey allowed us to explore among migrant home-owners in France, especially among those coming from Portugal, continues to hold true.³³ In 2003, when the number of retired people amounted to 12.6 percent of immigrants born in Portugal, half of them were already practicing bilocalization or alternation of residence.³⁴

Bilocalization, an Intercultural Residential System

According to qualitative surveys, the movement known in France as “promoting home-ownership” must have begun around 1975 (quantitative data were not very precise at that time). Portuguese immigrants followed in the footsteps of the Italians and the Spaniards. In 1992, 40 percent of all people from Portugal owned the lodgings they were living in (56 percent for all people in France as well as for people from Spain; 39 percent of those coming from Portugal also owned a residence there).³⁵ These figures do not include other residences they may also have been renting in France in 1992; in the 1999 census, the latter figure approached 50 percent.

João, for instance, tells that at first he always found a place to live through his Portuguese friends and had never lived in an HLM (low-cost housing). “It never crossed my mind to even look for one”, he says. He bought a one-room apartment and, after that, a little cottage in a small town in a Paris suburb where many other Portuguese live. He put in the plumbing and the electricity. Later, he built a seven-room house and

³³ Villanova and Bonvalet, “Immigrés propriétaires.”

³⁴ See the PRI survey *Passage à la retraite des immigrés*, conducted by the CNAV in 2003, published by Claudine Attias-Donfut, *L’enracinement: Enquête sur le vieillissement des immigrés en France* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2006).

³⁵ Patrick Simon, “Les immigrés et le logement, une singularité qui s’atténue,” *Tableau de l’enquête MGIS INED/INSEE, Données sociales, 1996*: 421-28.

bought a second house to fix up so he could live in it and rent out the first one. Then he moved into the first one with his wife and three children, and they rented out the smaller one. Finally, they sold the big house that was becoming too expensive because of taxes and the cost of heating and bought a smaller, four-room house, where they were living at the time of the interview. In the basement, João installed a second kitchen and a rumpus room for the boys. The children are now home-owners nearby. The couple also owns a large house in Portugal, and they plan to shuttle back and forth when they retire. They have kept their Portuguese citizenship.³⁶

Residential itineraries show that accessing ownership status is done progressively, certain stages having begun with life in a slum in a Paris suburb.³⁷ From 1962 to 1972 (when it was demolished) the greatest number of Portuguese were concentrated in the Champigny shantytown.³⁸ Thus, the immigrants have contributed considerably to the rehabilitation of the French housing stock: they doubled the amount of suburban housing in the Paris region, using quality materials to rebuild the originally modest houses, and they introduced elements of the Minho rural tradition to rural housing surrounding middle-sized cities.³⁹

Energetic investment in buying and remodeling the old housing stock led them to use the know-how acquired in the building industry, which, as of 1980, occupied the most qualified and qualifying positions among Portuguese migrants.⁴⁰ From that point of view, they might be compared to the older Italian migrations (which started at the beginning of the twentieth century, and continued to increase until 1962). But the latter have not been studied systematically from the housing angle. Besides, the Italians did not mark the built-up territory in France to the same extent, since they

³⁶ According to an interview from the author's field work partially published in "Os Emigrantes Portugueses e a auto-reabilitação na região parisiense," *Sociedade e Território* 25-26 (Feb. 1998): 21-32.

³⁷ Villanova, *Les migrants propriétaires*, 1. Two surveys of approximately sixty non-directive interviews each were carried out in the Ile-de-France region and in people's homes in Portugal, with the collaboration of Alexandra Castro.

³⁸ Marie-Christine Volovitch, *Portugais à Champigny: le temps des baraques* (Paris: Autrement, 1998).

³⁹ Jacques Barou, "En Auvergne, une immigration portugaise en milieu rural," *Hommes et migrations*, Portugais de France, 1210 (Nov.-Dec. 1997): 43-60.

⁴⁰ Sergio Lopes, "Os emigrantes portugueses e as profissões de construção civil em França," *Cadernos de Ciências Sociais* 7 (Nov. 1988): 137-41.

arrived at a time when salaries were lower and legal rights less favorable to foreigners in the building industry.

Construction attracted most of the Portuguese workforce which, since its arrival and until the national census of 1982, absorbed 45 percent of all male workers in France. In 1992, 49 percent of the men had been first employed in the building sector and 47 percent still were,⁴¹ though professional mobility has appeared more clearly in recent statistics. Some of them come from villages where self-construction—calling on family members to build one’s house—is still the rule, and remains the rule when rebuilding rural houses in France. Self-construction involves exchanges of know-how and the evaluation of the materials and the process of construction. The children, who received training in the building trade and who are employed or self-employed have also transmitted their know-how to their relatives.⁴²

Cultural borrowings or mixtures born of this circulation can be seen in the conception of interiors, or in the more formal exterior decoration. Examples include the double kitchen, one on the old rural model, the other blessed with all the “integrated” elements of modern installations, or the outside staircase occupying a large part of the façade and permitting a second spatial organization after the very ornate indoor staircase, or the imposing outdoor fireplace, either separated from the building for the barbecue, or integrated along the front façade, built according to a single model.⁴³

Scholarship on Portuguese migrations exists in several countries and shows the energy migrants have put into acquiring places to live or rent out and build up a capital, especially in the United States, but also in Canada and Brazil. For example, after Gérard Lavigne, Carlos Teixeira described the role played by home-ownership in Canada. In the U.S.A., Paulo Filipe Monteiro shows that the Portuguese own several houses that they rent out.⁴⁴ That is not new, since already in the nineteenth century,

⁴¹ Annick Echardour, “La vie professionnelle des immigrants originaires du Portugal,” *Données sociales* (1993): 181-85.

⁴² Villanova, “Os emigrantes portugueses.”

⁴³ See note 2.

⁴⁴ Gérard Lavigne, *Les ethniques et la ville* (Laval: Le Préambule, 1987); Carlos Teixeira, “The Suburbanization of Portuguese Communities in Toronto and Montreal: From Isolation to Residential Integration?” in Anne Laperrière et al., eds., *Immigration and Ethnicity in Canada/Immigration et Ethnicité au Canada* (Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1996), 181-201; Monteiro, “Migrantes imigrados.”

in Rio de Janeiro, Portuguese people who had come mainly to start up a bakery, were detested by the poor Brazilians who rented old and broken-down homes from them at high prices.⁴⁵

For Portuguese migrants in France, such acquisitions cover the two countries, but accumulating residences usually concerns the country of origin, while France remains the place of a single acquisition, used as the main residence. The reasons for that difference compared to countries of Portuguese immigration on other continents are probably the strategies for maintaining ties in both countries, as elucidated by the children's behavior. In fact, when the time comes to go to university or choose an occupation, some of them want to reproduce their parents' itineraries in reverse. According to the 1980-99 statistics analyzed by Jorge de Portugal Branco, "Portugal continues to attract part of the best trained youth, to integrate them into the labor market as well as into highly qualified, superior skills, especially in the universities".⁴⁶ They then decide to go live in Portugal, in a village close to the one where the family has its homestead. Some settle there permanently; others try it out for a few years as mentioned above. Frequently, architecture students who happen to be sons of immigrants, choose to spend their year of study abroad through the Erasmus program in the region their family came from, where they will find the field for their project, diploma, or dissertation, with the idea of returning there to practice their profession one day.

The other reason for the French specificity is the financial consideration. Buying real estate in Portugal was really quite cheap, all the more so before the arrival of the euro, and the importance of the properties and the revenues they represent are taxed more in France than in Portugal.

However, circulation continues through the generations, backed by the entrance of Portugal into the European Economic Community (1986), with all the facilities and encouragements this meant for youth; but also, as qualitative studies have shown, making a visible difference between the time when the Portuguese immigrant (like other immigrants) was looked down upon (*i.e.*, put in an inferior position, as was the case in their own country as well). Portugal's entering the European Economic Community gave it the opportunity to reinforce its identity, along with its European

⁴⁵ Gladys Sabina Ribeiro, "Porque você veio encher o pandulho aqui? Os portugueses, o antilusitanismo e a exploração das moradias populares no Rio de Janeiro da República Velha," *Análise Social* 127 (19/3) (1994): 631-54.

⁴⁶ Branco, "Duas décadas de presença portuguesa em França."

membership, that all the generations share. The picture of a successful community has little by little imposed itself in France thanks to the signs of its upward mobility: the men's professions, the number of home-owners, and the successful school and university itineraries of some of its descendants, mainly those who arrived at the beginning of their schooling or who were born in France.

Alternating Homes, a New Form of European Mobility?

Hailing mainly from the rural North, the small householders and employees kept up the family spirit typical of those regions against the threat of family disintegration in the face of migrations. Voluntarily and strategically, they concentrated on residential investments, beyond the frontiers that separate the country of origin from the country of destination, and neutralizing the idea of "returning home" by integrating in France. Shuttling back and forth, making professional choices, acquiring real-estate, all went towards creating a circulation between two homes: the house built in the village near one's parents, the property acquired later in France, and working close to where the children live.

Becoming a home-owner meant that the community spread out across the Paris suburbs, into the urban centers of Ile de France where the Portuguese are the most numerous, since they bought up property several years ago in towns where the housing stock was decaying and not yet too expensive. They found houses to "make over" (*e.g.*, in places like Bezons, Houilles, the West of Paris, Champigny, Saint-Maur in the North-East, or beyond). Their children have usually settled in neighboring areas, having bought apartments or, less frequently, houses. In the small towns and villages, those who invested in the old homes often had come from the same village in Portugal to work in the small businesses that Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade described.⁴⁷ The community's modes of localization differ according to the place to which they first came. In the neo-rural and peri-urban milieus, those who originated from the same village stick geographically together. When acquiring property, in the urban environments, the village networks usually break up, but not the family, who remains geographically close.

For a long time, immigrant mobility in France appeared like a temporary situation that must resolve itself, either by permanently settling in the host country, considered a sign of successful integration, or by return-

⁴⁷ Rocha-Trindade, "Comunidades emigrantes."

ing to the country of origin. National immigration policies were implemented in that framework, as were French measures to help people return to their country. These measures echoed the ideal of a sedentary society and the production of nation-states. Globalization has cracked that ideal, imposing the economic reality of the circulation of merchandise, capital, men, and knowledge.

Research has explored various forms of mobility, from daily or weekly shuttling long distances, between the place of residence and the place of work, to various forms of alternating and the permanence of a semi-nomad existence. What is characteristic of modern societies is the sedentary model, which is precisely what this state of affairs has upset. For example, Gypsies living in low-rent public housing in Portugal keep their caravans in the back yard, so as to be able to take to the road in search of seasonal work during the summer.⁴⁸ The formerly nomad Moorish society of Mauritania spends their vacations—whatever their social class—in tents in the desert.⁴⁹ In the French Alps (Haute-Savoie), Bernard Mazerat has shown how old shepherds or their descendants alternate, revamping the mountain chalets (where they used to take their cattle to graze during the summer) and turning them into vacation homes.⁵⁰ Such practices reflect the old habitus engraved in a spatial memory that lends a hybrid form to rebuilt spaces, such as can be found in the houses of the former Nomads of Ouzbekistan studied by Jean-Paul Loubes.⁵¹ This author questions afresh the linear vision of the nomadic preceding the sedentary model as being an indicator of evolution. He stresses, in effect, that going from one state to another can fall either way according to various economic factors.

In *D'une maison l'autre* (Between Two Homes), Philippe Bonnim and Roselyne de Villanova present studies of populations of very varied origins, who today practice double residence in order to create, by breaking

⁴⁸ Alexandra Castro, "Le relogement des Tsiganes au Portugal: un cas de redéfinition des identités," *Études Tsiganes* 13 (1995): 35-44.

⁴⁹ For further development of this thesis, see Sébastien Boulay, "Quand un objet change de statut: Trajectoire de la tente dans la société maure (Mauritanie)," *Muséum ethnographique* 6 (Nov. 2004), which may be found at <<http://www.ethnographiques.org/2004/Boulay.html>>.

⁵⁰ Bernard Mazérat, "Les alpages de Miage: Chalets d'en haut, maisons d'en bas," in Bonnim and Villanova, *D'une maison l'autre*, 69-89.

⁵¹ Jean-Paul Loubes, "La mémoire de l'architecture nomade dans la maison d'Asie Centrale," in Roselyne de Villanova and Geneviève Vermès, dirs., *Le métissage inter-culturel: Créativité dans les relations inégalitaires* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2005), 177-97.

down borders, an uninterrupted domestic space between countries differently invested by generations and styles.⁵² That is what the immigrant populations in France are doing, or the domestic migrants moving between regions, or the city-dwellers, who create a family home in the country or, more broadly speaking, a “family territory”, if one includes the network of the extended family, as imagined by Anne Gotman for the migrants arriving from the French provinces to the capital. Migrant chains develop between regions of origin and Paris “a bipolarity that opens a space for circulation, hospitality and seasonal housing that permits one to speak of an enlarged residential space for all the generations, the young ones in particular”.⁵³

In the immigrants’ case, our analyses also show that the hybridization of concrete forms in domestic spaces born of the contacts between the models of the two societies, extends beyond the idea of a construction that would reflect identities.⁵⁴ Specific cognitive processes lead to the production of such hybrid forms—cultural borrowings, additions, or oppositions—when one considers the bilocalization of residential alternating. Thus, the continuity between the two residences occurs on two levels, concrete forms and cognitive operations. The extended space of alternation and bilocalization is architectural—both stylistically and in the way forms are oriented—and social in its uses and the relations it fosters, namely the proximity between generations. That double spatial inscription is reinforced by the integration in the country where one works.

Double residence as continuous space ignores the geographic borders between States. That phenomenon is a great change compared to the previous eras of seasonal workers during the first part of the twentieth century and of migrants in the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s. Abdelmalek Sayad denounced the living conditions of the latter, characterized by what he called the “double absence”: for they were both absent from their country and looked down upon in the host country, where they were only considered

⁵² Bonnin and Villanova, *D’une maison l’autre*.

⁵³ Anne Gotman, “Géographies familiales, migrations et générations,” in Catherine Bonvalet, Anne Gotman, and Yves Grafmeyer, eds., *La famille et ses proches: L’aménagement des territoires*, Travaux et Documents No. 143 (Paris: INED/Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), 69-131.

⁵⁴ Yves Charbit, Marie-Antoinette Hily, Michel Poinard, *Le va-et-vient identitaire* (Paris: INED, Travaux et documents, cahier n.° 140, 1997). This work analyzes migrants shuttling between France and three villages in Portugal from the point of view of identity.

“temporary”. In his own way, Sayad combines socio-political facts and personal experience, and superimposes the narratives in which subjectivity is a response to prescribed identities.⁵⁵

One may well ask if the new forms of seasonal work, or filling in for Parisian janitors during the summer vacation, which some Portuguese people are engaged in, will speed up the rhythm of alternating by doubling one’s residence, given that in certain sectors, such employment is much more lucrative than it used to be.⁵⁶ One might also wonder how Eastern Europeans will behave as their countries enter the European Union, facilitating their migration. They are feverishly engaged in self-construction in their villages, which is impressive especially because of the size of the houses, started as soon as the children are born with an eye to ensuring their future dowry.⁵⁷ One cannot resist comparing them to “the Frenchies”, those migrants from the Portuguese villages who arrived in France at the beginning of the 1960s.

The double residence of the Portuguese, who in a way are the immigrant-pioneers of that practice, must be analyzed anew, by studying those forms of recent mobility and in particular how freely they move around. Double residence imposes modes of behavior according to opportunity: the Portuguese experience teaches us a new way of experiencing the dynamics of mobility.

⁵⁵ See, among other works, Abdelmalek Sayad, “Un logement provisoire pour des travailleurs provisoires: Habitat et cadre de vie des travailleurs immigrés,” *Recherche sociale* 73 (Jan-Mar. 1980): 3-31; Abdelmalek Sayad, “La vacance comme pathologie de la condition d’immigré: le cas de la retraite ou de la pré-retraite,” *Gérontologie: La vieillesse des immigrés en France* 60 (Oct. 1986): 37-55; Abdelmalek Sayad, *L’immigration ou les paradoxes de l’altérité* (Brussels: De Boeck-Wesmael, 1991); Sayad, *La double absence*.

⁵⁶ According to a report by SOPEMI, Portuguese seasonal labor lasting less than six months in 1992 concerned Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Luxemburg, and France. SOPEMI, *Tendances des migrations internationales: Rapport annuel 1992*.

⁵⁷ Dana Diminescu, “Pour une anthropologie des migrations roumaines en France: le cas du pays d’Oas,” *Migrations Etudes*, synthèse, 91, (Nov-Dec. 1999).