TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS AND THE LOCAL POLITICS OF MIGRANT GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING IN POST-COLONIAL PORTUGAL

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ABSTRACT

Globalization, the intensification of international migration flows and the internationalization of modern nation-states have prompted fundamental transformations in traditional notions of citizenship, belonging and political participation. This article examines the impact of national and transnational institutional settings on migrants' political participatory frameworks by analysing the dynamics of migrants' grassroots organizing in a squatter settlement in Amadora, Portugal. Empirical investigation of this neighbourhood reveals that transnational and border-crossing forms of organizing have become important factors in shaping current practices of migrant collective mobilization. The study also points out the pervasive role of national membership and clientelism as key factors for accessing a wide range of rights and entitlements. It is further argued that contrary to the proponents of postnational models of citizenship, the nation-state continues to play a determinant role in the politics of inclusion and exclusion of migrant communities in the polity. At a broader level, the article draws on the case study of Amadora, Lisbon, to illustrate how migrant political participation patterns need to be understood in the battleground of local, national and transnational competing forces.

Key Words: citizenship, transnationalism, local politics, identity, migrant communities, collective mobilization, political incorporation.

In the last few decades, globalization, transnationalism and diasporic communities have posed major challenges to traditional notions of development, citizenship, belonging and community (Appadurai 1996; Castles and Davidson 2000; Cross and Keith 1993; Soysal 1994; Vertovec and Cohen 1999). These new social phenomena have had a major impact on modern nation–states' citizenship laws and migration policies leading to a reformulation of conventional criteria for belonging while raising new questions about migrants' social and political participation in the host societies.

Present-day research on citizenship and migration has stressed the emergence of multiple forms of belonging which transcend exclusive loyalties to the nation-state. As Appadurai (1996) has forcefully argued that a "postnational global order" has become increasingly responsible for the erosion of the nation-state as the sole legitimate basis for allegiance and identity. Similarly, Soysal (1994) contends that a "postnational model of citizenship" has emerged, reflecting a shift from national rights and entitlements to universal human rights. In her words: "Rights, participation and representation in a polity, are increasingly matters beyond the vocabulary of national citizenship" (1994: 165). In her view, the nation is no longer a "meaningful definer of the contemporary state, given the intensification and interconnectedness of the global system and the penetration of national dominions by supranational discourses" (ibid. 165).

These authors' insights are of great pertinence to the study of citizenship and migration. However, these contributions have tended to be highly theoretical and often elusive. As Castles and Davidson (2000) argue, Soysal has overstressed the emergence of a postnational belonging model and is "overly optimistic about the strength of the tendency" (2000:18). A call for more

empirically grounded research has been stressed by several authors as a means of redressing the complexities of national and transnational settings and their impact on migrants' political participation.

In the recent literature on citizenship and migrants' political participation, national institutional settings have been identified as major determinants of migrants' collective activism (Brubaker 1992, Castles 1995; Stratham 1999). The work of Ireland (1994) has pointed out the importance of institutional frameworks in shaping migrants' political behaviour. Central to his argument is the notion that immigrants' political behaviour is very much dependent on the institutional frameworks of the host society's "opportunity structure". By this he means a whole range of variables such as immigrants' legal situation, host-society citizenship laws and naturalization procedures, and welfare policies which become determinant in shaping migrants' collective organization. Similarly, Stratham (1999) proposes a "political opportunity approach" to the study of minority groups and their political integration in British society. Stratham argues that political opportunities facing minority groups are very much dependent on two broad dimensions of citizenship. The first one relates to the formal status of citizenship rights of those groups and the second one concerns the cultural obligations implicated in the state's incorporation policies. In applying this approach to the analysis of African Caribbean and Indian subcontinent minorities, Stratham found that British racialized cultural pluralism politics has produced a wide variation in mobilization patterns amongst the groups studied.

A key concern of these studies is the need to examine the processes through which national policies shape migrants' political integration processes. Rather than stressing the relationship between national institutional settings and migrants' collective action this paper addresses the relationship between transnational networks, nation-state policies and migrant collective organizing at a grassroots level in Portuguese post-colonial society. It seeks to contribute to the development of a framework which articulates macro institutional structures with a micropolitics of migrants' mobilization and political participation. The case study of the migrant squatter settlement of Alto da Cova da Moura, Amadora, in the periphery of Lisbon where I have conducted ethnographic research, constitutes an entry point to examine the relation between nation-state policies and transnational networks in shaping migrants' collective action.

In the context of the research conducted in Amadora, I attempt to draw on present-day theoretical insights on migration and citizenship to explore the local and the translocal dynamics of migrants' grassroots mobilization. However, instead of examining how state policies affect patterns of mobilization of migrant communities I seek to develop an actor-centred approach to the study of immigration politics. By focussing on the processes of domination, negotiation and contestation at the grassroots level, I attempt to explore the ways in which institutional settings

not only play a key role in structuring migrants' collective forms of organization but also how they impose particular subjectivities, enabling specific cultural and political practices while disabling others.

The first part of the paper maps out the origins and development of the settlement, focussing on the emergence of migrant neighbourhood-based organizations. The second part explores how dominant local official discourses and policies have conditioned migrant organizing. Special emphasis is given to the processes of negotiation and resistance produced at the local level. Finally, the paper discusses the local dynamics of transnational networks and their affects on migrants' political participation.

Grassroots Neighbourhood Organizations: Negotiating a Space of Politics

The Migrant Neighbourhood of Alto da Cova da Moura

The migrant squatter settlement of Alto da Cova da Moura is situated on a small volcanic plateau in the periphery of Lisbon covering a total area of 16.3 ha with a southern exposure and steep cliffs on the northern and eastern sides. The settlement is located approximately 15 km from downtown Lisbon with easy access to public transportation (railways and buses) and to main highways and freeways crisscrossing in its outskirts. Administratively, the settlement is located in the municipality of Amadora and it is under the jurisdiction of two parish councils, Buraca and Damaia.

According to the official legislation, this neighbourhood has been classified as being "doubly illegal" (Municipality of Amadora, Cova da Moura Report, 1983). First, it resulted from the "invasion" of privately- and state-owned lands. Of the 16.3ha, 11.1ha are privately-owned by a Portuguese family who flew to Brazil after the Portuguese Revolution in 1974. The remaining land is the property of the Portuguese state. Secondly, the built environment is also illegal given that no licenses or building permits were ever issued. In legal terms, this neighbourhood does not fit either one of the two major categories of "urban illegality". It is neither an "illegal neighbourhood" resulting from the illegal construction in lots legally acquired by the home owners nor a "shanty neighbourhood" resulting from the occupation of publicly owned property (Bill 804/76 and Bill 275/76).

According to some older residents in neighbourhood the first shacks were built in the 1940's. Pioneer residents settled in two major locations. One group concentrated in a farm called "Quinta do Outeiro" in the southern side of the neighbourhood. This group was mainly

constituted by farm workers who remained on the property, and built their own shacks after agricultural production came to a halt in the late 1950s. The second group settled in the northern part of the neighbourhood in a quarry which had been closed down for many years. In the 1960s these lands were also used also by residents of other surrounding neighbourhood, mainly internal rural migrants who started to subdivide the land in small orchard plots.

After the Revolution of 1974, political liberalization, social turmoil, and housing shortages contributed to the proliferation and consolidation of illegal neighbourhoods all over the country, especially in the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto. A national survey conducted in 1977 revealed that there were 83,000 illegal housing units in the whole country. Of these, 77% were located in the metropolitan area of Lisbon (Neves da Silva and Dias da Costa, 1988). This situation was further aggravated by the massive repatriation of Portuguese residing in the ex-colonies, new influxes of refugees fleeing the civil wars and hunger in Angola and Mozambique and new African labour migration flows to Portugal (Pires and Saint-Maurice 1989).

By mid-1974, several Capeverdean families who had appropriated some of the land for themselves, their extended families and friends were already living in the neighbourhood. Many of the newcomers had been residing in Portugal in small rundown hotels in Lisbon or in peripheral towns for some time before settling in the neighbourhood. For these, Cova da Moura offered an opportunity for homeownership, geographic proximity to work and city living and some social mobility. Family and neighbourhood networks proved to be crucial in the first period of adaptation to the new country. Access to housing opportunities, jobs, schools and public services, in general, were obtained, in most cases, not by institutional channels but rather through extended family ties and by a complex network of contacts spreading throughout Portugal, and to other European countries namely Spain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, as well as the United States of America. These first Capeverdean migrants constituted the basis of a chain migratory process which has lasted until the present.

Between 1977 and 1987 the population of Cova da Moura boomed from 600 to 3000 residents.[1] Massive influxes of Capeverdean migrants and Portuguese returnees settled in the neighbourhood occupying the lots still available for home construction. By the mid-1980's Cova da Moura became the largest migrant enclave in Portugal with a highly ethnically heterogeneous population. According to municipal estimates, fifty-five percent of the total population were Capeverdean migrants, 8% came from Angola, 5% were Portuguese from the metropolitan area of Lisbon and the remaining 32% were internal migrants from the northern and central regions of

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[1] According to information provided by the Residents' Association, this figure grossly underestimates the total population in the neighbourhood. Given that houses were (and still are) constructed overnight and given the cosntant new flows of migrants, it is close to impossible to know exactly how many people resided (and reside) in the neighbourhood

Portugal.[2] Among the African population, the great majority (54.6%) worked in the construction and industry sectors as unskilled and as semi-skilled labourers. The remaining worked in low paid jobs in the service industry. Most of the women worked as janitorial labourers and homemakers with no job security or social benefits. The white Portuguese population living in Cova da Moura, have found jobs in semi-skilled and skilled occupations such as nurses, low rank civil servants, factory laborers or even as police officers or taxi-drivers (Survey/Report on Cova da Moura, 1983).

Although political turmoil, social exclusion, displacement and lack of economic opportunities have pushed African migrant workers into residential segregation, like their Portuguese neighbours in the settlement, they pursued the pleasures of communal bonding and social networking, grappled with political and social issues of their country of origin and worked diligently to improve their life chances in the new setting. Cova da Moura was not a simple dormitory for a disenfranchised migrant labour force. Rather, the production of this neighbourhood entailed a process of transformation of a place into a space as "the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities"(de Certeau 1984:117). It extended beyond the geographic boundaries of the neighbourhood. In fact, the production and reproduction of Cova da Moura systematically defied the imposed spatial-temporal boundaries of marginality and illegality. Extended family and social networks with other migrant settlements and with the countries of origin, working opportunities at a national and international levels and membership in multiple associations (e.g. sports, leisure) and institutions (trade unions and churches) contributed to the production of a world view and collective identity that transgressed the apparently isolated and bounded "illegal" community of Cova da Moura.

Internally, processes of institutional completeness have configured everyday social practices. The community was not a "dead place" but alive with an increasing number of commercial and businesses enterprises and local associations. Barbershops, coffee shops, restaurants, garages, boutiques, video and camera shops, repair shops, shoemakers, tailors, travel and real estate agencies, funeral homes, supermarkets, hair saloons and construction subcontracting firms are just some of a wide array of small businesses operating in the neighbourhood. In addition to these local enterprises many migrant women became engaged in commercial activities to supplement their household income. These ranged from corn grinding and traditional pastry baking to the street vending of fruits, vegetables and clothes to small importing businesses of goods from the migrants' countries of origin.

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[2] In the municipal official survey (1983) no special category was established for Portuguese returnees. Instead, they were included amongst the overall category of "Portuguese".

From the late 1970s to mid 1980s the residents of Cova da Moura established local neighbourhood-based organizations. In 1978, a group constituted by Portuguese returnees, Capeverdean and Angolan residents founded the Residents' Commission of the Neighbourhood of Alto da Cova da Moura. Three years later the same group founded the Sports and Leisure Club. In 1984, the Cultural Association of Moinho da Juventude was also established, catering to the needs of local youth and neighbourhood women. As it will be discussed in the next section, these organizations played a crucial role in the creation of new social and political spaces where state policies were negotiated and contested.

In the last decade, new influxes of undocumented migrants from Mozambique, Zaire, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Eastern Europe have accentuated the ethnic heterogeneity of the population. According to local organizations, the total population residing in the neighbourhood is approximately 6000[3]. However, no one knows exactly how many people reside in Cova da Moura. Overnight construction, multiple occupancy, the presence of an increasing number of undocumented migrants and high geographical mobility among the residents are major factors accounting for the difficulty in obtaining reliable estimates.

The Residents´ Neighbourhood Association

In 1978 a group of fifteen residents formed the Residents' Neighbourhood Commission (Comissão de Moradores do Bairro do Alto da Cova da Moura). The group was constituted by newly arrived Portuguese returnees, Capeverdean and Angolan migrants, some of whom had worked for the Portuguese colonial administration. On November 12, 1978 the first board of directors was elected under the supervision of the Parish council of Amadora.

The Commission's initial demands were twofold: the construction of basic infrastructures in the neighbourhood (water, electricity, sewage, street pavements and garbage collection) and a halt to building demolition. By 1978 the municipality of Oeiras which had the jurisdiction over Cova da Moura had already issued 29 electricity permits, yet, the majority of the households had no electricity, piped water or sewage. In fact a year earlier the municipality had already demolished several houses and prohibited the construction of new houses in the neighbourhood. The ordinance had to do with a local government attempt to implement an urban renewal plan in the settlement. However, due to bureaucratic bottlenecks, tensions and conflicts between municipal authorities, central government agencies and the landowners no agreement was ever

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[3] Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude, Activities Reports 1994-1998. The last official survey conducted in Cova da Moura dates from 1987. It was estimated that the total population residing in the neighbourhood was approximately 5000 people. According to The Residents' Association a figure as high as 10.000 is a more accurate estimate of the total population living presently in the neighbourhood.

reached on a potential urbanization and re-housing scheme for Cova da Moura (Survey/Report on Cova da Moura, Municipality of Amadora 1983). In response to the commission's pressures and due to a lack of municipal power to implement a local urban rehabilitation plan, the municipality legitimated the residents' organization and tacitly empowered them as the planners, the architects, the engineers and the policemen of the settlement.

Local state legitimation of the residents' commission had major implications for the structuring of spatial, social and political relations in the neighbourhood. Right from the beginning the commission was responsible for the management of the property and for the construction processes in the settlement. Unoccupied lots were allocated by the commission according to criteria established by the organization which kept an enrolment list of those in need of a piece of land to build their own houses. In 1979, the water and sewage systems were installed in some areas of the neighbourhood and two main streets were then paved. The Commission was directly involved with municipal authorities throughout the whole process of "urbanization". While directly lobbying local state agents for better services, the residents' commission was also engaged in the mobilization of local labour and in the promotion of fundraising campaigns to subsidize infrastructure construction costs.

In 1980, the residents' commission founded a social and sports club (Clube Desportivo e Recreativo do Alto da Cova da Moura). The club's main objective was the creation of a space for social and cultural activities for those living in the settlement. In the 1980s and 1990s the Club became part of a broader-based political strategy which sought to produce new representations of the settlement as a socially and politically engaged constituency. In 1991 the commission acquired the judicial status of a non-profit organization with officially recognized statutes. The hegemonic representation of the association as the true representative of the neighbourhood's multiple interests and demands underlined the elaboration of its statutes. According to these, the association has two major objectives: first to promote collaboration with state authorities (local and national) aiming at the urban renewal of the neighbourhood (legalization and/or rehabilitation of all the building constructions existent in Cova da Moura); second, to manage all the equipment of public utility existent in the neighbourhood and to raise the necessary funds for its renewal. These objectives were officially recognized by local state authorities.

The municipality of Amadora and the Parish Council of Buraca were involved right from the beginning in the elaboration of the residents' association statutes. Various meetings were held between the directors of the organization and local state authorities to discuss the potential areas of intervention and the nature of the association's judicial status. The official constitution of the organization was perceived to be of utmost importance for its assertion as the sole representative

of the neighbourhood residents' interests, legitimating its autonomy to intervene locally in collaboration with the local state.[4]

In the last four years, the association has been deeply involved in lobbying state authorities to improve basic infrastructures in the neighbourhood and to officially legalize the neighbourhood.[5] Local mobilization and the organization of public gatherings in close collaboration with Amadora' s city council have underlined the organization's practices. Presently, the association has a total membership of 524 heads of household which according to the board of directors represents nearly half of the total population residing in Cova da Moura. For the association, its large membership is of crucial importance for the organization's activities. As one director puts it:

> An organization has power to influence state authorities if it has a large membership which can vote. We have that power here and given that the people do not have much in who to believe in and given that our intervention has not been discredited so far, people will tend to believe a little bit in what we tell them. It's on that strength that we have relied to get something for this neighbourhood.

It is apparent from this testimony that the residents' association directors are acutely aware of the organization's limitations and strengths. Even though they may assert themselves as full representatives of the residents' interests they also recognize that representation can never be fully achieved and that the association is always a space where power is negotiated and, ultimately, contested. Furthermore, the envisioning of the neighbourhood as a constituency has constituted a major source of social and political capital, providing the association with a wider margin of manouvre to influence local state authorities. Although, this may imply, in some instances, unilateral political commitments, it has not hampered the association from negotiating with multiple interlocutors. Underscoring the association's strategies is the idea that "good relations" with state authorities is a priority independently of their party preferences. What is at stake here is not so much a question of political ideology but rather the construction of political alliances for pragmatic reasons and expediency. As we shall see next a rather different strategy has been pursued by the other local organization, the Cultural Association of "Moinho da Juventude".

The Cultural Association "Moinho da Juventude"

The Cultural Association "Moinho da Juventude" was established in 1984 by a small group of residents led by Eduardo Pontes, an Azorean, and his wife Lieve, a Belgian psychologist who

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[4] See Parish Council of Buraca Bulletin 2/90, October 1, 1990.

settled in the neighbourhood in 1982. In its official documents, the organization presents itself as being "borne out of an informal community work with children, women and from local mobilization struggles for basic infrastructures" (Association's Report, 1995). The formation and development of the organization can be divided into three different phases. The initial phase was a period of gestation regarding the organization's objectives and social intervention activities. As the President of the association pointed out to me:

> In the beginning we were not clear about the objectives of the association. We were just a small group of people and we thought about setting up a small library for children in the neighbourhood. Then we got the idea of getting a space for children after school hours to keep them occupied while the parents were at work. That's how the whole thing started.

In the second phase, the initial group expanded their scope of activities and began to mobilize the community to advance the residents' interests. Demands were centred around the construction of basic infrastructure such as sewage and piped water systems in the southern part of the neighbourhood. This is also a period which coincided with a process of institutionalization of the organization. In June 9, 1987, the association was officially registered, adopting the by-laws of a non-profit organization and in 1989, it was judicially recognized as a Private Institution of Social Solidarity (IPSS). The third phase is characterized by a process of professionalization of its multiple cultural, social, educational and job training activities. A complex network of contacts at a local, national and international levels have proven to be of crucial importance for the development and financing of the association's activities.

Right from its early beginnings, Moinho da Juventude deliberately engaged in a politics of representation that attempted to develop an alternative base of political power within the neighbourhood. For the association's leaders, the complicity between the residents' commission and the local authorities was highly criticized. In their opinion, the commission's activities failed to address the real needs of the neighbourhood residents specially its youth. Keeping aloof from local politics was perceived as a means to maintain their autonomy.[6] Instead national and international contacts, partnerships and alliances were privileged strategies allowing for new forms of collective action and social intervention.

According to the organization's statutes, the main objectives of the association are the valorization of cultural difference and the social integration of ethnic migrant communities in mainstream Portuguese society. Its activities center around three major areas, social, cultural and

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[5] See Residents' Association Activities Reports, 1995-1998.

economic. Regarding the first two areas, Moinho da Juventude has developed multiple activities such as an information centre providing counselling services on housing, employment, social security and social services issues; literacy courses, a library and a small bookshop selling mainly books and newspapers from Capeverde. At a cultural level, there are various groups engaged in a wide number of activities. These range from rap groups to a traditional Capeverdean musical women's group "Batuque Finka Pé" to a group which organises the Capeverdean festivities of St. John the Baptist "Cola San Jon".

Regarding its youth populations, the association has organized several programs including a day care centre, tutoring services, after school activities and summer camps. Also a youth centre and sports groups (football and basketball teams and athletics) have mobilized increasing numbers of youth residents. At an economic level, professional training has become a privileged and key area of intervention. A multiplicity of programs have been developed targeting women and youth residing in the neighbourhood. The overwhelming majority of these programs (e.g. Now, Horizon, Youthstart and Integrar) have been subsidized by the European Social Fund and by national institutions aiming at the professional training of disadvantaged populations, in various areas such as the formation of social mediators, the acquisition of educational, social and professional skills and professional training of monitors for Multicultural centres. Also, the association has promoted the establishment of small informal enterprises (ex. domestic services and cooking services). The major objective of these small firms is the creation of job opportunities for unemployed women through the creation of self-employment.

At present, approximately 450 persons plus 105 families are directly involved in the association's activities and projects. With a total staff of fifty workers and an annual budget close to a million dollars, the cultural association Moinho da Juventude is the largest migrant organization operating in the municipality of Amadora. Accessing international networks and European funded projects has been one of the main priorities of the association. As one of the directors put it:

> Contrary to other organizations, we were right from the beginning very successful in getting projects financed by the Social European Fund. The other associations had tried but there was so much bureaucracy, so many application forms to fill in, so much work that they would give up. In the beginning we were the only ones who had these projects because we were able to work our way through the bureaucracy and we started the projects and we finish them with great success.

For the founding director, the participation of the association in European Programs was also crucial to gain access to local and national funds. According to her, regional state institutions

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[6] Personal interview with Godlieve Meersschaert, founding director of the Cultural Association Moinho da Juventude.

(e.g. social security and employment centres) have increasingly supported the association   for "they realized that we do things well not only at a bureaucratic level but also in terms of project results, community involvement practices and so forth ... so they realized that we were not into the charity business".

The association's reputation as an efficient institution has brought in new sources of funding from a multiplicity of Portuguese state institutions (including, Regional Centre of Social Security, Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, Ministry of Education, Portuguese Institute of Youth Institute of Employment and Professional Training, Municipality of Amadora, Parish Council of Buraca). While some of these institutions subsidize the organization on an annual basis, funds for integration projects are usually allocated on a short-term basis (from one to two years). This financial structure has major implications for the organization's functioning. Heavy reliance on European funds makes the association substantially vulnerable to European budgetary oscillations, compromising the continuation of specific projects due to lack of funding. Also, in terms of the nature of activities to be implemented, these become deeply dependent on European directives and strategies concerning migrant integration programs. Given this situation, the association has refrained from establishing long-term strategies, opting, instead, for short-tem planning in which the identified needs of the local populations are continuously negotiated with the structural constraints (financial and administrative) facing the association in given periods of time.

Participation in international networks and transnational partnerships has not only been crucial for expanding the range and scope of the association's activities but it has also provided new approaches to social intervention. The importation of specific methodologies have been a constant feature of the associations practices. Community projects developed in other European cities and ethnic neighbourhoods (e.g.. Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium) have been often appropriated and reworked by the association. Also exchange programs, participation in international conferences and seminars have provided the association with a constant flow of information and expertise in multiple areas of social intervention.[7] Furthermore, participation in transnational networks has prompted the recasting of local collective identities within a translocal notion of identity and membership. By linking themselves to wider "spaces for and of politics" (Soysal 1998) the association has increasingly inscribed local claims and demands in transnational approaches to migrants' integration and social activism. The next section is devoted to the analysis of the interplay between the residents' commission and the local state. It will focus especially on the ways dominant discourses impose particular subjectivities and how these are contested and resisted at a local level. Also this section will address the mutually conditioning

character of state policy and grassroots mobilization, drawing out the implications for what it tells us about membership rights and migrants' participation in the national collectivity.

Local Politics, Clientelism and Migrant Organizing

The Illegal Other: Africans and Portuguese at Cova da Moura

The first official survey conducted in Cova da Moura dates from 1983. In it the neighbourhood is described as a *sui generis* example of illegal occupation of land in the metropolitan area of Lisbon (Survey/Report on Cova da Moura, Municipality of Amadora, 1983). According to the survey, and unlike to the other twenty-four slum neighbourhoods existing at the time in the municipality, Cova da Moura was established through a process of "invasion" of private and state owned lands. In addition to this illegal occupation, all its building stock is also illegal.

It is within this framework of "illegality" that the settlement has been represented as a judicial and an administrative problem for both city planners and municipal authorities. Judicially, the "double illegal character" of the neighbourhood posed a major problem to the potential process of urban legalization given that the legislation existent at the time was not applicable to those situations of invasion of private property. Administratively, for local state authorities Cova da Moura was primarily a housing problem reflected in urban chaos, precarious dwellings and inadequate basic infrastructures (water, electricity, garbage collection sewage, etc.). The reports elaborated by the municipality or under its auspices were most revealing of a perception of the neighbourhood in terms of spatial segregation and poverty -- a problem of "governmentality."[8] That is, the local government acknowledged right from the early stages of the settlement the need to intervene and to improve the living conditions of its populations. Yet, according to city planners, lack of administrative capacity and the existence of a "piecemeal legislation" seriously hampered local state intervention in the neighbourhood (Survey/Report on Cova da Moura, Municipality of Amadora, 1983). In this report and in subsequent reports, the official discourse on the illegal status of the neighbourhood residents was not produced along ethnic or racial lines. Rather, the different ethnic migrant populations were represented as a homogeneous population living in the cracks and fringes of legality.

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[7] See Cultural Association Moinho da Juventude Activities Reports, 1994-1998.
[8] Here I draw on Foucault´s later notion of governmentality not as a "disciplinary power" but rather as a form of power aiming at the welfare of the population, the improvement of its conditions, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, etc. See Foucault (1991).

The last report elaborated in 1987 ("Legalização" de Alguns Quarteirões da Cova da Moura, 1987) focussed on the attitudes of residents towards what was defined as "their situation of illegality". According to this report, the majority of the population interviewed "were conscious" of their illegality and were also willing to "cooperate" in the resolution of the problem. Willingness to cooperate with city council authorities and to invest in a potential urban renewal plan were seen as important resources for the implementation of urban rehabilitation measures. However, for those who were not fully aware of the depth and scope of their illegality, the report recommended that the municipality should make them "aware" of their illegal status. Here, the appeal for the inscription of a "consciousness of illegality" in the hearts of the residents epitomizes the official production of the residents of Cova da Moura as "illegal subjects". Municipal efforts to make residents internalize a sense of illegality encouraged them to "assimilate the transgression of the laws" (Foucault 1979) reducing their subjectivities to a judicial problem.

These discourses have been determinant in structuring collective identities and the daily experiences of those living in the settlement. For many African migrants, the dominant ideology of illegality has reached deep into their sense of self worth and world outlooks. As one resident commented:

> They all say we are illegals. I know the land we are in is not ours. It is owned by someone else but like the rest of the people we also need a place to live. Besides, they let us build the houses. We fought very had to build a house and now they can demolish it when they want. All my money is in this house... what can I do? This is not our country... They do as they please.

This quotation alludes to the way in which discourses on illegality configure residents' identity and shape their perceptions of social exclusion and marginalization *vis-a-vis* the host society. Feelings of insecurity, vulnerability and helplessness are often voice by the residents whose lived experiences in the neighbourhood encourage a *habitus* that speaks of the need to accept a subjectivity that fixes them in a grid of illegality and lawlessness.

Yet, for many African residents the narratives of illegality are not evenly "distributed". "European" residents, given their citizenship status and economic power are perceived as enjoying a privileged position that empowers them to formulate oppositional meanings, identities and interests. As a resident explained "They are not really like us, they know a lot of people and in one way or the other they get things done." For many residents, the perceived social and economic capital of "Europeans" accounts for the ways in which they were able to organize locally and to lobby state authorities for more and better public services.

Struggling against Illegality

Right from its early beginnings the founding members of the neighbourhood residents' commission challenged the disabling features of an identity politics that fixed residents in hegemonic representations of illegality. For them, the neighbourhood could not be envisaged in terms of a judicial and administrative problem. Instead, the settlement and development of Cova da Moura was framed as a "social problem" which required state intervention. By appealing to their status as returnees, victims of decolonization, and displacement, the leaders of the commission succeeded in creating an ideological divide between them and the African migrant residents.

These images were appropriated and reproduced by the official discourses and the media. The struggles to disrupt official representations which reduced all neighbourhood residents to illegal, lawlessness and marginal beings are well illustrated in an item published under the heading "War against transgressors to discipline construction – an illegal neighbourhood that searches for legality" (*Portugal Hoje*, January 26, 1982). In this article Cova da Moura was depicted as a "model illegal neighbourhood" which "has assumed their illegal origins" while struggling for legalization. Central to these struggles was the residents' commission's efforts "to free the neighbourhood from the illegal stigma and to create the conditions for urban renewal". The article further revealed the tensions and conflicts between the residents' organization and the municipal authorities regarding the construction of basic infrastructures. Also, the absence of an urban policy and strict control by local authorities were seen by the residents' organization as major handicaps to the potential legalization of the settlement. For the residents' commission, the stigma of illegality could only be overcome through discipline and tight law enforcement. Yet, according to the news report the law was "silent" and the local authorities were "passive" and made no attempts to "discourage the abuse and anarchy that certain citizens have provoked through unplanned building construction". Similarly, in two other articles featuring headlines such as "President of Parish Council of Buraca is blamed for encouraging clandestine construction" it was reported that accusations were made by the residents' commission president regarding the Parish Council and the Communist City Council's lack of commitment to legalize the neighbourhood and from refraining to demolish "wild constructions" in the settlement.

Furthermore, the article reported a specific incident that has prompted harsh criticism by state authorities towards the residents' commission. The story concerns a neighbourhood resident who, according to the commission, built three houses in the neighbourhood and sold them afterwards. Meanwhile, the resident had attempted to obtain an authorization from the commission to renovate a recently acquired house. In response to her request, the commission

obtained a considerable number of signatures to expel her from the neighbourhood. She sought the Parish council support and was received by its President. This is the President's testimony: "I told her that no one can expel no one from anywhere. Before the 25 of April [The Portuguese Revolution] people were exile to Tarrafal and to other places. Today, fortunately that is not possible". Furthermore, the President of the Parish Council stressed that he never had authorized any constructions in the area and that the position of the parish is that "the residents commission should be the ones to divide the space in the settlement as they think fit" (*Voz da Amadora,* 19, 1982; March 27, 1982).

I would like to draw attention to three major features in these reports which seem particularly important for understanding the complex relationship between the residents' commission and the state. First, these reports reproduce to a large extent the discourses of the commission's leaders on the neighbourhood as being split between the "Europeans" who where portrayed as law-abiding and hard-working people and the rest of the population – the Africans as the "transgressors", lawless and troublemaking people. Such representations, as Hall et al. (1978) have argued, entail a categorical split between "us" the representatives of normality, law and order and "them" the criminals who question "our" identity and threaten "our" own existence. Secondly, state officials and local institutions are portrayed in these accounts as being unresponsive to the efforts of the commission to legalize the neighbourhood and to control the "invasion" of the settlement and urban chaos. Third, the reports clearly emphasize the residents' commission's "legitimate" power to "govern" the neighbourhood under the complicit eyes of local state officials. However, as this journalistic coverage reveals the relationship between the state and the commission is highly ambivalent, for if in specific situations the Parish Council supports the commission's actions, in other contexts it cunningly disavows its power and authority.

For the commission's directors the mass media was not the only means to disrupt images of marginality and to air their grievances. Political partisanship was perceived as the most important vehicle to access a multiplicity of resources which would not be available otherwise. In fact, the leaders of the organization had a clear understanding of the local state's functioning and of the importance of party clientelism in structuring local power relations[9]. In response to local structural constraints the commission developed a set of strategies and tactics intended to

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[9] Ruivo´s work (1988,1993) on the Portuguese local administrative structure suggests that local power is structured along two major axes: informal relations and political integration. Due to the weak penetration of the state apparatus, Ruivo contends that local state authorities tend to capitalize on a complex web of informal relations to gain access to central administration resources. As for political integration, his argument is that after 1974, political participation and mobilization have been mainly channelled to local political partisanship. The emergence of new clienteles anchored on a system of political patronage has mined the Portuguese civil society. As a result, local agents tend to solve local administrative problems through their own informal connections and partisan networks rather than through the organization of official local interest groups. Also see Mozzicaffredo et.al. (1991).

capitalize on the opportunities provided by political patronage. The political trajectory of the most prominent leader of the association attests to the increasing importance of political allegiance in acquiring crucial forms of social and political capital. According to him his affiliation in the socialist party was a "pay-off" to the Mayor of Oeiras who recognized the residents' commission's interests, legitimating its informal power. In his own words:

> In the late 1970s, the socialist party proposed a new administrative project for Amadora. At the time Amadora was only a parish under the jurisdiction of Oeiras. The PS proposed that Amadora should become a municipality. Given my connections with the Mayor of Oeiras who was a socialist and given the great support he gave us, I decided to affiliate myself in the socialist party... I had to show my gratitude to the person who helped us. So it was my obligation and also of interest for the neighbourhood and for me to become a socialist.

Throughout the years he held several positions in the Parish Council of Buraca as a treasurer, secretary and as the responsible to the Housing and Urban development department. He was also a member of the Municipal Assembly of Amadora and the responsible for the socialist party cell in Buraca. Political campaigning in the neighbourhood, the organization of local visits of politicians and central and local state authorities to the neighbourhood, and social gatherings were some of the activities he systematically promoted in Cova da Moura. As he pointed out:

> Here we are all in the same boat. In one way or the other we are all the victims of the state's negligence... And we have to fight together to get a better life. For that we have to negotiate with those in power ... It is the only way out.

What these comments illustrate is the ways in which the residents' commission leaders strategically manipulate identity boundaries, in an attempt to maximize resources. If in certain contexts a clear boundary is drawn between the "European" group and the rest of the population in other instances, these boundaries become blurred. A sense of commonality with the neighbourhood residents derived from shared experiences of dispossession and marginalization is evoked in order to maximize the association's social and political capital. Also the director's quote alludes to the way in which improved living conditions are perceived to be contingent on their power of negotiation with state authorities. As we will discuss next, citizenship and political clientelism were, in fact, of key importance in influencing local state policymaking.

"Governmentality" under siege

In the early 1980s the municipality of Amadora set up a cabinet in the neighbourhood which was in operation until 1992. From the interviews conducted amongst several elements of the cabinet's

staff, it became apparent that no clear objectives or strategies were ever established by the municipality regarding the cabinet's role in the settlement. According to one of staff members, the overall rationale behind its constitution was the attempt to curtail building construction as well as to function as a gatekeeper between the neighbourhood and the municipality. Concerning the first objective the cabinet's intervention prove to be highly ineffective for several reasons. First, the speed of building construction processes in the neighbourhood coupled with a lack of municipal resources to demolish or enforce specific building construction regulations undermined any attempt at urban planning. Second, the lack of an overall local housing strategy and the persistence of a piecemeal legislation to local urban and social issues heightened the incapacity of the administrative structure to pursue a coherent course of action.

Regarding the second objective, namely its gatekeeping functions, these were partly successful at least for a great number of residents. However, according to state officials, the neighbourhood residents' association overrode continuously the authority they enjoyed in the neighbourhood. Clientelist relations with politicians and inspection officials undermined the cabinet' s decisions. Furthermore, direct personal access to specific aldermen and to the Mayor legitimated the commission's practices and interventions in the neighbourhood.

In 1993, the municipality joined the National Urban Renewal Plan (PER) and the entire housing stock in Cova da Moura was to be surveyed. The inclusion of the neighbourhood in the PER implied the future demolition of all houses and the re-housing of its residents. However, an incomplete survey which left out a considerable number of houses concentrated in the "European" area raised serious questions in the municipality's Housing Department. Such suspicious were proven correct for while all the other degraded neighbourhoods were included in the overall local re-housing plan, Cova da Moura was the only settlement which was left out of the Plan. In the opinion of municipal officials, the decision to exclude Cova da Moura from PER was not an administrative decision but rather a political one. As an official explained "You know that are people in that neighbourhood with a lot of political and economic power who were not interested in the inclusion of Cova da Moura in PER."[10]

This decision had major implications for all those residing in the neighbourhood. For the African migrant population residing in overcrowded and very precarious conditions it meant their exclusion from social housing and improved living conditions. For other residents it implied the maintenance of the "status quo" which provided them with a wider margin of manoeuvre in future negotiations. The residents' association kept silent on this issue. Instead, they focussed their

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[10] Personal interview with municipal officials of the Department of Housing and Renewal of Degraded Areas, Municipality of Amadora, March 1999.

efforts in lobbying local state authorities to devise an overall special urban renewal plan for the neighbourhood.

In 1997, during the municipal elections, the association became directly involved in the socialist party campaign, mobilizing all neighbourhood constituencies. The victory secured by the socialist party ended eighteen years of uninterrupted communist ruling and provided the residents' association with renewed hope for the future legalization of the neighbourhood. Electoral campaign promises were made to the association leaders which increased their opportunities to act as privileged mediators and collaborators with local state authorities.

It may be useful to draw out the implications of the ethnographic data presented in this section regarding the effects of institutional frameworks on local grassroots organizing and integration processes. First, as we have seen the dynamics of local state politics have conditioned to a large extent the nature of the residents' association strategies and organizational tactics. Relations of clientelism and political patronage have been used as a mechanism of social regulation and cooptation of local organizing and political activism in the neighbourhood. Second, the exercise of power by state institutions have met multiple forms of resistance at the local level. In their struggle against hegemonic forms of representation (e.g. illegal, marginal, and lawless) the residents' organization has produced alternative social meanings and identities. In so doing, new "frontiers of identity" (Cohen 1994) have been erected through a double process of in-group ascription and out-group categorization.

The last significant point has to do with the ways the residents' association has influenced local policymaking. By appealing to national membership rights, the organization's leaders have shaped institutional forms of inclusion and exclusion grounded on a national membership and citizenship rights. For example, the exclusion of the neighbourhood from the Special Renewal Plan has privileged a small group of residents while excluding other residents from accessing better housing and living conditions. In this context, the ability to influence local policies is largely contingent on national belonging, citizenship rights and clientelistic relations. This warrants a reconsideration of the allegedly pervasive character of transnational forms of citizenship in shaping migrants' membership and participation in host polities (Soysal 1994; 1998). The following section explores the transnational forms of organizing and its impact on the neighbourhood's social reality.

The Transnationalization of Collective Organizing

In Portugal, migrant ethnic communities are not officially or judicially recognized as specific categories or collective groups. Instead, a more individual oriented approach has been adopted in dealing with migrants' integration in the host society. Although few specific programs have been devised to address the specific needs of migrant groups, policy instruments targeting disadvantaged populations are often directed towards migrant populations. Programs designed to promote the integration of underprivileged groups are highly centralized by the Portuguese state and heavily subsidized by the European Community Structural Funds (High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities, Reports, 1996-1998). A multiplicity of legal measures have been taken to promote the integration of migrant populations in Portuguese society. These measures have focussed on issues of equality, tolerance, multiculturalism and human rights. At present, the "equalization of rights between nationals and foreigners" and the harmonization of Portuguese immigration policy at an European and international levels (UN, OIT, and the Council of Europe) constitute the major axes of a policy discourse and official rhetoric anchored on universal notions of human rights .[11]

Border-crossing and Collective Organizing: Between the Local and the Translocal

In the last decade, the Cultural Association Moinho da Juventude has taken advantage of numerous national and international programs aimed at the integration of Cova da Moura's migrant populations. The transnational character of the association's strategies has been a major feature of the organization's activities. Although they operate locally, the association has drawn extensively on international projects and models of social intervention to anchor its social practices and activities. In this sense, organizational tactics tend to defy local and nationally circumscribed policies and institutional settings as key privileged spaces for membership. Similar trends were found by Soysal' s (1994) study of Muslim immigrant communities' mobilization patterns in the European context. Drawing on empirical research conducted among Turkish guestworkers, she argues that the assertion of Islamic organizing in Europe has become more and more framed within a postnational model of citizenship "anchored in deterritorialized notions of person's rights" (1994:3). Furthermore, Soysal (1998) contends that the organizational strategies of migrant groups have acquired a transnational dimension which has a direct impact in local migrant organizing. Multi-referential forms of citizenship and claims-making constitute a major challenge to nationally bounded projects of civic participation and identity formation.

In recent years, the association has capitalized on numerous national and international integration programs. A variety of training and vocational courses have been implemented by the

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[11] See"Immigration and Integration Policies in Portuguese Cities", Alto Comisssário para a Imigração e

organization constituting, presently a priority area of intervention. Under the auspices of the Operational Sub-Programme "Integrar" Line of Action 2 and 4, the association has promoted vocational training programs directed at the socio-economic integration of migrant women and youths. Regarding the line of Action 2, professional training in carpentry targeting "high risk" youths was implemented in the neighbourhood. A total of ten migrant youths residing in participated in the program which had also a social component including social and education courses to improve the group' s social skills. In regards to the Line of Action 4, the association's program "Serviços de Proximidade – Economia de Bairro" was also fully subsidized for two years. Like other programs formulated by the association, this initiative adopted social intervention methodologies used in other European countries such as "Planning for Real" and "Dip" (Goal Oriented Intervention). The project Serviços de Proximidade has been implemented in other European countries (e.g. The Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium and France) and it aims at the creation of jobs for people with low schooling levels.[12]

In Cova da Moura the project was especially directed towards migrant unemployed women. In 1997, a task group was constituted to implement the "Planning for Real" model in the neighbourhood. A survey of the population was conducted in order to assess its resources and capacities. Meetings were also held with several residents to define priority areas of intervention. The residents surveyed were subdivided into sub-groups according to the nature of the identified needs. These ranged from setting up bus routes servicing the neighbourhood to the construction of a crossing in the street that circles the settlement. A list of identified needs was sent to local authorities and a meeting was held with the parish council of Buraca. At the end of the program, a neighbourhood clean-up campaign mobilized the women's group and a brochure was distributed to the residents focussing on the residents' potential contributions, state contributions and neighbourhood needs.

The City Council response to this initiative was reduced to painting a new crossing on the main street and the eventual furnishing of more garbage bins. At a parish level, the council reacted strongly against the "imperative" character of the associations' demands. According to a parish official "the demands of the organization were unreasonable. They came here and they want things done immediately. They simply refuse to negotiate."[13]

The tendency of the association to refuse the mediation of political and state actors and the non-negotiable nature of its demands resembles the nature of new social movements (Melucci

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Minorias Étnicas., 1999.
[12] See "Serviços de Proximidade – Curso Economia de Bairro". Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude, 1998.
[13] Personal interview with a Parish Council official of Buraca.

1981). As Melucci has argued persuasively a major feature of the new collective modes of action is not so much the conquest of a space of power within the state apparatus but rather the satisfaction of collective demands. For Melucci, the refusal to negotiate with the institutional and political systems constitutes a source of strength for the movements, which tend to focus on group identity and on the direct participation of its members.

In the case of Moinho da Juventude, the nature of its collective action is rather ambiguous. If on the one hand, they display a major feature of the new social movements, namely, their refusal of the political and state mediation of their claims, on the other hand, their dependency on state subsidies makes them accomplices of a system against which they tend to define themselves. Consequently, the attempt to create and control of "field of autonomy" *vis-à-vis* the state is often compromised. This does not necessarily jeopardize the organization's ideological stance which continuously asserts itself as "a community project" nor does it condition them from pressuring state officials to expedite their own demands. The main issue is the way in which the association's strategies and tactics are constructed in the tension between a struggle for autonomy and the complex dynamics of local politics.

The pressure to make political alliances and to endorse local political leaders has been particularly conspicuous during election periods. As the president of the association pointed out: "In the last municipal elections the socialist party really pressured us to endorse its candidate lists... we are not interested in their game". From the interviews conducted among the members of the association it became evident that its participation in international programs and forums increased substantially the organization's economic, social and political capital. These resources have been of crucial importance to warrant a wider degree of political manoeuvrability and autonomy.

However, if the association has resisted political patronage and clientelism, it has also shown willingness to lobby state officials in order to advance its own interests. Negotiation with directors of public agencies has often proved effective for accessing new funds and resources. In turn, the success of the association's practices and programs also have been strategically used by state institutions and state officials for their own professional and career advancement. To this extent, the association's strategies are enmeshed in an often paradoxical and complex matrix of local state connivances, an effort to resist political patronage and transnational spaces of membership.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have focussed on the relationship between local and transnational networks and migrant's collective organizing. This analysis raises a number of complex issues, which I have attempted to explore and which are central to the understanding of migrants' political participation patterns in the Portuguese society.

The first issue concerns the *mutually conditioned* processes of interaction between local state institutions and migrant collective organizing. The residents' commission practices attest to the ways in which local organizing has been successful in influencing local level policymaking. Rather than centring on the institutional determinants of migrants participation patterns alone (Ireland 1994) one needs to consider the micropolitics of everyday practices as to the conditions under which polices are (or not) negotiated in response to specific local claims, patronage relations and clientelism. Bringing the analysis of migrant policies together with the examination of grassroots collective organizing help us to recognize the complex configurations of power, the interdependencies, ambiguities and connivances that shape migrants' participation in the host society.

The second major problem has to do with the translocality of migrants' collective organizations. The analysis of the cultural association Moinho da Juventude's organizational strategies brings to fore the importance of transnational networks and the constitution of multiple sites of membership in structuring the association's activities and discourses. Border-crossing forms of organizing become inscribed in the locale providing new frameworks for collective action and social innovation.

The third significant point advanced in this paper concerns the tension between "postnational" and "national" forms of membership. The analysis of the relationship between the two local neighbourhood organizations and state institutions constitute an entry point to the study of the complex processes of inclusion and exclusion. Migrant integration policy has reflected a broadening of rights granted on the basis of a more global notion of membership. Moinho da Juventude' s practices and programs reflect the character of inclusionary policies grounded on transnational ideals of equality and tolerance. However, as the empirical data reveals national citizenship as well as discretionary and clientelistic behaviours are still very much fundamental conditions for membership in the national collectivity. Hence, current claims of "postnational citizenship models" as major determinants of present-day membership in contemporary nation-states needs to be re-examined. More empirically based analysis of policy implementation seems crucial to understand how recent global trends in citizenship rights articulate with nationally bounded and "privatized" notions of citizenship and how these different models of membership coexist and impinge, often in paradoxical ways, on migrants' participation in host societies.

The final question has to do with political action and the struggles against dominant power relations. In the context of neighbourhood organizing, the political struggle is also a "cultural struggle" (Gupta 1995). Central to the relations between local organizations and the state is the production of specific subjectivities and cultural realities. The ethnographic data have shown how institutional frameworks not only structure local mobilizing patterns but also impose specific individual and collective identities. These have been the object of contestation and resistance. For instance, local state hegemonic discourses on illegality have been resisted by the residents' association which has produced alternative strategic identities anchored on a conception of lawfulness, national belonging and victimization. These new collective identities enable people to act collectively as political subjects struggling for recognition.

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