

STUDIES IN GLOBAL SOCIAL HISTORY

# CHAINS OF GOLD

PORTUGUESE  
MIGRATION  
TO ARGENTINA  
IN TRANSATLANTIC  
PERSPECTIVE

MARCELO J. BORGES



BRILL

## Chains of Gold

# Studies in Global Social History

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VOLUME 2

# Chains of Gold

Portuguese Migration to Argentina  
in Transatlantic Perspective

*By*

Marcelo J. Borges



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON  
2009



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*Cover illustration:* Commemoration of the anniversary of the Portuguese Republic and Portuguese festival. On stage, the men's and women's commissions of the Portuguese Mutual Aid Association of Comodoro Rivadavia; at the center, the flags and shields of Argentina and Portugal, 1935. Author's personal collection.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Borges, Marcelo J.

Chains of gold : Portuguese migration to Argentina in transatlantic perspective / by Marcelo J. Borges.

p. cm. — (Studies in global social history, ISSN 1874-6705; v. 2)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-17648-5 (hbk. : alk. paper)

1. Portuguese—Argentina—History. 2. Immigrants—Argentina—History. 3. Portuguese—Argentina—Social conditions. 4. Portuguese—Argentina—Economic conditions. 5. Social networks—Argentina—History. 6. Algarve (Portugal)—Emigration and immigration—Social aspects. 7. Portugal—Emigration and immigration—Social aspects. 8. Argentina—Emigration and immigration—Social aspects. 9. Algarve (Portugal)—Social conditions. 10. Algarve (Portugal)—Economic conditions. I. Title. II. Series.

F3021.P8B69 2009

304.8'820469—dc22

2009012410

ISSN 1874-6705

ISBN 978 90 04 17648 5

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

## CONTENTS

List of Illustrations .....	vii
List of Maps, Tables and Figures .....	ix
Acknowledgements .....	xi
Abbreviations .....	xv
Chapter One <i>Maria vai com as outras</i> (Monkey See, Monkey Do) .....	1
Portuguese Migration in Argentina .....	5
Regional Flows and Local Networks .....	11
Spatial Distribution and Immigrant Communities .....	16
Approach .....	20
Chapter Two Migration in Context: Society, Economy, and Population in Rural Algarve .....	25
The Land and Its Uses .....	29
Rural Life and Migration in Two Algarvian Parishes .....	38
Population and Space .....	39
Economy .....	42
Social Groups .....	47
Domestic Groups .....	50
Migration as a Family Strategy .....	54
Demography and Emigration .....	61
Conclusion .....	68
Chapter Three Regional Patterns of Migration: A Systems Approach .....	71
Migration Systems .....	73
A Systems Approach to Algarvian Migrations .....	75
The Algarve and the Southern Iberia Migration System .....	78
Gibraltar .....	79
Southern Spain and Alentejo .....	84
Other Circuits of Medium-distance Migration .....	96
The Algarve and the Atlantic Migration System .....	99
Causes, Continuities, and Changes .....	100

Information and Perceptions .....	109
Transatlantic Destinations .....	115
Portuguese Africa: The Colonial Path .....	118
<i>Fazer a América</i> : Destination Selection .....	121
Conclusion .....	136
 Chapter Four Chains of Gold: Migratory Networks in	
Two Portuguese Immigrant Communities .....	139
Oil Camps and Suburban Gardens: Portuguese Migrants in	
Two Contrasting Receiving Societies .....	140
Comodoro Rivadavia: The Making of an Oil Town .....	143
Villa Elisa: From Bourgeois Retreat to Family	
Gardening .....	149
The Dynamics of Chain Migration .....	155
Forging the Chains: Origins and Social Spaces .....	157
Phases: Pioneers, Migrant Workers, and Families .....	165
Comodoro Rivadavia .....	169
Villa Elisa .....	183
<i>Os esquecidos</i> : The Broken Links of Chain Migration .....	193
Chain Migration and Ethnic Middlemen .....	197
Conclusion .....	206
 Chapter Five Making a Living and Making a Life:	
Economic and Social Adaptation .....	209
Making a Living .....	210
Black El Dorado: Working in Comodoro Rivadavia .....	211
Women and Work .....	226
Gigantic Gardens of Flowers: Working in Villa Elisa .....	233
A Family Affair: Generations and Gender .....	246
Social Networks and Occupational Chains .....	253
Making a Life: Marriage Patterns .....	265
Old and New Social Ties .....	274
Social and Ethnic Life .....	283
Conclusion .....	301
 Bibliography and Sources .....	305
Index .....	339

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. View of Km 3 oil fields in winter. Courtesy of the Archivo Histórico Municipal de Comodoro Rivadavia–Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College .....	144
2. Weeding the fields in the flower garden of the Carneirinho family, Villa Elisa, 1965. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata .....	150
3. Oil Well 2 drilling team, 1907, Courtesy of Ignacio Locco–Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College .....	214
4. Oil workers on Well 218, 1923. Courtesy of the Archivo Histórico Municipal de Comodoro Rivadavia–Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College .....	215
5. Preparing the field in the <i>quintas</i> of La Plata County. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata .....	234
6. Cutting chrysanthemums inside a Villa Elisa glasshouse. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata .....	235
7. Juan Ferreira and his sons fumigating a glasshouse with carnations, Villa Elisa, 1965. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata .....	247
8. A flower gardener and his family cleaning broken glass after a hail storm, Villa Elisa, 1972. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata .....	248
9. Portuguese wedding picture. Alexandrina Viegas and João Madeira, Km 8, 1927. Courtesy of Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús–Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College .....	266
10. Live tableau to commemorate the anniversary of the Portuguese Republic and the foundation of the local Portuguese Mutual Aid Association, Comodoro Rivadavia, 1943. Courtesy of Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús–Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College .....	284
11. Portuguese festivities, Comodoro Rivadavia, 1950s. Courtesy of Idalete Madeira and Manuel Gomes Correia–Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College .....	285
12. Ceremony commemorating Portugal Day in a downtown La Plata park, organized by the Portuguese Club of La Plata, 1965. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata .....	286





## LIST OF MAPS, TABLES AND FIGURES

### MAPS

1.1: Portugal by Districts .....	13
1.2: Argentina by Provinces .....	19
2.1: Algarve .....	31
4.1: Comodoro Rivadavia and Environs .....	146
4.2: Villa Elisa and Environs .....	152
4.3: Social Space of Origin of Algarvian Immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa .....	162
4.4: Areas of Origin of Portuguese Immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia .....	166
4.5: Areas of Origin of Portuguese Immigrants in Villa Elisa .....	167

### TABLES

1.1: Regional Origins of Portuguese Migrants in Argentina .....	8
1.2: Portuguese Immigration in Argentina by Decade, 1857–1959 .....	10
1.3: Portuguese Emigration to Argentina by Districts of Origin, 1914–55 .....	14
1.4: Portuguese Migration in Argentina by County of Origin, 1910s–1960s .....	15
2.1: Residence of Out-of-Town Spouses in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel, 1878–1920 .....	42
2.2: Occupations of Male Head of Households in Boliqeime .....	46
2.3: Occupations of the Grooms and Fathers at the Time of Marriage in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel, 1878–1920 .....	46
2.4: Household Types in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel .....	53

2.5:	Absentees from Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel .....	54
2.6:	Absent Population of Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel by Place of Residence .....	60
2.7:	Net Population Change in São Brás de Alportel, 1864–1940 .....	64
2.8:	Demographic Rates in São Brás de Alportel, 1864–1940 .....	65
2.9:	Net Population Change in Boliqueime, 1864–1940 .....	67
2.10:	Demographic Rates in Boliqueime, 1864–1940 .....	68
3.1:	Emigration from the Algarve by Destination, 1880–1959 .....	116
3.2:	Emigration from the Algarve by Occupation and Destination .....	124
3.3:	Emigration by Selected Counties and Destination .....	134
4.1:	Portuguese Immigrants by District of Origin .....	160
4.2:	Local Origins of Algarvian Immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa .....	160
5.1:	Portuguese Grooms in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa by Occupation .....	212
5.2:	Marriage Patterns of Portuguese Immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia, 1913–1960 .....	268
5.3:	Marriage Patterns of Portuguese Immigrants in Villa Elisa, 1930–1980 .....	271
5.4:	Occupational Homogamy .....	278
5.5:	Ethnic Homogamy by Occupation of Portuguese Grooms .....	280
5.6:	Marriage Patterns of Argentines of Portuguese Descent .....	282

#### FIGURES

5.1:	Family Chain from the County of Loulé to Villa Elisa, 1910s–1960s .....	255
5.2:	Family Chains from São Brás de Alportel to Comodoro Rivadavia, 1910s–1960s .....	261

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of institutions have provided generous financial assistance for the research and writing of this book. I received a Marion Johnson Fellowship and several graduate awards from Rutgers University, and research fellowships and grants from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento, the Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, and the Portuguese National Library. Dickinson College has funded my research through several Research and Development grants, and provided an engaging intellectual community in which to pursue my scholarship.

The work for this book spans over a decade and three countries. Many people have contributed to its completion with generosity. Samuel Baily, Caroline Brettell, Mark Wasserman, and Virginia Yans offered invaluable advice during the early stages of the project and have continued encouraging my work ever since. Many other colleagues have helped me in many ways—suggesting contacts and leads to follow, sharing information and material, and providing critical feedback: Samuel Amaral, María Bjerg, Graciela Ciselli, Fernando Devoto, Ana Infeld, Noemí Girbal, Mariela Infesta, Sonia Ivanoff, Daniel Cabral Marques, Daniela Nieto, Emir Reitano, Susana Torres, and Marta Valencia, in Argentina; Maria Baganha, Helena Carreiras, Carminda Cavaco, Andrés Malamud, Beatriz Padilla, Miriam Halpern Pereira, and Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade in Portugal; Donna Gabaccia, Michael Gonzales, Brian Gratton, Jeffrey Lesser, Leslie Page Moch, José Moya, and Silvia Pedraza, in the United States. The intellectual exchange with many colleagues in conferences and seminars has helped refine this book's ideas; the collegial environment of the immigration/migration network of the Social Science History Association, and the ethnicity and migration network of its European counterpart have proven particularly stimulating. At Brill, the interest of Marcel van der Linden and Hylke Faber, and the good disposition of Birgitta Poelmans and Nienke Brienen-Moolenaar have made the transition from manuscript to book a smooth journey.

Most historical research is a solitary task, but I have been fortunate to experience the thrill of big and small discoveries and new insight

in archives and in the field with several colleagues and friends. Emir Reitano has shared many such moments with me in Portugal and Argentina; so have my Dickinson colleagues, Lonna Malmsheimer, John Osborne, and Susan Rose, and the students from Dickinson College and the National University of Patagonia associated with the Patagonia Mosaic Project. John Osborne's help with the Mosaic's photographic collection is particularly appreciated. My friend and colleague, Susana Torres, has been a constant source of encouragement since our graduate school days and a sounding board for many of the ideas that found their way into this book; many of them owe their present shape to our collaborative work in Argentina and the United States, and to her generous feedback. Susana's first-hand knowledge of Comodoro Rivadavia has been invaluable for this project.

Several friends took me into their homes and shared cherished moments during the research and writing of this book, particularly during my stays in Argentina, Portugal, and Spain: Fernando Arcas, Margarida Berberan, Teresa Couceiro, Lurdes Henriques and Gilberto de Sousa, Alberto López, Pedro Moreira, Ana Isabel Baltazar Nunes, Ana María Plano, João Sabóia, and María del Carmen and Antonio Torres. Many others have provided encouragement along the way: Gabriela Badi, Joan Clifford, Rodolfo Corbera, Patricia David, Pablo de la Fuente, Mirta Guglielmoni, Ana Johsson, César Mazzolenis, Julie McPhail, Claudia Olivieri, Raivo Karmas, Guadalupe Segalerba, Melissa Simmermeyer, Viki Zavales—my sincere appreciation to all of them.

Access to libraries and public and private archives was crucial for this research. Religious and civil authorities in Portugal and Argentina gave me the possibility of working with parish and civil registry archives that offered invaluable information, as did the director of the Dirección Provincial de Personas Jurídicas, in La Plata. Father Chantre and Father Moreira, in Boliquireme and São Brás de Alportel, were very helpful. The authorities of Astra Compañía de Petróleo, Petroquímica Comodoro Rivadavia, and Repsol-YPF granted access to personnel archives. José Rosa Valente, in Petroquímica, and Rodolfo Santellán, in the community of Astra, provided important information and contacts. In Comodoro Rivadavia, José María Amado, María Coelho Amado, Manuel Gomes Correia, Idalete Madeira, and Anibal Marcos put the resources of the local Portuguese association at my disposal and shared valuable connections with the local Portuguese community, as did Adelino Mendes Amaro and Diniz Viegas in Villa Elisa and La Plata. The Portuguese

Consulate in Buenos Aires welcomed me to its archive; I am particularly grateful to Graciela de Sousa e Silva for facilitating my work. The able assistance of Florencia Plano made the completion of that work possible. I benefited greatly from the guidance of Maria Isabel Fevereiro in the Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático in Lisbon, and João Sabóia, in the Arquivo Municipal de Loulé and the Arquivo Distrital in Faro. The help of Christine Bombaro and James Gerencser at the Dickinson College Library is much appreciated, as it is that of the affable and reliable staff of the interlibrary loan department. A complete list of public and private repositories appears in the bibliography. I am grateful to the directors and staff who made my work possible.

Equally critical for this project was the generosity of several people who contributed with personal papers, photographs, and the memories of their families. I owe special thanks to the many migrants and their children who opened their homes and shared their family stories with me—and whose names are acknowledged in the notes and in the bibliography. Listening to their stories and looking at their family photographs and papers have enriched this study with a crucial human dimension. This brief tribute cannot fully express my gratitude to them.

Some passages of this book have appeared in articles and are used here with publishers' consent. They were published in "Many Americas: Patterns of Transatlantic Migration and Choice of Destination in Southern Portugal (19th–20th Centuries)," *Studi Emigrazione* 40, 150 (June 2003): 351–75, used with permission from the Centro Studi Emigrazione, Rome; "Migration Systems in Southern Portugal: Regional and Transatlantic Circuits of Labor Migration in the Algarve (18th–20th Centuries)," *International Review of Social History* 45, 2 (Aug. 2000): 171–208, used with permission from the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, and Cambridge University Press; "Network Migration, Marriage Patterns, and Adaptation in Rural Portugal and among Portuguese Immigrants in Argentina, 1870–1980," *The History of the Family* 8, 3 (2003): 445–79, used with permission from Elsevier; and "Portuguese Migrations in Argentina: Transatlantic Networks and Local Experiences," *Portuguese Studies Review* 15, 2 (2007), used with the editor's permission. The authorization from the newspaper *El Día* in La Plata to reproduce pictures from its archive is sincerely appreciated.

As with many other things in life, the strongest forces to see this project through are to be found close to home. My interest in migration most likely started listening to my paternal grandfather, whose stories

about transatlantic crossings and distant lands sparked my imagination as a child. His memory and that of my other grandparents and great-grandparents—who lived through similar experiences, with different origins but the same destination—were with me as I researched this book. The unfailing support of my family has been crucial throughout all these years. The process of research and writing was made more enjoyable by the daily encouragement and good humor of Douglas Preston, my first reader and life companion, who has adapted to trans-state and trans-oceanic moves with generosity. I am also indebted to my brothers, Jorge and Mario, and to my parents, Delia Peñalva and Mario Borges, whose support is unconditional. With deepest gratitude, it is to my family that I dedicate this book.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Archivo de Astra Compañía Argentina de Petróleo, Comodoro Rivadavia (Astra company archive)
AAPCR	Archivo de la Sociedad Portuguesa de Beneficencia y Socorros Mutuos, Comodoro Rivadavia (Portuguese Association archive)
ACP	Archivo de la Compañía Petroquímica, Comodoro Rivadavia (Petroquímica company archive)
ADF	Arquivo Distrital de Faro (District Archive of Faro)
ADPPJ	Archivo de la Dirección Provincial de Personas Jurídicas, Ministerio de Gobierno de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, La Plata (Archive of the Legal Status Division of the Ministry of Government, Buenos Aires Province)
AHML	Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Loulé (Historical Municipal Archive)
AMNE	Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Lisbon (Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
ANSCT	Archivo de la Parroquia Nuestra Señora del Carmen, Tolosa, La Plata (parish archive)
APSBA	Arquivo da Paróquia de São Brás de Alportel (parish archive)
APSSB	Arquivo da Paróquia de São Sebastião de Boliqueime (parish archive)
ARCCR	Archivo del Registro Civil de Comodoro Rivadavia (civil registry archive)
ARPPBA	Archivo del Registro Provincial de las Personas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, La Plata (central civil registry archives, Buenos Aires Province)
ASLGVE	Archivo de la Parroquia San Luis Gonzaga, Villa Elisa (parish archive)
AYPF	Archivo de Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales, Comodoro Rivadavia (YPF company archive)
DNM	Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, Buenos Aires (National Department of Migrations)



Km 3	Central company town of YPF, Comodoro Rivadavia
Km 8	Company town of Petroquímica Oil Company (formerly Compañía Ferrocarrilera de Petróleo), Comodoro Rivadavia
MOPDG	Ministerio de Obras Públicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Dirección de Geodesia, Departamento de Investigación Histórica y Archivo, La Plata (Archive of the Geodesy Department, Ministry of Public Works, Buenos Aires Province)
YPF	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales; it also refers to the company town of the same company (a.k.a. Km 3), Comodoro Rivadavia

## CHAPTER ONE

### MARIA VAI COM AS OUTRAS (MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO)

The turn of the twentieth century witnessed a major increase in the departure of Portuguese migrants. Scarcely a new phenomenon, Portuguese transatlantic migration gained new momentum as a part of a worldwide expansion in geographic mobility fueled by sociodemographic forces, the internationalization of labor markets, and new developments in maritime transportation. In the Algarve, Portugal's southernmost region, migration became the chosen path of growing numbers of working men, resulting in levels of transatlantic departures never seen before.<sup>1</sup> The new upward trend attracted the attention of contemporary observers and was widely discussed in the regional press. Newspapers published regular accounts of the high number of overseas migrants and discussed—often with alarm—its effect on the population and economy of the region. “If this growing trend of emigration of Algarvians continues, our province will become depopulated in a short time,” cautioned a regional newspaper in 1909.<sup>2</sup> Many contemporary observers considered the increase in overseas migration as another manifestation of Portugal's perennial political and economic crises, and as a clear symptom of its structural problems. Others explained it by turning to pathological metaphors, such as the spread of ‘migration fever,’ or by resorting to traditional images that evoked primordial attributes, such as those of adventurous and fortune-seeking Portuguese. “The fever of emigration that carries so many of our compatriots to the Americas looking for gold is growing,” reported a front-page newspaper article in 1912. “America is for them the land of riches, and they go following their adventurous spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Serrão, *A emigração portuguesa: Sondagem histórica*, 4th ed. (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1982), 29–37; João Evangelista, *Um século de população portuguesa, 1864–1960* (Lisbon: Instituto Nacional de Estatística–Centro de Estudos Demográficos, 1971), 91–2, 94, 109, 114.

<sup>2</sup> *O Distrito de Faro*, Apr. 8, 1909.

<sup>3</sup> *Ecos do Sul*, Oct. 26, 1912. Newspapers made regular use of the image of a ‘fever’ of emigration spreading throughout the region to refer to the growth in transatlantic departures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In 1890, the newspaper

Along with its rapid growth among the rural population, another distinctive aspect of Algarvian overseas migration highlighted by the regional press at the turn of the twentieth century was its manifest preference for Argentina. In effect, this feature represented a clear departure from the prevailing pattern of Portuguese transatlantic migration. Portugal was one of the countries with the highest rates of emigration in Europe, ranking second only to Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century, and just behind Italy and Scotland at the eve of World War I in emigrants per one thousand inhabitants.<sup>4</sup> In several regions, a culture of migration developed and emigration became one of the few trusted paths to social mobility in the eyes of the working classes. Most Portuguese migrants left for Brazil, Portugal's former colony. This movement was facilitated by several centuries of contact, an established tradition of migration, labor opportunities for European migrants, and the development of commercial and financial links that included a fluid network of transportation. This was not the case, however, for Algarvian migrants, the majority of whom, as geographer Mariano Feio observed in the 1940s, did not share with other Portuguese migrants "the mirage of Brazil."<sup>5</sup> In 1912, for instance, at the peak of transatlantic migrations, 9 out of 10 migrants from continental Portugal departed for Brazil; in contrast, 8 out of 10 Algarvian migrants chose Argentina as their destination.<sup>6</sup>

---

*O Porvir*, from Olhão, used it to explain the existence of an important "stream" from the counties of Faro and Olhão to Argentina. The "greed" produced by the return of successful migrants on those who stayed behind, caused the spread of "migration fever" (Mar. 9, 1890). For other examples of the use of this image to explain the increase in migration see, among others, *O Progresso do Sul*, June 12, 1892; *O Algarve* (Faro), Jan. 14, 1912; *O Provinciano*, Sept. 19, 1920. The same metaphor was used throughout Portugal and much of Europe. José Moya argues that its wide use in different countries denotes its usefulness to explain migration's geographic diffusion. See José Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 95–117. See also Domingos Caeiro, "À cata da fortuna: A emigração portuguesa na imprensa periódica, nos princípios do novecentos," in *Olhares lusos e brasileiros*, ed. Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade and Maria Christina Siqueira de Souza Campos (São Paulo: Usina do Livro, 2003), 13–46.

<sup>4</sup> Dudley Baines, *Emigration from Europe, 1815–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Mariano Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l'Algarve: Livret-guide de l'excursion E: Congrès International de Géographie Lisbonne 1949* (Lisbon: Union Géographique Internationale, 1949), 113.

<sup>6</sup> Portugal, Ministério das Finanças, Direcção Geral da Estatística, *Emigração Portuguesa: Ano de 1912* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1913), 4–5.

How did contemporary observers explain that, in marked contrast with the rest of Portugal, most Algarvian migrants went, in the words of a regional newspaper, “almost exclusively to the great Argentine Republic”?<sup>7</sup> For some observers, the prevalence of this practice among Algarvian migrants could only be the result of irrational or even pathological behavior. (Partly, this view denoted a general urban condescension—represented by newspaper writers—about the rural folk, who constituted the large majority of migrants.) Thus, a columnist from the newspaper *O Sul* evaluated this choice of destination in the following terms:

Most, if not nearly all, Algarvian migrants leave for the Argentine Republic where the weather is benign but where they encounter the competition of Germans and Italians.... We say it here very clearly: it is a mistake to think that it is possible to find over there the wealth and happiness that one cannot find here, if one goes as if on an adventure and without preparation.<sup>8</sup>

Another writer, from the newspaper *O Heraldo*, chose an ironic tone and images of a behavioral illness to explain migrants’ preference:

It is worth noting that the Algarve alone represents two fifths of [Portuguese] emigration to Argentina! One may ask, why do our emigrants go to those regions? We do not know. Contagion seems to prevail among many of them, which is like saying—in plain Portuguese—*Maria vai com as outras* [which translates as *Maria goes with the others—the Portuguese equivalent of ‘Monkey see, monkey do’*].<sup>9</sup>

Not all the commentaries that appeared in the regional press, however, had the same condescending tone. Other observers considered labor migration as a valid option among the possibilities available to the working population of the Algarve and as a way to cope with limited economic opportunities at home. Instead of the result of irrational behavior or mere imitation, this alternative view portrayed transatlantic migration in general, and Algarvian migration to Argentina in particular, as a labor strategy based on a careful weighing of options and the development of tactics to take advantage of favorable conditions in overseas labor markets. In this vein, a front-page article discussing the growth of emigration published in 1912 by *O Distrito de Faro* read:

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<sup>7</sup> *O Porvir*, Sept. 8, 1889.

<sup>8</sup> *O Sul*, Sept. 29, 1912.

<sup>9</sup> *O Heraldo* (Tavira), Nov. 9, 1912.

The Algarvian worker cannot withstand inconveniences... when he does not have a job or earn well, he emigrates; and since in Argentina he has relatives and friends, he leaves with the greatest of confidences, and our fields continue to loose population.... Rural workers would only stay if they give them approximately what they earn in the Rio de la Plata. That is impossible!

In another article published later that year, *O Distrito de Faro* interpreted the preference of Algarvian migrants for particular destinations in similar terms:

With the existence of small communities of Portuguese workers settled overseas, for these people [migrants] life is increasingly easier, even more enjoyable. Everyone has a guaranteed place. Since they already have relatives and friends abroad, they already know what they are going to be doing.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, the newspaper commentator identified two crucial driving forces of transatlantic labor migration: availability of information and assistance among kin and fellow villagers. Both were key components of migratory networks that developed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and linked the Algarve and Argentina for over seven decades.

Algarvian migration to Argentina emerged in the context of a long regional migratory tradition and as part of broader systems of labor migration that included overlapping circuits of internal, medium-distance, and international migration. The existence of labor opportunities across the Atlantic, in combination with networks of contact that facilitated mobility, created favorable conditions for Algarvian migrants in Argentina. Social networks connected individuals, families, and villages to systems of migration. By the turn of the twentieth century, migrants had established communities in Argentina that sustained a regular flow of labor migrants and their families. More significantly, during that time Argentina became the leading overseas destination for Algarvian migrants and, in Argentina, Algarvians became the largest regional group among the Portuguese. Hence, when 'Maria' decided to 'go with the others,' it was not as a consequence of irrational imitation or contagion, but the result of a labor strategy that contributed to minimize uncertainties and maximize possible benefits.

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<sup>10</sup> *O Distrito de Faro*, Mar. 21, 1912 and Oct. 3, 1912. The second article was reproduced in other regional newspapers in the same month (for example, in *Ecos do Sul*).

This book examines the social, economic, and cultural contexts in which this strategy developed, the experiences of those who pursued it, and the multiple paths followed by migrants as they settled in different destinations. By taking the less explored 'south to south' perspective (southern Europe and South America), it seeks to illuminate larger questions about transatlantic labor migrations, namely how rural Europeans became transnational workers and contributed to creating diverse immigrant communities in the Americas.

#### PORTUGUESE MIGRATION IN ARGENTINA

In Argentina, Portuguese migrants were part of a multiethnic influx of laborers that began arriving in large numbers during the last quarter of the nineteenth century attracted by the possibilities of work and settlement, and encouraged by migratory policies devised to attract European labor and population. Argentina became one of the largest immigrant destinations during the heyday of mass transatlantic migrations, second only to the United States, but with a greater impact on its sociodemographic growth. As a result of this influx, its population almost quintupled from the late 1860s to the beginning of World War I. By 1914, foreign-born residents accounted for a third of the country's population—a proportion unmatched by any other contemporary immigrant destination.<sup>11</sup> The presence of Portuguese migrants predates this period of mass migrations, going back to colonial times; but there were more changes than continuities in this multi-secular movement, especially regarding its sociodemographic and regional composition. It is possible to distinguish two phases in Portuguese immigration in Argentina, each with distinctive socioeconomic, demographic, and regional characteristics. The arrival of growing numbers of Algarvians in the late 1800s signaled the beginning of a new type of immigration and marked the transition between the two phases.

The first phase of Portuguese migration to Argentina began during the early years of Spanish colonization, developed fully during the

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<sup>11</sup> Walter Nugent, *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870–1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 16–21; Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), chap. 14; Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2003).

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and continued at a slower pace until the mid-nineteenth century. In spite of continuing restrictions by the Spanish crown to the movement of foreigners into its colonies, Portuguese migrants were a significant presence in many Spanish-American cities, and the commercial center of Buenos Aires was no exception.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the Portuguese formed the largest group among foreigners of non-Spanish origin.<sup>13</sup> In the seventeenth century, most Portuguese migrants were artisans and rural producers in the hinterland of Buenos Aires, in many cases combining both activities. Imperial rivalries between the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, exacerbated by religious orthodoxy, made the Portuguese the object of suspicion and discrimination. Colonial authorities believed many Portuguese migrants to be New Christians of Jewish origin and accused them of being Crypto-Jews. Despite the obstacles created by a hostile environment, many of these migrants and their descendants became part of the middle and upper echelons of local society—buying land, acting in politics, and marrying daughters of the local elite. For some scholars, the Portuguese constituted the earliest example of successful integration of migrants in what was to become Argentina.<sup>14</sup>

The transformation of Buenos Aires into the capital of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata and the growth of its port in the emerging Atlantic economy created new opportunities for Portuguese migrants during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Periodic acts of discrimination continued as the Bourbon administration created new regulations that sought to enforce the traditional principle of exclusion of foreigners

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<sup>12</sup> Louisa Schell Hoberman, “Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Mexico: A Preliminary Portrait,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, 3 (Aug. 1977): 479–503; James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532–1560: A Social History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), chap. 7; Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea: Portugal’s Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492–1640* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> R. de Lafuente Machain, *Los portugueses en Buenos Aires, siglo XVII* (Madrid: Tipografía de Archivos, 1931); Carlos Lemonde de Macedo, *Presencia e integración portuguesa en el Río de la Plata* (Santiago de Chile: Nascimento, 1961); Boleslao Lewin, “Los portugueses en Buenos Aires en el período colonial,” in *VI Congreso Internacional de Historia de América*, vol. 4 (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1980), 47–62; Eduardo Saguier, “The Social Impact of a Middleman Minority in a Divided Host Society: The Case of the Portuguese in Early Seventeenth-Century Buenos Aires,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, 3 (Aug. 1985): 467–91; Emir Reitano, “Los portugueses del Buenos Aires tardocolonial: Inmigración, sociedad, familia, vida cotidiana y religión” (Ph.D. diss., Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Lewin, “Los portugueses en Buenos Aires”; and especially Saguier, “The Social Impact of a Middleman Minority.”

from Spanish territories. The local population denounced the negative effects of these measures because many Portuguese migrants were engaged in activities considered essential for the economic well-being of the city. As a result, expulsion edicts and other restrictive measures were rarely fully enforced. The Portuguese formed a socially diverse, multi-class group, including a significant sector of merchants of considerable means who had integrated themselves successfully into the established commercial and landowning families, as well as a more modest sector of migrants composed of artisans, maritime workers, manual laborers, store owners, and farmers.<sup>15</sup> Portuguese migrants continued arriving after the advent of independence in Argentina in the 1810s, albeit at a slower pace. In 1816, the Portuguese were still the second largest foreign group after the Spaniards. During the following decades, however, their relative importance decreased, especially with the growth of transatlantic labor migrations during the second half of the nineteenth century, numerically dominated by Italian and Spanish migrants.<sup>16</sup>

The Portuguese community of mid-nineteenth century Buenos Aires was the result of this long-term presence. There were important continuities in the occupational and demographic characteristics of the Portuguese population of Buenos Aires of the late colonial period and the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> For example, during the early nineteenth century, most Portuguese migrants were port and maritime laborers, artisans, merchants, and farmers. Even though the relative importance of some occupations fluctuated over the years, the

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<sup>15</sup> Reitano, "Los portugueses del Buenos Aires tardocolonial," 55–60, 76–7, 100–5, 107–11, 124–7.

<sup>16</sup> César García Belsunce, ed., *Buenos Aires, su gente, 1800–1830* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1976); Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración*, chap. 5; Reitano, "Los portugueses del Buenos Aires tardocolonial," 80–3.

<sup>17</sup> I have studied the evolution of the Portuguese immigrant community in Buenos Aires during the second half of the nineteenth century based on the analysis of the manuscript returns of the 1855, 1869, and 1895 censuses—the only original returns that have survived the vicissitudes of Argentine archival preservation practices—and presented the results of this research in the following publications: "Los portugueses en Buenos Aires a mediados del siglo XIX: Una aproximación socio-demográfica," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 4, 12 (Aug. 1989): 353–82; "Características residenciales de los inmigrantes portugueses en Buenos Aires en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 6, 18 (Aug. 1991): 223–47; "Portugueses en Buenos Aires en el siglo XIX: Características y evolución de una comunidad multi-secular," in *Emigração/Imigração em Portugal: Actas do Colóquio Internacional sobre Emigração e Imigração em Portugal (séc. XIX–XX)* ed. Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva et al. (Lisbon: Editorial Fragmentos, 1993), 308–22. The discussion that follows is based on these sources.



Table 1.1: Regional Origins of Portuguese Migrants in Argentina (Percentages)

Place of origin	Colonial Times (17th century)	Mid-19th Century (1855)	20th Century (1930s–1960s)	
	Buenos Aires	Buenos Aires	Buenos Aires	Argentina
Aveiro	2.3	0.5	2.8	3.4
Braga	3.0	5.0	4.7	6.5
Bragança	—	—	4.1	2.8
Castelo Branco	0.8	—	2.1	3.3
Coimbra	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.7
Faro (Algarve)	3.1	0.6	41.4	34.1
Guarda	—	—	13.1	19.6
Leiria	3.8	—	3.3	5.3
Lisboa	16.8	41.8	3.0	1.8
Porto	20.6	34.3	0.9	0.9
Viana do Castelo	21.4	2.2	6.4	7.4
Viseu	1.5	0.6	4.4	5.5
Others continent	8.3	5.6	6.8	2.9
Azores and Madeira	15.4	6.9	4.0	3.8
(Number)	(131)	(359)	(1,281)	(3,713)

Sources: Lafuente Machain, *Los portugueses en Buenos Aires*; Borges, “Portugueses en Buenos Aires en el siglo XIX”; Registros consulares, Archivo del Consulado de Portugal en Buenos Aires. The surviving consular registration records cover mostly the 1940s and 1950s (75 percent of the migrants registered between 1941 and 1959). Most migrants arrived after 1930 (70 percent). For this sample, I have considered the registrations of migrants whose first name starts with the letter M.

general profile changed little during the first half of the century. By the mid-1800s, sailors and maritime laborers, artisans, and merchants and commercial workers formed two-thirds of the active population. The most important change was a steady decline in the number of farm workers that followed the growth of Buenos Aires as an urban center. Continuities were also apparent in other characteristics of the Portuguese migrant community in Buenos Aires, most notably in their regional origins. The majority of the Portuguese migrants during the colonial and early independent years were from the cities of Porto and Lisbon, from traditional places of emigration in the Minho, such as Viana do Castelo and Braga, and from the Atlantic Islands, mainly the Azores. By mid-nineteenth century, Lisbon and Porto concentrated its predominance among the places of origin of Portuguese migrants while the proportion of migrants from the archipelago of Azores and the northern region of Minho declined (Table 1.1).

The last quarter of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of a new phase of Portuguese migration. This change becomes clear when comparing the profiles of Portuguese migrants in the 1855 and 1895 censuses. Whereas the former showed a long-settled community whose sociodemographic characteristics resembled those of the late colonial years, the latter suggested more recent arrivals and the presence of a younger population of labor migrants as well as a growing presence of women and families. In 1855, migrant men represented over 95 percent of the Portuguese community, their average age was 41.5 years, and a third of them had been living in Buenos Aires for more than two decades. In contrast, by 1895, the proportion of men dropped to 75 percent and their average age to 34.6 years. In addition, two-thirds of all Portuguese migrants lived with other countrymen, indicating the presence of groups of migrant laborers and families. Regarding their occupational profile, there was a slight increase in the proportion of day laborers and non qualified workers, and a considerable growth in the number of cart-drivers and porters. Consular reports confirm the growth of Portuguese migrants who worked in transportation at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1907, the Portuguese Consul identified over twenty important Portuguese cart-drivers and reported the existence of “many more who are occupied in that service, having each a few carts, in general one, two, or three.”<sup>18</sup> Unlike the long-term or permanent migration of earlier times, this new phase was characterized by a predominance of temporary labor migrants. Consular reports presented the migratory pattern of Portuguese migrants as a labor strategy aimed at saving money to improve their standing at home, primarily through the purchase of land. In 1886, the Portuguese ambassador commented that many migrants “have acquired some capital and, after they went back to invest it in their country, they came back here [again].”<sup>19</sup> And a decade later, the Consul wrote: “The main aspiration of this people is to save some money to buy small plots of land in their homeland. Since April, I have signed seven deeds and thirteen public proxies for Portugal.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Commercial Report of Consul Constancio Roque da Costa, Buenos Aires, May 8, 1907, Caixa 501, Consular Correspondence, AMNE. See also Annual Report of Consul Constancio Roque da Costa, Buenos Aires, Mar. 25, 1901, Caixa 500, Consular Correspondence, AMNE; Letter of Ambassador João de Souza Lobo, Buenos Aires, July 17, 1886, Caixa 44, Correspondence of the Portuguese Legation, AMNE.

<sup>19</sup> Lobo, Letter, July 17, 1886.

<sup>20</sup> Costa, Annual Report, Feb. 1, 1900.

Table 1.2: Portuguese Immigration in Argentina by Decade, 1857–1959

Period	Immigrants (1)			Total travelers (2)		
	Arrival	Departures	Net	Arrival	Departures	Net
1857–9	88	9	79	—	—	—
1860–9	432	151	281	—	—	—
1870–9	656	244	412	—	—	—
1880–9	1,811	660	1,151	—	—	—
1890–9	1,653	1,000	653	—	—	—
1900–9	7,633	3,924	3,709	—	—	—
1910–9	17,570	7,948	9,622	—	—	—
1920–9	23,406	8,778	14,628	—	—	—
1930–9	10,310	6,650	3,660	12,834	9,312	3,522
1940–9	4,230	2,169	2,061	8,562	6,102	2,460
1950–9	12,033	3,937	8,096	17,950	9,055	8,895
Total	79,822	35,470	39,346	39,346	24,469	14,877

(1) For Argentine statistics, ‘immigrants’ were all second- and third-class passengers arriving in the port of Buenos Aires from overseas. I have estimated the figures for the years 1928–31, 1934 (arrivals only), 1935, and 1958–9 as a percentage of the total number of Portuguese travelers for those years.

(2) These figures include all Portuguese travelers regardless of their passenger class and the way of arrival or departure (sea, river, land, air).

Sources: Dirección General de Inmigración, *Resumen estadístico del movimiento migratorio en la República Argentina, 1857–1924* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Agricultura de la Nación, 1925); Ministerio de Agricultura, *Memoria correspondiente al ejercicio de 1926* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos del Ministerio de Agricultura, 1927); idem, *Memoria correspondiente al ejercicio de 1927 presentada al Congreso de la Nación* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos del Ministerio de Agricultura, 1928); idem, *Memoria de Inmigración, Año 1937* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos del Ministerio de Agricultura, 1940); Dirección General de Inmigración, “Resumen estadístico del quinquenio 1923–1927” (Biblioteca de la Dirección Nacional de Migraciones [hereafter Biblioteca DNM], Buenos Aires, mimeographed); idem, “Memoria,” 1932, 1934, 1936 (Biblioteca DNM, mimeographed); Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, “Memoria,” 1938, 1939–43, 1955–9” (Biblioteca DNM, mimeographed); idem, “Memorias y Estadísticas del movimiento migratorio,” 1944–54; idem, “Cuadros inéditos: entradas, salidas y saldos, 1945–1976”; idem, “Entradas, salidas y saldos de extranjeros, 1875–1973” (Biblioteca DNM, mimeographed).

Portuguese migration to Argentina climaxed during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Approximately 80,000 Portuguese arrived in Argentina from 1857 to 1959, 56 percent of whom stayed in the country (Table 1.2). Almost two-thirds arrived between 1907 and 1931, and more than 51 percent between 1910 and 1929. A comparison between Argentine and Portuguese statistics shows a similar evolution, but it reveals that Portuguese agencies undercounted more than a quarter

of the departures to Argentina.<sup>21</sup> Initially a movement of temporary male labor migration, the second phase soon became a complex flow that included family migration and settlement.

### *Regional Flows and Local Networks*

One of the most distinctive characteristics of this second phase was a remarkable change in migrants' regional composition, as traditional areas of origin of Portuguese migration to Argentina were replaced by new ones (Table 1.1). Whereas the 1855 census registered only two Algarvian migrants in Buenos Aires, most Portuguese migrants whose place of birth was registered in the 1895 census were from the Algarve.<sup>22</sup> Contemporary observers took note of this change in migration patterns, as illustrated by regular references to Algarvian migrants in the reports sent by the Portuguese officials in Buenos Aires. "The majority [of Portuguese migrants] are workers, in general from the Algarve, whose exemplary behavior, love of work, and valuable economic spirit deserve all our praise," stated one report; and another report described Algarvian migrants in Buenos Aires as "peaceful and honest working people who are able to find an occupation easily."<sup>23</sup>

Algarvian migrants remained the largest regional group among the Portuguese in Argentina from the late nineteenth century until the early 1960s, when Portuguese migration to Argentina declined; they were followed by migrants from the northern interior district of Guarda, in

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<sup>21</sup> Portugal, Ministério das Finanças, Direcção Geral de Estatística, *Estatística Demográfica, Movimento da População, 1914-21* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1917-24); idem, *Anuário Estatístico, 1921, 1923-4, 1926-37* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1925-38); Portugal, Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico, 1938-51* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1940-52); Portugal, Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *Anuario Demográfico, 1952-9* (Lisbon: INE, 1952-60). For Argentine figures, see Table 1.2. The disparity in migration statistics suggests the importance of clandestine migration and departures from points in the Iberian Peninsula that were not as controlled by authorities, mainly Gibraltar. Likewise, since immigration statistics registered mainly the arrivals in the port of Buenos Aires from overseas, Argentine statistics did not fully account for the total number of migrants. Re-migration of Portuguese from other countries, especially from Brazil, and river crossings from the port of Montevideo were not strictly monitored by the authorities.

<sup>22</sup> Since information on town or province of birth was not required, 1895 census takers only recorded the information in 5 percent of the cases.

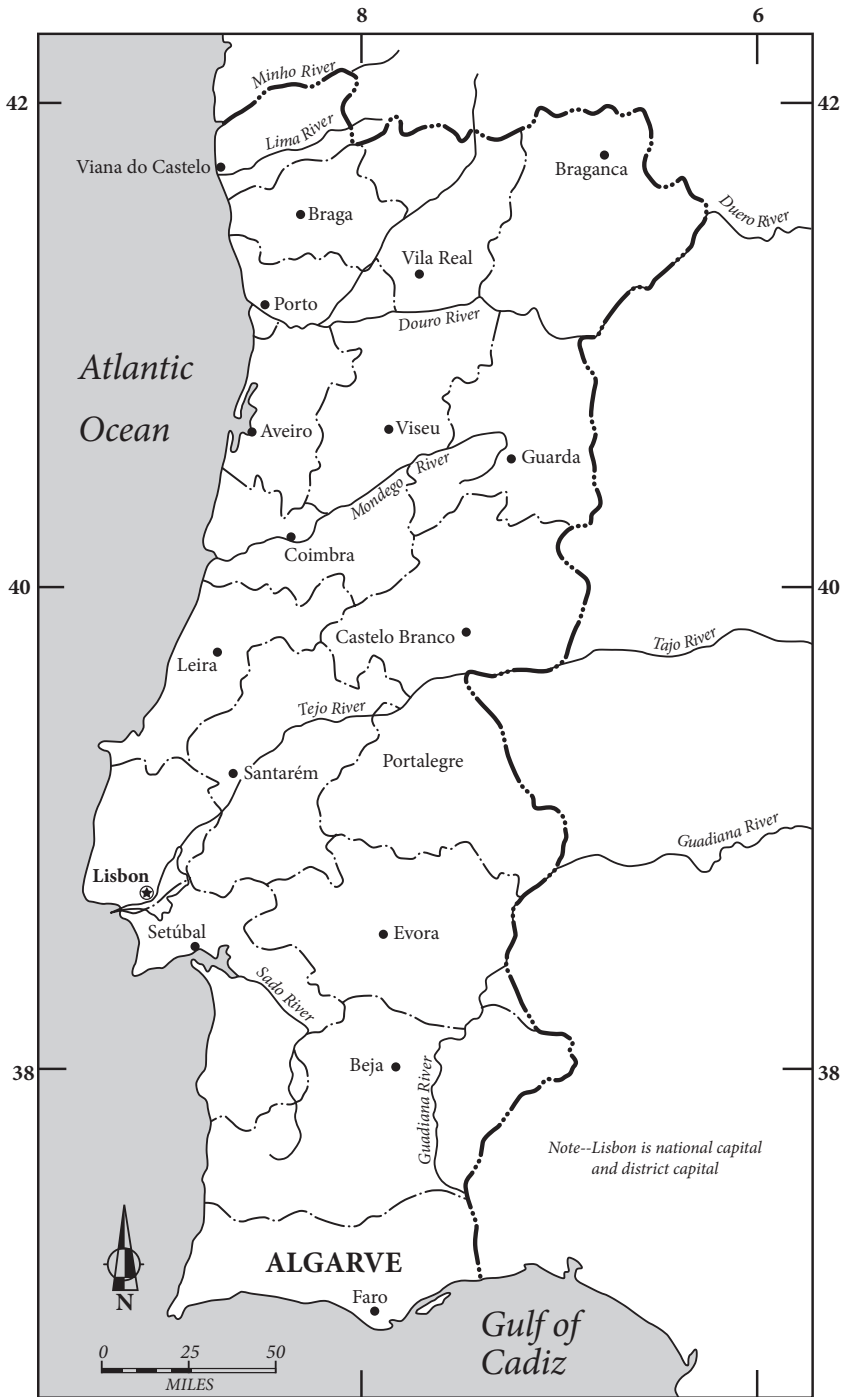
<sup>23</sup> Annual Report of Consul Constancio Roque da Costa, Buenos Aires, Feb. 1, 1900, Caixa 500, Consular Correspondence, AMNE; and Annual Report of Consul F. Mendes Gonçalves, Buenos Aires, Dec. 31, 1888, Caixa 498, Consular Correspondence, AMNE.

the region of Beira Alta—both regions with little or no participation in the early phase. In the 1910s and 1920s, during the heyday of migration to Argentina, Faro and Guarda accounted for around 70 percent of Portuguese migrants, while few other districts surpassed the 5 percent mark (Table 1.1). The main difference between these regional flows lay in their relative importance in the context of the total emigration from each district. Argentina was the main destination in the case of the Algarve, but its share was not as significant in the case of Guarda. In average, during the first six decades of the twentieth century, more than half of the Algarvian migrants went to Argentina compared to 14 percent of the migrants from Guarda.<sup>24</sup>

The importance of regional origins notwithstanding, the key to explaining the nature of Portuguese migration to Argentina during the period of mass migration is to be found at the micro level. Far from generalized at the regional level, migration was a selective phenomenon based on local patterns of geographic mobility. The map of Portuguese migration to Argentina resembles a night sky with a few bright constellations on the south, east, and northwest. Most migrants originated in a small number of counties on the center-east of the Algarve and in the eastern interior of the Beira, joined later by a few counties in the northwestern region of Minho. Indeed, the majority of migrants came from only a handful of counties: out of 306 counties that existed in Portugal in the early twentieth century, only 10 accounted for two-thirds of all migrants to Argentina in the 1910s and 1920s; and, even though there were a few more counties on the top from the 1930s through the 1960s, the concentration remained very high, with two-thirds of all migrants coming from only 14 counties, 10 of which accounted for more than half. The share of migrants from some counties is especially noteworthy. Approximately 14 percent of all migrants to Argentina originated in the county of Loulé, in the Algarve, and migrants from the nearby counties of Faro, Olhão, São Brás de Alportel, and Tavira represented between a third (early decades) and 18 percent (later decades) of the total. In the interior district of Guarda, the counties of Sabugal (in the earlier part of the century) and Seia (from the 1930s to the 1960s) were the birthplace of close to 9 percent of all migrants to Argentina, followed by the counties of Guarda and Almeida. Whereas the overwhelming number of migrants in the earlier part of the century hailed from counties in

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<sup>24</sup> For sources, see note 21.



Map 1.1: Portugal by Districts

Table 1.3: Portuguese Emigration to Argentina by Districts of Origin, 1914–55 (Percentages)

District	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	Average
Faro	44.8	31.3	24.9	40.6	34.2	33.0
Guarda	33.3	26.7	24.4	20.8	22.5	25.0
Castelo Branco	5.4	6.7	4.8	2.4	4.5	5.4
Viseu	1.5	4.1	8.4	8.3	5.3	5.4
Braga	0.6	5.3	5.6	4.8	5.7	5.2
Leiria	0.2	5.0	6.0	1.9	5.3	4.7
Viana do Castelo	0.2	2.7	3.8	4.7	6.0	3.7
Coimbra	1.1	3.4	5.6	3.7	2.8	3.5
Bragança	5.7	3.1	2.3	1.3	3.2	2.9
Aveiro	0.8	3.0	5.4	2.1	2.0	2.9
Porto	1.7	1.2	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.1
Vila Real	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.8	0.9
Other continent	1.5	2.5	2.4	2.1	3.2	2.6
Azores and Madeira	2.0	3.9	4.4	3.7	2.0	3.4
Overseas	—	—	0.1	2.1	1.6	0.6
(Number)	(1,175)	(15,249)	(4,747)	(3,486)	(7,521)	(32,178)

Total published emigration from Portugal to Argentina between 1914 and 1955 was 40,517. The total number of migrants, however, was higher. There is no information for 1943. In addition, published statistics were based on information on passport requests submitted by the civil governments of each district and there is no information from Guarda between 1923 and 1924, and from Viana do Castelo from 1923 to 1928. Regarding the distribution of emigration by district of origin and destination, there are no data for 1922–4 or 1936–40.

Sources: Portugal, Ministério das Finanças, Direcção Geral da Estatística, *Estatística Demográfica, Movimento da População, 1914–21* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1915–24); idem, *Anuário Estatístico 1921, 1923–24, 1926–31* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1925–32); Portugal, Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico, 1938–55* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1940–56).

the Algarve and Guarda (and to a lesser extent from the mountains of Castelo Branco, south of Guarda), after the 1930s there were also visible concentrations of migrants from the Minho, in the northwestern corner of Portugal (mostly from the counties of Viana de Castelo, Barcelos, and Esposende) and from the county of Leiria, in the district of Leiria, north of Lisbon—none of these smaller local flows, however, accounted for more than 4 percent of migration to Argentina (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Portuguese Migration in Argentina by County of Origin, 1910s–1960s (Percentages)

1910s–early 1920s		1930s–1960s	
County, District	Percentage	County, District	Percentage
Loulé, Faro	13.2	Loulé, Faro	13.6
Faro, Faro	9.6	Seia, Guarda	8.8
Sabugal, Guarda	8.5	Faro, Faro	5.7
Olhão, Faro	7.4	Olhão, Faro	5.4
São Brás de Alportel, Faro	7.0	São Brás de Alportel, Faro	4.6
Guarda, Guarda	5.3	Viana do Castelo, Viana do Castelo	4.1
Tavira, Faro	4.8	Leiria, Leiria	3.3
Almeida, Guarda	4.0	Guarda, Guarda	3.2
Fundão, Castelo Branco	3.0	Sabugal, Guarda	3.1
Belmonte, Castelo Branco	2.0	Barcelos, Braga	2.9
Chaves, Vila Real	1.1	Esposende, Braga	2.8
Celorico da Beira, Guarda	1.0	Nelas, Viseu	2.8
Proença-a-Nova, Castelo Branco	1.0	Tavira, Faro	2.7
Figueira do Castelo Rodrigo, Guarda	1.0	Mangualde, Viseu	1.5
Albufeira, Faro	1.0	Almeida, Guarda	1.4
Others (less than 1% each)	30.1	Oliveira do Hospital, Coimbra	1.4
(Number)	(8,980)	Miranda do Douro, Bragança	1.2
		Gouveia, Guarda	1.1
		Albufeira, Faro	1.1
		Others (less than 1% each)	29.3
		(Number)	(3,737)

Source: Portugal, Ministério dos Negócios da Fazenda, Direcção da Estatística, *Emigração Portuguesa, 1910–12* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1911–3); Portugal, Ministério das Finanças, Direcção Geral da Estatística, *Estatística Demográfica, Movimento da População, 1909–21* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1915–24); Registros consulares, Archivo del Consulado de Portugal en Buenos Aires. Calculations for the 1910s and 1920s based on the Portuguese emigration statistics 1910–21 (after that year, there is no information on destinations by counties of origin). Calculations for the 1930s–1960s based on a sample of the registration records of the Portuguese Consulate in Buenos Aires. See Table 1.1.



*Spatial Distribution and Immigrant Communities*

In addition to a shift in regional origins, Portuguese immigration during the second phase was characterized by a wider spatial distribution in Argentina. Unlike Portuguese migrants during the colonial time and early national period, those who arrived during the second phase settled over a larger geographic space that was no longer confined to the city of Buenos Aires and its immediate hinterland. As the main port of arrival and the largest urban center, Buenos Aires remained the single most popular immigrant destination. But by the late nineteenth century, the territory effectively occupied by Argentina had expanded and, with it, new opportunities for migrant workers appeared. Beyond Buenos Aires, Portuguese migrants found seasonal and temporary work in farms and cattle ranches, in towns that were emerging with the extension of railroads, and in few provincial centers outside the pampas region. In some cases, the initial flow of male labor migration gave way to family reunification or to the formation of families, resulting in long-term or permanent settlement and in the rise of Portuguese immigrant communities.

The 1914 national census offers a picture of the spatial distribution of Portuguese migrants during the first decades of mass labor migrations. About 14,500 Portuguese were in Argentina at the eve of World War I, close to 80 percent of whom were concentrated in the city of Buenos Aires and in the larger pampas region. Of the total Portuguese migrants in Argentina, over a third lived in the city of Buenos Aires, 13 percent in the counties around the capital city and in the provincial capital of La Plata, and over a quarter in the rural counties in the interior of the province of Buenos Aires. The rest resided mostly in other towns and rural centers of the extended pampas region that included the southern counties of the provinces of Santa Fe and Córdoba (10 and 3 percent, respectively), and the territory of La Pampa (1 percent). There were also many Portuguese migrants laboring in the oil fields of the central coast of the territory of Chubut, in Patagonia, and its environs (2 percent)—noteworthy because this was a largely depopulated area. Finally, the provincial centers of Mendoza, in the west, and Tucumán, in the northwest, were home to 1 percent of the Portuguese immigrant population each.<sup>25</sup> Except for their presence in Patagonia, the geographic

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<sup>25</sup> Argentina, Comisión Nacional del Censo, *Tercer censo nacional levantado el 1 de junio de 1914* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos de L. J. Rosso, 1916), vol. 2, 129–359.

distribution of Portuguese migrants resembled that of the immigrant population as a whole at that time.<sup>26</sup> Another significant characteristic of the Portuguese group was its presence in the countryside. Overall, 40 percent of Portuguese migrants in 1914 resided in rural areas, well above the proportion of immigrants as a whole (31 percent); in the province of Buenos Aires, the proportion of Portuguese rural dwellers rose to two-thirds. Portuguese rural workers were present in large ranches as well as in small farms and vegetable gardens around the country's capital.<sup>27</sup>

During the following decades, a further concentration of Portuguese immigrants in the province of Buenos Aires took place, particularly in the environs of the city of Buenos Aires. In the early 1930s, the Portuguese consulate estimated the number of Portuguese migrants settled in Argentina in about 20,000: half in the city of Buenos Aires and its environs, 10 percent in other towns of the province of Buenos Aires, 15 percent in Rosario and other towns of the province of Santa Fe, 4 percent in Comodoro Rivadavia, in Chubut, and the rest "dispersed about in the provinces."<sup>28</sup> Census data for the following decades showed a heavier concentration in and around Buenos Aires than the consular estimate suggested. By the time of the 1947 census, more than half of the approximately 25,500 Portuguese migrants in Argentina lived in the province of Buenos Aires, followed by 30 percent in the city of Buenos Aires, 5 percent in Chubut (almost all in the oil center of Comodoro Rivadavia), 4 percent in the province of Santa Fe, and 2 percent in the province of Córdoba.<sup>29</sup> The concentration of Portuguese migrants in the expanding suburban ring around the city of Buenos Aires (including within this area the provincial capital of La Plata and its vicinity) continued during the 1950s, as a new wave of immigration from Portugal

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<sup>26</sup> For a comparison see Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración*, 294–9.

<sup>27</sup> Argentina, *Tercer censo*, 2: 219–20, 395–8. The proportion of rural residents among immigrants in the province of Buenos Aires was 43 percent. Only Danish immigrants had a larger concentration in the countryside than the Portuguese (73 percent). Danish immigrants were concentrated almost exclusively in agricultural settlements of the southeast, where they formed tight-knit farming communities. See María Bjerg, *Entre Sofie y Tovelille: Una historia de los inmigrantes daneses en la Argentina, 1848–1930* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Consular report, Buenos Aires, Dec. 10, 1935, 3rd floor, 11, 440, AMNE.

<sup>29</sup> Argentina, Dirección Nacional del Servicio Estadístico, *IV Censo General de la Nación, 1947* (Buenos Aires: Guillermo Kraft, n.d.); Argentina, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, *Características migratorias de la población en el IV Censo General de la Nación del año 1947*, rev. ed. (Buenos Aires: INDEC, 1999).

developed through family reunification and family migration. According to the 1960 census, more than 87 percent of the Portuguese migrants were living in the city and province of Buenos Aires, distributed as follows: over 48 percent in the counties of the Greater Buenos Aires area, 21 percent in the rest of the province of Buenos Aires, and 18 percent in the city of Buenos Aires. The only significant regional concentration in the rest of the country remained in the Patagonian province of Chubut (5 percent); the shares of the provinces of Santa Fe and Córdoba decreased to 3 and 1 percent, respectively.<sup>30</sup>

The diverse geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic conditions of the areas of settlement offered different opportunities and resulted in the formation of distinctive communities. Just as the micro-social level is crucial in the formation of circuits of migration from Portugal to Argentina, the local level is equally important to understand migrants' experiences in Argentina. Migrants from different regions and localities tended to favor some areas of settlement over others as well as particular activities that, in some cases, developed into ethnic economic niches. There were numerous cases of regional concentration. For example, migrants from Guarda worked as vegetable gardeners around the city of Buenos Aires, and as farm hands and farmers in the rural counties of Salliqueló and Casbas (in western Buenos Aires); migrants from Leiria congregated in the mining and cement industries of Olavarría (in the central hills of Buenos Aires); migrants from Viana do Castelo and Braga became brick-makers in the suburbs of the city of Buenos Aires; migrants from the Algarve favored flower and vegetable gardening around the city of Buenos Aires and the provincial capital of La Plata, and petroleum work in central Patagonia.<sup>31</sup> Portuguese migrants from different regions also settled in the city of Buenos Aires, where they

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<sup>30</sup> Argentina, Dirección Nacional de Estadística, *Censo Nacional de Población 1960* (Buenos Aires: DNE, n.d.), vols. 1–9.

<sup>31</sup> Claudia Poncioni, "Présence culturelle portugaise et brésilienne à Buenos Aires (dimension historique et réalité actuelle)" (master's thesis, Université de Haute Bretagne, Rennes II, 1987), 27–45, 162; Aurora Alonso de Rocha, *Extranjeros en Olavarría: Primera reseña, 1867–1988* (Olavarría: Archivo Histórico Municipal, n.d.), 73, 76–7; Marcelo Borges, "Historia y memoria en una comunidad rural de inmigrantes portugueses: Las fuentes orales en los estudios migratorios," in *Estudios de Historia Rural*, Serie Estudios e Investigaciones no. 7, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación (La Plata: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1991), 129–56; Ada Svetlitz de Nemirovsky and Rosana González, "Saudade: La comunidad rural portuguesa de La Matanza," *Scripta Ethnologica*, 21 (1999): 81–92; idem, "Produtores agrícolas portugueses na região metropolitana de Buenos Aires," *Análise Social* 40, 175 (2005): 297–318.



Map 1.2: Argentina by Provinces

worked in a variety of service and commercial activities. As the entrance port and the largest urban center, the capital city attracted migrants from all regions, but Algarvians had a numerical edge. According to consulate records, Algarvians constituted 41 percent of the Portuguese migrants from the 1930s to the 1960s, and their share was probably larger in the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>32</sup> Of course, none of these communities were regionally exclusive or ethnically homogeneous, and Portuguese migrants were in contact with migrants from other regions and nationalities; but in most of them there was a clear predominance of certain regions and localities. Furthermore, in all of them, Portuguese migrants constituted a large, visible group, organized along ethnic lines in civil associations such as mutual aid societies and clubs.

#### APPROACH

This is a social history of transatlantic migration. Migration is central to the histories of Argentina and Portugal. Both societies were transformed by the movement of labor, capital, and ideas that crisscrossed the Atlantic during the period of mass migrations. The nation state provides a valid analytical scale to understand migratory policies and enforcement, or the impact of economic trends, but the social dimensions of international migration are best captured when regional and local levels are considered in transnational perspective.

Migration was firmly rooted in the local ground. More than a national phenomenon, the move of tens of thousands of Portuguese migrants to Argentina originated in and achieved full meaning at the level of the *aldeia* (village). Transatlantic migration was a labor strategy that emerged at the local level as part of broader strategies of family reproduction and with an eye on household economies. Yet to comprehend fully the developments of circuits of geographic mobility, migrants' objectives, and the consequences of migration for them and their home communities, it is necessary to consider local patterns within larger contexts. With that intent, this book combines meso and micro perspectives to the study of Algarvian migration to Argentina.<sup>33</sup> The first part focuses

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<sup>32</sup> Registros consulares, Archivo del Consulado de Portugal en Buenos Aires. For calculations based on consular registrations I have used a sample of migrants whose first name starts with the letter M.

<sup>33</sup> Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 15–21.

on the emergence of transatlantic migration in the context of Algarvian society and economy, and its connection with other patterns of migration in a context of multiple flows and destinations. At the regional level, the use of a systems approach highlights that, far from an anomaly or a break with an immobile past, transatlantic migrations arouse in a social world where geographic mobility was widespread and in which different circuits of migration with diverse objectives and participants coexisted. At the local level, this study uses elements of the 'village-outward' approach to explore how migrants linked with larger systems through locally based networks.<sup>34</sup> In particular, this analysis explores the dynamics of migration in the local context by focusing on two rural parishes among the counties with the largest numbers of migrants to Argentina: Boliquireime (Loulé) and São Brás de Alportel.

Migrants pondered alternatives, made decisions, and moved in the context of a larger world; they had to adapt their strategies to shifting conditions and structural limitations. Market forces and national states created the framework for migrants' experiences; shifting economic and political circumstances generated and limited possibilities. Some migrants were more successful than others in realizing their objectives, but overall, access to social networks allowed them to adjust to changing circumstances. These connections also created limitations, as they channeled migrants to particular labor markets and communities, and to a finite set of options. Nonetheless, knowing what to expect and counting on the assistance of trusted networks gave migrants who used them more possibilities of relative success.

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<sup>34</sup> Following the pioneering work of Samuel Baily in the 1980s, elements of the village-outward approach have been used by other historians. By focusing on the movements from specific villages and their ramifications abroad, it provides a framework for a historical analysis of the micro-aspects of migration within broader economic, political, and international contexts. Some anthropological studies have applied a similar approach, following migrants from particular villages to specific destinations. See Samuel Baily, "The Future of Italian American Studies: An Historian's Approach to Research in the Coming Decade," in *Italian Americans: New Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity*, ed. Lydio Tomasi (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1985), 193–201; idem, "The Village-Outward Approach to the Study of Social Networks: A Case Study of the Agnonesi Diaspora Abroad, 1885–1989," *Studi Emigrazione* 29, 105 (Mar. 1992): 43–68; idem, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870 to 1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999). See also Donna Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Patricia Nabti, "International Emigration from a Lebanese Village: Bishmizzinis on Six Continents" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1989).

Migrants' settlement and adaptation are also best comprehended at the micro level. Portuguese migrants did not leave for 'Argentina,' but for specific local destinations. Built on social ties that provided information and assistance, migrant networks were crucial in creating these migratory circuits and in the subsequent processes of settlement and adaptation. In order to explore the role of social networks and the ways in which migrants adapted to different local host societies, the second part of the book focuses on the experiences of Portuguese communities that emerged in two contrasting places: Villa Elisa, located in the suburban area between the cities of Buenos Aires and La Plata, in the province of Buenos Aires, and Comodoro Rivadavia, located 2,000 kilometers south of the country's capital, on the coast of the Patagonian province of Chubut. Algarvian migrants formed the largest groups among the Portuguese immigrants in both communities, most of whom hailed from the two rural parishes studied in the first part of the book. Thus, by including origin and destination and exploring the experiences of migration, settlement, and adaptation in two contrasting socioeconomic spaces in Argentina, this study combines elements of both linear and divergent comparative history—the former focuses on continuities and changes across space; the latter examines the influence of the conditions the migrants found at their points of arrival in their adaptation to the new environment. It focuses not only on comparisons across space but also over time, by looking at continuities and changes across generations.<sup>35</sup>

Portuguese migrants encountered very different labor experiences in Villa Elisa and Comodoro Rivadavia. Villa Elisa developed as a rural town in a suburban environment characterized by family gardening and the production of flowers for the nearby urban markets; in contrast, Comodoro Rivadavia, a large urban center surrounded by a ring of oil company towns, grew as a result of petroleum production and related industrial, service, and transportation activities. Most migrants who decided to settle in Comodoro Rivadavia became part of a multi-ethnic community of industrial workers who lived in company towns and sought to establish themselves as permanent members of the larger society through a secure job, housing, social services, and education for

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<sup>35</sup> Nancy Green, "L'histoire comparative et le champ des études migratoires," *Annales E.S.C.* 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1990): 1335-50; idem, "The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies," *Journal of American History* 13, 4 (Summer 1994): 3-18.

their children. In contrast, migrants who decided to make Villa Elisa their new home chose to refashion their initial plan of security and prosperity through land ownership by relocating it from the ancestral countryside to the flower gardens of suburban Argentina. In the process, they built a community of rural proprietors. These alternative strategies created different possibilities for Portuguese migrant men and women, as well as for migrants and their children in terms of family formation, economic adaptation, and inter-generational social mobility. Despite differences in the local host societies and the contrasting socioeconomic profile of both immigrant communities, social networks proved resilient and adaptable both in aiding migrants' access to the labor market and influencing their socialization. Migrants in both communities recreated old networks and forged new ones to achieve their goals yet they did so in different ways. Their choices, in combination with structural and cultural forces, created two distinctive communities.

The study that follows combines macro and micro perspectives, including quantitative and qualitative evidence, grand narratives and small stories. Each chapter engages in dialogue with, and seeks to contribute to, a rich body of literature on transatlantic migration and its impact on societies of origin and destination in general, and on Portugal and Argentina in particular. By incorporating the voices and perspectives of migrant men and women in that larger historiographical and theoretical framework, this book aspires to integrate the human dimension into the account. In her detective novel *The Daughter of Time*, Josephine Tey reflects upon the traditional histories of Richard III that detective Grant, the novel's hero, is revisiting with these words: "The story was distressingly devoted to the general... There was a dearth of human beings in this record of humanity."<sup>36</sup> It is this book's objective to contribute to larger discussions about 'migration' without losing sight of the 'migrants' themselves.

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<sup>36</sup> Josephine Tey [Elizabeth MacKintosh], *The Daughter of Time* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988 [1951]), 46.





## CHAPTER TWO

### MIGRATION IN CONTEXT: SOCIETY, ECONOMY, AND POPULATION IN RURAL ALGARVE

Social scientists Léon Poinsard and Paul Descamps, disciples of Frédéric Le Play and members of the group who published the journal *La Science Sociale*, visited Portugal in the early twentieth century. Their observations and collaborative fieldwork with local scholars resulted in two of the earliest systematic regional studies of Portuguese society.<sup>1</sup> These researchers were invited by Portuguese intellectuals who admired their empirical approach in social sciences and by political leaders interested in addressing the ‘social question’—the threat of upheaval in times of rapid socioeconomic change that preoccupied European governing elites at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Poinsard arrived in 1909, at the end of the rule of Portugal’s last monarch, Manuel II; Descamps followed two decades later, during the consolidation of the autocratic regime of António de Oliveira Salazar. Despite a gap of over twenty years between their visits, Poinsard and Descamps portrayed rural Portugal and the Algarve in particular, in remarkably similar terms. The southernmost region of Portugal was a society of ‘peasants-workers’ where most families had access to some land. Farming was vital for rural families but it did not cover all their needs. The fragmentation of rural property, which was divided in small plots scattered throughout the countryside, and the limits imposed by the available terrain, led Algarvian farmers to look for complementary activities. In addition to working on their

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<sup>1</sup> Léon Poinsard, “Le Portugal inconnu,” *La Science sociale*, Ser. 2, fasc. 67–68 (Mar.–Apr. 1910); Paul Descamps, *Le Portugal: La vie sociale actuelle* (Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie., 1935).

<sup>2</sup> Philippe Périé, “Le Play and his Followers: Over a Century of Achievement,” *International Social Science Journal* 50, 157 (Sept. 1998): 343–8; Bernard Kalaora and Antonie Savoye, *Les inventeurs oubliés: Le Play et ses continuateurs aux origines des sciences sociales* (Seysse: Champ Vallon, 1989); Bernard Kalaora, “Paul Descamps ou la sociologie leplaysienne à l’épreuve du Portugal de Salazar,” *Gradhiva* 6 (Summer 1989): 5–64. For an overview of the history of social movements and labor in Portugal, see José Pacheco Pereira, “L’historiographie ouvrière au Portugal,” *Le mouvement social* 123 (Oct.–Dec. 1983): 99–108.

own land, farmers rented other plots, engaged in different trades, and worked temporarily for other farmers.

Like their mentor, Poinsard and Descamps used family monographs to examine the organization of local societies and to illustrate the variety of arrangements devised by people to cope with their environment, make a living, and raise their families. One of the cases discussed by Léon Poinsard in his analysis of the Algarve was a family in the rural parish of Conceição, located in the county of Faro. This family owned about two hectares of nonirrigated land where they grew olives, almonds, carobs, and other trees as well as some barley and wheat in the terrain between the trees. They also rented a small irrigated plot in a larger farm, where they grew vegetables. The family sold part of its production in the market of Faro. Since, in addition to cultivating his land, this farmer also worked periodically as a wage agricultural laborer, Poinsard classified him as both a market-gardener and a day-laborer.<sup>3</sup> In the 1930s, Paul Descamps described similar arrangements in a family of small farmers in the nearby county of Loulé. This family combined work in its small farm with wage work in a larger farm, and seasonal work in the harvests (for the men) and fruit packing (for the women). Poinsard characterized the head of this family as “half laborer, half proprietor.”<sup>4</sup>

Rural Algarve was also a land of labor migrants, as farmers frequently left their homes to look for work elsewhere, first in other regions and later in other countries. In effect, labor migration was one of the strategies developed by rural Algarvians to take advantage of periods of higher wages and obtain cash, thus diversifying their economic resources. The ethnographic descriptions of Léon Poinsard and Paul Descamps make regular references to this phenomenon. Far from an extraordinary occurrence, labor migration was a regular part of the rural calendar. For most Algarvian farmers the agricultural year was devoted to tending fruit trees: digging for irrigation during December and January; transplanting carob trees in February, March, and October; harvesting almonds in late July and early August, carobs in August, and figs in August and September. They also harvested grapes in September and October, and olives in late October. Farmers also looked after vegetable gardens and grew cereals, like maize and wheat.<sup>5</sup> The cereal harvest season, which

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<sup>3</sup> Poinsard, “Le Portugal inconnu,” 131–7.

<sup>4</sup> Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 175–6.

<sup>5</sup> See the details of the Algarvian rural calendar in Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 174–5.

took place from May to July, coincided in the Algarve, in the Alentejo, and in southern Spain. Since cereal cultivation was only a small part of the Algarvian economy, small farmers and rural workers were attracted by the possibilities of higher wages available during harvest seasons in the fields of the Alentejo and Spanish Andalusia. Farmers and rural workers had additional opportunities for seasonal work in the summer as cork, palm, and esparto grass cutters. Just as farming was a family endeavor, migration too required the cooperation of family members, and, in particular, of the women who stayed at home. Descamps noted that when Algarvian men migrated, it was the women who administered the family resources.<sup>6</sup>

Local observers also depicted labor migration as commonplace among rural Algarvians. Geraldino Brites, a local doctor from Loulé, wrote a comprehensive medical study during the first decade of the twentieth century that includes perceptive observations on rural life and society. Brites portrayed labor migration as a regular part of the working year of the rural families. For him, this was not an individual initiative but a carefully planned family strategy. He writes:

The working men leave the agricultural works of the spring and summer to the women and go to work outside the province: now harvesting in the Alentejo; now extracting cork here, in the Beiras, or in Estremadura; now harvesting palm in Spain.

Suffering privations and facing inclement weather, they struggle without rest to secure some savings that help them to survive during the winter. Meanwhile, wives, sisters, and children, sometimes of tender age, cultivate the lands, where the head of the household had the precaution of leaving the heaviest works done. When the time of the harvest approaches, those groups of *trabalhadores* (workers), whose departure had left the households almost deserted, return.<sup>7</sup>

If the agricultural year was not good at home, Brites added, a “new exodus” took place. This time, the young men went to the mines of the Alentejo and southern Spain.

Another local observer, Manuel Estanco Louro—known for his work as a philologist as well as a lawyer and a teacher—commented on the significance of labor migration among rural Algarvians in his

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<sup>6</sup> Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 168.

<sup>7</sup> Geraldino Brites, *Febres infecciosas: Notas sobre o concelho de Loulé* (Lisbon: Academia das Ciências, 1914), 185.

monographic study of the parish of São Brás de Alportel, written in the 1920s. By then, Algarvian migrants were also leaving in large numbers for overseas destinations. For Louro, São Brás was “a hotbed of emigrants” engaged in “insane work throughout the world.” He laid out a repertoire of common destinations for Algarvian migrants that, in addition to the Alentejo and southern Spain, included Argentina, Brazil, the United States, Morocco, and France. Louro described labor migration as an important source of income for rural households. When a migrant leaves, he wrote, “the wife stays at home and eats with the money that the husband sends from abroad.”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, for Louro the significance of labor migration transcended the individual migrant’s household. The entire parish depended on the resources generated by its migrants. According to his estimates, São Brás had a deficit of more than a quarter of its total expenditures, and migrants were the ones who helped close that gap: a third of the money came from overseas migrants and two-thirds from internal migrants.<sup>9</sup>

In order to understand the emergence of migration as a viable labor strategy among Algarvian farmers and rural workers, it is necessary to consider the context in which it originated and the economic, social, and demographic patterns to which it was related. This chapter examines the economic basis of the region, the system of land tenure and land transmission, the social composition of the population, and the structure and economic role of the domestic group. The first part presents the general ecological and socioeconomic features of the Algarve; the second part surveys the social, economic, and demographic composition of the parishes of Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and examines the demographic aspects of geographic mobility and the participation of men and women from these parishes in multiple circuits of labor migration from a household perspective.

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<sup>8</sup> M[anu]el F[rancisco] do Estanco Louro, *O livro do Alportel: Monografia de uma freguesia rural-concelho* (Lisbon: Ministerio de Agricultura, 1929; repr., São Brás de Alportel: Câmara Municipal, 1986), 180, 179, 129–30.

<sup>9</sup> Louro calculates the parish’s deficit in 4,568,281.10 escudos out of a total expenditure of 6,187,087.10 escudos. See Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 179–81.

## THE LAND AND ITS USES

Its singular history, characteristic landscape, and relative isolation from the rest of the country, made the Algarve a distinctive geographic and sociocultural entity. A narrow, rectangular territory of approximately 5,000 square kilometers separated from the rest of the country by mountain ranges, it was the last part of Portugal to be reconquered from the Muslims in the thirteenth century. Until the demise of the monarchy in 1910, the Portuguese monarch was 'King of Portugal and the Algarves.' Despite several changes in the administrative divisions of Portugal, the Algarve has always been considered as a single unit—be it a kingdom, a province, or a district—a clear indication of its distinctiveness.<sup>10</sup> According to current administrative divisions, the limits of the Algarve coincide with those of the *Distrito* (district) of Faro, with capital in the city of Faro.<sup>11</sup>

The region is often compared to an amphitheater that descends from the mountains to the sea and overlooks northern Africa. To the north, the Caldeirão and Monchique mountains separate the Algarve from the Alentejo; to the east, the limit is formed by the Guadiana River, which also divides Portugal from Spain; to the west and to the south, the Algarve faces the Atlantic Ocean. Except for the highest points of the

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<sup>10</sup> The main changes in the administrative organization of Portugal took place during the liberal governments of the nineteenth century, but there were some modifications during the twentieth century as well. Provinces have appeared and disappeared as part of this evolution and, with the exception of the Algarve, they have contained several districts (or parts of them). The Algarve has also remained as a single unit in the different projects put forward over time for the creation of administrative regions. For the evolution of administrative organization in Portugal, see A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. 2, *From Empire to Corporate State* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), 16–8, 203; Franz P. de Almeida Langhans, "Organização administrativa local," in *Dicionário de história de Portugal*, ed. Joel Serrão (Lisbon: Iniciativas Editoriais, 1963–1971), 2:217–22; Ruy d'Abreu Torres, "Distritos administrativos," in *Dicionário de história*, ed. Joel Serrão, 1:835–6. For an analysis of the Algarve as a region in the Portuguese context, see José Mattoso, "O Algarve na história regional portuguesa da Idade Média," in *O Algarve na perspectiva da antropologia ecológica* (Lisbon: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, 1989), 13–21; M. Gomes Guerreiro, "O Algarve perante a regionalização do país," *ibid.*, 25–35; Eugénio de Castro Caldas, "Aspectos e perspectivas do ordenamento regional português," *ibid.*, 39–59.

<sup>11</sup> Districts are divided into municipal units called *concelhos* or counties, and these in turn are divided into *freguesias* or parishes. The number of these smaller units have changed over the years. Today, the District of Faro is divided into 16 *concelhos* and 76 *freguesias*. For an overview of the changes in the local organization in the Algarve, see Bernardo de Serpa Marques, "Freguesias e concelhos do Algarve (1798–1900)," *Al-Ulyã, Revista do Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Loulé* 1 (1992): 129–42.

two mountain ranges (576 and 907 meters), most of the region comprises hills below 300 meters, while the lands of the coastal strip lay below 50 meters.<sup>12</sup> It is possible to distinguish different geographic and ecological areas. In 1850, French engineer Charles Bonnet proposed a classification in three zones that has been applied by scholars thereafter with few variations: the *Serra*, with its mountains of schist; the *Barrocal*, composed mostly of limestone hills separated by fertile valleys and running parallel to the coast; and the *Beira-mar* or *Litoral*, the coastal plains of sedimentary terrains. Based on the climatic conditions created by the dominant winds, the littoral area is in turn divided into *Sotavento* and *Barlavento*, approximately east and west of the coastal town of Albufeira, respectively. During the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century, the economic base of the Algarve rested on rural activities and thus varied according to its three ecological zones: irrigated gardening and some cereal farming in the littoral; the harvesting of olive, fig, almond, and carob trees in the hills of the *Barrocal* (and, to some extent, on the coast); and the cutting of cork oaks, holm oaks, and other trees, along with cereal agriculture, in the *Serra*.<sup>13</sup>

Because of similarities in climate and landscape, its relative proximity, and the cultural traces of the prolonged Arab presence, the Algarve has often been compared to northern Africa. In 1880, English traveler Oswald Crawford described it as “a bit cut off from Africa.”<sup>14</sup> Since then, similar comparisons have been repeated by other observers. Writing several decades later, Léon Poincard remarked that “for its

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<sup>12</sup> This presentation is based on several descriptions of the region, including Raúl Proença, ed., *Guia de Portugal II: Extremadura, Alentejo, Algarve* (Lisbon: Oficinas Gráficas da Biblioteca Nacional, 1927); Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l'Algarve*; Pierre Birot, *Le Portugal: Étude de géographie régionale* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1950); Gaetano Ferro, *L'Algarve: Monografia regionale* (Genoa, Ital.: Società d'Arte Poligrafica, 1956); Dan Stanislawski, *Portugal's Other Kingdom: The Algarve* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963); and Carminda Cavaco, *O Algarve oriental: As vilas, os campos e o mar* (Faro: Gabinete do Planeamento da Região do Algarve, 1976), 2 vols.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Bonnet, *Memoire sur le Royaume de l'Algarve* (Lisbon: Academia das Ciencias de Lisboa, 1850). There are variations among authors regarding the subdivisions of the Algarve. See some examples and discussions of spatial divisions in Proença, *Guia de Portugal II*, 188–196; A. de Medeiros Gouveia, “Algarve: Aspectos fisiográficos” (Ph.D. diss., Universidade de Coimbra, 1938), 21–23, 119–138; Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l'Algarve*, 30–4; Ferro, *L'Algarve*, 21–46; Stanislawski, *Portugal's Other Kingdom*, passim; Cavaco, *O Algarve oriental*, 1:13–33; and Pedro Prista, “Sítios do Alto Barrocal,” in *Lugares de aqui: Actas do Seminário Terrenos Portugueses*, ed. Brian Juan O'Neill and Joaquim Pais de Brito (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1991), 83–8.

<sup>14</sup> Oswald Crawford, *Portugal Old and New* (New York: G. P. Putnam's and Sons, 1880), 164.



Map 2.1: Algarve



physiognomy, its climate, and its vegetation, it gives the impression of an extra-European land, a piece of Africa attached by chance to our continent.”<sup>15</sup> Others have gone beyond geography and climate to link the Algarve and Africa. In his 1918 economic study of the Algarve, Thomaz Cabreira wrote that, based on the physical characteristics of the population, “the Algarvian [man] presents more similarities with the Berber or Mourish type.”<sup>16</sup> Appearances, however, are often deceiving. Instead of looking to the south, one could look at northern Portugal to find more appropriate terms of comparison for some key socioeconomic attributes of this region. Because of the high division of property, intensive agriculture, multiple cultivation, and dispersed patterns of settlement, other scholars have compared the Algarve to the northern region of Minho. “The Algarve is the Algarve”—responded Paul Descamps to the frequent comparisons with Africa—and even though he recognized that social types were different, he believed a comparison with the northwestern region of Minho to be more accurate. In a similar vein, geographer Pierre Birot wrote in 1950: “On the opposite end of the Minho, the Algarve is one of the poles of Portuguese rural civilization. It is an entirely Mediterranean Minho.”<sup>17</sup>

Although one should avoid a rigid parallel between these two regions, the comparison is useful to highlight the distinctiveness of the Algarve in the context of southern Portugal. In contrast to both its neighbor to the north (the region of Alentejo, in Portugal) and to the east (the region of Andalusia, in Spain), where rural society was characterized by large estates and a considerable population of landless laborers, in rural Algarve intensive agriculture and generalized access to property were the norm. At the beginning of the twentieth century, more than 65 percent of the rural property in the Algarve was divided into plots of less than 2.38 hectares, and more than 84 percent in parcels of less than 6 hectares. In 1910, the average area of rural property was 0.867

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<sup>15</sup> Poinsard, “Le Portugal inconnu,” 126.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Cabreira, *O Algarve económico* (Lisbon: Imprensa Libanio Da Silva, 1918), 48.

<sup>17</sup> Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 164–5; Birot, *Le Portugal*, 186. See also Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l’Algarve*, 5–8. However, as these authors recognize, this analogy should not be taken too far. Differences in climate, social types, cultivation, and other factors are very important. But this parallel is a way of stressing some of the distinctive traits of the Algarve that are too often blurred in general descriptions which tend to differentiate broadly between northern and southern Portugal. In these overviews, the features of the Algarve are subsumed in the general characteristics of the Alentejo (the region north of the Algarve).

hectares. This was somewhat higher than in the districts of northern Portugal (for instance, the average rural properties were 0.128 hectares in Viseu, 0.147 hectares in Viana do Castelo, and 0.281 hectares in Braga), but it was the lowest figure south of the Tagus River, underlining the contrast between the Algarve and its neighbors (the average surfaces were 10.902 hectares in Evora, 7.420 hectares in Beja; and 5.886 hectares in Portalegre).<sup>18</sup>

Intensive agriculture and widespread division of property have characterized rural Algarve for centuries. Figures on tax contributions for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show a clear predominance of small landholders along with a substantial presence of medium-size plots.<sup>19</sup> The common practice of *aforamento*—by which vacant lands as well as land belonging to the nobles and the church were given out for production to small farmers—contributed to the large-scale distribution of property.<sup>20</sup> This form of land tenure consisted of an emphyteutic contract that gave the holders of the land (the *foreiros*) the right to work it, and even to transmit it, in exchange for a fixed annual rent (*foro*); but it did not give them full ownership. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the central government gave the *foreiros* more rights over the land they worked, a trend that became even more important with the Liberal reforms of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> In addition, during the

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<sup>18</sup> Cabreira, *O Algarve económico*, 54.

<sup>19</sup> Joaquim Romero Magalhães, *O Algarve económico, 1600–1773* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1988), 187, and part 2, chaps. 1 and 2.

<sup>20</sup> For a comprehensive study of the different forms of landholding in northern Portugal, with special reference to emphyteutic property, see Maria de Fátima Brandão, *Terra, herança e família no noroeste de Portugal: O caso de Mosteiro no século XIX* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1994). Brandão shows a convergent process of increasing private appropriation of communal lands and growing interference of the local government to legitimize that appropriation by the concession of emphyteutic contracts in order to get revenues. See also Rui Graça Feijó, *Liberalismo e transformação social: A região de Viana do Antigo Regime à finais da Regeneração* (Lisbon: Editorial Fragmentos, 1992), for an analysis of the transformations during the nineteenth century in another area of the northwest. Unfortunately, there is nothing comparable to these studies for the case of the Algarve. For a general overview about changes in the Algarve as a result of the Liberal reforms, see António Pedro Manique, “A institucionalização da ‘Nova Ordem’ burguesa na região algarvia: Os direitos individuais e a propriedade privada; estruturas administrativas, ordenamento do território e finanças municipais; a justiça; regimes constitucionais e representação política do Algarve,” and “O Algarve face ao liberalismo económico,” both in *O Algarve da antiguidade aos nossos dias: Elementos para a sua história*, ed. Maria da Graça Maia Marques (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 1999), 349–61 and 363–6, respectively.

<sup>21</sup> João Baptista da Silva Lopes, *Corografia ou memória económica, estatística e topográfica do Reino do Algarve* (Lisbon: Academia Real das Sciencias de Lisboa, 1841;

seventeenth century, vacant land (*baldios*) that belonged to the crown went to the jurisdiction of the counties which, in turn, rented them out for cultivation. In many cases, a process of individual appropriation ensued, sometimes with legal confirmation of individual ownership.<sup>22</sup> In other cases, the plots were considered in practice as property of the renters, who began building enclosures and houses, and transmitting the land through inheritance.<sup>23</sup>

Colonization through clearing of uncultivated land was another way by which small farmers appropriated plots of land and eventually became their owners. As a result, the land available for farming increased steadily, particularly during the nineteenth century. In his 1830s grand survey of the Algarve, João Baptista da Silva Lopes repeatedly observed the existence of large portions of uncultivated land in the different counties.<sup>24</sup> As late as in the 1860s, an official report stated that approximately 62 percent of the region consisted of uncultivated lands. But in 1870, another report noted “a progressive growth of cultivation that has taken several untilled lands,” resulting in a general increase of the cultivated area in the Algarve.<sup>25</sup> The process continued steadily for several decades. Thus, in the 1890s the uncultivated area represented almost half of the region’s surface, and by the 1920s it had decreased

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repr., Faro: Algarve em Foco, 1988), 33. A similar argument is presented by agronomist Francisco Weinholtz for the region as a whole and by Manuel Estanco Louro for the parish of São Brás de Alportel, where there were many cases of church land given in *aforamento*. See Francisco D’Almeida de Bivar Weinholtz, *Memória sobre a economia rural da 9ª região agronómica* (Tavira: Tipografia Burocrática, 1891), 43, and Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 84–5.

<sup>22</sup> The *Serra* of Tavira provides a good example of such a development. In 1502, King Dom Manuel granted jurisdiction over this area to the *câmara* (municipal council) of Tavira which, in turn, distributed the land to renters. In 1645, the rights over the area were rented by the *câmara* to a local military commander. Finally, in 1722, King Dom José granted the settlers of the *Serra* of Tavira full property over the land they worked. Cavaco, *O Algarve oriental*, 1:129; Magalhães, *O Algarve económico*, 137–8, 149; and Cristiana Bastos, *Os montes do nordeste algarvio* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 1993), 143–4.

<sup>23</sup> Cavaco, *O Algarve oriental*, 1:129.

<sup>24</sup> Lopes, *Corografia*, *passim*.

<sup>25</sup> As reported in the *Relatório acerca da arborização geral do reino* (Lisbon, 1868) and the *Recenseamento geral dos gados de 1870* (Lisbon, 1875), both analyzed by Miriam Halpern Pereira, *Livre-câmbio e desenvolvimento económico: Portugal na segunda metade do século XIX*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Sá da Costa Editora, 1983), chap. 2 (particularly pp. 61–2).

to about one-third.<sup>26</sup> Behind this growth in the area of cultivation was the strenuous process of land clearing or *arroteamento*, which spread from the littoral to the interior. The rocky terrain of the *Barrocal* and the *Serra* made this practice a necessity for agriculture; the land had to be cleared before any attempt for cultivation could be made. This traditional process continued well into the twentieth century. Geographer Dan Stanislawski described it in the 1950s:

Algarvian farmers have broken the surface and planted carob, olive, almond, and fig trees, often with grains beneath. To do so they have worked for generations to clear the fields of the larger stones, piling them up into rock fences at times six feet high and from eight to ten feet broad.<sup>27</sup>

If the process of land clearing and the practice of *aforamento* constituted the main foundations of the division of rural property in the Algarve, the reason for its predominance was the strict compliance with the principle of partible inheritance. The Civil Code of 1867 established the equal division of property among all heirs, making some provisions to accommodate different arrangement within this general rule: two-thirds of the assets (the *legítima*) had to be equally divided among the heirs in the direct line of ascent or descent, and the remaining third (the *terça*) could be managed freely. The part of the surviving spouse could vary according to premarital arrangements: in marriages with ‘communion of assets,’ the *terça* of each spouse included a third part of their half of the common property; in the case of ‘separation of assets,’ each spouse kept the property and goods he or she brought to the marriage and was entitled to a third of the assets acquired during the marriage.<sup>28</sup> In some areas of Portugal, notably in the northwest, families used different ways to avoid the excessive division of land and to ensure the continuity of the property as a viable socioeconomic unit—including selection of a

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<sup>26</sup> Weinholtz, *Memória*, 39; Alexandre S. de Figueiredo e Melo and Miguel Belo, “O Algarve: Estudo econômico agrícola,” *Boletim de estatística e informação agrícola* (Jan. 1927–Aug. 1928): 20.

<sup>27</sup> Stanislawski, *Portugal’s Other Kingdom*, 168–9.

<sup>28</sup> Caroline Brettell, “Kinship and Contract: Property Transmission and Family Relations in Northwestern Portugal,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33, 3 (July 1991): 443–65; Brandão, *Terra, herança e família*, appendix 1. For a general background on Portuguese legal codification, see Nuno E. G. Silva, “Codificação em Portugal,” in *Dicionário de história*, ed. Joel Serrão, 1:601–2.

avored heir, restrictions on marriage, and migration.<sup>29</sup> This was not, however, the case among Algarvian families, whose strict adherence to the principle of egalitarian division resulted in a pattern of land tenure characterized by intense fragmentation of property. In the Algarve, land, houses, and even trees were zealously divided among the heirs at the time of death (the *partilhas* or partitions).<sup>30</sup> Estanco Louro reports that in some cases even rooms were divided among different heirs by counting the beams of the roof.<sup>31</sup>

It is common for Algarvians to refer to their *terras*, in plural, when speaking about their land. That is because land is not only highly divided but also fragmented and dispersed, a pattern that some authors have termed “pulverization.”<sup>32</sup> In the 1910s, for example, Algarvian proprietors had in average 4.7 plots of land. This average varied from 2.6 plots per proprietor in Vila Real de Santo António to 14 plots in São Brás de Alportel.<sup>33</sup> Land was particularly fragmented and dispersed in the *Barrocal* and the *Serra*, where each property consisted of several plots located in different types of terrain. Both the characteristics of Algarvian

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<sup>29</sup> There are several anthropological studies and a few historical analyses about the relationship between inheritance, land property patterns, and household formation. Scholars, however, have devoted most of their attention to northern Portugal. See, for example, João de Pina Cabral, *Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve: The Peasant Worldview of the Alto Minho* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Brian Juan O’Neill, *Social Inequality in a Portuguese Hamlet: Land, Late Marriage, and Bastardy, 1870–1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Caroline Brettell, *Men Who Migrate, Women Who Wait: Population and History in a Portuguese Parish* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); idem, “Kinship and Contract”; Feijó, *Liberalismo e transformação social*; Brandão, *Terra, herança e família*; Jeffery Bentley, *Today There is No Misery: The Ethnography of Farming in Northwest Portugal* (Tucson: Arizona University Press, 1992); Armindo dos Santos, *Heranças: Estrutura agrária e sistema de parentesco numa aldeia da Beira Baixa* (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1992). An overview of some of these issues in relation to social reproduction can be found in João de Pina Cabral, *Os contextos da antropologia* (Lisbon: Difel, 1991), especially chaps. 5, 6, and 9. For a comparison between the north and the Alentejo, see Brian Juan O’Neill, “Family Cycles and Inheritance in Rural Portugal,” *Peasant Studies* 12, 3 (Spring 1985): 199–213.

<sup>30</sup> Weinholtz, *Memória*, 43 and passim; Poinsard, “Le Portugal,” 133, 140; Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 170, 177; Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l’Algarve*, 98 and passim; Ferro, *L’Algarve*, 178, 136, and passim; Cavaco, *O Algarve oriental*, passim; Bastos, *Os montes*, chap. 7. There were, however, a few exceptions to this general rule: Descamps mentions the existence of transmission of property to a preferred heir among the small farmers of Vila Real de Santo António with compensation to the other siblings (p. 178).

<sup>31</sup> Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 134.

<sup>32</sup> Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 134–6; Ferro, *L’Algarve*, 136 and chap. 5 in general; Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l’Algarve*, 98; Stanislawsky, *Portugal’s Other Kingdom*, 207–8; Bastos, *Os montes*, chap. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Melo and Belo, “O Algarve,” 41–3.

agriculture and the predominance of egalitarian inheritance contributed to this outcome. Dispersed property, however, was not something Algarvian farmers endured. On the contrary, access to different types of land was a cultural and ecological strategy deeply embedded in Algarvian farming practices.<sup>34</sup> Behind the dispersion of rural property lay the desire to have access to land of diverse nature and different yields. In the hilly and rocky lands of the *Barrocal* and the *Serra*, fragmentation was also an adaptation to the possibilities of the terrain and the limits it imposed to land clearing. This practice extended also to the tenants, who, as an agricultural study observed in the 1920s, did not like “to rent all the land in the same property.”<sup>35</sup>

The characteristics of land tenure influenced the patterns of land use and the organization of Algarvian agriculture. A symbiotic relationship developed between small and large farms as well as between irrigated and nonirrigated lands. The most common forms of land use were the *horta* and the *casal*—small properties that generally did not exceed two hectares—and the *quinta*, a medium-size farm.<sup>36</sup> The *lavoura*, a rural unit common in other regions of Portugal and consisting of large holdings, was rare in the Algarve. The *horta* and the *casal* were based on irrigated and nonirrigated farming, respectively. The latter, commonly known as *pomar de sequeiro* (dryland orchard), was the form of agricultural production that gave the Algarve its most distinctive feature in the Portuguese context. In these dry gardens, located mostly in the littoral and the *Barrocal*, farmers cultivated what geographer Orlando Ribeiro called the “Algarvian triad” of almonds, figs, and carob trees.<sup>37</sup> The farms of Conceição and Loulé visited by Léon Poincard and Paul Descamps and described at the beginning of this chapter illustrate this type of agriculture which predominated in the Algarve. On the opposite end of the spectrum, *quintas* constituted the largest type of landholding. These rural units were generally enclosed and their productive base was mixed, including gardens, cereals, fodder, and trees. Léon Poincard gives us a description of a *quinta* near Faro he visited in 1909, which he considered a good example “of what is called big

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<sup>34</sup> The same strategy has been identified in northwest Portugal. See Bentley, *Today There is No Misery*, 82–106 and *passim*.

<sup>35</sup> Melo and Belo, “O Algarve,” 46.

<sup>36</sup> Cabreira, *O Algarve económico*, 60–2.

<sup>37</sup> Orlando Ribeiro, *Portugal, o Mediterrâneo e o Atlântico: Esboço de relações geográficas*, 4th ed. (Lisbon: Sá da Costa Editora, 1986), 48.

estate in this region.”<sup>38</sup> Part of the land was farmed by the owner with a combination of fruit-bearing trees and interplanting of grains. The rest of the property, located on a plain, was rented in small plots to nearby farmers who grew potatoes, vegetables, and barley. Several wells provided irrigation using a *nora*, an ancient water-lifting device. It was common for larger properties to be divided into small plots cultivated by *rendeiros* (tenants). These *rendeiros* were usually small farmers who combined cultivation in their own land with work on rented plots. Some *quintas* also hired wage workers. Paul Descamps visited a *quinta* near São Brás de Alportel in 1930 that employed twelve agricultural workers and some artisans. This farm produced a great variety of fruit trees (mostly figs, almonds, carobs, oranges, and medlars) and some cereal (wheat, rye, and corn).<sup>39</sup>

Small farmers could not subsist on the production of their plots alone and had to find additional sources of income to support their households. This was especially necessary in the case of those farmers who owned only nonirrigated land. The strategies were varied: they rented *horta* land for irrigated cultivation, complemented their farming with nonagricultural activities, and migrated seasonally or on a more long-term basis. Migration was not only a way of complementing family resources, it also provided opportunities for savings which in time could translate in access to and diversification of rural property. An in-depth look at the parish level will provide a better understanding of the social and economic organization of rural Algarve and their connections with migration.

#### RURAL LIFE AND MIGRATION IN TWO ALGARVIAN PARISHES

The parishes of Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel are representative of rural life in the Algarve. As in other rural communities, people from these parishes used a variety of economic strategies that included labor migration. Migrants from Boliqueime, São Brás, and nearby parishes formed the majority of the Portuguese immigrants in the Argentine communities analyzed later in the book. Both parishes are located in the interior of the Algarve. Boliqueime is situated on the west of the county

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<sup>38</sup> Poinsard, “Le Portugal inconnu,” 132.

<sup>39</sup> Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 172–3.

of Loulé—12 kilometers from the town of Loulé and 24 kilometers from the city of Faro. Its territory lies almost entirely in the *Barrocal*, with some land on the plain near the coast. São Brás is located 16 kilometers north of Faro and approximately 14 kilometers east of Loulé. Its area combines terrains from the *Barrocal* and the *Serra*. The parish of Boliqueime is part of the county of Loulé (except for the period 1836 to 1855 when it was annexed to Albufeira). São Brás belonged to the county of Faro until 1914 when it became an independent, single-parish county.<sup>40</sup>

### *Population and Space*

The tendency in the Algarve, cautions Estanco Louro, is to “attribute to the Arabs everything that is old.”<sup>41</sup> Even though popular histories of Boliqueime and São Brás follow this general trend, there is no evidence of settlements in either parish during the period of Muslim rule. The origins of Boliqueime have also been linked to the activities of Italian tuna fishermen in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries who, having found a source of water in the area, called it Boliqueime or “abundant well.”<sup>42</sup> The earliest documented references to these parishes come from reports written by religious inspectors in the sixteenth century. São Brás is mentioned in a religious visit of 1517 as a hermitage built by the church of Santa Maria of Faro. Another visit, in 1565, estimated its population in 150 “parishioners” or a total of about 500 to 750 people. The parish of Boliqueime was also visited by religious inspectors in 1565, but there is no information about the number of inhabitants.<sup>43</sup> In a historical account of the Algarve written *circa* 1600, Henrique Serrão

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<sup>40</sup> There are two comprehensive studies of these parishes which were written at different periods and with different perspectives: Louro, *O livro de Alportel*; and Carminda Cavaco, “Paisagem e vida rural numa aldeia algarvia: Boliqueime” (bachelor’s thesis in Geographical Sciences, Universidade de Lisboa, 1960). Louro’s book on São Brás follows the Portuguese tradition of local monographs and incorporates an ethnographic perspective; Cavaco’s study of Boliqueime is written from the perspective of human geography.

<sup>41</sup> Louro, *O Livro de Alportel*, 53.

<sup>42</sup> Francisco Ataíde Oliveira, *Monografia do concelho de Loulé* (Porto: Typografia Universal, 1905; 3rd repr. Faro: Algarve em Foco Editora, 1989), 144; José Pedro Machado, *Ensaio sobre a toponímia do concelho de Loulé* (Lisbon: Sociedade de Língua Portuguesa, 1987), 12–3.

<sup>43</sup> Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 55–6, 66–9, 73–4; Oliveira, *Monografia do concelho de Loulé*, 144–5.



gave Boliqueime 140 “residents” and described São Brás as a place with a “large parish” of about 200 “residents.”<sup>44</sup>

The growth in population and its dissemination throughout the countryside resulted in the dispersed settlement pattern that characterizes the Algarve, particularly the *Barrocal*.<sup>45</sup> The first stages of population dispersion seem to have started after the Christian reconquest of the region from the Arabs in the thirteenth century, but the process developed largely during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, along with a decline in the old urban centers of the Algarve and a growing ruralization.<sup>46</sup> Population growth and dispersion continued during the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, with the clearing of land, the development of roads, and the division of property as a result of partible inheritance. Except for the head of the parishes—the towns of Boliqueime and São Brás—the population was not concentrated in villages but scattered throughout the hills and valleys in hamlets of variable size called *sítios*. São Brás had 57 *sítios* in 1850, 55 in 1911, and 54 in 1940. Boliqueime had 42 *sítios* in 1911 and 1940.<sup>47</sup> Both parishes had also a diverse number of isolated dwellings. The number of household varied among the different hamlets. For example, in 1911, in São Brás it ranged from 641 households in the town to only 3 in Pero Sancho; in Boliqueime it went from 92 households in Malhadais to only 2 in Estação (the area next to the railroad station). Even though São Brás

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<sup>44</sup> Henriques Fernandes Serrão, “História do Reino do Algarve,” in *Duas descrições do Reino do Algarve no século XVI*, ed. Manuel Viegas Guerreiro and Joaquim Romero Magalhães, *Cadernos da Revista de História Económica e Social*, 3 (Lisbon: Sá da Costa Editora, 1983), 162, 165.

<sup>45</sup> For an analysis of Algarvian patterns of settlement and the characteristics of the *sítios* or hamlets, see J. Leite de Vasconcellos, *Etnografia portuguesa: Tentamente de sistematização* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1980 [orig. 1936]), 2:265–71. See also Prista, “Sítios do Alto Barrocal”; Bastos, *Os montes*.

<sup>46</sup> Stanislawski, *Portugal's Other Kingdom*, 170–2; Magalhães, *O Algarve económico*, 125–31. Geographers describe this process as interspersed or “intercalary” dispersion. Unlike the old pattern of population dispersion of northwest Portugal, which goes back to the decline of the Luso-Roman populations, in rural Algarve, dispersion developed later among several important and long-established urban centers: Tavira, Faro, and Portimão, on the coast, and Loulé, in the interior. See Orlando Ribeiro, *Geografia de Portugal*, vol. 5 of *Península Ibérica*, ed. Manuel de Terán (Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, 1955), 305–13, and Ferro, *L'Algarve*, 75–105.

<sup>47</sup> Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 125; Portugal, Ministério das Finanças, Direcção Geral da Estatística, 4ª Repartição, *Censo da população de Portugal no 1º de Dezembro de 1911* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1926); Portugal, Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *VIII Recenseamento geral da população*, vol. 9, Distrito de Faro (Lisbon: Sociedade Astória Limitada, 1944). Some *sítios* are listed together in some years causing a decrease in the total number.

has some hamlets in the *Serra*, in both parishes most of the hamlets were located in the medium-size hills of the *Barrocal*.

The social space of Boliqueime and São Brás had the parish as the main center, but not as an exclusive or closed one. The type of settlement pattern, the existence of major routes that connected the area with regional and national centers, and the lack of major geographical barriers contributed to foster contacts among the people of the parishes and with the outside world. In addition, as a result of the dispersion of property, farmers had to move around a great deal to work in their plots which were often located far away, even in other parishes. Villagers also traveled regularly to sell and buy products in the markets and fairs of nearby towns. By looking at the geographical origins of the people who married in both villages, it is possible to gauge the nature of social interaction among parishioners (Table 2.1).<sup>48</sup> The majority of the spouses were residents in the same parish and a small proportion lived in nearby parishes. Following the custom of celebrating the wedding in the village of the wife and not of the husband, the proportion of nonresidents was higher among the grooms. Between 1878 and 1920, 22.7 percent of the grooms and 5.6 percent of the brides in Boliqueime were outside residents; in São Brás, the same was true for 12.0 percent of the grooms and 4.1 percent of the brides. In the case of Boliqueime, the neighboring parishes of Paderne, Albufeira, São Sebastião de Loulé, Quarteira, and Alte represented about 80 percent of the nonresident grooms and 86 percent of the brides. In São Brás, the bordering parishes of Santa Bárbara, Estoi, São Clemente de Loulé, Salir, Santa Catarina, Cachopo, and Querença represented 60 percent of the nonresident grooms and more than 90 percent of the nonresident brides. Interaction within these spaces, built on marriage, kinship, and other socioeconomic ties,

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<sup>48</sup> Scholars have been using the geographical origin of spouses to analyze the characteristics of social spaces in rural Europe for some time. For some examples as well as discussions about the benefits and shortcomings of this approach, see Marcel Jolivet, "L'utilisation des lieux de naissance pour l'analyse de l'espace social d'un village," *Revue Française de Sociologie* 6, numéro spécial (1965): 74–95; Alain Morel, "L'espace social d'un village picard," *Études Rurales* 45 (Jan.–Mar. 1972): 62–80; P. E. Ogden, "Expression spatiale des contacts humains et changement de la société: L'exemple de l'Ardeche," *Revue de Géographie de Lyon* 49 (1974): 191–209; P. J. Perry, "Mariage et distance dans le canton du Bleyard (Lozère) 1811–1820 et 1891–1900," *Études Rurales* 67 (July–Sept. 1977): 61–70; H. Balfet et al., *Pratiques et représentations de l'espace dans les communautés méditerranéennes* (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1976). For the case of the Algarve, see Bastos, *Os montes*, chap. 4.

Table 2.1: Residence of Out-of-Town Spouses in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel, 1878–1920  
(Percentages as a total of non-residents)

Boliqeime			São Brás de Alportel		
Parish, county	Groom	Bride	Parish, county	Groom	Bride
Paderne, Albufeira	26.1	29.3	Santa Bárbara, Faro	15.2	45.0
São Sebastião, Loulé (including Quarteira)*	24.0 (5.1)	27.6 (12.1)	Estoi, Faro	9.3	20.0
Albufeira, Albufeira	21.0	25.9	São Clemente, Loulé	10.2	2.5
Alte, Loulé	8.1	3.4	Santa Catarina, Tavira	9.3	2.5
Loulé (other)	3.4	1.7	Faro (urban parishes)	9.3	—
Algôs, Silves	2.6	—	Salir, Loulé	7.6	17.5
Guia, Albufeira	2.6	1.7	Cachopo, Tavira	4.2	5.0
Almancil, Loulé	2.1	1.7	Olhão, Olhão	4.2	—
Faro (urban parishes)	1.7	3.4	Querença, Loulé	4.2	—
Other Algarve	5.6	5.2	Moncarapacho, Olhão	3.4	2.5
Outside Algarve	1.7	—	Loulé (other)	3.4	—
			Santo Estevão, Tavira	2.5	—
Total % of non-residents	22.7	5.6	Other Algarve	11.0	5.0
Total % of residents	77.3	94.4	Outside Algarve	1.7	—
			Unclassifiable	4.2	—
			Total % of non-residents	12.0	4.1
			Total % of residents	88.0	95.9

\* São Sebastião became a separate parish in 1891 as a result of the division of the parish of São Clemente. Quarteira became an autonomous parish in 1916.

Sources: Livros de casamentos, São Brás de Alportel, 1878–1889, Registo Paroquial, ADF; Livros mistos (baptismos, casamentos, óbitos), São Sebastião de Boliqueime, 1878–1889, Registo Paroquial, ADF; Livros de casamentos, 1890–1911, Arquivo da Conservatória do Registo Civil do Concelho de São Brás de Alportel; Livros mistos (baptismos, casamentos, óbitos), São Sebastião de Boliqueime, 1890–1911, Arquivo da Conservatória do Registo Civil do Concelho de Loulé; APSBS, Livros de casamentos, 1911–1920; Livros mistos (baptismos, casamentos, óbitos), 1911–1920, APSSB.

These figures are from a 10 percent random sample.

influenced the formation of social networks that were important in the development of patterns of migration.

### *Economy*

Farming was the base of economic life in both parishes. A geographic dictionary published in 1873 describes Boliqueime as “a land rich in grains, wine, figs, olive oil, almonds, and carobs”; and São Brás as a parish that had “very good wine, excellent oranges, and other products.”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Augusto Leal, *Portugal antigo e moderno: Dicionário geographico, estatístico, chorographico, heraldico, archeologico, histórico, biographico e etymológico de todas as*

The bulk of the agriculture in both parishes consisted in the typical products of the *pomar de sequeiro*, but farmers practiced diversified agriculture by combining the production of unirrigated and irrigated lands. In Boliqueime, cereals were a secondary crop and irrigated gardening gained some importance after the 1940s.<sup>50</sup> In São Brás, there were variations according to the type of terrain: in the 1920s, fruit trees covered roughly half of the *Barrocal* land, with another quarter devoted to grains, and the rest to secondary products; in the *Serra*, more than a third of the productive area was covered with trees (mostly holm oaks and cork oaks), a similar proportion was left fallow, and less than twenty percent was cultivated with grains.<sup>51</sup>

Following the general pattern in the region, access to land was widespread and property was fragmented and dispersed. In São Brás, in 1918, each tax payer had an average of 14 plots of land and the average rural property was 0.81 hectares.<sup>52</sup> Similar information is unavailable for Boliqueime at the time, but in 1950, each household had an average of 5.4 plots of land, and 91 percent of the properties were less than 1 hectare and 72 percent were less than 0.5 hectares.<sup>53</sup> Of course, there were differences in the distribution of land. Some farmers had many plots while others had a small piece of land surrounding their houses. Farmers worked their land with their families. Sharecropping was limited and, in small- and medium-sized farms, external workers were used only in rare occasions, such as when the men were absent. These temporary workers were generally small farmers themselves. As Estanco Louro explains for the case of São Brás:

Direct, resident, and family-based cultivation is the only stable form of farming. In the majority of the cases, the family alone is enough for farming, which follows, without many changes, a tradition that is certainly millenarian. Only in extreme instances would a family resort to workers; this being more frequent among the emigrant families. And these workers

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*ciudades, villas e freguezias de Portugal e de grande número de aldeias* (Lisbon: Livraria Editora de Mattos Moreira & Companhia, 1873), 1:163, s.v. "Alportel." A century earlier, another geographic dictionary described São Brás as a "poor place" with "few products of any kind" except for a fair production of wine. See Padre Luis Cardoso, *Dicionário geográfico ou notícia histórica de todas as cidades, villas, lugares e aldeias, rios, ribeiras e serras dos Reynos de Portugal e Algarve, com todas as cousas raras que nelles se encontrão, assim antigas, como modernas* (Lisbon: Regia Offic. Silviana, 1747–1751), 1:361, s. v. "Alportel."

<sup>50</sup> This presentation of the economic and social characteristics of Boliqueime follows Cavaco, "Paisagem."

<sup>51</sup> Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 132–9.

<sup>52</sup> Melo and Belo, "O Algarve," 41.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

are, in general, farmers with little land, which is not enough to absorb all their work.<sup>54</sup>

Following arrangements typical of rural Algarve as a whole, the farmers from these parishes also sought to diversify the production of their land by renting other plots. For example, the farmers from Boliqueime and other parishes of the counties of Loulé and Faro took advantage of the well-watered land of the Quinta de Quarteira, rich with numerous springs and easily accessible subsoil water. A *morgado* (entailed property) created by an official grant from King Dom Diniz in 1297, in the nineteenth century this 2,000 hectare estate was in the hands of the Counts of Azambuja.<sup>55</sup> Farmers rented small plots called *quartos* through long-term leases (*foros*) that lasted generally ten years and were usually renewed several times. In fact, it was common for farmers to pass these leases from one generation to another within the same family. In the fertile gardens of the *quartos* of Quarteira, farmers cultivated wheat, corn, sweet potatoes, beans, tomatoes, cabbages, and other crops. Intended for household consumption, this production allowed them to complement the family economy and diversify their diet.<sup>56</sup>

Even though industrial activities were limited in rural Algarve, in São Brás several local entrepreneurs developed a dynamic industry for the processing of cork bark. Some of the cork was extracted in the Algarvian *Serra*, but the bulk of it originated in other regions. Teams of men from São Brás and from other parishes in the counties of Loulé and Faro migrated every year to extract cork in the groves of the Alentejo, Estremadura, and Beira Baixa. The processing centers of São Brás were small factories that produced cork squares, sheets, and bottle stoppers. This activity provided work for a part of the parish population and also attracted outside labor, particularly skilled workers from other cork centers in the Algarve, such as Silves and Faro. In 1917, there were over 20 cork processing factories in São Brás that employed about 300 workers; by 1930, the number of factories had doubled, but they only employed 172 workers. With the decline of this local industry in the

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>55</sup> Leal, *Portugal antigo e moderno*, 8:7–9, s.v. “Quarteira”; Lopes, *Corografia*, 307–9.

<sup>56</sup> Cavaco, “Paisagem,” 49, 109–12, 133–42. In the 1980s, all this area was radically transformed with the creation of Vilamoura, Portugal’s biggest private tourist resort. Vegetable gardening succumbed to real estate speculation, and summer villas and golf courses rose near the ocean where farmers had tilled their *quartos* for generations.

early twentieth century as a result of the lack of direct transportation to the industrial centers, most cork industrialists from São Brás moved their activities to the southern side of the Tagus estuary, particularly to Setúbal which, by 1930 concentrated over 3,800 cork workers.<sup>57</sup>

In Boliqueime, industrial alternatives were reduced to home-based crafts performed almost entirely by women, an activity known as *empreita*—so termed because it was customarily paid as piecework labor. The most significant of these domestic crafts was the plaiting of palm fibers for items such as baskets, hats, and rush mats.<sup>58</sup> Merchants from Loulé imported the raw material from Andalusia and sold it to women throughout the county. The production cycle came to a full circle when the merchants bought the finished products from the women. Some works were also sold in Loulé's market and in the annual fairs of Boliqueime and other towns. During the months of September and October, the women of Boliqueime and surrounding parishes also worked selecting and packing almonds and figs in the *fumeiros*—workshops owned by local merchants and whose production was sold to urban centers and to external markets.<sup>59</sup>

The different economic characteristics of Boliqueime and São Brás are reflected in the occupational profile of both parishes' population (Tables 2.2 and 2.3). Whereas in Boliqueime, around 85 percent of the men were occupied in farming activities, the same was true for about

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<sup>57</sup> Portugal, Ministério do Trabalho, Direcção Geral do Trabalho, Repartição Técnica do Trabalho, 2ª Secção, *Boletim do trabalho industrial* N° 116, Estatística industrial, ano de 1917 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1926), 11–2, 60–1; Portugal, Ministério do Comércio e Comunicações, Direcção Geral das Indústrias, 2ª Repartição Industrial, 2ª Secção, *Boletim do trabalho industrial*, N° 150, “Registo do trabalho nacional, Estatística dos estabelecimentos industriais e pessoal empregado referido a 31 de Dezembro de 1930” (Lisbon: Emilio Braga, 1931), 28–9, 44–5, 89–90, 104–5. For an overview of the cork industry in São Brás and the Algarve, see Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 129–30, 146–7, 169, 388; Dan Stanislawski, *Portugal's Other Kingdom*, 190; José de Oliveira Machado, “A indústria corticeira no Algarve: Razões do declínio das actividades preparadora e transformadora,” in *4º Congresso do Algarve: Textos das comunicações* (n.p., [1986]), 2:1049–66; Emanuel Andrade C. Sancho, “A industria corticeira no Algarve: O caso de S. Brás de Alportel,” in Marques, *O Algarve*, 424–7. For an analysis of industrial growth and urbanization in the south bank of the Tagus, see Maria Alfreda da Cruz, *A margem sul do estuário do Tejo: Factores e formas de organização do espaço* (Montijo: n.p., 1973).

<sup>58</sup> Lopes, *Corografia*, 151–4, 313; Henry Frederick Link, *Travels in Portugal, and Through France and Spain*, trans. John Hinckley (London: T. N. Longman and Q. Rees, 1801), 444–5; Bonnet, *Memoire*, 108; Cavaco, “Paisagem,” 161–3.

<sup>59</sup> Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 176, 276. Decamps describes cases in Loulé and Albufeira. For Boliqueime, my information comes from conversations with local people. I was told of at least one local merchant who regularly hired local women for this task.

Table 2.2: Occupations of Male Head of Households in Boliqueime (Percentages)

Occupation	1895	1910
Trabalhadores	36.1	51.4
Proprietários	47.8	37.2
Artisans/skilled workers	8.7	5.6
Masons	2.2	0.9
Shoemakers	2.1	1.8
Others	4.4	2.8
Others	7.4	5.8
Cart drivers	1.3	1.0
Merchants	1.2	0.8
Poor	2.4	0.7
Others	2.5	3.4
(Number)	(912)	(1,146)

Source: Róis dos confessados, 1895, 1910, APSSB.

Table 2.3: Occupations of the Grooms and Fathers at the Time of Marriage in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel, 1878–1920 (Percentages)

Occupation	Boliqeime		São Brás
	Grooms	Fathers	Grooms
Trabalhadores	55.3	35.0	50.1
Proprietários	30.0	56.7	27.2
Artisans/skilled workers	7.3	6.1	13.3
Carpenters	1.0	1.0	0.2
Masons	0.7	1.5	2.8
Millers	1.0	0.3	0.2
Shoemakers	1.9	1.3	2.8
Stonemasons	—	0.2	2.1
Taylors	0.9	0.7	0.1
Cork workers	—	—	2.8
Others	1.8	1.1	1.4
Others	7.3	2.2	9.4
Cart drivers	0.5	1.0	0.4
Industrialists	—	—	0.7
Maritime workers	0.7	0.3	0.3
Merchants	0.8	0.5	2.3
Railroad workers	2.7	—	—
Others	2.6	0.4	5.7
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0
(Number)	(982)	(1,230)	(1,159)
(Unknown)	(126)	(986)	(40)

Source: Sample of marriage records, 1878–1930. See Table 2.1.

77 percent of the men in São Brás. Shoemakers and masons predominated among the artisans in Boliqueime. Other groups worth noting were merchants, cart-drivers, and railroad workers. On the other hand, the occupational profile of the population of São Brás was more varied. In São Brás, there was also an important group of artisans and skilled workers. Among the latter, the most significant group was represented by those working in the important cork industry. Finally, São Brás' urban center, the *vila*, was bigger than the *aldeia* of Boliqueime, and that is also reflected in the higher proportion of merchants, as well as in the presence of industrialists, clerical employees, and other urban occupations. In all likelihood the artisans and small merchants of both parishes combined their crafts with some farming.

### *Social Groups*

The regular coexistence of agricultural production and wage employment makes the Algarve a clear example of a peasant-worker society.<sup>60</sup> According to historical records and common usage, two occupations predominated in the countryside: *proprietários* (proprietors) and *trabalhadores* (workers or laborers). For most Algarvians, however, these were not exclusive but overlapping categories: *trabalhadores* were not landless laborers but small proprietors, and both groups resorted to complementary activities and wage work. The examples presented at the beginning of this chapter illustrate this combination. Several observers noted the elusiveness of these categories: Léon Poincard talks about the "market-gardener/daylaborer" of the littoral, Paul Descamps identifies the "laborers-proprietors" of the *Barrocal*, Estanco Louro refers to the rural inhabitants of São Brás as "proprietors-proletarians," and Carminda Cavaco characterizes the rural dwellers of Boliqueime as "proprietors-daylaborers."<sup>61</sup> The fluidity of sociooccupational categories in the rural world of the Algarve is also illustrated in the shift from *proprietários* to *trabalhadores* as the major single occupational group in the confessional rolls of Boliqueime from 1895 to 1910 (Table 2.2). The same person could appear either as *proprietário* or *trabalhador* in

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<sup>60</sup> For a discussion of this concept, see Douglas Holmes, *Cultural Disenchantments: Worker Peasantries in Northeast Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>61</sup> Poincard, "Le Portugal inconnu," 131–5; Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 175–7; Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 142; Cavaco, "Paisagem," 30.



different occasions and for different listings.<sup>62</sup> Further, since property was inherited and divided after the death of both parents, the sociooccupational category of a person commonly changed during the person's life course. Table 2.3 presents two patterns that illustrate this situation in the case of Boliqueime. First, marriage records show that the children of *proprietários*' families were very often considered *trabalhadores*. Among the single sons of *proprietários* who married in this parish between 1878 and 1930, roughly half appeared as *proprietários* and half as *trabalhadores*. Second, the proportion of *trabalhadores* and *proprietários* changes—and it is almost the opposite—depending on whether one considers the occupations of the grooms or the occupations of the couples' fathers. Whereas most of the fathers were *proprietários*, most of the grooms were *trabalhadores*.

The widespread access to land and resulting fluidity of sociooccupational categories notwithstanding, rural Algarve was not devoid of social differences. On one hand, both parishes had some people without land or other means of subsistence. For instance, in 1895, 2.2 percent of the head of households of Boliqueime (22 men and 2 women) were listed in the confessional rolls as poor. In the case of São Brás, Estanco Louro mentions the existence of four to six people begging daily in the countryside in the 1920s.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, there were a few households in both parishes with enough resources to have servants. In Boliqueime, 7 households had servants in 1895 (0.6 percent of all households) and 2 in 1910 (0.1 percent); in São Brás, 62 households had servants in 1890 (2.8 percent), but only 19 (0.6 percent) in 1917.<sup>64</sup>

If households headed by people identified as poor and households with servants serve to illustrate both ends of the social spectrum in Boliqueime and São Brás, it is clear that neither of them represented a large segment of the social fabric of these societies. Most people had access to some land which constituted the main base of their livelihood. Of course, there were variations among the *proprietários* as well. For

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<sup>62</sup> This fluidity is related to the construction of identities and the existence of different types of communities which are the result of internal relationships as well as between the local population and the external authorities (state, church). For an insightful discussion of these relationships and the sources for the study of rural communities in Portugal, see Maria de Fátima Brandão and Rui Graça Feijó, "Entre textos e contextos: Os estudos de comunidade e as suas fontes históricas," *Análise Social* 20, 83 (1984): 489–503.

<sup>63</sup> Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 180–1.

<sup>64</sup> Calculations based on the parishes' confessional rolls. Róis dos confessados, 1895 and 1910, APSSB; Róis dos confessados, 1890 and 1917, APSBA.

example, the overwhelming majority of the voters in the electoral rolls of 1910 were listed as *proprietários* (93.4 percent in the case of Boliqueime and 82.9 percent in São Brás), but a closer look at their activities and wealth reveals a more heterogeneous group. Land taxes represented the major basis of taxation in both parishes—especially in Boliqueime, where they represented 81.4 percent of the total taxes, compared to 53 percent in São Brás, showing the greater economic diversity of the latter. Consequently, the majority of the *proprietários* paid only land taxes (more than 88 percent in Boliqueime and almost 65 percent in São Brás). Among the *proprietários* listed in 1910 it is possible to find extreme examples like Manuel Dourado, with a total taxation of 119,062 réis (and a diversified economic base that included land, industrial, rent, and interests taxes), and José Nunes, who paid 511 réis of land taxes, both in São Brás; or Francisco Coelho, from Boliqueime, who paid 61,656 réis for a combination of land, industrial, and interests taxes, and his fellow villager Francisco Rodrigues, who paid 717 réis in land taxes. These examples show the opposite ends within this group. The great majority, however, were farmers of modest means: in 1910, over three-quarters of them paid taxes for less than 6,000 réis.<sup>65</sup>

Social stratification did exist in these parishes, but the population was not polarized into contrasting social classes. There was not, for example, a small class of big landowners and a majority of laborers, as was the case in the Alentejo, or a group of wealthy landowning families coexisting with a majority of landed peasants, as was true in many places of the North.<sup>66</sup> In the Algarve, widespread access to the land resulted

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<sup>65</sup> Recenseamento eleitoral dos cidadãos eleitores e elegíveis para cargos administrativos d'este concelho de Loulé, June 30, 1910, Fundo Câmara Municipal de Loulé, AHML; Recenseamento eleitoral do concelho de Faro, June 30, 1910, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF. The electoral rolls provide a listing of the individuals qualified to be electors and to be elected for administrative office. Therefore, not all the population of the parishes is represented in these rolls. Only men over 21 who were head of households or literate, or had a minimum taxation of 500 réis, were qualified to vote at that time. The taxation base was twice as high until 1895 (a minimum income of 100,000 réis, that is approximately 1,000 réis of taxation). Minimum taxation disappeared as qualification to vote during the First Republic, with the Electoral Law of 1911. See Marques, *History of Portugal*, 2:48, 160.

<sup>66</sup> For a discussion of social stratification in the Alentejo, see the classic anthropological study by José Cutileiro, *A Portuguese Rural Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). For northwestern Portugal, see Brandão, *Terra, herança e família*, especially chap. 4; Brettell, *Men Who Migrate*, chap. 2; Feijó, *Liberalismo e transformação social*, chap. 2; Bentley, *Today There is No Misery*; Cabral, *Sons of Adam*; idem, *Os contextos*, passim. For the northeast, see O'Neill, *Social Inequality*.

in a population composed mostly of small and medium farmers. It was a world of peasants-workers in which the domestic group was the primary unit of the rural economy. As Cristiana Bastos explains, in the Algarve “it is not horizontal social groups that are important but the family groups that farm the small plots of land—either as proprietors or as tenants. Work is not salaried but domestic. The group that one belongs to as a result of one’s position in the production is not that of the peers, but the immediate family.”<sup>67</sup>

### *Domestic Groups*

Demographers and social historians classify Portuguese households in two main regional systems: the southern system, prevalent in the Algarve, Alentejo, and Beira Baixa; and the northern system, typical of Minho, parts of Trás-os-Montes and Beira Alta, and Beira Litoral.<sup>68</sup> The first system is characterized by a high proportion of simple family households and neolocal household formation—that is, the creation of an independent household after marriage. The general features of this system are apparent in the household structure of Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel. In both parishes the formation of a new family led to the constitution of a new household. As a consequence, simple family households constituted between 83 and 89 percent of the domestic groups (see Table 2.4). These figures are consistent with

<sup>67</sup> Bastos, *Os montes*, 139.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Rowland, “Sistemas familiares e padrões demográficos em Portugal: Questões para uma investigação comparada,” *Ler História* 3 (1984): 13–32; idem, “Demographic Patterns and Rural Society in Portugal: Implications of Some Recent Research,” *Sociologia Ruralis* 26, 1 (1986): 36–47; idem, “Sistemas matrimoniales en la Península Ibérica (siglos XVI–XIX): Una perspectiva regional,” in *Demografía histórica en España*, ed. Vicente Pérez Moreda and David-Sven Reher (Madrid: Fundación Ortega y Gasset–Ediciones El Arquero, 1988), 72–137; idem, *População, família, sociedade: Portugal, séculos XIX–XX* (Oeiras: Celta Editora, 1997). The household typology used by Rowland and by most scholars is based mainly on the work of Peter Laslett and the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. See Peter Laslett, “Introduction: The History of the Family,” in *Household and Family in Past Time*, ed. Peter Laslett, with the assistance of Richard Wall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 1–89. For general overviews of the history of the family and of household formation in Portugal and southern Europe, see David Kertzer and Caroline Brettell, “Advances in Italian and Iberian Family History,” *Journal of Family History* 12, 1–3 (1987): 87–120; William Douglass, “Iberian Family History,” *Journal of Family History* 13, 1 (1988): 1–12; Cabral, *Os contextos*, 109–59, 213–39; and Mário Leston Bandeira, *Demografia e modernidade: Família e transição demográfica em Portugal* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1996).

available information for other Algarvian parishes.<sup>69</sup> Married couples with children represented the most important single form of domestic organization, accounting for more than a half of all households.<sup>70</sup> The occupation of the head of the household was not a significant variable for determining household structure. In the case of Boliqueime, where there is information to test that relationship, households headed by *trabalhadores* or *proprietários*—the dominant occupations—presented little variations in their composition.

In contrast to the first system, the main traits of the northern system were a high proportion of complex households (stem families), a pattern of patrilocal residence for the heir after marriage (residence in the parents' home), and restrictions to marriage for the remaining children. Other distinctive features of this regional household system stressed by most studies include a widespread access to land and a restrictive inheritance system, which they commonly link to the high rates of migration in the northwest since the eighteenth century.<sup>71</sup> The main objective of most landowning families in northwest Portugal was to preserve their resources across generations. To that effect, families took advantage of the legal provisions on partible inheritance and tended to favor one heir with a larger share of the inheritance. Nonfavored heirs could choose to establish their own households with fewer resources or to remain in the original household headed by another sibling—in many cases without marrying. Among other consequences, this practice resulted in a high

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<sup>69</sup> Cristiana Bastos, "The Northeastern Algarve and the Southern Iberia Family Pattern," *Journal of Family History* 13, 1 (1988): 115–6; Robert Rowland, "Sistemas familiares," 18, 24. Except for Bastos' study, and two examples presented by Rowland from the parishes of Quelfes in 1835 and Moncarapacho in 1545, both in the county of Olhão, there are no other local studies of household structure for the Algarve. These studies show similar patterns of household distribution.

<sup>70</sup> The difference between married couples alone (3a) and married couples with children (3b) in Boliqueime, in 1895, is certainly due to the fact that children under 8 years were not always reported by the priests because they were not required to fulfill Easter obligations.

<sup>71</sup> Studies about household formation in the Northwest note the existence of a system based on a high proportion of complex households and its relationship with the practice of a preferred heir within the legal framework of the partible inheritance. In addition to the articles of Robert Rowland cited above, see Feijó, *Liberalismo e transformação social*, 63–76; Brandão, *Terra, herança e família*, passim; Brettell, *Men Who Migrate*, 42–58, 147–65; and Cabral, *Sons of Adam*, 37–81. For the Northeast, see O'Neill, *Social Inequality*. Of course, the relationship is not a simple one, and these authors acknowledge and discuss its nuances. For a discussion of the relevant literature, see Brandão's *Terra, herança e família*, 185–201; Cabral, *Os contextos*, 136–59, 213–39; and Bandeira, *Demografia e modernidade*, chap. 3.

proportion of celibacy and illegitimate births, as well as in an important number of extended households. Another option for nonfavored heirs, particularly for men, was to migrate. In this way, migration became a central strategy in the reproduction of the family's patrimony.<sup>72</sup>

The underlying assumption among scholars is that the situation was totally different in "the South," where the family system was based on simple households. Moreover, the argument goes, the preservation of the family's patrimony was not a major concern because the majority of the population had no land, and emigration was not important.<sup>73</sup> But the Algarve does not fit into this description. In this region, the nuclear family pattern was predominant, land was widely available and highly fragmented, and migration was extensive. The Algarvian case also shows that generalized access to land was not necessarily connected to complex family households.<sup>74</sup> Hence, unlike northern Portugal, in the Algarve widespread access to land and property fragmentation coexisted with a dominant pattern of nuclear family households and a strict compliance with the principle of partible inheritance. In addition, migration played an important role in the household economy.

Of course, family relationships were not confined to the limits of the house.<sup>75</sup> Even though the majority of the domestic groups in the Algarve lived in simple family households, their members were connected to others by kinship ties and by other primary relationships. Several channels also linked the different domestic groups through the

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<sup>72</sup> For an excellent analysis of this issue, see Brandão, *Terra, herança e família*; idem, "O bom migrante à casa torna?" in Silva et al., *Emigração/Imigração*, 163–83; and Feijó, *Liberalismo e transformação social*, chap. 2.

<sup>73</sup> It is interesting to note some parallels with the Italian case, in which it is very common to contrast the north of the country, with extensive landed peasantry (in addition to a more developed industrial base), and the south, characterized by large landholdings and landless laborers. Regarding emigration, scholars have related those contrasting socioeconomic characteristics with high levels of migration in the north and lower levels of migration, as well as higher levels of popular mobilization, in the south. This apparent division, however, has been the object of debate and revisions in the last decades. For a traditional interpretation, see John MacDonald, "Agricultural Organization, Migration, and Labour Militancy in Rural Italy," *Economic History Review*, 2 Series, 16 (1963): 61–75, and other works by John and Leatrice MacDonald. For a critique of that position, see Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants*.

<sup>74</sup> Bastos, "The Northeastern Algarve," 111–22.

<sup>75</sup> For a discussion about the relationship between household and family, see David Kertzer, "Household History and Sociological Theory," *Annual Review of Sociology* 17 (1991): 155–79; Martine Segalen, *Historical Anthropology of the Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Tamara Hareven, *Families, History, and Social Change: Life-Course and Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000). For a discussion of these topics and the general debate on primary social units in Portugal and Europe, see Cabral, *Os contextos*, 109–59, 213–39.

Table 2.4: Household Types in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel (Percentages)

Household Type	Boliqume		São Brás	
	1895	1910	1890	1917
1. Solitaires	12.3	10.9	11.0	8.1
a) Widow/Widower	10.3	8.0	8.8	5.4
b) Others	2.0	2.9	3.0	1.1
2. Coresident Singles	1.4	1.4	1.9	0.7
3. Simple Family Households	83.1	85.5	83.6	89.0
a) Married Couple Alone	26.8	17.4	12.0	21.6
b) Married Couple with Children	43.8	55.6	60.1	53.9
c) Widower with Children	3.2	3.5	2.5	2.4
d) Widow with Children	9.0	8.5	8.5	9.5
h) Others	0.3	0.5	0.5	1.6
4. Extended Family Households	3.0	2.0	3.3	2.1
5. Multiple Family Households	0.1	—	0.1	—
6. Undetermined	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
(Number)	(1,117)	(1,175)	(1,384)	(2,231)

Notes:

Totals may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Since children younger than 8 years-old were not always included in the confessional rolls, the numbers of 3.b households was probably higher.

Household typology based on a combination of Rowland, “Sistemas familiares”; Brettell, *Men Who Migrate*, 150–2; Feijó, *Liberalismo*, 72–3; and Brandão, *Terra*, 236. These authors have adapted the typology developed by Peter Laslett and the Cambridge Group to the Portuguese case. See, Laslett, “Introduction.”

Sources: Róis dos Confessados, 1895, 1910, APSSB; Róis dos Confessados, 1890, 1917, APSBS.

sharing of daily activities and rural tasks; through exchanges of labor and services, such as the traditional *tornas* and *ajudadas*; and through participation in special occasions, such as the annual slaughter of the pig.<sup>76</sup> Relationships between kin and neighbors formed social networks that became instrumental in the process of migration and gained new meaning with it.

<sup>76</sup> Cristiana Bastos underlines the relationships between parents and children and siblings of different households in the parishes of the northeast, and Pedro Prista notes the existence of exchange of labor, services, and resources among “neighbors and kin-neighbors” of the parish of Querença, north of Loulé. Bastos, *Os montes*, 181–2; Prista, “Sítios,” 98.

Table 2.5: Absentees from Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel (Percentages)

Place and Year	Individuals		Households with absentees	
	N	% Population	N	% Households
Boliqeime				
1889	75	2.2	n/d	n/d
1895	54	1.5	42	3.8
1901	36	0.9	28	2.4
1909	332	7.8	250	18.4
1910	322	6.9	253	18.4
1912	468	8.3	344	23.8
1913	600	10.3	504	34.4
1915	464	9.2	n/d	n/d
1920	334	n/d	252	n/d
São Brás				
1890	31	0.3	27	1.2
1899	107	1.2	95	3.6
1907	243	2.0	205	7.8
1917	552	5.4	451	15.6
1920	523	n/d	437	15.3

Sources: Róis dos Confessados, APSSB and APSBA.

### *Migration as a Family Strategy*

Migration was a labor alternative that attracted a significant proportion of rural households in the Algarve. It was common for members of Algarvian families to work outside their towns for variable periods of time in order to contribute with extra income and save money to secure a better situation for the family or to form a new one. According to the information included in the confessional rolls that local priests compiled each year around Easter, during the peak period of overseas migration right before the onset of World War I, between a quarter and a third of all the households of Boliqueime had members with temporary residence outside the parish. And even in 1917, after the first wave of overseas migration was over, more than 15 percent of the households of São Brás had at least one person living temporarily outside the parish. The proportion of households with migrants surely

increased during the 1920s, when a second phase of high international migration took place (Table 2.5).<sup>77</sup>

Migration was a family strategy—that is, the result of a family’s “ability to identify opportunities, mobilize resources, and take advantage of them”—but one in which both collective and individual objectives coexisted.<sup>78</sup> Unlike in other places in Europe where migration was common among rural families, in the Algarve maintaining the family patrimony across generations was not the main objective of this strategy.<sup>79</sup> The goals of migration changed over the life-course of the individuals and the life-cycle of the households.<sup>80</sup> At different times, different family members worked outside the home to pool resources for the well-being of the family as a whole, or to save money to get married and form a new family unit. Key tactical decisions in this strategy included determining who would migrate, to which destination, and for how long. The most common practice among migrant families in Boliqueime was for their older sons to work outside the parish—either alone, with other siblings, or in the company of their fathers. In 1920, the sons of migrant families were about 70 percent of all the absent people of Boliqueime. Likewise in São Brás, they represented about half of the absentees in 1917. With the money earned as migrant workers, these young men

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<sup>77</sup> Local priests collected information at the household level each year around Easter. Their objective was to keep track of whether the adult population complied with the Easter obligations of confession and communion. It was common for priests to close each confessional roll with general remarks about the religious state of the parish, the fervor of the parishioners (or lack thereof), and the reasons that may have caused some of them not to fulfill their annual religious duties. In addition to recurrent remarks about the handful of “rebels” who did not follow the rules of the Catholic faith, the confessional rolls of Boliqueime and São Brás contain regular references to parishioners who were working temporarily outside the parishes.

<sup>78</sup> Laurel Cornell, “Where Can Family Strategies Exist?” *Historical Methods* 20, 3 (Summer 1987): 123. See also Leslie Page Moch, “Historians and Family Strategies”; Nancy Folbre, “Family Strategy, Feminist Strategy”; Daniel Scott Smith, “Family Strategy: More Than a Metaphor?”; and Louise Tilly, “Beyond Family Strategies, What?”; all in the same forum on “Family Strategy: A Dialogue,” *Historical Methods* 20, 3 (Summer 1987): 113–125.

<sup>79</sup> Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 14, 36–40; Feijó, *Liberalismo e transformação social*; Brandão, *Terra, herança e família*.

<sup>80</sup> Jan Kok, “Revealing Family Strategies Using Life Course Analysis,” *Economic and Social History of The Netherlands* 6 (1994): 109–27; Phyllis Moen and Elaine Wethington, “The Concept of Family Adaptive Strategies,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 18 (1992): 233–51.



could contribute to the household economy, and save money to form a family of their own and establish a new household. The distribution of absent population in São Brás shows that the strategy of temporary migration was also common among young heads of households. Married men represented over a third of the absent population in 1917 and about 45 percent in 1920. For young married men, labor migration was a way of providing for their new families and saving money to increase their resources, mainly through the acquisition of land.

Contemporary accounts confirm that access to land and the diversification of property was one of the main objectives among Algarvian migrants. In 1891, agronomist Francisco Weinholtz described how workers used temporary migration as a means to acquire land, and remarked that small farmers spent their savings—which many of them obtained as migrant workers—clearing and preparing their lands.<sup>81</sup> As a result, in the areas where migration was widespread, there was virtually no landless population. Weinholtz observed:

In some points of the Algarve, like Loulé and São Brás de Alportel... rural property belongs largely to the emigrants who, during the winter months, with no calculation, clear even the worst terrain, working hard to get a piece of clean land to cultivate.

There, property is so divided that, even though these are counties of workers [*proletários*], there is hardly any daylabor work, since workers' families are the ones that cultivate the land.<sup>82</sup>

In a similar vein, in the early twentieth century, Léon Poinsard observed that Algarvian rural workers who migrated regularly to the Alentejo and Spain had cleared and acquired much of the land in the central valleys. These migrants, he added, “deprive themselves of everything in order to save and become landowners... and, after thirty years of hard work, they are able to accumulate a small estate, provided a calamity does not chase them out to Brazil or Africa.”<sup>83</sup>

Algarvian migrant workers developed strategies to take advantage of labor opportunities in different destinations. The proportion of households with several members working outside the parish simultaneously varied from a third in Boliqueime to 16 percent in São Brás. Most of these migrants were either siblings or fathers and their sons. They were

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<sup>81</sup> Weinholtz, *Memória*, 56, 59.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>83</sup> Poinsard, “Le Portugal inconnu,” 128–9.

not always working in the same place. In fact, members of the same household often participated in different labor circuits. The periods of absence, the nature of the movement, and the choice of destination depended on factors such as position in the household, age, and gender. The most common combination consisted of several siblings who were working in different domestic destinations, followed by cases in which the father was working abroad while the children were in domestic destinations or in Spain. For example, in 1919, the two sons of Jacinto Galego, from the *sítio* of São Faustino, in the north of Boliqueime, were working outside the parish: 23 year old José was in Spain and 22 year old Joaquim was in the Alentejo. Joaquim had been migrating temporarily to the Alentejo at least since he was 17 years old. Jacinto's oldest son, Manuel, had also worked in the Alentejo as a teenager. By 1919, Manuel had married and was living on his own. The combination of labor arrangements was different in the family of José Bandeirinha, a *trabalhador* from the *sítio* of Benfarras, in the south of Boliqueime. In 1919, José was working in Buenos Aires—where he had arrived in 1911—his 21 year old son, António, the oldest child then living at home, was working as a miner in Aljustrel, in the Alentejo; and one of his younger sons, 14 year old Marcelino, was working in nearby Loulé.

It was common for Algarvian migrants to participate in multiple destinations over time. This was the result of a two-step migration trajectory that included periods of seasonal and temporary migration in the Alentejo or other Portuguese destinations, or seasonal migration in Spain, followed by migration overseas. This strategy becomes evident if one goes back ten years in the migratory history of the Bandeirinha family mentioned above. In 1910, José (then 44 years old) and his oldest son, whose name was also José (then 21 years old), were working in the mines of Aljustrel, in the Alentejo. In July of the following year, a few months after the birth of a new son, José Sr. applied for a passport and left for Buenos Aires. In 1915, José Jr., who was by then married and had a child, was also in Buenos Aires. By 1920, his brother António, who had been working in Aljustrel like his father and older brother had done before, joined José Sr. in Buenos Aires. The following year, José Sr. returned to Boliqueime. The pattern was later repeated by José Sr.'s youngest son, Manuel, who had lived separated from his migrant father much of his childhood. When his father left for Buenos Aires, Manuel was only a few months old; when his father returned in 1921, he was 11 years old. In 1935, following the well-traveled path of his father and brothers, Manuel also migrated to Buenos Aires. To be

sure, not in every case participation in domestic and medium-distance circuits led to overseas migration, but the participation in different migratory circuits at different stages of the life course and by several members of the family were common practices. Tracking down the households with migrants in the 1920 confessional roll retrospectively to the roll of 1910, it is possible to identify a minimum of 42 homes in Boliqueime in which their members had started migrating at least a decade earlier. (Since the information for 1920 is not complete, and it is not always possible to identify the cases in which young men formed new households after one or more periods of work outside the parish and continued migrating afterwards, this is undoubtedly an indication of a larger phenomenon.)

The majority of the migrants were young men in their 20s and early 30s. In 1912, more than 83 percent of the absentees from Boliqueime were men, 64 percent of whom were single, and 81 percent between 15 and 39 years old (more than half were between 20 and 29 years old). In the case of São Brás, in 1917 men represented 87 percent of the absent population, 58 percent of whom were single, and more than 83 percent were between 15 and 39 years old. However, as the examples presented above indicate, participation in the different circuits of labor migration varied significantly according to the demographic characteristics of the migrants and the changing circumstances of their life course, such as marriage and formation of a new household. Whereas most single men went to domestic and medium-distance destinations, most married men went overseas. For example, in 1912, three-quarters of single migrants from Boliqueime were working in domestic destinations or in Spain; in contrast, more than half of married migrants were working overseas. This pattern is also reflected in the age composition of both circuits of labor migration. In the same year, more than 90 percent of the migrants from Boliqueime who were less than 20 years old were absent in domestic destinations or in Spain. The typical international and overseas migrant was in the early to mid-30s (the average age was 31.7 in 1912 and 34.2 in 1920), and the typical internal and medium-distance migrant was in the mid-20s (the average age was 26.6 in 1912 and 24.7 in 1920).

In addition to age and the evolution of the migrant's life course, gender also played a major role in the patterns of migration. Women accounted for about 16 percent of the absent population of Boliqueime in 1912. The number of migrant women, however, was certainly higher than the confessional rolls suggest. Married women migrated usually

as part of family migration, following the migration of their husbands. Once the complete household migrated, they were not considered as parish residents and were not included in the confessional rolls.<sup>84</sup> Men and single women who worked temporarily outside their parishes developed distinctive patterns regarding destinations (Table 2.6). Migrant men from Boliqueime worked in domestic, medium-distance, and international destinations. By contrast, in 1912, most of the women who were absent temporarily from Boliqueime were in the Algarve, followed by Lisbon, the Alentejo, and Spain. The overwhelming majority of these women were single (more than 80 percent) and younger than the absent men (79 percent were between 15 and 34 years old). These young women were attracted by the job markets of the cities, especially by domestic service.<sup>85</sup>

Unfortunately, the priest of São Brás de Alportel did not include comparable information about the places of residence of the absent population in the parish's confessional rolls. As an alternative source, the military censuses offer a glimpse into the places of migration of the young men of the parish (Table 2.6). These censuses include information on the places of temporary residence of the men of military age (20 years old) who were outside the parish.<sup>86</sup> Between 1900 and 1930,

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<sup>84</sup> Once the complete domestic unit migrated, they disappeared from the confessional rolls. Therefore, confessional rolls only provide information about migrants who maintained a link with the parish and were still considered parish residents, namely men and single women who migrated temporarily. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, seasonal migration for harvesting and mining was very important for Algarvian migrants. However, since the confessional rolls were taken during early spring, seasonal migration for the summer harvests or the work in the mines during the winter are not fully represented either.

<sup>85</sup> The dissimilar patterns of migration of men and women were noted at the end of the nineteenth century by E. G. Ravenstein in his *The Laws of Migration, Paper # 1 and # 2* (New York: Arno Press, 1976; originally published in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, in 1885 and 1889).

<sup>86</sup> Data for São Brás de Alportel come from the analysis of censuses of men of military age: Recenseamentos militares aos 20 anos, concelho de Faro, 1900–09, 1911–14, Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Faro; Livros de Recenseamento militar aos 20 anos, 1917–30, Arquivo Municipal de São Brás de Alportel. According to the military regulations of 1895 and 1901, the military age was 20 years; in 1911, it was lowered to 17 years. Local authorities made military listings including all 20 year old men. Beginning in 1912, two listings were made: for 17 and 20 year old men. The regulation of 1885 established that every men 14 years old and older subject to military service or reservist who applied for a passport had to pay a 250 réis fee or contract a mortgage for the same amount (art. 11). The military regulation of 1911 stipulated that men between 14 and 19 years had to pay a 75 réis bond in order to obtain a passport. Licensed soldiers had to pay a 150 réis deposit or present a warrantor for the same amount. Reservists had to present

Table 2.6: Absent Population of Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel by Place of Residence (Percentages)

Place of Residence	Boliqueime (1912)		São Brás de Alportel (1900–30)
	men	women	20 year-old men
Algarve	19.1	55.7	46.5
Alentejo	23.1	10.0	7.8
Lisbon	9.1	15.7	6.9
Southern Bank of Tagus	2.6	2.8	5.2
Other Portugal	2.3	2.8	3.7
Spain	7.4	4.3	—
Argentina	29.1	1.4	15.1
Other International	6.3	5.7	14.1
Other	0.8	—	—
(N)	(350)	(70)	(537)
(Unknown)	(42)	(8)	—
(Students and seminarians)	—	—	(45)

Source: Rol dos Confessados, 1912, APSSB; Recenseamentos militares aos 20 anos, Concelho de Faro, 1900–09, 1911–14, Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Faro; Livros de Recenseamento militar aos 20 anos, 1917–1930, Arquivo Municipal de São Brás de Alportel.

the majority of the absent young men were in domestic destinations; almost half of them were in other towns of the Algarve, especially in the cities of Faro and Olhão. As in the case of Boliqueime, other domestic destinations of importance included Lisbon, the southern bank of the Tagus River, and the Alentejo. Despite government's measures to discourage the emigration of men of draft age, about 30 percent of the

authorization by the military commander. Military service could be delayed for several reasons, including being absent outside the country. During this period, it was necessary to pay a military fee. See *Regulamento dos Serviços do recrutamento dos exércitos de terra e mar, aprovado por Decreto de 26 de Dezembro de 1895* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1895); Secretaria de Estado dos Negócios da Guerra. Direcção Geral, 2a Repartição, *Regulamento dos Serviços do recrutamento do exército e da armada, aprovado por Decreto de 24 de Dezembro de 1901* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1902); Secretaria de Guerra. Repartição do Gabinete, Serviços do Recrutamento Militar, *Lei e Regulamento, Decretos de 2 de Março e 23 de Agosto de 1911* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1912). Military censuses provide information about temporary changes of address, but not in every case. There are many cases with no information on the whereabouts of the absent men, many of whom were considered "rebels." Additionally, it is not possible to examine the participation of women in the various circuits of migration or the participation of migrants in seasonal movements. Limitations notwithstanding, these sources present an approximate picture of the places of migration at the local level.

absent men of military age from São Brás were overseas, most of them in Argentina. Since it was more difficult for young men of draft age to obtain passports, the extent of overseas emigration was certainly greater in the population of São Brás as a whole.

### *Demography and Emigration*

The overall dimension of migration from Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel can be gauged by looking at its influence on the demographic evolution of the parishes. The analysis of the demographic changes at the local level sheds light on both the causes and effects of emigration. A high rate of population increase during the second half of the nineteenth century was a significant factor behind the growth of overseas migration during the first decades of the twentieth century. At the same time, long-term and permanent migration were major forces in the shaping of the demographic characteristics of the parishes during the first half of the twentieth century.

The population of São Brás de Alportel grew at a low but steady pace during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: from 1,985 inhabitants in 1698 to 3,928 inhabitants in 1776—that is at average increase rate of 17.8 people per year. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the population of the parish stagnated and even declined. Between 1802 and 1836 the average rate of growth was less than 1 person per year.<sup>87</sup> The great leap forward occurred during the second half of the nineteenth

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<sup>87</sup> Analysis based on the Portuguese national censuses (1864–1940), the confessional rolls, and *Nota dos Livros de Registo Parochial do Roes de Confessados das diferentes freguesias do Algarve entrados e registados na Câmara Eclesiástica*, Ms. 351, Arquivo da Diocese de Faro. The causes for this population decline are not clear. Several epidemics attacked Europe in general, and the Iberian Peninsula in particular, during that period. For example, Caroline Brettell refers to the effects of a worldwide cholera epidemic in northern Portugal in the 1830s, taking a high death toll in the parish of Lanheses. According to Nuno Cortes, the cholera epidemic also affected the Algarve in 1833 (at least the area of Loulé). Several epidemics of scarlet fever, measles, smallpox, typhus, and typhoid fever plagued the area in the 1840s. In the case of São Brás, the years 1840, 1846, and 1848 present a high rate of mortality. See Brettell, *Men Who Migrate*, 21; Nuno Osório Cortes, “Abandono de crianças no Algarve: O caso dos expostos de Loulé (1820–1884),” *Al-ulyã, Revista do Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Loulé* 3 (1994): 89; Jorge M. Rodrigues Ferreira and Olegário A. Vieira Ferreira, “O abandono de crianças na Roda da Câmara Municipal de Faro durante o século XIX: Notas para o seu estudo” (paper presented at the III Congresso da Associação Ibérica de Demografia Histórica, Braga, Portugal, Apr. 22–24, 1993), 7–8. Finally, in a different vein, Estanco Louro attributes the low rate of population growth that São Brás experienced until the 1830s to the fact that the surplus of production in the parish

century: in the fifty-year period from 1850 to 1900, the population of the parish grew at a yearly rate of 117 people (121.5 if we consider the increase between 1836 and 1900). In clear contrast with the preceding period, the population of the parish more than doubled between 1864 (6,015) and 1911 (12,111). The situation in São Brás resembles the general increase in population in Portugal and Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century, which was largely the result of improved living conditions and a subsequent fall in mortality. During the period between the two first national censuses (1864 and 1878), the Algarve presented the highest average rate of growth in the country. In the Algarve, São Brás de Alportel and Vila Real de Santo António presented the highest population growth (and the highest in the country).<sup>88</sup> The growth of São Brás' population continued during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century, but at a lower rate. After a peak in 1911, a rapid process of depopulation began (Tables 2.7 and 2.8). Between 1911 and 1920, population declined at a yearly rate of more than 79 people. The decline was even more intense between 1920 and 1930, with more than 110 people on average per year. Finally, between 1930 and 1940, while the legal population grew at a slow rate, the actual number of people present in São Brás declined.

The demographic evolution of the parish of Boliqueime has many parallels to that of São Brás but also some differences. As in São Brás, the population of Boliqueime grew at a considerable pace during the eighteenth century and decreased during the first half of the nineteenth century. The decline was sharper in Boliqueime, particularly during the 1830s. The turmoil of the civil wars during the consolidation of Liberalism in Portugal seems to have hit this area harder. The notorious guerrillas that supported Dom Miguel's claims to the Portuguese crown were very active in this area, invading towns and terrorizing the countryside. Political violence reached the village of Boliqueime itself,

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was consumed in taxes for "the legion of priests and the voracious tax collectors." See Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 126.

<sup>88</sup> Evangelista, *Um século de população portuguesa*, 9. In the case of São Brás, along with the general conditions for population growth, the development of the cork industry during this period fostered economic development and attracted population from outside the parish. As Table 2.7 shows, between 1864 and 1878, São Brás had a positive net migration of 151 legal residents and 298 actual inhabitants. But cork production declined during the twentieth century. For an overview of demographic growth in Portugal in the European context, see Evangelista, *Um século*; Bandeira, *Demografia e modernidade*; Nuno Alves Morgado, "Portugal," in *European Demography and Economic Growth*, ed. W. R. Lee (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 319–39.

where in 1833 some parishioners killed the priest and his assistant over political differences. Miguelista guerrillas also attacked and sacked nearby towns such as Loulé and Albufeira. Violence and instability also disrupted agricultural production. Finally, diseases and epidemics took their share of lives; the 1833 cholera epidemic struck the county of Loulé particularly hard.<sup>89</sup>

A process of steady population growth started at the beginning of the 1840s and continued with increased force throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and into the first decade of the twentieth century. There is a remarkable contrast between the pace of growth before and after the middle of the nineteenth century. Whereas from 1732 to 1839, the population of Boliqueime grew at an annual average rate of 5.9 people; from 1864 to 1911, the average population growth was 47.8 people per year. Even though it is not as large as that of São Brás for the same period, it is nonetheless a substantial rate of growth. Since there was no dramatic change in Boliqueime's economy during that period, improvements in general living conditions and the extension of the area under cultivation certainly provided the main bases for this population growth. The population of Boliqueime grew until 1913, stagnated during the rest of the 1910s, and declined sharply during the 1920s. It only recovered after 1930, but the total legal population in 1940 was lower than either in 1911 or in 1920 (present population was higher).<sup>90</sup>

The decline of population in both parishes during the early twentieth century was the result of long-term and permanent migration. The growth of emigration is better observed by looking at the rates of population increase. In São Brás, the balance of births and deaths from 1860 to 1940 produced a natural increase in population. Except for the years 1863, 1879, and 1918, there was a positive surplus of births over deaths. The high increase in mortality in 1918 is the result of an influenza epidemic that swept the country and Europe in general that year.

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<sup>89</sup> Oliveira, *Monografia do concelho de Loulé*, 146–7; Cortes, “Abandono,” 89, 101–4; Rodrigues Ferreira and Vieira Ferreira, “O abandono.” For a discussion of the impact of violence and guerrilla activities in the Algarve during the civil war, see Aurízia Anica, *As mulheres, a violência e a justiça no Algarve de oitocentos* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 2005), 133–58. For an overview of the political development in Portugal during this period, see Marques, *History of Portugal*, 2:41–75.

<sup>90</sup> Analysis based on the Portuguese national censuses (1864–1940), the confessional rolls, and Nota dos Livros de Registo Parochial do Roes de Confessados das diferentes freguesias do Algarve.



Table 2.7: Net Population Change in São Brás de Alportel, 1864–1940

Year	Population (1)		Intercensal Growth (2)		Natural increase (3)	Net Migration (4)		Retention (%) (5)	
	Legal	Present	Legal	Present		Legal	Present	Legal	Present
1864	6,015	5,782							
			1,745	1,892	1,594	151	298	109.5	118.7
1878	7,760	7,674							
			1,757	1,829	2,015	-258	-186	87.2	90.8
1890	9,517	9,503							
			1,649	1,611	2,079	-430	-468	79.3	77.5
1900	11,166	11,114							
			945	786	2,619	-1,674	-1,833	36.1	30.0
1911	12,111	11,900							
			-712	-939	1,177	-1,889	-2,116	-60.5	-79.8
1920	11,399	10,961							
			-1,108	-19	1,473	-2,581	-1,492	-75.2	-1.3
1930	10,291	10,942							
			403	-297	1,202	-799	-1,499	33.5	-24.7
1940	10,694	10,645							

Notes:

(1) Legal population is the total resident population of the parish, including those who were absent at the time of the census. Present population is the population present at the time of the census, including the “transient” or temporary residents (*transeuntes*).

(2) Intercensal growth is calculated by subtracting the population at the beginning of the period between two censuses from the population at the end of the same period.

(3) Natural increase is the surplus of births minus deaths.

(4) Net migration is the population at the end of the period minus the natural increase.

(5) Population retention is the percentage of intercensal growth in relationship to natural increase.

Sources: Calculations based on Portuguese national censuses 1864, 1878, 1890, 1900, 1911, 1920, 1930, and 1940; church birth and death records.

The population of the Algarve suffered the deadly consequences of the epidemic particularly during the months of October and November. During the peak months, an average of ten people a day lost their lives in São Brás.<sup>91</sup> In general, the parish presented high birth rates, particularly until the first decade of the twentieth century, while death rates were

<sup>91</sup> Paulo Girão, *A penumónica no Algarve: 1918* (Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópico, 2003), 65–78.

Table 2.8: Demographic Rates in São Brás de Alportel, 1864–1940

Period	Birth Rate (1)		Death Rate (2)		Migration Rate (3)		Rates of Increase			
	Legal	Present	Legal	Present	Legal	Present	Natural (4)		Actual (5)	
							Legal	Present	Legal	Present
1864–1878	38.3	39.2	21.7	22.3	1.6	3.2	16.6	16.9	15.0	13.7
1878–1890	40.8	41.1	21.4	21.5	-2.5	-1.8	19.4	19.6	16.9	17.8
1890–1900	39.3	39.5	19.2	19.3	-4.1	-4.5	20.1	20.2	16.0	15.7
1900–1911	38.8	39.2	18.3	18.6	-13.1	-14.5	20.5	20.6	7.4	6.1
1911–1920	28.8	19.6	17.6	18.1	-17.8	-20.6	11.2	11.5	-6.6	-9.1
1920–1930	29.8	29.5	16.2	16.1	-23.8	-13.6	13.6	13.4	-10.2	-0.2
1930–1940	26.0	25.2	14.5	14.1	-7.6	-13.9	11.5	11.1	3.9	2.8

## Notes:

- (1) Birth rate is the number of baptisms divided by the population at mid-period and multiplied by 1,000.  
(2) Death rate is the number of deaths divided by the population at mid-period and multiplied by 1,000.  
(3) Migration rate is net migration divided by the population at mid-period and multiplied by 1,000.  
(4) Rate of natural increase is birth rate minus death rate.  
(5) Rate of actual increase is the rate of natural increase minus migration rate.

Sources: Idem Table 2.7.

below the national levels throughout the period.<sup>92</sup> As a result, São Brás presented important rates of natural growth—generally well above the national average. The actual rate of growth indicates the importance of emigration (Table 2.8).

<sup>92</sup> Since my calculations of demographic rates combine the information from the national censuses and vital church records (baptism and death records), it is necessary to consider the possibility of underrepresentation. Civil registry records were not mandatory in Portugal until 1911, during the First Republic. It is possible that some births have gone unreported (for example, newborns who died shortly after birth without being baptized), and it is also possible that some deaths were not recorded in the church books. However, I believe that until 1940 (the end of the period covered in this demographic analysis) the potential differences between church and civil population records would not significantly alter these calculations. In the case of São Brás, I collected data from the local civil registry for the period 1920 to 1930. According to these data, birth rates were 29.3 for legal and 29.5 for present population in 1920–1930, and 25.8 for legal and 25.1 for present population in 1930–1940; death rates were 18.0 for legal and 17.8 for present population in 1920–1930, and 16.6 for legal and 16.1 for present population in 1930–1940. As these figures suggest, the greater difference existed between death rates. The rates of population increase were, according to the same source, -12.5 in 1920–1930 and 1.6 in 1930–1940 of actual increase of the legal population, and -0.2 in 1920–1930 and -4.9 in 1930–1940 for present population. For a discussion of Portuguese vital statistics and a comparison with national demographic rates, see Massimo Livi Bacci, *A Century of Portuguese Fertility* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 36, chaps. 2 and 3; and Bandeira, *Demografia e modernidade*, 139–146. For a comparison with a northwestern parish, see Brettell, *Men Who Migrate*, 20.

As the rates of net population change show, since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a growing number of people was leaving the parish for longer periods or permanently (except for the period 1864 to 1878, when São Brás attracted population) (Table 2.8). Emigration increased considerably during the 1910s and 1920s, when the number of people who migrated surpassed the rate of natural growth of the parish, resulting in negatives percentages of population retention.<sup>93</sup> The difference between the rates of natural and actual growth (that is, natural growth minus migration) increased during the first three decades of this century, reaching its widest gap during the 1920s. According to the figures provided by the confessional rolls, the population of São Brás reached its highest point in 1907 (12,126 people) and decreased after that. The intensification of emigration throughout rural Algarve contributed to that downward trend. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, 1908 marked a turning point in overseas departures.

In Boliqueime, the evolution of births and deaths presents short-term fluctuations from the 1860s to the 1940s. Except for 1873 and 1918, the balance was always positive. The 1918 influenza epidemic also hit the parish hard as it did in other parishes of Loulé which, along with São Brás, registered the flu outbreak before other parts of the Algarve. Indeed, it was in Boliqueime that the epidemic claimed its first Algarvian victim in October 1918.<sup>94</sup> This exceptional occurrence aside, the death rates in the parish were below the national level—although they were higher than those of São Brás until 1920.<sup>95</sup> Boliqueime had also particularly high birth rates (sometimes higher than those of São Brás). Overall, Boliqueime had important rates of natural increase from the 1860s to the 1940s. The comparison with the rates of actual increase, once migration rates are taking into account, shows that emigration was also the reason for the population decline that occurred in Boliqueime

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<sup>93</sup> Population retention is the relationship between the actual increase of population (the population at the end of the period minus the population at the beginning of the period) and the natural increase of the population (births minus deaths) during the same period. See Table 2.7.

<sup>94</sup> Girão, *A pneumónica no Algarve*, 63, 153.

<sup>95</sup> The sharp decline in the death rate during the 1930s may be the result of a sub-representation in vital church records.

Table 2.9: Net Population Change in Boliqueime, 1864–1940

Year	Population (1)		Intercensal Growth (2)		Natural increase (3)	Net Migration (4)		Retention (%) (5)	
	Legal	Present	Legal	Present		Legal	Present	Legal	Present
1864	3,393	3,279							
			627	572	807	-180	-235	77.7	65.3
1878	4,020	3,851	680	848	732	-52	114	92.9	115.6
1890	4,700	4,697	334	277	597	-263	-320	55.9	46.4
1900	5,034	4,974	606	614	1,048	-442	-434	57.8	58.6
1911	5,640	5,588	1	-79	543	-542	-662	0.2	-14.5
1920	5,641	5,509	-634	-99	760	-1,394	-859	-83.4	-13.0
1930	5,007	5,410	631	199	707	-76	-508	89.2	28.1
1940	5,638	5,609							

Notes: See Table 2.7.

Sources: Idem Table 2.7.

during the 1910s and 1920s. Except for the period 1878 to 1890, an important proportion of the natural population increase always left the parish (see retention percentages in Table 2.10). But the effects of emigration on the demographic balance of the parish were particularly important during the 1910s and 1920s, when high migration rates produced negative rates of population increase. During the 1920s, the parish lost more than 1,200 people (or almost 1,400 if we consider present population).

It is clear that during the early decades of the twentieth century, migration produced stagnation and decline in the population of both parishes. Local observers noticed this demographic phenomenon and lamented its effects. Estanco Louro's negative assessment of the effect of emigration for the demographic health of São Brás illustrates that position:

The county of São Brás would be one of the precious jewels of the country, a perennial spring that carries a voluminous flow of wealth, that of population. And if that is not the case, it is due to the existence of a

Table 2.10: Demographic Rates in Boliqueime, 1864–1940

Period	Birth Rate (1)		Death Rate (2)		Migration Rate (3)		Rates of Increase			
	Legal	Present	Legal	Present	Legal	Present	Natural (4)		Actual (5)	
							Legal	Present	Legal	Present
1864–1878	44.7	46.0	29.1	30.3	-3.5	-4.7	15.6	16.1	12.1	11.4
1878–1890	41.6	42.5	27.6	28.2	-1.0	2.2	14.0	14.3	13.0	12.1
1890–1900	35.8	36.0	23.5	23.6	-5.4	-6.6	12.3	12.4	6.9	5.8
1900–1911	36.4	36.8	18.6	18.8	-7.5	-7.5	17.8	18.0	10.3	10.5
1911–1920	29.1	29.6	18.4	18.7	-10.7	-12.4	10.7	10.9	0.0	-1.5
1920–1930	29.2	28.5	14.9	14.5	-26.2	-15.7	14.3	14.0	-11.9	-1.7
1930–1940	23.1	22.3	9.8	9.5	-1.4	-9.2	13.3	12.8	11.9	3.6

Sources: Idem Table 2.8.

Notes: See Table 2.8.

horrible, pathological factor which threatens to extinguish our progress. It is emigration.<sup>96</sup>

The demographic decline caused by migration was the result of a shift in migratory strategies, from an early predominance of seasonal, medium-distance movements to the predominance of long-term and permanent migration overseas. This shift began at the late 1800s and consolidated itself during the first two decades of the new century.

## CONCLUSION

Labor migration emerged as a viable alternative among Algarvian farmers for coping with the limited resources of family farming and complement their economies. Most migrants were peasants-workers who combined domestic agriculture and wage labor in and outside the region. As in other regions of Portugal, in the Algarve migration was part of a family strategy. The objectives, however, were different. In other parts of Portugal, notably in the northwest, emigration was one of the means of dealing with a system of social reproduction based on the maintenance of the family's patrimony by preferred inheritance. In contrast, among Algarvians, migration was not the path followed

<sup>96</sup> Louro, *O Livro de Alportel*, 127.

by nonfavored heirs, because such social type did not exist; migration was a strategy for the reproduction of the nuclear family. In this strategy, individual and family objectives coexisted and changed over the life-course of the migrants. Labor migration was part of the array of tactics used by Algarvian farmers to support the household economy, to obtain cash, and to acquire land thus diversifying their household's productivity and securing a better position. For young migrant men, it was also a means of saving money in order to secure resources to form a new family.

Of course, migration was not limited to rural Algarve. Labor migration had a central role in the economies of the coastal towns as well. Like the peasants-workers of the rural parishes, Algarvian fishermen combined work in the familiar waters near their towns with periods of labor in other regions of Portugal and abroad. Seasonal migration allowed them to take advantage of different fisheries. As in the case of migrant rural laborers, in many cases, initial seasonal absences became temporary and even permanent resettlement. If I have not analyzed the role of migration in the Algarvian fishing towns in detail in this chapter, it is because their participation in the flows to Argentina was minimal. By considering migration from coastal towns in the general analysis of patterns of migration from the Algarve, the following chapter will shed some light on these migratory traditions.

Long-term and permanent migration clearly affected the demographic evolution of the Algarve during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, this was a new phase in a phenomenon that had been present in the region long before that time. When the people of Boliqueime, São Brás, and many other Algarvian parishes started to migrate overseas in increasing numbers at the turn of the twentieth century, they did so in the context of a long history of labor migration. Moreover, the emergence of new overseas destinations did not mean the end of previous circuits of medium- and long-distance domestic migration. Multiple types of geographic mobility and alternative destinations coexisted. Algarvian migrants took advantage of different labor markets and participated in several migratory circuits simultaneously. Diversity and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances are the characteristics that best describe Algarvian migration.



## CHAPTER THREE

### REGIONAL PATTERNS OF MIGRATION: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

In the summer of 1921, Francisco Mendes left his home in the parish of São Sebastião (Loulé) to work as a seasonal laborer. It was the first of several harvest seasons in which he worked as a reaper in the Alentejo and in the fields near Huelva, in Spain. The oldest of seven siblings, Francisco worked during the rest of the year with his father on their own land and tending the plots they rented in the *morgado* of Quarteira. Farming provided the family with sustenance and even yielded an occasional surplus that could be sold in the markets of nearby towns, but seasonal labor gave them access to much-needed extra income in cash. Francisco also wanted to save some money to form a family of his own. In 1928, after seven harvesting seasons, he invested his savings in a ticket to Argentina, where he had relatives. He was 25 years old, recently married, and soon to become a father. In Argentina, Francisco worked as a vegetable and flower gardener in the suburbs between Buenos Aires and La Plata; first as a wage laborer, then on his own land. His wife and son joined him seven years later, and his siblings followed the same path over the next decades.

In the nearby parish of São Brás de Alportel, António Pires had also seen how friends, neighbors, and family members had left to work during the summer months or for longer periods. His own father had migrated several times to work in Morocco, the United States, and Argentina. In 1929, when he was 16, he decided to join his father and brother in Morocco. They were all masons and the bustling towns of French Morocco provided ample opportunities for construction work. Since António had not been called to military service yet, and getting the proper departure documentation was both a costly and unpredictable process, he did like many others and made the crossing clandestinely. A guide conducted António and two other migrants along one of the familiar routes for undocumented migrants—first to Seville, from there to the port of Algeciras, and then across the Gibraltar Strait to Tangier. In Morocco, António worked in construction in Rabat and Fez. Upon returning to the village and completing his military service, António



got married. At 25, after a season of temporary work in the Alentejo, he decided to migrate again, this time venturing across the Atlantic. Since the Argentine government had made it more difficult to obtain a migration license, if António wanted to follow the route taken by many fellow villagers and several family members to Argentina, he had to be resourceful. In 1938, he secured a passport to Bolivia and left with two other friends. Once in the port of Buenos Aires, however, they stayed in Argentina. Using the trusted links of personal networks, António made the trip south to Patagonia, where he worked as a mason. He was later joined by his wife and they settled there permanently.

Experiences like those of Francisco and António were common among transatlantic migrants from the Algarve.<sup>1</sup> When Algarvian migrants joined thousands of laborers from other regions in Portugal and Europe in search of opportunities beyond the Atlantic, they did so in a context of existing traditions of labor mobility and applying previous experiences to new circumstances. The destinations may have been new, but the use of migration as a labor strategy and its function in the household economy were not. Algarvian young men had been migrating for centuries to complement the family economy, secure cash, buy land, and start new families.

From the eighteenth century to the mid-1900s, Algarvian migrants participated in internal, international, and transatlantic circuits of labor migration. The individual circumstances and places of origin and destination varied: rural workers from Loulé who worked in the Alentejo harvests, the copper mines of southern Spain, or construction work in São Paulo, Brazil; farmers from Tavira who worked in the Alentejo mines and the fields and company towns of California; fishermen from Olhão who participated in the fishing season off the coast of Spain and also migrated to Angola or the northeast of the United States; artisans from the parishes of Loulé who migrated to Morocco and to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and many other combinations. Sometimes these multiple migration paths were undertaken by the same person; others, by different members of the same family. Still in many other cases, migrants went to only one destination, either following circuits of seasonal or tem-

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<sup>1</sup> The two preceding stories are based on information collected through oral history interviews and passport requests' books. Interviews with Francisco Mendes (Villa Elisa, Aug. 14, 1991) and António Pires [pseud.] (Comodoro Rivadavia, Jan. 14, 2003); *Livros de registo de passaportes, 1928 and 1938*, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF. Interviews are cited in a short format in the notes; full details are available in the bibliography.

porary migration, or a linear path of permanent relocation. Variations notwithstanding, these multiple types of migrations formed recognizable migration systems that linked Algarvian migrant workers with the labor markets of Europe, Africa, and the Americas. This chapter examines the characteristics and evolution of these migration systems and their connections to broader circuits of geographic mobility.

### MIGRATION SYSTEMS

Migration systems are identifiable flows of migration that link particular regions or countries to multiple destinations over time. This perspective views human mobility as part of global flows of goods, services, and information; in them, migration takes place within a set of circuits that form distinct geographical systems. Migration systems connect contrasting economic and demographic structures that produce differential demands for labor at both ends of the migratory circuits. One-time movements do not create a system; a recurrent pattern of migration does. A system implies the existence of circular mobility based on seasonal or temporary migration. With time, permanent relocation also develops along with a continuation of temporary moves. Thus, migration flows include emigration, return migration, re-emigration, and permanent migration. These flows rest on networks of interaction that originate at the local level and act as vehicles of information, assistance, and cooperation that link migrants to the system. Systems are adaptable and responsive to internal and external conditions; they emerge, change, and might disappear according to changing social, demographic, economic, and political circumstances. Even though one system might be dominant in a certain period and region, systems are not exclusive and they can overlap.

Originally applied by social geographers and other social scientists to the study of rural-urban mobility, the systems approach has also gained terrain in the analysis of international migrations. Jan Lucassen's study of labor circuits within the North Sea region pioneered the use of the systems approach among migration historians. Lucassen defined migration system as a "composite" of "'push' and 'pull' areas." Later Leslie Page Moch applied a systemic perspective to a historical analysis of European migration over three centuries, and defined migration "as a socially constructed, self-perpetuating system that includes home and destination—a responsive system that expands, contracts, and changes

according to circumstance.” More recently, Dirk Hoerder proposed a global interpretation of human migrations in the last millennium based on a systems approach.<sup>2</sup> For Hoerder, migration systems can be identified as “empirically observable interconnected migrations” or “a cluster of moves between a region of origin and a receiving region that continues over a period of time.”<sup>3</sup> The concept of migration systems offers a way to consider the migration experience of particular geographical areas within global patterns of geographic mobility. It also provides a way to approach the study of migration as a multifaceted historical process, including the different types of migratory movements that developed in a particular space over time. By bringing together the local and the global, it helps to identify and analyze the peculiarities of national and regional responses to international economic, social, and political structures. It constitutes what Dirk Hoerder calls a “meso-level” of analysis, bridging the macro-level world systems approach and the micro-level circumstances (regional, local, and individual variations).<sup>4</sup> As Leslie Page Moch states, “although macroeconomic structures molded migration in a general way, specific migration systems operated within meso-level social networks and local ideologies.”<sup>5</sup>

The systems approach provides a useful analytical framework to study European migrations from a global perspective, taking into account their historical dimension, the variations throughout time and across

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<sup>2</sup> Akin Mabogunje, “Systems Approach to a Theory of Rural-Urban Migration,” *Geographical Analysis* 1 (1970): 1–18; Aristide Zolberg, “The Next Waves: Migration Theory for a Changing World,” *International Migration Review* 23, 3 (Fall 1989): 403–30; John Salt, “A Comparative Overview of International Trends and Types,” *Ibid.*, 431–56; Alejandro Portes and József Böröcz, “Contemporary Immigration: Theoretical Perspectives on its Determinants and Modes of Incorporation,” *Ibid.*, 606–30; James Fawcett, “Networks, Linkages and Migration Systems,” *Ibid.*, 671–80; Mary Kritz et al., eds., *International Migration Systems: A Global Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Jan Lucassen, *Migrant Labour in Europe, 1600–1900: The Drift to the North Sea* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 4, 100–1; Moch, *Moving Europeans*, 41; Dirk Hoerder, “Migration in the Atlantic Economies: Regional European Origins and Worldwide Expansion,” in *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996), 21, and *idem*, *Cultures in Contact*, 16; see also Hoerder’s “Changing Paradigms in Migration History: From ‘To America’ to World-wide Systems,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 24, 2 (Spring 1994): 105–26.

<sup>4</sup> Dirk Hoerder, “Segmented Macrosystems and Networking Individuals: The Balancing Functions of Migration Processes,” in *Migration, Migration History, History*, ed. Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (Bern; Berlin; etc.: Peter Lang, 1997), 74, 78–81, and *idem*, *Cultures in Contact*, 16–21.

<sup>5</sup> Leslie Page Moch, “Dividing Time: An Analytical Framework for Migration History Periodization,” in Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migration, Migration History, History*, 44.

space, as well as the connections among local, regional, national, and international movements. This perspective challenges traditional views of European transatlantic migrations. Influenced by the modernization paradigm, previous studies had linked the beginning of labor migration in Europe to the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and crisis of the rural economy. According to this view, a largely sedentary Europe was radically transformed by the emergence of circuits of rural-urban migration created in certain areas by the Industrial Revolution, and, especially, by the beginning of the massive transatlantic flows to the Americas of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The systems approach questions this image of a sedentary pre-industrial Europe and the traditional emphasis on the disruptive nature of modern migrations, showing instead a society characterized by a high level of internal and international mobility.<sup>6</sup> However, except for a few exceptions, important topics such as Europe's regional variations and its multiple connections beyond the space of the North Atlantic still await scholarly attention, especially regarding the multiple circuits of geographic mobility that developed between southern Europe and South America from the late eighteenth century to the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

#### A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO ALGARVIAN MIGRATIONS

By the eighteenth century, several circuits of internal and medium-distance migration connected different regions of the Iberian Peninsula and formed recognizable migration systems. In Spain, Andalusia, Castile, and Catalonia attracted laborers from other regions of the country as well as from neighboring France and Portugal. Andalusia became the dominant 'pull' area for the Portuguese, and the Algarvians were one

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<sup>6</sup> For reviews of old and new paradigms see Moch, *Moving Europeans*; idem, "The European Perspective: Changing Conditions and Multiple Migrations, 1750–1914," in Hoerder and Moch, *European Migrants*, 115–40; idem, "Dividing Time"; James Jackson, Jr. and Leslie Page Moch, "Migration and the Social History of Modern Europe," in Hoerder and Moch, *European Migrants*, 52–69 [orig. 1989]; Hoerder, "Changing Paradigms"; idem, "Migration in the Atlantic Economies"; idem, "Segmented Macro-systems"; idem, *Cultures in Contact*, chap. 1; Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, "Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives," in *Migration, Migration History, History*, 9–38.

<sup>7</sup> Among these exceptions are Leslie Page Moch's synthesis of migration patterns in western Europe and Dirk Hoerder's ambitious analysis of global migrations in the last millennium. See Moch, *Moving Europeans*; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*.

of the most important groups among them. In Portugal, the Douro region, the cities of Porto and Lisbon, and especially the southern region of the Alentejo, were important destinations for migrants from other Portuguese regions as well as for laborers from Spanish Galicia. These and other Iberian regions also participated in the transatlantic migration system.<sup>8</sup> Little is known, however, about the connections between this web of migration circuits and other circuits of international and transoceanic migrations. With a long tradition of migration within and beyond the Iberian Peninsula, the Algarve provides a privileged area for the study of the dynamics of migration systems. Algarvians participated in a variety of migratory moves, including medium-distance, long-distance, and overseas migration, on a seasonal, temporary, and permanent basis. These circuits were part of broader systems of migration that linked Algarvian migrants with other regions of Portugal, with other European countries, as well as with destinations in Africa and the Americas.

There were three main systems of migration. The first one connected the Algarve to the neighboring Portuguese region of the Alentejo and, outside of Portugal, to southern Spain and Gibraltar. This system extended also beyond the Strait of Gibraltar to Morocco. The timing and characteristics of the flows within this system varied. While the flows to the Alentejo, southern Spain, and Gibraltar were dominant until the late nineteenth century, migration to Morocco became more important during the first decades of the twentieth century. This system included

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<sup>8</sup> Antonio Meijide Pardo, *La emigración gallega intrapeninsular en el siglo XVIII* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1960); Domingo González Lopo, "La emigración a Portugal desde el suroeste de Galicia en los siglos XVIII al XX," in Silva et al., *Emigração/Imigração*, 373–91; Antonio Eiras Roel, "Migraciones internas y medium-distance en España en la edad moderna," in *Les migrations internes et à moyenne distance en Europe, 1500–1900*, ed., Antonio Eiras Roel and Ofelia Rey Castelao (Santiago de Compostela: Consellería de Educación e Ordenación Universitaria, Xunta de Galicia, 1994), 2:37–83; António de Oliveira, "Migrações internas e de média distância em Portugal de 1500 a 1900," in Eiras Roel and Rey Castelao, *Les migrations internes*, 2:1–36; Evangelista, *Um século de população*, 163–76; Teresa Rodrigues and Maria Luís Rocha Pinto, "Migrações no Portugal do século XX," *Ler História* 43 (2002): 179–202. See also Lucassen, *Migrant Labour*; Moch, *Moving Europeans*; Hoerder, "Migration in the Atlantic Economies." For an introduction to Portuguese migration, see Evangelista, *Um século*, passim; Joel Serrão, *A emigração portuguesa*; Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, "L'émigration portugaise (XV<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècles): Une constante structurelle et les réponses aux changements du monde," *Revista de História Económica e Social* 1 (1978): 5–32; Miriam Halpern Pereira, *A política portuguesa de emigração, 1850–1930* (Lisbon: A Regra do Jogo, 1981).

mainly temporary labor migration for harvesting, mining, and fishing, in the case of the Alentejo, southern Spain, and Gibraltar; and fishing and employment in urban crafts and construction work, in the case of Morocco. Another flow within this system took the form of rural to urban internal migration, connecting Algarvian migrants with regional urban centers and with Lisbon and its industrial environs to the south of the Tagus River. The second migration system followed the transatlantic flows that attracted millions of European migrants since the mid-nineteenth century. Algarvians began to participate in the Atlantic migration system later than migrants from northern Portugal—during the second half of the nineteenth century and especially during the early twentieth century—and with distinctive characteristics of their own. From the end of the nineteenth century to the 1950s, while the rest of Portuguese migrants traveled mainly to Brazil, the majority of Algarvian migrants chose Argentina as their main destination, followed by Brazil, the United States, the Portuguese colonies in Africa, and later Venezuela. Finally, in the third migration system, during the 1960s and 1970s, Algarvian migrants joined the rest of the Portuguese and the majority of the migrant workers from southern Europe in a European migration system that connected them to the labor markets of northwestern industrial countries, especially to France and Germany.<sup>9</sup> All three systems included both temporary and permanent migration. The latter, however, was more important in the second and third systems, in which a period dominated by temporary male labor migration eventually led to reunification and permanent family migration.

There was a historical progression from the first to the third system. The first system was dominant from the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century; the second one attracted the majority of the migrants during the first half of the twentieth century; and finally the third one became important during the period 1950s–1970s. However,

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<sup>9</sup> There was a secondary flow outside of these dominant systems of Algarvian migrants to Australia. It resulted from the active intervention of the Australian government to diversify its pool of European immigrants, targeting in particular countries with low immigrant representation like Portugal and Yugoslavia. The main instrument was the Special Passage Assistance Program, introduced in 1966. As a consequence, the number of Portuguese migrants grew considerably. In the Algarve, migration to Australia reached 5 percent of the departures in the 1960s, and declined steadily over the next decades. Brian Murphy, *The Other Australia: Experiences of Migration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 169–71; F. G. Cassola Ribeiro, *Emigração portuguesa: Algumas características dominantes dos movimentos no período de 1950 a 1984* (Porto: Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas–Centro de Estudos, 1986), 65.

migration within these three systems was not mutually exclusive. There was coexistence and considerable overlapping among them, especially in the first and second systems, as well as in the transition from the second to the third.

#### THE ALGARVE AND THE SOUTHERN IBERIA MIGRATION SYSTEM

Algarvian participation in the southern Iberian migration system spanned several centuries. Temporary and seasonal migratory flows to Spain and Gibraltar dominated Algarvian migration during the eighteenth century and the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, and, along with migration to the Alentejo, attracted sizable number of migrant workers well into the twentieth century. Labor migration to Morocco was mostly a twentieth century phenomenon and peaked during the 1930s and 1940s. Population movements within this space were by no means exclusive to the Algarve, but involved other Portuguese regions as well. These movements are underrepresented in official statistics because of changing policies regarding passports and migration documentation, loose control by central authorities, a strong tradition of clandestine migration, and the permeability of the Portuguese-Spanish border.

These migratory movements emerged in the context of long tradition of migration and contacts within the southern Iberian space and reaching across the Gibraltar Strait to Africa. The Algarve was part of a larger area of commerce and circulation that involved southern Spain and northern Africa which developed during many centuries of contact across what Joaquim Romero Magalhães calls the “Portuguese-Hispanic-Moroccan gulf.”<sup>10</sup> Since the Middle Ages and early modern era, a varied group of people circulated within this area, including merchants, peddlers, smugglers, artisans, sailors, fishermen, captives, soldiers, bureaucrats and colonists for the Portuguese possessions in northern Africa. Building on these early contacts, the vast majority of Algarvian migrants until the last quarter of the nineteenth century also moved within this space. According to the passport requests, Spain, Gibraltar, North Africa, and Morocco represented 96 percent of migration from the Algarve from 1834 to 1875, 71 percent from 1876 to 1890, and

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<sup>10</sup> Magalhães, *O Algarve económico*, 11.

only 3 percent from 1891 to 1900 (this sharp decrease in the number of passports was in part caused by their substitution for safe-conducts for migrants workers to Spain in the late 1870s).

### *Gibraltar*

Gibraltar became a dynamic labor and commercial market within the Portuguese-Hispanic-Moroccan space.<sup>11</sup> Conquered by the British in the eighteenth century and declared a free port, Gibraltar attracted a great number of foreign traders and workers.<sup>12</sup> According to Sir Frederick Sayer, local Civil Magistrate in the 1860s, immigrants constituted the bulk of Gibraltar's working population; they formed a diverse community that included Genoese, Spaniards, Jews, North Africans, British, Minorcans, Italians, Portuguese, and other foreign workers.<sup>13</sup> Among the Portuguese, the British garrison was an important destination for Algarvian merchants and migrant workers.<sup>14</sup> Commerce and contraband attracted many Algarvians, who benefited from their proximity to The Rock. In the 1840s, Gibraltar and Cádiz were the main destinations for Algarvian exports. The Algarvian ports of Olhão and Tavira were at the forefront of the commercial activities with Gibraltar.<sup>15</sup> It is no surprise that people from these two ports represented 52 percent of the Algarvian migration to Gibraltar in the period 1834 to 1890.

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<sup>11</sup> For the characteristics and evolution of Gibraltar's population, as well as its political, military, economic, and social history, see Frederick Sayer, *The History of Gibraltar and of its Political Relation to Events in Europe* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1865); John D. Stewart, *Gibraltar: The Keystone* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967); Sir William G. F. Jackson, *The Rock of the Gibraltarians: A History of Gibraltar* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1987).

<sup>12</sup> The commercial antagonism between British and Spanish authorities created opportunities for trade and contraband. These possibilities increased during certain periods—for example, after 1841, when strong antismuggling measures were taken by the Spanish authorities. The port was several times under siege, a situation that also generated opportunities for a lucrative supply commerce. See Jackson, *The Rock*, 233–8.

<sup>13</sup> Sayer, *History of Gibraltar*, 460–1. Sayer explained the importance of foreign labor in Gibraltar as follows: "The fixed population of Gibraltar is of such peculiar character that it is absolutely necessary to admit into this confined and crowded town a considerable number of foreigners. The natives are for the most part idle, dissolute, and phlegmatic; there are but few skilled artisans among them, and their demands for wages are exorbitant. Domestic service is almost entirely supplied by foreigners, the natives being quite unfitted for such duties. It would be difficult to instance a single possession under the British Crown where the material for general and domestic labour is worse than in Gibraltar" (p. 460).

<sup>14</sup> Magalhães, *O Algarve económico*, 301–8.

<sup>15</sup> Lopes, *Corografia*, 33–4, 341, 343, 362–3, 366.



Since Gibraltar was primarily a strategic military garrison, British authorities established strict regulations for the entrance and settlement of foreigners. Consequently, the majority of immigrant labor was temporary. Foreigners were granted a permit, generally for a maximum period of one to two months. Many Portuguese, as well as other migrants who worked in Gibraltar temporarily or permanently, lived in the nearby Spanish town of La Línea de la Concepción (Cádiz). This town grew during the nineteenth century in the shadow of the economic activities of the British garrison. Portuguese workers formed an important community; many settled in what became known as the 'Portuguese neighborhood' in La Línea's fishing section.<sup>16</sup>

Despite restrictions to the circulation and residency of foreigners, Portuguese migrants also settled in Gibraltar and their presence was significant during the first decades of the nineteenth century. The number of Portuguese grew from 25 in 1753 to 650 in 1814; that is, from 2 to 20 percent of the total population. By 1860, Portuguese population amounted to 525 persons, representing 14.4 percent of the foreigners and 3.31 percent of the total population. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Portuguese colony settled in Gibraltar declined. In the 1891 census, 123 Portuguese were registered, representing 5 percent of the then Spanish-dominated foreign population (almost 80 percent of the foreigners were then Spaniards, the majority of whom were women).<sup>17</sup> These numbers refer, of course, to the more stable Portuguese population without taking into account the temporary migrants. There are no details in the censuses regarding the regional origins of the Portuguese population of Gibraltar during this period, but it is safe to assume that the vast majority of Portuguese migrants were indeed Algarvians.<sup>18</sup> According to a 1934 consular report, 92 percent of the Portuguese residents registered in La Línea were from

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<sup>16</sup> José de la Vega Rodríguez, *La Línea de la Concepción (Cádiz): Cien años de historia, 1870–1970* (Jerez: Gráficas del Exportador, n.d.), 92; Ramón Corzo Sánchez et al., *La Línea de la Concepción* (Cádiz: Exma. Diputación Provincial de Cádiz, 1984).

<sup>17</sup> Jackson, *The Rock*, 248–9.

<sup>18</sup> There are some scattered references to migration from other Portuguese regions. Henrique Rodrigues refers to laborers from Viana do Castelo going to Gibraltar in the 1840s. And for the beginning of the nineteenth century, William Jackson argues that "the close links between the British naval bases at Lisbon and Gibraltar... led to Portuguese tradesmen being drawn to Gibraltar to work in the dockyard and on the fortifications." See Henrique Rodrigues, "Emigração, conjunturas políticas e económicas," in *Emigração/Imigração*, 65; Jackson, *The Rock*, 225.

the Algarve, more than two-thirds of whom from the maritime towns of Olhão and Tavira.<sup>19</sup>

Two periods emerge clearly from the distribution of Algarvian migration to Gibraltar by occupations. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the majority of migrants worked in maritime activities and commerce. During the 1860s and 1870s, while the number of merchants and peddlers remained stable and the number of maritime workers grew, the overall significance of both groups dropped as a consequence of a growing presence of farmers and rural workers as well as an important presence of masons and other artisans.<sup>20</sup> This shift shows the emergence of a new type of labor migration during the last quarter of the nineteenth century that used the migration paths built by their fellow countrymen since the eighteenth century. It also shows an extension of the area of emigration from the coast to the interior of the Algarve, as rural workers and artisans began to participate in larger numbers in a labor flow that, up to that point, had been almost exclusively from maritime towns.

The second half of the nineteenth century also witnessed a growing presence of women and children among Algarvian migrants to Gibraltar. The large number of migrant women gives this regional flow a distinctive character in the context of Portuguese migration. Women represented 23 percent of the migration from the Algarve from 1834 to 1850, 42.5 percent from 1851–1875, and 26.4 percent from 1876 to 1890. Until the end of the nineteenth century, two-thirds of all Algarvian migrant women went to Gibraltar (a proportion that rose to 94 percent from 1850 to the mid-1870s); during the same period, more Algarvian women than men migrated to Gibraltar (55.5 percent).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Report of Vice-Consul Antonio Nascimento, Sept. 1, 1934 as part of Report of Consul José Valderas, Sept. 9, 1934, 3rd floor, 11, 437–438, AMNE.

<sup>20</sup> According to the passport requests' books, maritime workers represented 30.7 percent of the male migrants over 14 years in 1834–50, 18.8 percent in 1851–70, and 7.1 percent in 1875; *trabalhadores* and day laborers increased from 2.6 percent in 1834–50 to 28.1 percent in 1851–70, to 69 percent in 1875; merchants represented 22.8 percent in 1834–50 and 4 percent in 1851–70. The shift in the geographical origins of the migrants within the Algarve—from the coast to the interior—also helps to explain these changes in their occupational background.

<sup>21</sup> The uniqueness of this gender composition in the Portuguese context becomes more apparent by comparing the figures from the Algarve with those presented by Porto, a leading port of emigration during the nineteenth century. Emigration in this area was almost exclusively dominated by Brazil. According to Jorge Alves, women represented 2 percent of the migrants in 1836 and 5.8 percent in 1860. Their presence grew by the end of the century, representing 22 percent in 1899. This difference might also be related

The reasons for such a significant number of women among Algarvian migrants are rather elusive. Nineteenth-century observers pointed out that Gibraltar depended on immigrants for many activities, particularly domestic service.<sup>22</sup> It is, therefore, possible that some of the female migrants from the Algarve would have found work in that activity. However, the large number of women who migrated with children and a variety of family members (more than 30 percent of the total number of women and more than 57 percent of those twenty years old or older), casts serious doubts about that possibility. Migrant women were either called by their husbands in Gibraltar or migrated in the company of their husbands and children. For these migrants, however, family migration or reunification did not necessarily mean permanent settlement abroad. Algarvian migrants in Gibraltar used temporary family migration as a strategy to maximize their resources. One way to do so was through family labor. For example, one of the main occupations for Algarvian migrants in Gibraltar and environs was fishing, an activity that, according to contemporary accounts, benefitted from the help of the whole family.<sup>23</sup> But even more crucial was the possibility of maximizing gains and saving in living expenses. As Manuel Leal, a migrant from Estoi, explained in a letter to his wife Maria Rosa: “I need you here because all my clothes are torn (...) and I am in disarray because I do not even have somebody to fix me something to eat.” Asking his wife Maria da Cruz to join him, José Ramos, another migrant from Estoi, put it more succinctly: “I have calculated that I have to pay somebody to cook for

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to the gender composition of short and medium-distance migration vis-à-vis overseas migration. As E. G. Ravestein noted in his famous “laws,” women tend to migrate more than men in shorter distances, but men tend to predominate in long-distance migrations. See Jorge Fernandes Alves, “Emigração portuguesa: o exemplo do Porto nos meados do século XIX,” *Revista de História*, Centro de História da Universidade do Porto 9 (1989): 267–89; idem, “Lógicas migratorias no Porto oitocentista,” in Silva et al., *Emigração/Imigração*, 78–97; Ravestein, *The Laws of Migration*, 196–9.

<sup>22</sup> Sayer, *History of Gibraltar*, 460.

<sup>23</sup> Tuna fishing was the main activity. This task required the cooperation of many and diverse people. In the Algarve, women participated in cutting, salting, and storing the fish; and children worked alongside their parents. As João Lopes pointed in the 1840s, tuna fishing “occupies many hands, not only men, but also women and young men.” See Lopes, *Corografia*, 97, 34, 82–3. Frei João de São José described tuna fishing in the Algarve during the sixteenth century as a lively family enterprise (“Corografia do Reino do Algarve [1577],” in *Duas descrições do Reino do Algarve no século XVI*, 121–2). For a description of the division of labor in tuna fishing in the Algarve in the twentieth century, including the activities at the beach and at sea, see Fausto Costa, *A pesca do atum nas armações da costa algarvia* (Lisbon: Editorial Bizâncio, 2000), 95–130.

me and with that money the three of us can eat.” And José Fernandes, a migrant from Olhão who had a store in La Línea and worked in Gibraltar explained to his wife Maria do Carmo that it made more economic sense for them to be together in the following terms: “work does not abound here but I always have something to do; if I do not have more is because while I go to Gibraltar the door remains closed and the costumers go away; I wish you would come, the sooner the better.”<sup>24</sup> The official perception of this strategy of family migration echoes the migrants’ language. In his report to the Parliamentary Commission on Portuguese Emigration in 1873, the Civil Governor of Faro explained this unusual pattern of temporary labor migration involving families instead of just male laborers as follows: “From the counties of Faro, Olhão, and Tavira, entire families migrate temporarily to Gibraltar. This is more economical for them because, in this way, they avoid reducing the gains they seek to obtain there.”<sup>25</sup>

Algarvian migration to Gibraltar declined at the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time, temporary migration to Spain grew considerably and new overseas destinations began to attract large numbers of people. However, the movement to Gibraltar did not disappear overnight and some migrants did settle in the area. According to a 1911 consular report, 364 Portuguese were registered in Gibraltar, almost all of them from the Algarve. The majority lived in La Línea and commuted daily to Gibraltar to work in maritime tasks, fishing, and other manual activities. About 900 Portuguese people were reported living in La Línea (approximately 600 men and 300 women). “For a small community like this one, this [number] is important,” observed the Consul General.<sup>26</sup> The consul also noted the existence of a “fluctuating” population which traveled aboard twelve Algarvian ketches engaged in small-scale commerce from the Algarve to Gibraltar and Morocco,

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<sup>24</sup> Letter from José Souza Ramos to Maria da Cruz, Gibraltar, June 28, 1874, Processo de passaporte 558, July 1874; Letter from Manuel Leal to Maria Roza, Gibraltar, Aug. 24, 1874, Processo de passaporte 59, Sept. 1874; Letter from José Fernandes to Maria do Carmo, n/d, Processo de passaporte 126, Apr. 1875; all in Fundo Governo Civil, ADF.

<sup>25</sup> Report of the Civil Governor of Faro, Oct. 27, 1873, Processos da Comissão Parlamentar sobre a Emigração Portuguesa, 1872–1875, Fundo Governo Civil, caixa 20, maço 3, ADF.

<sup>26</sup> Report from Consul N. Nunes Tavares (Dec. 27, 1911), and information from the Portuguese Vice-Consulate in La Línea de la Concepción, in Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, *Colonias portuguesas em países estrangeiros* (Lisbon: Tipografia Universal, 1915), 11–2, 62–3.

making approximately fifty voyages during a year. By the 1930s, the established Portuguese community of this area had diminished considerably. In 1934, the Portuguese consul reported that there was no longer a “Portuguese colony” in Gibraltar, adding that work was scarce and only few Algarvian maritime workers commuted from La Línea.<sup>27</sup>

### *Southern Spain and Alentejo*

From the eighteenth century to the 1930s, thousands of Algarvian migrants left for Spain and the Alentejo to work seasonally and temporarily in fishing, harvesting, and mining. The migration of Algarvian laborers to Spain developed in the context of a long migratory tradition dating back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Political circumstances and wars at times imposed limits to the free movement of people between the two Iberian nations, whereas times of political stability facilitated geographic mobility. Thus, during the period of the union of the crowns of Castile and Portugal, from 1580 to 1640, Portuguese migration to Spain “was a true torrent.”<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, these early contacts and their geographic location gave Algarvians privileged access to the commercial movement between Castile and its American colonies (mainly through regional contraband) and also to opportunities in the Castilian colonies themselves—a movement that can be considered an extension of these early circuits of intra-Iberian migration.<sup>29</sup> Opportunities in colonial commerce came to a halt with the Braganza restoration in Portugal and the end of Iberian union, but the flow of migrant workers to Spain survived changing political circumstances. Thus, by 1655, Manuel Severim de Faria observed that many Portuguese continued leaving for Castile, Extremadura, and Andalusia, taking advantage of their proximity and attracted by their labor opportunities.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Letter from Consul Manuel José Florencio dos Santos, Gibraltar, July 16, 1934, 3rd floor, 11, 439–440, AMNE. In 1934, there were only 62 Portuguese migrants registered in La Línea de la Concepción (see report cited in note 19).

<sup>28</sup> The expression belongs to historian Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, cited by Magalhães, *O Algarve económico*, 24. Caroline Brettell mentions a letter written by Philip II “dealing with recommendations to halt this migration flow from Portugal to Spain.” See Brettell, *Men Who Migrate, Women Who Wait*, 287, note 2.

<sup>29</sup> Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocen Sea*, 48–9.

<sup>30</sup> Manuel Severim de Faria, “Remédios para a falta de gente,” in *Testemunhos sobre a emigração portuguesa: Antologia*, ed. Joel Serrão (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1976), 73–5.

Andalusia became one of the main areas of attraction for Portuguese migrants. The traffic with the Spanish colonies in the Americas offered plenty of commercial opportunities which, in the Portuguese case, combined with the role Andalusian ports played in commerce with and transportation to and from the Portuguese enclaves in North Africa. Several local studies document the existence of colonies of Portuguese migrants in Andalusia. Their presence was important near the border and around the lower Guadalquivir valley, but also in towns of central and eastern Andalusia, such as Córdoba and Málaga. Portuguese presence in the latter two areas, however, appears to have declined after the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> There are references to Algarvian migration to Andalusia since at least the sixteenth century. In 1577, for example, Frei João de São José mentioned the migration of merchants from the city of Tavira to Seville and other Spanish ports.<sup>32</sup> Early migration flows were diverse. Evidence from the town of Ayamonte (Huelva)—located facing the Algarve across the Guadiana River—shows that migrants formed a heterogeneous population that included merchants, artisans, laborers, and fishermen.<sup>33</sup> Beginning in the early eighteenth century, more temporary and seasonal workers joined the migratory flows to Spain, especially from the Algarve. A study of the Portuguese colony of Jerez (Cádiz), shows a growing number of Algarvian labor migrants at that time.<sup>34</sup>

The majority of Algarvian migrants to Spain during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century were either rural workers or fishermen. As in the flow to Gibraltar, it is also possible to distinguish two periods based on the migrants' occupational profile in the passport requests. During the first half of the nineteenth century, merchants,

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<sup>31</sup> José L. Sánchez Lora, "La inmigración portuguesa en Ayamonte: 1600–1860," in *Huelva en su historia: Miscelánea histórica* (Huelva: Diputación Provincial, 1986), 1:317–31; Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, "La inmigración de corto y medio radio en la Andalucía moderna: Modalidades y comportamientos"; Isabel Rodríguez Alemán, "La emigración hacia Málaga en el siglo XVII (1651–1700)"; Juan Diego Pérez Cebada, "La emigración portuguesa a Jerez (ss. XVI–XVIII)"; all in Eiras Roel and Rey Castelao, *Les migrations internes*, 2:357–79, 859–71, and 887–910, respectively; Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*, 50–5

<sup>32</sup> São José, "Corografia," 51. See also Godinho, "L'émigration portugaise," 20; and Magalhães, *O Algarve económico*, 122. Joaquim Magalhães argues that this migration of Algarvian merchants deepened the commercial depression that, along with a process of ruralization, affected the Algarve during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

<sup>33</sup> Sánchez Lora, "La inmigración portuguesa en Ayamonte."

<sup>34</sup> Pérez Cebada, "La emigración portuguesa a Jerez."

muleteers, and farmers formed the largest groups of migrants (17.7 percent, 16.1 percent, and 14.5 percent respectively). After that and until 1870, merchants and farmers still accounted for about one third of Algarvian migrants and small farmers and rural workers represented 15.5 percent. By the 1870s and particularly during the 1880s, the majority of migrants were maritime workers who, as an 1874 report observed, “[went] to Spain to engage in temporary fishing.”<sup>35</sup> Sardine and tuna were the most lucrative catches.<sup>36</sup> Passport applications, however, only capture a fraction of the movement of Algarvian fishermen across Iberian borders. Migrant workers in this well-established flow used both legal and clandestine circuits. Economic difficulties and tax pressures contributed to the decline of the fishing companies of Portuguese and Spanish capital established during the eighteenth century on the eastern coast of the Algarve. Some of the Spanish fishing entrepreneurs relocated across the Guadiana River in Spain, but they continued recruiting Portuguese fishermen on a seasonal basis, especially in the towns of the eastern coast. Wage differences in Spain were advantageous for Algarvian fishermen.<sup>37</sup> Between 3,000 and 5,000 fishermen participated in this activity from July to January of each year. From the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the border town of Ayamonte and the nearby port of Higueirita (later renamed Isla Cristina) attracted a steady seasonal flow of Algarvian fishermen. German naturalist Heinrich Link, who visited this area at the end of the eighteenth century, estimated that no less than 800 Portuguese fishermen migrated to Ayamonte in 1783, and that 2,500 of them were working in Ayamonte and Sanlúcar de Barrameda (Cádiz) in 1790.<sup>38</sup> Isla Cristina became an important

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<sup>35</sup> *Relatório apresentado à Junta Geral do Distrito de Faro na sessão ordinária de 1875 pelo Conselheiro Governador Civil José de Beires com documentos e mappas illustrativos: Resoluções e consultas da Junta Geral* (Coimbra: Imprensa Académica, 1875), 298. The report also mentions the departure of many workers for Gibraltar in search of work.

<sup>36</sup> Because of their geographical location, the fishermen from eastern Algarve and the adjacent area of Andalusia had privileged access to tuna's annual migration. Tuna migrate eastward—from the Atlantic toward the Mediterranean—to spawn during May and June, and westward—back to the Atlantic—during July and August. For a description of Algarvian fishing areas and techniques, see Stanislawski, *Portugal's Other Kingdom*, chap. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Carminda Cavaco, “Migrações internacionais de trabalhadores do Sotavento Algarvio,” *Finisterra: Revista Portuguesa de Geografia* 6, 11 (1971): 45–8, 55, 58.

<sup>38</sup> Link, *Travels in Portugal*, 462. For some of these figures, Henry Link relied on Constantino Botelho de Lacerda Lobo, “Sobre o estado das pescarias da costa do Algarve no ano de 1790,” *Memórias Económicas da Academia das Ciências*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Banco de Portugal, 1991), 5:69–102. See also Sánchez Lora, “La inmigración portuguesa

fishing and processing center and, in Link's words, was "flourishing by the emigrations of the portugueze" [sic].<sup>39</sup> Fish packing and processing also attracted Algarvian migrants to southern Spain. Women were an important component of this labor force, resulting in family migration. The border city of Vila Real de Santo António, with a working population trained in fish processing, was the dominant place of origin of this flow of migrant men and women.<sup>40</sup> Both movements of seasonal migration attracted thousands of Algarvians throughout the nineteenth century and until the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup>

The combination of differential economic opportunities, commercial contacts, labor recruiting networks, and the easy crossing of the border between the Algarve and Andalusia facilitated this migratory movement.<sup>42</sup> Recognizing its socioeconomic significance, the Portuguese government issued a directive in May 1878, allowing Algarvian workers to migrate to Spain with transit permits rather than passports; this official measure was reiterated in 1882, then again by the Portuguese-Spanish Treaty of July 1894, and it finally received full sanction and nation-wide

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en Ayamonte." Before turning into a permanent settlement and an officially-recognized town in the late eighteenth century, Higuera was a seasonal fishing locale. Fishing entrepreneurs from Catalonia and Valencia established the first sardine fisheries and salting facilities. Early on, maritime workers from nearby communities and from Portugal provided the bulk of temporary labor. See José Miravent, *Historia de Isla Cristina* (Huelva: Instituto de Estudios Onubenses Padre Marchena, 1981 [originally published as *Memoria sobre la fundación y progreso de la Real Isla de la Higuera*, 1850]); Juan Benito Arranz, "Isla Cristina (Huelva): Aportación al estudio de la pesca en España," in *Homenaje al Excmo. Sr. D. Amando Melón y Ruiz de Gordejuela* (Zaragoza: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Instituto de Estudios Pirenaicos-Instituto Juan Sebastián Elcano de Geografía, 1966), 191-202.

<sup>39</sup> Link, *Travels in Portugal*, 457.

<sup>40</sup> Cavaco, "Migrações internacionais," 59-62.

<sup>41</sup> Faro's passport request books began to register the temporary migration of fishermen to Spain in April, 1874. This movement is the reason for the abrupt increase in the number of passport issued during the second half of the 1870s: from 84 in 1873 to 304 in 1876. But this flow of temporary migration disappeared from the passport records after 1878, only to appear again for one year in 1885 (thus explaining the great increase in the number of passport for that year and the dominance of fishermen in the occupational profile of the migrants). For local examples of temporary migration for fishing and processing in Spain, see Cavaco, "Migrações internacionais," 47, 52-3, 56-8, 61.

<sup>42</sup> In 1799 Henry Link noted that it was easy to get a passport with the *Juiz de fora* in Vila Real de Santo António to go from the Algarve to Ayamonte. He further noted that Spaniards were not very strict in patrolling the crossing of the frontier. Link, *Travels in Portugal*, 457.



application with the 1896 Emigration Law.<sup>43</sup> Of course, these measures did not end with undocumented migration. Grounded in long-lasting contacts and adaptable to changing circumstances, recruiting networks for this labor migration functioned even during periods of restrictions in Spain, when Portuguese fishermen were hired clandestinely.<sup>44</sup>

While the people from the coastal towns of the Algarve migrated temporarily for fishing, Algarvians from inland communities also migrated every year to Spain to work in the harvests of the vast Andalusian estates as well as in the region's mining centers. In 1885, Algarvian authorities observed that the majority of Algarvian migrants were leaving "for Spain to work in the mines and rural activities during the months of May and June, or to work in the fishing industry during the months of July, August, and September"; adding that "as a rule this migration is clandestine, given the easy access to Spain and the difficulty local administrative authorities have to control it."<sup>45</sup> In addition, hundreds of workers also participated in an internal circuit of labor migration to the region of the Alentejo, north of the Algarve. In fact, a report on emigration published by the Portuguese Chamber of Deputies in 1873, presented the regular migration of Algarvian harvesters to the Alentejo as an example of the existence of an internal labor market in the country.<sup>46</sup> With economies characterized by a high concentration of property, a sizable population of landless workers, and important centers for mineral production, both Andalusia and the Alentejo provided significant labor opportunities for Algarvian farmers and workers. The socioeconomic base of rural Algarve, where dispersion of property into small plots was the rule, along with a majority of small proprietors (peasants-workers), contrasted and complemented the labor markets of its neighbors to the east and to the north. Participation in these circuits of labor migration was of central importance for Algarvian rural fami-

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<sup>43</sup> Fernando Emygdio da Silva, *Emigração portuguesa* (Coimbra: França & Arménio, 1917), 206–8; F. G. Cassola Ribeiro, *Emigração portuguesa: Regulamentação emigratória: Do Liberalismo ao fim da Segunda Guerra Mundial: Contribuição para o seu estudo* (Porto: Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas–IAECP–Centro de Estudos, 1987); Maria I. B. Baganha, *Portuguese Emigration in the United States, 1820–1930* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1990), 94–127.

<sup>44</sup> Cavaco, "Migrações internacionais," 55–6, 58.

<sup>45</sup> Distrito Administrativo de Faro, Anno de 1885, Mappa da emigração por concelhos do districto, Fundo Governo Civil, caixa 431, maço 8, ADF.

<sup>46</sup> Câmara dos Senhores Deputados da Nação Portuguesa, *Primeiro inquerito parlamentar sobre a emigração portuguesa pela comissão da Câmara dos Senhores Deputados* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1873), 17.

lies. Agronomist Francisco Weinholtz, a well-informed observer of the Algarvian rural world in the late nineteenth century, wrote: "If it were not for this periodical emigration—clear example of the misery that prevails in the province—which improves the situation of those who stay, how could our rural population be sustained."<sup>47</sup>

Migration for harvesting in Spain was a well-established strategy among rural Algarvians since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In 1835, for example, the authorities of the village of Alcoutim, in northeast Algarve, solicited the authorization of the central government to give passports to the numerous laborers who usually went "to nearby places of the Kingdom of Spain to work in rural works... staying there until the time of the harvests."<sup>48</sup> It is difficult to measure the total number of people involved in these seasonal moves. Since the 1860s there is evidence in Faro's passport requests' books of teams of men going to the Andalusian harvests. As mentioned before, changes in migration policies and the replacement of passports for safe-conducts granted by local authorities make the movement difficult to trace, especially after 1878. The fortunate preservation of some of the safe-conduct register books for the county of Loulé provides an opportunity to observe that movement from a local perspective. Loulé, a rural county located at the heart of the Algarve, was one of the main areas of origin of this labor migration. The council administration granted passes to cross the Portuguese-Spanish border to an annual average of 652 people between 1906 and 1914, and 1,065 people between 1925 and 1928. During some years, the numbers of migrants surpassed 1,000, reaching almost 2,000 in 1928. Algarvian migration to the cereal fields of Andalusia was a seasonal movement that peaked during the harvest months of June and July. Accordingly, the bulk of the safe-conducts to Spain were requested in Loulé during the spring (the months of April, May, and June concentrated 71 percent of safe-conducts applications from 1906 to 1914, and 78 percent from 1925 to 1928). The main destinations of these laborers were the cereal fields of Huelva, Trigueros, Gibraleón, and Cartaya (in the province of Huelva); Bornos, Jerez de la Frontera,

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<sup>47</sup> Weinholtz, *Memória*, 59.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from the Provisional Prefect of the Algarve, Feb. 24, 1835, caixa 945, AMNE.

Medina Sidonia, and Chiclana de la Frontera (Cádiz); and Seville, Utrera, and El Coronil (Seville).<sup>49</sup>

Although the latifundist structure of the Andalusian provinces provided a large number of landless workers, they were not enough during the busy harvest months.<sup>50</sup> Local workers complained of the massive presence of Portuguese migrants, who deprived them of the only opportunity during the year to bargain for better remuneration. But the need for harvesters largely surpassed the local supply of labor. Migrant workers took advantage of the opportunities created by this scarcity of laborers and local authorities welcomed their presence.<sup>51</sup> The fields of Seville employed between 5,500 and 7,000 agricultural workers from outside the province during the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>52</sup> About 10,000 workers were employed for the harvests in the countryside of Jerez de la Frontera at the end of the nineteenth century; approximately half of them came from the area of Jerez and the rest from the hill towns, the province of Huelva, and Portugal. In 1883, the British consul in Jerez estimated at more than 2,000 the number of Portuguese workers in the neighboring countryside.<sup>53</sup>

Harvest migration was a collective endeavor. Migrants worked in teams under the direction of a *manajeiro* (foreman). The number of workers who traveled with each *manajeiro* varied. For example, José Coelho Cinco Reis and Francisco da Ponte, two *manajeiros* from the parish of Boliqueime, were very active recruiting laborers for the Spanish harvests in the county of Loulé in the 1910s and 1920s. Coelho emigrated with twenty-seven workers in 1914, thirty-seven in 1923, and twenty-

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<sup>49</sup> Registo de salvo-conductos, 1906–28, and Certidões, guias de trânsito, termos de abonação, salvo-conductos, 1909, 1910, 1919, 1921, Fundo Administração do Concelho, AHML. A total of 5,867 safe-conducts were granted from 1906 to 1914, and 4,266 from 1925 to 1928.

<sup>50</sup> The following paragraphs are based on Temma Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia, 1868–1903* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), mainly chapters 1 and 7; Michel Drain, *Les campagnes de la Province de Séville: Espace agricole et société rurale* (Lille and Paris: Université de Lille III–Librairie Honore Champion, 1977), 2 vols., particularly 2:640–67; Jerome R. Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 17–9, 47–61, 147, 167.

<sup>51</sup> It is interesting to note that workers from the Alentejo also went to the harvests in Andalusia. Given the fact that the Alentejo itself was in need of harvesters—as the migration of Algarvians shows—this dynamic is not easy to explain. Perhaps, the answer resides in wage differences, geographical proximity, and the harvesting cycles in both regions.

<sup>52</sup> Drain, *Les campagnes*, 663.

<sup>53</sup> Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 150.

eight in 1928; Pontes took forty-eight workers in 1914, thirty-nine in 1923, and twenty-four in 1925. Although the majority were from the same parish of Boliqueime, workers from nearby parishes were also part of these groups. Since most of the migrants were reservists subject to military duty, the *manajeiros* were also their warrantors, assuming responsibility before the local authorities that the workers would return to their villages after the expiration of the safe-conducts.<sup>54</sup>

Task wages were more common than time wages among seasonal laborers throughout Europe.<sup>55</sup> In Andalusia, migrant laborers worked *a destajo*, that is on a piecework basis. To earn more money, migrant teams moved from estate to estate, reaping as much as their strength would allow them to, and working from dawn to dusk. Harvesters worked together in the fields during the day and slept in the same fields at night. Food rations were provided by the landowners as part of their wages. According to Jerome Mintz, in the province of Cádiz, “[w]orking *a destajo*, a reaper could harvest a wheat field a fanega in size (1.6 acres) in 2½ days to 3 days, depending on the yield.... The faster the work was accomplished, the sooner the reaper earned his pay and could go on to the next job.”<sup>56</sup>

Harvest migration to the Alentejo followed similar arrangements. Seasonal work in the fields of the Alentejo attracted migrants from the Algarve, as well as from central and northern Portugal, who worked in teams known as *ranchos* or *quadrilhas*.<sup>57</sup> During the month of April, just before the harvest season, *manajeiros* visited the agricultural centers of the Alentejo to evaluate the state of the upcoming harvests and contract

<sup>54</sup> Registo de salvo-conductos, 1906–28, and Termos de fiança e responsabilidade, 1923–25, Fundo Administração do concelho, AHML.

<sup>55</sup> Jan Lucassen, “The Other Proletarians: Seasonal Laborers, Mercenaries and Miners,” *International Review of Social History* 39 (1994, Supplement 2): 171–94.

<sup>56</sup> Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas*, 50–1.

<sup>57</sup> Ribeiro, *Geografia de Portugal*, 232–40; Orlando Ribeiro, “Deslocamentos da população em Portugal,” *Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa* (1940–41): 318–25; Poincard, “Le Portugal inconnu,” 171, 179–80; Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 190–1, 197–9. J. Leite de Vasconcellos describes the organization of migratory *ranchos* of northerners in the Alentejo in his *Etnografia portuguesa: Tentamente de sistematização* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1967), 5:657–64. See also, José da Silva Picão, *Através dos campos: Usos e costumes agrícola-alentejanos, concelho de Elvas* (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1983; orig. 1903), 225–45. A first-person account in Manuel Viegas Guerreiro, “Tradição oral e identidade cultural regional: Textos de camponeses de Querença,” in *O Algarve na perspectiva da antropologia ecológica*, 301–4. A similar account for the case of northeastern Algarve is presented in Bastos, *Os montes*, 89–93.

the services of their teams with the landowners. In the Algarve, they hired groups of men who left the villages in May. “When the month of May arrives”—observed geographer Mariano Feio—“one would say that harvest-fever takes hold of them; nothing can stop them: neither the certainty of working on their own land nor the enticing wages offered by local landowners.”<sup>58</sup> Harvest teams walked their way up to the fields of the Alentejo and back, covering several hundred miles. Their journey proceeded by steps, as they worked in several estates on their way to the area around the city of Beja. As in Andalusia, in the Alentejo harvesters were paid by task completed (known in Portugal as *empreitada* or *empreita*). The recollections of Joaquim Guerreiro, a migrant worker from Querença (Loulé), offer a personal perspective on the demands of the *empreitada* and its collaborative nature. He describes how harvesters worked together with little rest day after day, shared their meals from a common pot—for which each of them had to take a spoon from home—and slept together in the fields, taking shelter in a hayloft when it rained. “During... two months”—he recalls—“we only had the day of Saint John to rest, the day chosen by Algarvian harvesters to go to the city of Beja; some, to see the city and have a few drinks, others to buy a souvenir [for] their families.”<sup>59</sup>

Most harvest migrants were young men who sought to complement their livelihoods with seasonal wage work. In Loulé, for example, the majority of safe-conducts to Spain were requested by young farmers and rural workers, especially heads of households in their twenties.<sup>60</sup> The yearly departure of *ceifeiros* (male harvesters) from Algarvian villages was so important that it was covered by local and regional newspapers. Local correspondents from around the Algarve commented on the large number of working-age men who left every harvest season, leaving the rural economy in the hands of the women. This was not unusual, for women always played a central role in Algarvian agriculture. In the Algarve, farming was a family activity in which male and

<sup>58</sup> Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l'Algarve*, 112.

<sup>59</sup> Guerreiro, “Tradição oral,” 303.

<sup>60</sup> Taking the case of the safe-conducts holders from the parish of Boliqueime, in Loulé, 98.8 percent of the safe-conduct holders were men; more than 74 percent were between 15 and 34 years old, a significant proportion of whom in their twenties (43 percent). The average age was 28.81 years. Almost all of them are listed as *trabalhadores*. The majority of these men were married (56.2 percent married, 42.7 percent single, and 1 percent widowers). A few women also requested safe-conducts in Loulé along with their husbands. See notes 49 and 54.

female labor complemented each other.<sup>61</sup> The difference between the harvest season and the rest of the agricultural year was that during the harvests women had the entire responsibility of the agricultural work while their husbands and older sons were away. It was precisely this complementarity that made seasonal male migration a viable and profitable strategy for rural families. While the men harvested in the distant fields of the Alentejo and Spain, the women harvested at home. At the end of May 1912, for example, a correspondent of the newspaper *O Algarve* reported that, as every year, large number of *ceifeiros* had left the interior parish of Salir (Loulé) for Alentejo and Spain, “where wages were more advantageous”; adding that harvesting was also under way in the countryside of Salir, where one could hear the singing of the *ceifeiras* (women harvesters) at work.<sup>62</sup> Geraldino Brites observed the same situation in 1910 for the county of Loulé at large:

We can assert without any doubt that women in the county work in agriculture as much as men do. In the households where the husband is a farmer, so is his wife. She also works in the fields and there are times during the year, when the exodus of male workers take place, in which she even works alone.<sup>63</sup>

Algarvian migrants also went to southern Spain and the Alentejo to work in the mines, usually during the winter. For example, in the county of Loulé, outside of the summer harvest season, the number of safe-conducts applications increased during the months of September, January, December, and February.<sup>64</sup> Like other European peasants, these migrant workers combined their farming activities with temporary wage

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<sup>61</sup> For the organization of rural family production in the Algarve, see Lopes, *Corografia*, 34; Weinholtz, *Memória*, 27, 49, 55–6, 59–60; Brites, *Febres infecciosas*, 136, 183–88; Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 132, 142, 169, 418–27; Poinard, “Le Portugal incunnu,” 131–42; Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 167–79.

<sup>62</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), May 19, 1912. See also *O Algarve*, June 29, 1913, for a report on the return of harvesters from the Alentejo.

<sup>63</sup> Brites, *Febres infecciosas*, 136. See also Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l'Algarve*, 112–3.

<sup>64</sup> Termos de fiança e responsabilidade, 1911 and 1912, Fundo Administração do Concelho, AHML; Registo de termo de abonação, 1919, Fundo Câmara Municipal de Loulé, AHML; Registo de salvo-conductos, 1906–28, and Certidões, guias de trânsito, termos de abonação, salvo-conductos, 1909, 1910, 1919, 1921, Fundo Administração do Concelho, AHML. According to the applications for reservist soldiers' guarantees to leave the country filed in the county of Loulé, in 1911, 1912, and 1919, several migrants were going to Spain during the months of January, September, and December to work in the mines. Similarly, more than 10 percent of safe-conducts were issue in the month of September between 1906 and 1914, and 16 percent during the months of January and February between 1925 and 1928.

labor in the mines.<sup>65</sup> Geraldino Brites argued in the early twentieth century that since this labor migration was so common among the peasants-workers of Loulé, they should be considered as much miners as they were farmers.<sup>66</sup>

The main mining destination in Andalusia was Río Tinto, in the province of Huelva, bordering the Algarve.<sup>67</sup> The ancient copper mines of Río Tinto had been in production with diverse success since the eighteenth century, but the definite take-off began in 1873, when the Spanish government sold the mines to a group of British entrepreneurs who formed the Río Tinto Company Limited. With increased output, Río Tinto's labor demand also grew and attracted large numbers of workers. Portuguese migrants soon became an important part of the labor force. There was a small stream of migrant workers from northern Portugal, mainly from Trás-os-Montes, but the overwhelming majority came from the south: almost 90 percent of the Portuguese workers were from the Algarve.<sup>68</sup> Proximity played an important part in this migratory movement. As Luis Gil Varón explains: "men had only to cross the Guadiana through Ayamonte and walk 60 km to Huelva to take the train up to the mines, and so we find plenty of Portuguese from S. Brás, Loulé, Tavira, and other villages in the Algarve."<sup>69</sup> The county of Loulé was one of the most important areas of origin, accounting for more than 57 percent of the Algarvian workers in Río Tinto.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Lucassen, "Other Proletarians," especially 186–90.

<sup>66</sup> Brites, *Febres infecciosas*, 135, 186.

<sup>67</sup> The following discussion on Río Tinto and its immigrant population is based on David Avery, *Not on Queen Victoria's Birthday: The Story of the Rio Tinto Mines* (London: Collins, 1974); Miguel González Vilchez, *El muelle de Riotinto* (Huelva: Diputación Provincial de Huelva–Instituto de Estudios Onubenses Padre Marchena, 1978); Luis Gil Varón, *Migration and Development: A Migration Model for Río Tinto, 1877–1887* (Córdoba: author's ed., 1981); idem, "Migración portuguesa a las minas de Río Tinto," in *III Coloquio Ibérico de Geografía, Barcelona, 27 Septiembre–2 Octubre, 1983: Acta, ponencias y comunicaciones* (Barcelona: Secció de Geografia–Facultat de Geografia i Història–Universitat de Barcelona, 1984), 322–9; Rosario Márquez Macías and Pablo Tornero Tinajero, "Minería, población y sociedad en la Provincia de Huelva (1840–1900)," in *Huelva en su historia: Miscelánea histórica* ([Huelva]: Colegio Universitario de La Rábida–Caja Provincial de Ahorros de Huelva–Universidad Hispanoamericana de Santa María de La Rábida–Consejería de Cultura, Junta de Andalucía, 1986), 1:379–413.

<sup>68</sup> Luis Gil Varón, who has studied the migration population of Río Tinto, estimates that more than 86 percent of the Portuguese migrants were from the Algarve, 7.9 percent from the Alentejo, 3.9 percent from Trás-os-Montes, and 1.4 percent from Minho and Douro. See Gil Varón, *Migration and Development*; idem, "Migración portuguesa."

<sup>69</sup> Gil Varón, *Migration and Development*, 74.

<sup>70</sup> Gil Varón, "Migración portuguesa," 326.

It is possible to identify two main phases of arrival of Portuguese migrants to Río Tinto: one from 1882 to 1892, when the mining installations were being constructed; and another one from 1905, with the beginning of the largest open-pit mining operation in Spain, to 1914 when the market declined as a consequence of the onset of World War I.<sup>71</sup> For most Portuguese migrants, work in the Río Tinto mines was temporary and, in some cases, combined with seasonal work in the cereal harvests. It was a common perception among labor recruiters that the majority of Portuguese workers arrived after the harvests to work in mining during the winter and go back again to the fields during the next harvest season.<sup>72</sup> About one-quarter of Portuguese workers stayed in the mines for a year or less—compared to 14.9 percent among the working population as a whole. A significant number, however, stayed at the mines for longer periods: 22 percent between two and five years, and 21.5 percent between six and fifteen years. As a result of a more prolonged stay, and unlike seasonal harvest migration, Portuguese migration to the Río Tinto mines was not so overwhelmingly male-dominated and included families. The mines provided abundant work opportunities for women and children, therefore family members could be an additional source of income.<sup>73</sup>

In the Alentejo, the main mining destinations for Algarvian migrants were the copper mines of Aljustrel and São Domingos (Beja), operated since the second half of the nineteenth century by a Belgian and a British company, respectively. The mining activities and the prosperous towns that they created attracted numerous workers from other regions, particularly from the Algarve. Some 1,300 miners were working in Aljustrel at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> The mines of Lousal

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<sup>71</sup> Some years attracted sizable numbers of new Portuguese workers, particularly 1909 (120), 1912 (240), 1913 (151), and 1920 (235). In general, arrival of new workers followed a growth in demand due to increasing production, but there were other reasons. For example, the large number of Portuguese workers who joined the labor force of the mines in 1920 did so in the middle of a six-month strike, one of the worst in Río Tinto's history. Gil Varón, *Migration and Development*, 143–4, 163–4; idem, "Migración portuguesa," 324.

<sup>72</sup> The majority of the personnel files state that Portuguese workers came "from the countryside." Gil Varón, "Migración portuguesa," 328–9.

<sup>73</sup> Gil Varón, *Migration and Development*, 23–4, 54. In his study of the Algarvian parish of São Brás de Alportel, Estanco Louro noted that the *Sambrazenses* who emigrated to work in the mines of Andalusia stayed there for longer periods than those who went to the Alentejo, and some even settled there permanently. Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 130.

<sup>74</sup> *Algarve e Alentejo*, Mar. 26, 1898.



(near Azinheira dos Barros, Grândola), also attracted migrant workers from the Algarve.<sup>75</sup>

### *Other Circuits of Medium-distance Migration*

In addition to cereal harvesting and mining, Algarvian farmers and rural workers also participated in other flows of seasonal and temporary migration to complement their resources with access to wage work. They included the cutting of palm and esparto in southern Spain; the rice harvest in the basin of the Sado River, south of Lisbon; and cork cutting in the Alentejo and in other regions of central and southern Portugal. It is hard to gauge the total number of Algarvian migrants involved in these flows, but it was certainly high. For example, in 1902 some 2,000 men from the parish of São Brás de Alportel alone (with a total population of approximately 11,100 people in 1900) were working outside the parish in harvesting, mining, and cork extraction.<sup>76</sup>

For the number of workers involved and its impact on the regional economy, cork extraction was the most important of these additional seasonal activities. There are references to the seasonal migration for cork extraction in the internal passport requests' books of Loulé since the 1830s, but this movement was certainly older.<sup>77</sup> The regional newspapers reported every year the departure of large numbers of cork workers and dealers, as well as their return after the cork season was over.<sup>78</sup> Cork workers from the parishes of Loulé—mainly Almancil—and from the neighboring parishes of Santa Bárbara de Nexe (Faro) and São Brás de Alportel, were very active in this seasonal movement. Cork trimming was a specialized activity that demanded skilled laborers, as only certain

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<sup>75</sup> Evidence of migration to these mines in Róis dos Confessados, 1909, 1910, and 1912, APSSB; Recenseamentos militares (aos 20 anos), Concelho de Faro, 1900–09, 1911–14, AHMF; Livros de recenseamento militar aos 20 anos, 1917–30, AMSBA; *Ecos do Sul*, Oct. 26, 1912, and July 12, 1913. For information about these mines and mining activities in the Alentejo in general, see Poinsard, “Le Portugal inconnu,” 214–22; Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 286–96; Paulo Guimarães, *Crónica da ordem pública, 1867–1932* (Aljustrel: Sindicato dos Trabalhadores da Indústria Mineira do Sul, 1984); Helena Alves, *Minas de S. Domingos: Gênese, formação social e identidade mineira* (Mértola: Campo Arqueológico de Mértola, 1997).

<sup>76</sup> *Algarve e Alentejo*, June 8, 1902.

<sup>77</sup> Livros de registo de passaportes, 1810–20, 1833–35, 1845–64, Fundo Câmara Municipal de Loulé, AHML.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, *O Algarvio* (Loulé), Mar. 27, 1892; June 5, 1892; Aug. 28, 1892; Sept. 25, 1892. *Ecos do Sul*, Aug. 17, 1912; May 31, 1913; June 7, 1913. *O Herald* (Faro), June 1, 1912; June 7, 1913; June 13, 1914.

parts of the tree can be cut. Trimmers had to remove the outer layer carefully and without damaging the tree. Each tree could only be cut every eight to twelve years, depending on the grove and the terrain. Two groups were associated with this movement: migrant workers, who traveled every year to the regions of Alentejo, Beira Baixa, Santarém, and Castelo Branco to work in cork cutting; and cork dealers and industrialists with access to leased cork groves in these regions, who also left every year to oversee work during the cutting season. Dealers and workers left their villages at the end of May or the beginning of June, and returned during August and September. The product was brought back to the Algarve for processing. Processing centers were concentrated in Silves, Faro, and São Brás de Alportel.<sup>79</sup>

A secondary movement of internal migration also grew out of cork production. Due to differential advantages in transportation and access to markets, industrialists and workers from cork processing centers of the Algarve, such as Silves and São Brás de Alportel, migrated to the industrial area that emerged south of Lisbon, on the southern bank of the Tagus River. Algarvian workers were part of a larger labor influx attracted by the rapid industrialization of this area that included workers from the northern Portugal (mainly Beira Alta) and, especially, from the Alentejo. Family migration was common, as cork factories also employed women and children. Wages were higher for both men and women than the average earnings in northern and southern Portugal. In order to maximize their income, most families favored factory work over schooling for their children. Important Algarvian communities emerged in the towns of the southern bank during the first half of the twentieth century. Algarvian workers contributed to the growth of the southern industrial belt, settling mostly in Barreiro, Alhos Vedros, Cova da Piedade, and Aldeia Galega. In addition to a variety of cork processing centers, since 1907 Barreiro became the home of the Companhia União Fabril. Originally a chemical company producing soap, fertilizers and industrial oils, it later included textiles and metallurgical works. Internal migrant workers also found work in other activities, such as

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<sup>79</sup> For descriptions of the cutting process, see Poinsard, "Le Portugal inconnu," 173–5; Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l'Algarve*, 72–3; Stanislawski, *Portugal's Other Kingdom*, 213. See also Machado, "A indústria corticeira" for an overview of the cork industry.

transportation and services, and benefitted from access to the labor market of the Portuguese capital, just a ferry-boat ride away.<sup>80</sup>

Algarvian fishermen also migrated internally, mainly to the coast of Setúbal and to the Lisbon area. In the late nineteenth century, maritime workers from Olhão formed a significant enclave in the Lisbon district of Bica, where they constituted a quarter of the resident population. Their presence was also important on the coast of Caparica (Setúbal), where many settled after periods of temporary fishing. In his ethnographic study, Paul Descamps traces their presence on the coast south of Lisbon back to the eighteenth century. He presents the story of a fishing family from Fuseta (Olhão) whose ancestors moved to the area in the 1860s. As a family trade, fishing was passed from the second to the third generation and shared by all the male members of the family. Father and sons worked in both open sea and coastal fishing. With their economies they built a house whose style, according to Descamps, echoed the architecture of their ancestral Algarve. As in fishing migration to Spain, however, most of the Algarvian fishermen who traveled internally only left for the season and returned home during the winter months.<sup>81</sup>

With the beginning of the civil war in 1936 and the resulting insecurity to mobility, labor migration to Spain came to a halt. The 1930s, however, witnessed the rise of another destination of medium-distance migration beyond the Portuguese borders: Morocco. During the 1930s, Morocco attracted 16 percent of the Algarvian migrants who applied for passports (up from 6 percent in the 1920s). Algarvian migrants were part of two distinct circuits of labor migration. One of them consisted mainly of masons, carpenters, and other qualified workers, followed

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<sup>80</sup> Poincard, "Le Portugal inconnu," 275–9; Cruz, *A margem sul*, 138–58, 194–238; Maria Paulo dos Santos Diogo, "População e indústria na margem sul do Tejo da Regeneração ao Estado Novo: Os concelhos de Almada, Barreiro, Moita e Seixal" (master's thesis, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1989); Ana Nunes de Almeida, "Industry, Family, and Class: The Working-Class Community of Barreiro," *Journal of Family History* 19, 3 (1994): 197–212. In the early 1930s, Paul Descamps described the migration experience of a 47-year old Algarvian cork worker who, during his twenties, worked in the main processing centers of the Algarve, the Alentejo, and Setúbal, to finally settle in Barreiro. The factory where he worked employed 17 men and 44 women. Except for the two youngest children (who were 10 and 8 years old), his sons worked at the same factory. Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 325–6.

<sup>81</sup> Graça Índias Cordeiro, "A construção social de um bairro de Lisboa: A vocação marítima da Bica através dos seus registos de baptismo e de nascimento, 1886–1970," *Ler História* 26 (1994): 125–49; Descamps, *Le Portugal*, 266–8; Cavaco, "Migrações internacionais," 49–51.

by a smaller number of farmers and rural workers. In the 1920s and 1930s, 73 percent of Algarvian migrants to Morocco were artisans and qualified workers, two-thirds of whom were construction workers, masons, stone-masons, and bricklayers. The other circuit was composed of maritime workers and women who migrated to work in the dynamic fish-canning industry that developed in Morocco after World War I, and whose labor was largely supplied by the Algarvians. According to consular estimates, 5,500 Portuguese migrants were living in Morocco in the early 1930s; two-thirds of them were in Casablanca, followed by Rabat, Kenitra, and Meqnès. The vast majority were from the Algarve. A great part of this medium-distance migration was clandestine and, therefore unrepresented in the passport requests' books. The proximity between the Algarve and the coast of northern Africa, the accessibility of Morocco by sea, and the well-established practice of Algarvian fishing in this area permitted the use of small boats for the transportation of undocumented migrants.<sup>82</sup>

For centuries, Algarvian fishermen, rural workers, farmers, and artisans developed strategies that allowed them to complement their resources at home with temporary and seasonal migrations to other Portuguese regions and within the 'Portuguese-Hispanic-Moroccan gulf'. This long tradition of internal and international geographic mobility made temporary migration a regular labor option and a common strategy for household reproduction and socioeconomic advancement in the Algarve. This migratory culture and the valuable experience and resources afforded by migration itself, prepared Algarvian workers to take advantage of the emerging opportunities for labor migration across the Atlantic at the turn of the twentieth century.

#### THE ALGARVE AND THE ATLANTIC MIGRATION SYSTEM

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was a time of transition in which old and new patterns of migration coexisted in the Algarve. Transatlantic destinations attracted growing numbers of migrants, but the movement did not reach the same levels of northern and central

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<sup>82</sup> Portugal, Ministério do Interior, Comissariado General dos Serviços de Emigração, *Boletim de Emigração* 11, 1-4 (Jan.-Dec. 1930): 19-20; *O Sul*, Aug. 1, 1915; *O Algarve* (Faro), Apr. 4, 1921; "A emigração algarvia para Marrocos," *Vida Algarvia*, July 21, 1929, 1; Cavaco, "Migrações internacionais," 62, 64-78.

Portugal until later. Initially, most Algarvian migrants continued following the familiar trails of internal and medium-distance migration within the traditional ‘Portuguese-Hispanic-Moroccan’ space. Beginning in the late 1800s, however, the number of overseas migrants increased steadily, reaching unprecedented levels from 1908 to 1913. This increase accompanied the general growth of Portuguese migration during those years, described by historian Joel Serrão as a true “hemorrhage” of population.<sup>83</sup> After a sharp decline during World War I, migration began to increase again in 1919 and grew considerably during the 1920s. In the Algarve, the postwar growth in transatlantic migration was larger than in the rest of Portugal and surpassed even the peak years before the war.<sup>84</sup> In addition, in the 1920s and 1930s there was a significant flow of labor migration to Morocco and a smaller one to France, showing that old paths of medium-distance migration gained new importance and new ones began to emerge.

### *Causes, Continuities, and Changes*

Was the development of transatlantic flows a departure from or an extension of existing strategies of labor migration? Most contemporary accounts treated this phenomenon as a sign of a generalized crisis and stressed the idea of disruption. For the regional press and other observers the increase in transatlantic migration was caused by the economic hardship created by a series of climatic, agricultural, industrial, and commercial crises that afflicted the Algarve. During the early twentieth century, a prolonged period of harsh climatic conditions and natural disasters affected rural production, causing labor demand to stagnate and sending small farmers further into debt.<sup>85</sup> Property seizures for lack of

<sup>83</sup> Serrão, *A emigração portuguesa*, 36.

<sup>84</sup> This characterization is based on the analysis of official statistics and unpublished information contained in Faro’s passport requests. Portugal, Ministério das Finanças, Direcção Geral da Estatística, *Anuario Estatístico* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1884–86, 1900, 1921, 1923–24, 1925–50); idem, *Movimento da População* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1887, 1889–96, 1909–21); idem, *Emigração Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1901–12); Livros de registo de passaportes, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF.

<sup>85</sup> Regional newspapers gave ample coverage to these combined crises. For a discussion of indebtedness, see *Algarve e Alentejo*, June 8, 1902; *O Algarve* (Faro), July 19, 1908; Brites, *Febres infecciosas*, 161. References to the climate crises can be found in *Algarve e Alentejo*, Mar. 2, 1902; Dec. 6, 1903; May 8, 1904; *Folha de Loulé*, May 21, 1905; *O Algarve* (Faro), Nov. 24, 1912; June 29, 1913; Sept. 21, 1913. References to agricultural crisis in *O Algarve* (Faro), July 25, 1909; May 19, 1912; June 29, 1913; Sept. 21, 1913;

tax payments grew; in the county of Loulé alone they amounted to more than 2,000 in 1908 and 1913.<sup>86</sup> The decline of the leading industries of cork and fish processing created economic hardship and unemployment in the urban centers as well. Strikes broke out in Albufeira, Vila Real, Portimão, Silves, Olhão, Faro, São Brás, and other towns.<sup>87</sup> The press demanded the intervention of the regional authorities and the opening of public works to create jobs. The neighboring province of Alentejo, an important destination for Algarvian migrant workers, also underwent difficult economic times, limiting the options for temporary jobs.<sup>88</sup> These difficulties were only exacerbated during the Great War with food shortages, the effects of the 1918 influenza epidemic, and the limitations to transatlantic transportation that made migration nearly impossible.<sup>89</sup> Social and economic difficulties continued during the 1920s, with crisis in agriculture, growing inflation, heavy tax pressure, and social unrest.<sup>90</sup> This decade witnessed the largest wave of transatlantic migration.

The growth in transatlantic migration became an issue of debate and alarm for the Algarvian press, which gave ample coverage to this phenomenon in news and editorials. The prevailing view was that emigration was caused by hardship and the spread of the American 'fever' among the Algarvian populace. For example, the leading newspaper *O Algarve* observed in July 1908 that, as a consequence of the difficult economic times, the stream of overseas migrants was growing daily. In

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*O Sul*, June 9, 1912. References to locust invasions appeared in *O Algarve* (Faro), Nov. 22, 1908. For coverage of labor crises, see *O Algarve* (Faro), May 15, 1908; May 15, 1910; June 26, 1910.

<sup>86</sup> The situation was similar in other counties. See Brites, *Febres infecciosas*, 161; *O Algarve* (Faro), June 29, 1913.

<sup>87</sup> A general overview of labor protests in the Algarve can be found in José Tangarrinha, "Os primeiros 50 anos de greves no Algarve (1872-1921)," in *3º Congresso sobre o Algarve: Textos das comunicações* (Silves: Racial Clube, 1984), 1:127-30. Some examples among the numerous cases reported in the regional press in *Algarve e Alentejo*, Jan. 6, 1901; Apr. 12, 1903; *O Algarve* (Faro), Nov. 1, 1908; May 15, 1910; Jan. 8, 1911; Feb. 18, 1912.

<sup>88</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Mar. 13, 1910.

<sup>89</sup> References to the difficulties created by World War I in *O Sul*, July 11, 1915; Aug. 8, 1915; Feb. 6, 1916; Oct. 7, 1917; Apr. 7, 1918. *O Heraldo* (Faro), Aug. 26, 1914; Sept. 5, 1914; Apr. 30, 1916. Paulo Girão discusses how this prolonged crisis and its effects on families' daily subsistence may have intensified the reaction to the flu epidemic. Girão, *A penumónica no Algarve*, 125-8.

<sup>90</sup> Reports on the combined crises of the 1920s and their connection to the growth in Algarvian emigration abound in the regional press. Some examples in *O Algarve* (Faro), July 11, 1920; Apr. 27, 1924; Mar. 15, 1925; July 18, 1926; May 5, 1929. *Ecos de Loulé*, Aug. 1, 1920; Apr. 24, 1927. *Notícias do Algarve* (Faro), Sept. 9, 1923; Jan. 21, 1926. *Correio do Sul*, June 27, 1920; Mar. 30, 1924; Feb. 20, 1927.

1910, as the number of migrants continued to rise, it warned that “[t]he intense emigration of the able-bodied population of the Algarve for the Americas is becoming more acute”; and in January 1912, it decried the existence of a “fever of emigration” that was taking away the bulk of the region’s working population. In 1913, another regional newspaper, *O Heraldo*, echoed the generalized feeling among the regional press when it characterized the magnitude of Algarvian transatlantic migration as “frightful.”<sup>91</sup> Local correspondents filed regular accounts of the departure of migrants overseas and its consequences for the lives of villages throughout the Algarve, especially in the central *Barrocal* and *Serra*. “The numbers of emigrants from this town to the Americas is frightening,” observed *Ecos do Sul* from São Brás de Alportel in 1912. “Parishes that never produced a single emigrant have lost more than fifteen men each during this month,” reported *O Sul* in September 1912, adding that “flocks of people” ready to leave and their “weeping” families were a common scene at the train stations of Almancil, Loulé, and Boliqueime.<sup>92</sup>

While the regional press treated seasonal migration to the Alentejo and southern Spain as a regular occurrence, transatlantic departures were generally portrayed as a disruptive phenomenon. According to this view, the departure of large number of working men had profound socioeconomic repercussions for their families and villages. Newspaper correspondents noted that in many parishes labor for the regular agricultural activities was scarce and, as a result, women were not only in charge of their households but also of the local economies. In August 1912, for example, the correspondent of *O Sul* in Almancil reported that since the majority of the parish’s men had left for Argentina in the previous two years, women were responsible for all agricultural tasks.<sup>93</sup> Further, for the press the departure of men also created a vulnerable situation for their families at home. The existence of towns inhabited largely by women alone attracted public attention in 1912, when some prisoners escaped from Faro’s jail and insecurity increased in the coun-

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<sup>91</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), July 19, 1908; Mar. 3, 1910; Jan. 14, 1912; *O Heraldo* (Faro), Feb. 15, 1913.

<sup>92</sup> *Ecos do Sul*, Sept. 21, 1912; *O Sul*, Sept. 29, 1912. News from nearby parishes, such as Almancil (Loulé), Estoi (Faro), and Santa Bárbara de Nexe (Faro), also referred to the constant departures of migrant men. Some examples in *O Algarve* (Faro), Jan. 14, 1912; Mar. 10, 1912; Oct. 5, 1912; Nov. 17, 1912; Nov. 24, 1912.

<sup>93</sup> *O Sul*, Aug. 25, 1912, 3. The correspondent calculated that approximately 400 men had migrated from Almancil to Argentina in the two previous years.

tryside. According to *O Heraldo*, the bandits attacked the women of the parish of Estoi, the majority of whom were living alone in isolated rural houses, and in the neighboring parish of Almancil the women “who ha[d] their husbands in Buenos Aires” had to abandon their houses during the night for protection.<sup>94</sup>

Another way in which the regional press presented the growth of transatlantic departures in the early twentieth century as a crisis was through regular references to the magnitude of clandestine migration and its perils. “Clandestine emigration has taken frightening proportions during the last month”—reported *O Algarve* in May 1908. “We were even told of a cargo ship that transported people to a foreign ship in high sea, which sank taking those poor victims of the misery of emigration with it.”<sup>95</sup> The newspaper estimated that during the first two months of 1910 the number of illegal migrants had matched that of documented migrants and reported a continued flow of clandestine departures during the year.<sup>96</sup> A December 1910 report about the capture of a ship on its way from the port of Olhão to Gibraltar with some fifty clandestine migrants concluded: “These are scenes from the enormous misery that pervades the province, where the poor classes resort to emigration as the last resource in their difficulties.”<sup>97</sup> In 1912, as the flow of undocumented migrants continued strong, *O Algarve* called for measures to stop it and even proposed to put an end to legal migration altogether. In the midst of this public outcry against the magnitude of illegal departures, the Civil Governor solicited the help of the Police for the Repression of Clandestine Emigration.<sup>98</sup>

Clandestine migration was high in the first two decades of the twentieth century but it was certainly not a new phenomenon. It was a common practice among rural workers and fishermen who participated in the southern Iberian migration system during the previous two centuries, and it was also common among transatlantic migrants during the late nineteenth century. It was precisely the long-established connections with the ports of southern Spain and Gibraltar and their proximity that provided Algarvian migrants with an accessible, familiar route. Small

<sup>94</sup> *O Heraldo* (Faro), Oct. 23, 1912; Nov. 6, 1912.

<sup>95</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), May 17, 1908.

<sup>96</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Mar. 6, 1910; Sept. 11, 1910. For example, it reported large numbers of artisans and workers from the county of Faro leaving clandestinely for Argentina.

<sup>97</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Dec. 18, 1910.

<sup>98</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Mar. 10, 1912; Aug. 10, 1913; *O Heraldo* (Faro), Aug. 6, 1913.



ships connected these ports with Faro, Tavira, Vila Real, and other Algarvian ports on a regular basis. In the 1890s, the newspaper *Algarve e Alentejo* observed that Algarvian emigration was underrepresented in national statistics because the bulk of it was clandestine, adding: “The regular navigation from this coast to the first ports of the Mediterranean, mainly Gibraltar, has contributed to the growing departure of vigorous hands. This has been occurring for a long time as if it were a perfectly regular movement.”<sup>99</sup> Algarvian migrants even attempted to leave illegally from far-away ports. For instance, in 1908 four men from São Brás were arrested by the migration police in Porto aboard the steamship *Argentino*.<sup>100</sup> But most commonly, they took advantage of the proximity to and familiarity with Gibraltar.

A traditional destination for Algarvian migrants within the southern Iberian migration system, the port of Gibraltar played also an important role in Algarvian transatlantic migration. Before the completion of the railroad connection between the Algarve and Lisbon during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Gibraltar was the leading port of departure for Algarvian migrants. Even though Lisbon soon surpassed it, it remained an important departure point both for migrants from the coast and the interior, especially those lacking proper documentation. It was regularly used by clandestine migrant workers from Olhão to go for temporary fishing to the United States—a movement that local authorities wanted to control and tax by granting safe-conducts—and it was the most advantageous and accessible route for undocumented migrants from the rural parishes as well. According to João Ferreira Neto, Algarvian representative in the Portuguese Parliament, it was possible to travel from Gibraltar to Buenos Aires for as little as 11,000 réis, that is half the published fare for that itinerary. “One can imagine the treatment afforded to a passenger in such a long trip after paying such a sum,” speculated Ferreira Neto.<sup>101</sup> The port of Gibraltar was also

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<sup>99</sup> *Algarve e Alentejo*, Apr. 4, 1897.

<sup>100</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Oct. 11, 1908.

<sup>101</sup> Copy of the letter from Fabre, Orey, Antunes e Cia. to the Minister of the Interior, sent to the Civil Governor of Faro, Oct. 24, 1911, caixa 20, maço 2, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF. There are numerous examples of rural workers leaving for Argentina via Gibraltar in the press. See, for example, *O Futuro*, Mar. 28, 1897; *Algarve e Alentejo*, Aug. 23, 1896. Ferreira Neto’s assessment of the economic advantages of clandestine migration of rural workers from the port of Gibraltar to Argentina appeared in *O Distrito de Faro*, Oct. 10, 1908. The published fare for the ticket from Gibraltar to Buenos Aires was 22,000 réis (information taken from *O Distrito de Faro*, Oct. 22, 1908).

used by undocumented migrants from other Portuguese regions and by Spanish migrants. In 1913, for instance, the Portuguese ambassador in Argentina informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon of a clandestine network that channeled migrants from northern Portugal to South America via Gibraltar, many of whom arrived in Argentina despite their original intention of going to Brazil.<sup>102</sup>

The persistence of clandestine migration and the role of the port of Gibraltar illustrate the existence of important continuities between the southern Iberian and the transatlantic migration systems. Transatlantic migration emerged as an alternative in the context of the long-established flows of internal and international medium-distance migration. It was not a sudden development but an adaptation of previous migratory practices that benefitted from the experience, the knowledge, and the resources acquired with them. As Leslie Page Moch has observed, in Europe “the proliferation of migration streams and choices of destination was not a difference in kind from past movement; it was rather a difference in distance traveled.”<sup>103</sup> Similarly, Algarvian migrant workers who had traditionally used migration to the Alentejo, central Portugal, southern Spain, and Morocco as a common strategy to complement their resources, at the turn of the century extended their circuits of labor migration overseas. Moreover, both migratory streams coexisted. The newspaper *O Heraldo*, from Tavira, observed in 1909:

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<sup>102</sup> The Portuguese ambassador estimated that in December 1912, about 1,000 Portuguese migrants arrived in Gibraltar that way. Letter of Abel Botelho, Buenos Aires, Feb. 5, 1913, Correspondence of the Portuguese Legation in Buenos Aires, caixa 46, AMNE. Gibraltar was also used by Spanish migrants, mainly from Andalusia. Several emigration agents worked in the port of Gibraltar representing shipping companies as well as immigration recruitment plans of American companies or governments. See Elías de Mateo Avilés, *La emigración andaluza a América, 1850–1936* ([Málaga]: Editorial Arguval, 1993), 26–7, 153, 199–208; Francisco Contreras Pérez, *Tierra de ausencias: La moderna configuración migratoria de Andalucía, 1880–1930* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla–Secretariado de Publicaciones, 2000), 153–70. Mateo Avilés also states that Portuguese migrants utilized the Spanish ports of Cádiz and Málaga as points of legal and undocumented departure (p. 169).

<sup>103</sup> Moch, “The European Perspective,” 132. See also, Moch, *Moving Europeans*, idem, “Dividing Time.” Other scholars have noted the continuities between seasonal migration within Europe and transatlantic migration. See Lucassen and Lucassen, “Migration, Migration History, History”; Hoerder, “Migration in the Atlantic Economies”; Dino Cinel, “The Seasonal Emigration of Italians in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 10, 1 (Spring 1982): 43–58.

Deprived in their homeland... the rural population of the Algarve... began their massive flight to Brazil and the Argentine Republic several years ago, expecting better profits... Others, for the love to their families or their place of birth, or for the extreme lack of means for the trip, or even for the fear of throwing themselves into adventures in unknown climates far away from home, stay... [and they] take advantage of the time of increased agricultural work in the plains of the Alentejo or in the fields of neighboring Spain, where they are offered relatively high wages.<sup>104</sup>

Like previous circuits of labor migration, transatlantic migration also began as a temporary movement. Given the distance and the resources involved, the main difference was that transatlantic migrant workers stayed abroad for longer periods of time. This labor strategy was clearly identified by some contemporary observers. An editorial published in 1912 in *Ecos do Sul* opposing attempts to restrict what it was portrayed by other newspapers as a dangerous growth of Algarvian migration overseas, read:

There is no real emigration in the Algarve. Instead, there are temporary absences, ranging from four to six years, enough time for the *trabalhador* and small *proprietário* to acquire some money to put their lives in order, freeing themselves from debt and mortgages. Once that is obtained, they return to their homes to cultivate their lands working at the same time in the properties of the well-to-do for wages.<sup>105</sup>

Changes in transportation made overseas destinations more accessible and the transition to transatlantic labor migration possible for Algarvian migrant workers. Southern Europeans began to migrate in greater numbers to the Americas after the technological change from sail to steam-power shortened the duration of the trips and made fares more affordable. The expansion of railway transportation in Europe also contributed to this development, connecting isolated areas in the interior with transportation hubs and ports of emigration.<sup>106</sup> Algarvian

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<sup>104</sup> *O Heraldo* (Tavira), May 16, 1909.

<sup>105</sup> *Ecos do Sul*, Oct. 26, 1912.

<sup>106</sup> J. D. Gould, "European Inter-Continental Emigration 1815–1914: Patterns and Causes," *Journal of European Economic History* 8, 3 (Winter 1979): 611–5; Dudley Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 43–9; idem, "European Emigration, 1815–1930: Looking at the Emigration Decision Again," *Economic History Review* 47, 3 (Aug. 1994): 533–5; Nugent, *Crossings*, 31–3. For information on transatlantic migrations before and after steam shipping, see Philip Taylor, *The Distant Magnet: European Emigration to the U.S.A.* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), chaps. 7 and 8; Klaus Friedland, ed., *Maritime Aspects of Migration* (Cologne; Vienna: Böhlau, 1989).

overseas migration began to grow in the late nineteenth century, when both processes were well advanced in Portugal (which itself lagged behind other European countries in the development of a modern transportation infrastructure). For Algarvian migrants, Gibraltar and Lisbon were the two major ports of departure. Both ports were served by ship lines that advertised their services among potential migrants in Algarvian newspapers. Communications between the Algarve and Lisbon were precarious before the construction of the railroad connection. Travelers could reach Lisbon either by sea or by land across the northern mountain range and the Alentejo. Land transportation, however, remained difficult until the completion of the main road linking Faro to Beja, in the Alentejo and from there to Lisbon, in 1932. Finished in 1889, the Southern Line that connected Faro with Barreiro (across the Tagus River from Lisbon) by rail, made the journey easier. It took more than thirty years, however, for the railroad to cover most of the Algarve (it reached Vila Real de Santo António, in the east, in 1906, and Lagos, in the west, in 1922).<sup>107</sup> In 1915, an English traveler remarked that the journey from Faro to the nation's capital took over twelve hours, adding: "The desert of Sahara is scarcely more remote."<sup>108</sup> But for the population of the Algarve the change was remarkable. By 1906, the eastern coast, the *Barrocal* and even the lower *Serra*, where most transatlantic migrants originated, were within reasonable distance from the railroad and only half a day away from Lisbon.

Migrants relied on the services of travel and migration agents to negotiate the bureaucratic hurdles involved in securing the necessary departure documentation, such as passports and reservists' licenses. Agents also contributed to the circulation of knowledge about migration opportunities and destinations. Since the late nineteenth century, travel

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For the Spanish case that, as Portugal, had a late start in the transportation transition, see Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 35–40. For a general overview of transportation and communication developments in Europe, see Norman Pounds, *An Historical Geography of Europe, 1800–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chap. 9. Some information regarding migration and transportation from Portugal to South America is available in Pereira, *A política portuguesa de emigração*.

<sup>107</sup> Ferro, *L'Algarve*, 168; Feio, *Le Bas Alentejo et l'Algarve*, 148; Joel Serrão, "Caminhos de Ferro," in *Dicionário de história*, 1:447–51; Jorge Miguel Pedreira, "Caminhos de Ferro en Portugal," in *Dicionário ilustrado de história de Portugal* (Lisbon: Publicações Alfa, [1985]), 1:95–6; Magda Pinheiro, "Lisboa e a rede ferroviária portuguesa: Os caminhos de ferro da capital," *Ler História* 26 (1994): 77–91.

<sup>108</sup> Aubrey Bell, *Portugal and the Portuguese* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 35.

agencies and navigation companies advertised their services regularly in the Algarvian press. Navigation companies had representatives in the main towns of the Algarve, but also in small villages like Estoi, Santa Bárbara de Nexe, Fuseta, and Moncarapacho. The number of local agents grew during the first three decades of the twentieth century, along with the growth in the volume of migration. In the 1910s and 1920s, at the height of the movement overseas, as many as twenty different local agents from Faro, Olhão, Loulé, São Brás, Tavira, and Silves advertised their services through the press.<sup>109</sup> Ticket and passport agencies authorized to operate in the Algarve by the *Comissariado de Emigração*, the official control agency, grew from two, in 1921, to eleven, in 1929.<sup>110</sup> Of course, the business of migration presented ample opportunities for the activities of unlicensed agents as well (in 1913, for example, the emigration police filed charges against twenty-seven of them).<sup>111</sup> The Portuguese government always looked at migration agents with suspicion and tried to control their activities as well as that of the so-called *engajadores* or migrant recruiters. The authorities considered them partly responsible for the magnitude of Portuguese migration.<sup>112</sup>

Why did Algarvian migrants leave in growing numbers to transatlantic destinations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century? If economic difficulties provided the backdrop for increasing overseas migration, they do not suffice to explain its timing. Similar situations existed before without causing the same responses among Algarvian

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<sup>109</sup> Observations based on the analysis of advertisements published in the newspapers *O Algarve*, *O Sul*, *O Distrito de Faro*, *O Progresso do Sul*, and *Correio do Sul*, from Faro; *Primeiro de Maio*, *O Algarvio*, *O Progresso*, *O Povo Algarvio*, and *A Voz de Loulé*, from Loulé; *Ecos do Sul*, from São Brás; *O Herald*, *O Povo Algarvio*, and *A Província do Algarve*, from Tavira; *O Provinciano*, *Correio Olhanense*, and *O Olhanense*, from Olhão; *A Nossa Aldeia*, from Moncarapacho; and *A Voz do Sul*, from Silves.

<sup>110</sup> Based on the information reported in Portugal, Ministério do Interior, Comissariado Geral dos Serviços de Emigração, *Boletim de Emigração*, 1919–29. It is not a surprise that these agencies were located in the counties of Faro, Loulé, São Brás de Alportel, Olhão, and Tavira, from where the overwhelming majority of Algarvian migrants originated.

<sup>111</sup> Some agents were sanctioned more than once, showing how difficult this lucrative activity was to control. For example, the same three agents from Olhão were fined in 1912 and again in 1913. *O Algarve* (Faro), Mar. 24, 1912; Mar. 23, 1913.

<sup>112</sup> In 1913, for example, *O Algarve* reported that the Ministry of Interior sent a letter to the civil governors recommending strong measure against “certain individuals that in fairs and other places advise and incite the people to migrate” (June 15, 1913, 2). For a critical analysis of the role of the *engajadores*, see Joaquim da Costa Leite, “Informação ou propaganda? Parentes, amigos e engajadores na emigração oitocentista,” in Silva et al., *Emigração/Imigração*, 98–107.

workers. A combination of factors made transatlantic migration a feasible strategy for an increasing number of Algarvians at that time: the existence of differential economic opportunities between the Algarve and the countries of destination; increased knowledge about distant labor markets; and the development of migratory networks that sustained the movement over time. Additionally, changes in transatlantic transportation during the second half of the nineteenth century made this labor strategy more affordable, the services of migration agents catering to migrants and their families facilitated the trip, and liberal migratory policies in the main countries of immigration welcomed this influx of transatlantic laborers. These policies were the result of expanding economies and, in the case of Latin America, were also linked to the broader demographic objective of increasing the settlement of European population.<sup>113</sup>

### *Information and Perceptions*

Two main arguments have been commonly used to explain the increase of European migration before 1930: one stresses the relative level of expected income in the sending and receiving societies, and the other emphasizes the role of information.<sup>114</sup> As the Algarvian case shows, far from mutually exclusive, both elements were connected. The economic opportunities available in the transatlantic labor markets during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided a major incentive for Algarvian migrants. At the same time, the availability of information about these possibilities made the decision to migrate possible. As J. D. Gould states, "it is the increasing spread and sophistication of knowledge of the world overseas that the most fundamental of all historical changes related to intercontinental migration is to be found."<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Nugent, *Crossings*. For a comparative introduction to the idea of whitening and population policies, see Richard Graham, ed., *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).

<sup>114</sup> Baines, "European Emigration"; idem, *Migration in a Mature Economy*. Baines puts a greater emphasis on the flow of information.

<sup>115</sup> Gould, "European Inter-Continental Emigration 1815–1914: Patterns and Causes," 618. See also the discussion of the relationship between emigration and diffusion of information in Spain in Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 95–120. For the Portuguese case, an approach that stresses the importance of information in the Portuguese flow to Brazil can be found in Leite, "Informação ou propaganda?"

News about opportunities abroad circulated through the personal channels of migratory networks—among family, friends, and fellow villagers. Stories about successful migrants and the remittances sent to their families in Portugal served as powerful incentives. The newspaper *Ecos do Sul*, in the lead article of October 19, 1912, explained their impact on the decision-making process of would-be Algarvian migrants:

With few exceptions, those who first left earned money that, when compared with their previous earnings, were unexpected sums. Because it was enough for them, to send to their families, and even to buy some land...

Here, their families were jubilant. They could not find enough words to praise the profits obtained by their men. And it was not just talk.

The results were visible. The village gossip started: look at that fellow, a poor nobody who could not even make 12 *vinténs* a day here, and now he has paid everything and his wife has money to buy land and to use in other activities.

Tired of the *abundance* of a wage of 200 or 240 réis, and impressed with these stories, one day the rural worker [decided to] try his luck and left for Argentina. He went to work in the countryside for 5 or 6,000 réis of Argentine money [sic] a day, that is to say about 2,000 of our money. And shortly after arriving he starts sending his family checks of 20 or 30 gold pounds or more; and he starts calling his brothers, nephews, and friends, who, in turn, do the same....

After four years or a little more, Joaquim comes back to soothe his nostalgia (*matar saudades*), to *enjoy* himself for some months, after which he leaves again.<sup>116</sup>

The money earned and sent by migrant workers in the Americas and elsewhere became a significant resource for their families and the Algarvian rural economy in general. Precise figures, however, are hard to estimate at the regional level. In his study of São Brás de Alportel, Estanco Louro argues this flow of money was vital to cover the local deficit.<sup>117</sup> (Amounting to more than 2 percent of the gross domestic product in the period of mass migration before World War I—which

<sup>116</sup> *Ecos do Sul*, Oct. 19, 1912, 1. Emphasis in the original. The newspaper argues that the migration of rural workers and farmers followed an earlier flow of artisans.

<sup>117</sup> Louro, *O livro de Alportel*, 179. Louro calculated that São Brás' migrants covered the estimated 4,500 *contos* gap as follows: 1,500 *contos* contributed by migrants abroad; 3,000 by internal migrants; and 1,500 by the cork dealers who go every year with their workers to the Alentejo. (Portugal changed its currency from real—plural réis—to escudo in 1911, after the 1910 Republican revolution. The *conto*, formerly one million réis, became one thousand escudos.) General analyses of migrants' remittances only provide detailed information at the regional level for later periods.

was second only to Italy—remittances were equally important to correct deficits in the Portuguese economy as a whole.)<sup>118</sup> Other examples can be used to gauge the impact of Algarvian migrants' remittances at the local and familial level. In 1912, for example, the correspondent of *O Sul* in Loulé referred to the importance of the money sent by transatlantic migrants in his report about the village's annual fair. He wrote that, given the general crisis and the high volume of emigration, business transactions were low that year, except for the activities of the jewelers, adding: "[t]he bulk of the money melted into useless trinkets was the gold pulled out from the soil of Argentina and obtained with sweat and tears by many of our countrymen."<sup>119</sup> Even though some of the money may have been used for sumptuary consumption—as this critical account suggests—migrant families depended on remittances for more basic needs. Remittances helped to support many Algarvian households and pay off debts, and allowed some farmers to secure a better position by making improvements in their properties and buying land. One can only imagine the desperate situation that led Francisca de Jesús, from Boliqueime, to publish a notice in a regional newspaper announcing that a check for 12 pounds sterling sent with a letter from Rosario, Argentina, was missing, and pleading to those who may have found it not to cash it.<sup>120</sup> During the critical years of World War I, when the economy suffered a severe decline and emigration decreased, the lack of remittances worsened the situation for many Algarvian households. In 1915, under the dramatic title "The year of the famine," the newspaper *O Sul* described this grave situation and lamented:

Money? . . . One cannot even rely on that [money] that used to come from Argentina, because those who are still there working without rest do not

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<sup>118</sup> Rui Pedro Esteves and David Khoudour-Castéras, "A Fantastic Rain of Gold: European Migrants' Remittances and Balance of Payments Adjustment During the Gold Standard Period" (paper presented at the Seventh Conference of the European Historical Economics Society, Lund, Sweden, June 29–July, 2007); 7, 14. Further information of the importance of remittances in Portugal can be found in Pereira, *A política portuguesa de emigração*, 36–47; Rick Chaney, *Regional Emigration and Remittances in Developing Countries: The Portuguese Experience* (New York: Preager, 1986); Helen Graham, "Money and Migration in Modern Portugal: An Economist's View," in *Portuguese Migration in Global Perspective*, ed. David Higgs (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1990), 81–96. A good regional analysis focusing on the impact of remittance from Brazil in Porto is Jorge Fernandes Alves, *Os Brasileiros: Emigração e retorno no Porto oitocentista* (Porto: [Gráficos Reunidos], 1994), 275–86.

<sup>119</sup> *O Sul*, Sept. 8, 1912.

<sup>120</sup> *Ecos do Sul*, Mar. 9, 1912. Figure in pounds in the original.



send it...because they do not have it either. Nor can we count on that [money] that those hundreds of harvesters and miners who regularly go to Spain used to bring to survive during the winter....<sup>121</sup>

In addition to remittances, the stories about successful migrants who 'made it in America' created powerful images of what was possible for those who decided to seek fortune overseas. The regional press offers a glimpse of these images. News about migrants who returned to Portugal for visits appeared regularly in the local reports and the social and miscellaneous sections of the Algarvian newspapers. The descriptions of these migrants left no doubt about their success abroad. For example, local correspondents wrote about the visit of a countryman from Estoi who had "an important commercial house in Buenos Aires"; a marriage in São Brás of an emigrant who "with honest and intelligent work has achieved some wealth" in Argentina; or an emigrant from Cacela (Vila Real de Santo António) in a visit from Africa, who gave money to be distributed among the local school children.<sup>122</sup> News about donations of Algarvian living overseas to schools, hospitals, asylums, and other local institutions were also very common.

The image of the successful return migrant made its way into Portuguese popular culture in the figure of the *brasileiro*, named after the main traditional transatlantic destination for Portuguese migrants, Brazil (during the second half of the twentieth century, when France became the main destination, it was replaced by the *francês*). If only some migrants achieved their goals of riches and success, the popular figure of the *brasileiro* was an integral part of what Caroline Brettell calls "the Portuguese ideology of return migration," and contributed to maintaining a large movement of labor migration and a steady flow of remittances to Portugal.<sup>123</sup> This social type had counterparts in other countries of emigration, such as the *americano* in Italy, and the *indiano* in Spain. The figure of the *brasileiro* who returns to the village to display his new wealth through clothes, new customs, and the construction

<sup>121</sup> *O Sul*, Aug. 15, 1915.

<sup>122</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Dec. 19, 1909; Aug. 21, 1910; *O Heraldo* (Faro), Nov. 27, 1912.

<sup>123</sup> Caroline Brettell, "Emigrar para voltar: A Portuguese Ideology of Return Migration," *Papers in Anthropology* 20, 1 (Spring 1979): 1-20; idem, "Leaving, Remaining, and Returning: Some Thoughts on the Multifaceted Portuguese Migratory System," in Higgs, *Portuguese Migration in Global Perspective*, 61-80; idem, "The Emigrant, the Nation, and the State in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Portugal: An Anthropological Approach," *Portuguese Studies Review* 2, 2 (1993): 51-65; Paulo Filipe Monteiro, *Emigração: O eterno mito do retorno* (Oeiras: Celta, 1994).

of lavishly decorated houses, became a popular theme in Portuguese literature. As a social type, the *brasileiro* was often the object of ridicule by the upper classes. Maria Baganha argues that the Portuguese elite used this critical portrayal of the successful return migrant as a mechanism of social control, as a complement to the restrictive character of Portuguese migration.<sup>124</sup>

For most Algarvians, Argentina became the land where *brasileiros* were made, as the name became synonymous with return migrants regardless of their destination. Algarvian writer Boaventura de Passos presents a farcical depiction of the successful return migrant in his novel *A família Pires* [The Pires Family], written in the 1920s or early 1930s. Recently arrived from Argentina, Fortunato displays his success in his clothes, jewelry, and the “golden smile” of his teeth with gold caps: “a person turns around the corner, all vanity, gleaming from the gold in his teeth and his ring as well as in the watch chain with a hanging medal. . . . It was Fortunato, just arrived from Argentina a few days ago, full of pesos and arrogance.” And later: “Just the gold he has hanging from the watch chain, not to mention that he has on his fingers and in his mouth! Just that is a fortune!” By the end of the novel, Fortunato marries the daughter of the Pires family and returns once more to Argentina “with the intention of saving some more pesos to come back to the homeland for good.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Maria I. B. Baganha, “Uma contra-imagem do brasileiro,” *Revista de História Económica e Social* 7 (1981): 129–37; idem, *Portuguese Emigration*, 94–126. See also Miriam Halpern Pereira, “Liberdade e contenção na emigração portuguesa (1850–1930),” in Silva et al., *Emigração/Imigração*, 9–16; idem, *A política portuguesa de emigração*. An insightful social history of the impact of return migrants in Porto can be found in Alves, *Os Brasileiros*. The literary dimension is discussed in Nuno Valério, “A imagem do ‘brasileiro’ na obra literária de Júlio Dinis,” *Ler História* 39 (2000): 141–52; A. M. Pires Cabral, *A emigração na literatura portuguesa: Uma colectânea de textos* (Vila Real: Secretaria de Estado da Emigração, 1985); Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade, “Refocalizar a imagem do ‘brasileiro,’” in Rocha-Trindade and Campos, *Olhares lusos e brasileiros*, 131–46. The beautiful catalogue of a Porto exhibit on the *brasileiro* contains several studies on the topic: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses, *Os Brasileiros de torna-viagem* (Lisbon: CNCDP, 2000). For the impact of the *indianos* in Spain, see Xosé Nuñez Seixas, “Retornados e inadaptados: El ‘americano’ gallego, entre mito y realidad, 1880–1930,” *Revista de Indias* 58, 214 (Sept.–Dec. 1998): 555–93; María Cruz Morales Saro, “Las fundaciones de los *Indianos* en Asturias,” in *Espanoles hacia América: La emigración en masa, 1880–1930*, ed. Nicolás Sánchez Albornoz (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988), 66–79. For the Italian case, see Dino Cinel, *The National Integration of Italian Return Migration, 1870–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), 118–9, *passim*.

<sup>125</sup> Boaventura de Passos, *A família Pires* (Faro: Edições Nêveda, 1998), 125, 146–7, 167.

A similarly mordant description of an enriched return migrant from Argentina appears in another of Boaventura de Passos' novels, *Aves de rapina* [Birds of Prey], written around the same time. Here, the returnee is Zé General, a character in a play, who comes back from Patagonia with an alleged nobility title and wins back the love of his former girlfriend. Passos' characterization of Zé General resembles that of Fortunato in its sarcasm:

A man shows up at the house, just off the bus. He was dressed up in an ensemble whose cut and color were so extravagant and exotic that they gave him the vivid resemblance of a cartoon.

[It was] Zé General, returned from Patagonia with his couple of pesos to rest in his homeland, under the laurels of his tacky heraldry.<sup>126</sup>

Like Zé General, Fortunato also shows a distinctive choice of clothing after his sojourn in Argentina when he goes to a dance in his pajamas, dismissing the reaction of the townspeople as lack of world experience.<sup>127</sup> Finally, in both cases, Passos further ridicules these returnees because they are no longer able to speak proper Portuguese and they want to show off their command of the Spanish language which results in a comical linguistic jumble.<sup>128</sup>

Despite the mockery of contemporary writers and the upper classes, the *brasileiro* was a powerful image for the popular classes. Stories of successful migrants were part of the Algarvian popular lore. These tales fed the dreams of success waiting those who dare beyond the Atlantic. Rural children became familiar with this image (and the idea of migration) early on, as the following nursery rhyme from the countryside of São Brás illustrates:

One, two, three,  
four, five, six,  
seven, eight, nine  
and three more makes twelve.

<sup>126</sup> Boaventura de Passos, *Aves de rapina* (Faro: Edições Nêvada, 1998), 113–4.

<sup>127</sup> Passos, *A família Pires*, 146–8.

<sup>128</sup> Passos, *A família Pires*, 125–7; idem, *Aves de rapina*, 114.

Three more makes twelve  
 my love is not from here  
 my love is a *brasileiro*  
 he wears a Panama hat.

He wears a Panama hat  
 a hat of fine straw  
 my love is a *brasileiro*  
 he just came back from Argentina.<sup>129</sup>

### TRANSATLANTIC DESTINATIONS

Traditional explanations of migrants' destination selection emphasize the predominance of a 'default' option, the influence of traditions of contacts and exchange, the effects of propaganda and recruitment, and the existence of cultural continuity between places of origin and destination. According to this logic, Algarvian migrants should have chosen Brazil as their preferred destination, as indeed the majority of Portuguese migrants did. For example, in 1912, at the height of the transatlantic migration system, 93 percent of migrants from continental Portugal went to Brazil. However, that year only 16 percent of migrants from the Algarve followed the same path and almost 80 percent went further south, to Argentina. Far from extraordinary, this distribution was representative of a broader regional trend that began in the late nineteenth century and was firmly established by the 1910s.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> The complete original song is: "Um, dois, três, / quatro, cinco, seis, / sete, oito, nove / para doze faltam três. Para doze faltam três / meu amor não é de cá / meu amor é brasileiro / traz chapéu à Panamá. Traz chapéu à Panamá / chapéu de palha fina / meu amor é brasileiro / veio há pouco d'Argentina." This song was part of the repertoire of the group of traditional Algarvian music Grupo Musical de Santa Maria, from Faro. They generously shared with me the lyrics of this song after their performance in Faro, in Christmas of 1993. The song was probably collected in the *sítio* of Corotelo, in the parish of São Brás de Alportel.

<sup>130</sup> For the most part, scholars have paid scant attention to regional and local variations of Portuguese emigration by destination. The exceptions are several studies devoted to the migratory patterns of the archipelagos of Azores and Madeira, whose migrants went to the United States, Guyana and the British Caribbean, Venezuela, and South Africa in large numbers. For analyses of migration from the Atlantic Islands, see Sacuntala de Miranda, *A emigração portuguesa e o Atlântico, 1870–1930* (Lisbon: Edições Salamandra, 1999); Maria Norberta Amorim, "Emigração em três paróquias do sul do Pico (finais do século XVIII a 1930): Abordagem microanalítica," in Silva et al., *Emigração/Imigração*, 249–77; Alberto Vieira, "A emigração madeirense na segunda metade do século XIX," in *Ibid.*, 108–144. Very few consider the possibility of alternative

Table 3.1: Emigration from the Algarve by Destination, 1880–1959 (Percentages)\*

Period	Africa	Americas	Europe	Others	(Number)
1880–99	10.5	32.7	56.8	0.0	(2,697)

Period	Africa	Portuguese Africa	Argentina	Brazil	Europe	U.S.A.	Others	(Number)
1891–99	0.1	35.6	9.1	42.9	5.0	7.1	0.1	(1,509)
1900–09	0.1	22.5 a)	23.9	43.3	3.0	7.0	0.0	(2,422)
1910–19	3.8	—	52.1	17.8	9.0	17.0	0.2	(6,326)
1920–29	6.0	—	59.0	12.4	12.8	8.8	1.0	(11,636)
1930–35	26.0	—	36.3	6.0	25.8	3.3	2.5	(3,256)
1944–49	—	—	65.8	20.7	1.3	2.1	10.1 b)	(1,955)
1950–59	—	—	38.7	17.3	9.2	1.9	32.9 c)	(7,720)

\* Before 1891 the only discrimination is by continents. Before 1914, I have considered “other South American countries” as Argentina and “North America” as the United States. Since there is no published information for 1922, I have used the data from the passport requests for that year.

a) Only until 1907.

b) During this period this category includes Africa and Europe.

c) The majority (19 percent of the total number) migrated to Venezuela. This category also includes migration to European countries, except France.

Sources: *Anuario Estatístico* (Lisbon, 1884–1886, 1892, 1900, 1921, 1923–1924, 1925–1950); *Movimento da População* (Lisbon, 1887, 1889–1896, 1909–1921); *Emigração Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1901–1912); F. G. Cassola Ribeiro, *Emigração portuguesa: Algumas características dominantes dos movimentos no período de 1950 a 1984* (Porto: Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas–Centro de Estudos, 1986); Livro de registo de passaportes, 1922, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF.

There were, however, some variations in the destination of Algarvian migrants over time (Table 3.1). During the second half of the nineteenth century, Brazil and the Portuguese colonies in Africa—especially Angola—attracted more migrants. But from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, Argentina, Brazil, and the United States became the

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destinations in continental Portugal, but the following studies show that such patterns existed and deserve to be studied more systematically: Jorge Carvalho Arroiteia, *Os ilhavs e os murtoseiros na emigração portuguesa* (Aveiro: Associação de Defesa do Património Natural e Cultural da Região de Aveiro, 1984); Paulo Filipe Monteiro, “Emigrantes imigrados: Da Lousã ao Connecticut, uma investigação em dois tempos,” in Silva et al., *Emigração/Imigração*, 323–47.

dominant destinations.<sup>131</sup> Emigration from the Algarve to Brazil was rather stable from 1900 to 1930, but its overall significance dropped: from 43 percent in 1900–1909 to 12 percent in 1920–1929 to 6 percent in 1930–1935. Emigration to the United States represented about 7 percent during the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century, reached 17 percent during 1910–1919, and decreased to about 9 percent in 1920–1929 and 3 percent in 1930–1935—without doubt, affected by the restrictive immigration laws passed by the American government in the 1920s. By contrast, beginning in 1909, Argentina emerged as the principal destination for Algarvian overseas migrants, and its importance grew steadily during the following decades: from 24 percent in 1900–1909 to close to 60 percent in 1920–1929. Despite the general decrease of emigration during the mid-1930s, Argentina was still the destination of half of all Algarvian migrants.<sup>132</sup> When the level of emigration recovered after World War II, Argentina remained the main destination: in the 1940s and the early 1950s, two-thirds of all Algarvian migrants went to Argentina. A significant proportion of this flow was the result of family reunification. Migration to Argentina decreased steadily after 1952. In the 1950s, the oil boom in Venezuela also attracted a growing number of Algarvian workers (19 percent of the total Algarvian migration), followed by two new overseas destinations, Canada (4 percent), and, outside the transatlantic system, Australia (2 percent). As in the rest of Portugal, beginning in the late 1950s, the labor markets of northwestern Europe became the preferred destinations for Algarvian migrants, especially France, which attracted two-thirds of all Algarvian migrants in the 1960s.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Livros de registo de passaportes, 1834–1947, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF. The passport requests's books for this period include mostly migration overseas. The important migratory flow to Spain became exempt from passports after 1878 and, therefore, it is not considered in this distribution. Furthermore, migrants to Portuguese Africa were exempted from passports after 1907.

<sup>132</sup> Published statistics of migration by district of origin and destination are available for 1930 to 1935 (see Table 3.1). According to them, 36.3 percent of Algarvian migrants went to Argentina. However, the analysis of the passport requests for the years 1933, 1935, and 1937 increases that figure to 56.2 percent (and, if 1930 is also considered, it grows to 65.8 percent).

<sup>133</sup> Livros de registo de passaportes; Portugal, Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1944–50); Portugal, Ministério do Interior, *Boletim Anual da Junta da Emigração 1953* ([Vila Nova de Famalicão, Tipografia Minerva], 1955); Ribeiro, *Emigração portuguesa: Algumas características dominantes*.

*Portuguese Africa: The Colonial Path*

Opportunities for European migrants in the Portuguese colonies were limited. Successive governments tried to encourage white migration and settlement, and nationalists demanded colonization efforts to redirect Portuguese migrants from the Americas to the African colonies, all with little success. An 1894 article from *O Progresso do Sul* illustrates the prevailing sentiment:

Given [Portugal's] propitious conditions as a colonial nation, in possession of vast and rich territories that only need human activity, wouldn't it be good policy to try to make them the destination of the massive flow that leaves every year for the New World, either to fill up its cemeteries or to join the legion of laborers working for its material development?<sup>134</sup>

Nevertheless, few resources were devoted to putting these ideas into practice and migration from Portugal to the colonies remained numerically weak. By 1910, Angola had only about 12,000 Europeans and Mozambique 6,000.<sup>135</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s, 13 percent of Algarvian migrants went to the Portuguese colonies. Angola attracted over three-quarters of them, followed by Mozambique (12 percent) and São Tomé and Príncipe (10 percent).<sup>136</sup> Colonial migration was not for general laborers. The

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<sup>134</sup> *O Progresso do Sul*, June 3, 1894. The benefits and costs of redirecting Portuguese migration from Brazil to Africa were discussed by essayists and politicians such as Joaquim de Oliveira Martins and Afonso Costa. Oliveira Martins was opposed to such an idea considering that it would have a negative effect on transatlantic commerce and the flow of capital sent by the migrants as remittances. See the discussion of these ideas in Afonso Costa, *Estudos de economia nacional, I- O problema da emigração* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1911), 167–73. For information on the evolution of colonization projects and policy changes, see Rui Ferreira da Silva, “Sob o signo do império,” in *Portugal e o Estado Novo (1930–1960)*, ed. Fernando Rosas, vol. 12 of *Nova História de Portugal*, ed. Joel Serrão and A. H. Oliveira Marques (Lisbon: Editorial Presença, 1992), 374–8; Eduardo Sousa Ferreira, *Origens e formas da emigração* (Lisbon: Iniciativas Editoriais, 1976), 107–23.

<sup>135</sup> Only in the 1950s and 1960s did the settlement of Portuguese population reach considerable numbers. Many of these settlers returned to Portugal with the onset of the wars of independence in the 1970s. Population estimates from Marques, *History of Portugal*, 2:82–3, 239–42.

<sup>136</sup> According to published statistics, the distribution of the migratory flow to Portuguese Africa for the country as a whole was 48 percent to Angola, 30 percent to São Tomé and Príncipe, and 17 percent to Mozambique. The largest colonies of Angola and Mozambique attracted the majority of Portuguese migrants during the twentieth century. The unusual share of the island of São Tomé in the late nineteenth century can be attributed to the attraction of the economic growth created by the ‘cocoa cycle.’ Evangelista, *Um século*, 138.

vast majority of Algarvian migrants to the colonies declared a trade or skill. Unlike the expanding economies of the Americas, the African colonies did not need unskilled labor, which was provided in abundance and cheaply by the local population. In the official discourse, farmers were the ideal settlers, but rural colonization grew slowly, dependent on erratic official support and limited by the lack of reliable communication between the coast and the interior. Two-thirds of all Algarvian migrants were engaged in either commerce or fishing, 20 percent were skilled workers or artisans, and only 12 percent were unskilled or rural workers. Colonial commerce provided opportunities for daring entrepreneurs and for representatives of metropolitan companies and their employees. Becoming a *caixeiro* or commercial clerk was a traditional strategy among young migrant men with the necessary skills and connections in the Portuguese colonial world. It was also one of the most common occupations among Portuguese migrants to Brazil until the late nineteenth century.<sup>137</sup>

The Algarvian fishermen who went to Portuguese Africa were mostly from the port of Olhão, and their main destination was Angola. This flow started in the 1860s as an extension of their activities off the Algarvian and Moroccan coasts. They developed fisheries off the coast of Angola using the same sail boats (*caíques*) and traditional fishing techniques of the Mediterranean, namely the fixed net known as *valenciana*. About 200 fishermen requested passports for Portuguese Africa during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. Many left with their families. Some migrated on a seasonal basis, others stayed for longer periods or permanently. Algarvian fishermen and maritime workers contributed to the creation and growth of Portuguese settlements on the southern coast of Angola, especially in Moçamedes (Namibe), Porto Alexandre (Tombua), and Bahia dos Tigres. A 1925 official citation praised their pioneering spirit and characterized them as “humble and unknown workers of civilization.” In addition to fishing, they were involved in the export of dry fish to northern Angola and to other Portuguese colonies in western Africa, and in shipbuilding.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Joel Serrão, “A emigração portuguesa para o Brasil na segunda metade do século XIX (Esboço de problematização),” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 13 (1976): 84–106; Alves, *Os Brasileiros*, 77–8.

<sup>138</sup> Joaquim Alberto Iria, *Breve notícia acerca da expansão e esforço colonizador dos pescadores olhanenses no Sul de Angola (Subsídios para a história da colonização algarvia*



Beginning in 1907, in an effort to attract more settlers to their colonies, the Portuguese authorities dispensed migrants of passports. As a result, this flow disappears from official statistics and the passport requests' books. It is clear, however, that colonial migration never achieved the proportions of migration to the Americas. In the case of Algarvian fishermen, while there are regular references to their departure to Portuguese Africa in the regional newspapers during the 1890s, the movement is not mentioned afterwards. In the 1890s, Algarvian fishermen pleaded with the colonial authorities not to allow the introduction of steamboat fishing on the coast of Angola. The competition, they said, would be "terrible, and they would be, inevitably, the victims of the new fishing system, forcing them to abandon their industry."<sup>139</sup> It is likely, then, that the Algarvian fisheries of Angola could not adapt to the technological changes introduced in the early twentieth century. On the other hand, agricultural colonization remained underdeveloped and was not a real alternative for Portuguese migrants. Viable colonization schemes and the need to 'populate' Portuguese Africa were still being discussed in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>140</sup> Nuno Simões, an advocate of redirecting 'excess' Portuguese population to Africa in the 1930s and 1940s, characterized the official initiatives as "disastrous." He estimated that from 1919 to 1935 Portuguese migration to Africa represented only one-fiftieth of all legal departures.<sup>141</sup> Discourses about the potential riches of the African territories and appeals to national pride could do little to divert migrants from the proven economic opportunities of the Americas.

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*em Africa*), offprint of *I Congresso de História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo*, 4ª Secção (Lisbon: n.p., 1938); Alberto Carlos Germano da Silva Correia, "Colonização portuguesa de Angola," in Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, *III Congresso Colonial Nacional: De 8 a 15 de Maio de 1930: Actas das Sessões e Teses* (Lisbon: [Tip. e Pap. Carmona], 1934), 12–21; *Algarve e Alentejo*, Apr. 26, 1896, 2. The official commendation was published in the *Diário de Governo* on June 27, 1925; a copy is included in Iria, *Breve notícia*, 47–8.

<sup>139</sup> Iria, *Breve notícia*, 45. In addition, industrial fishing methods had the unwanted consequence of depleting traditional fisheries. As Raul Brandão lamented in his account of the state of Portuguese fishing towns in the early twentieth century, "To cultivate the sea is one thing—it is the job of fishermen; to exploit the sea is something else—it is the job of industrialists." Raul Brandão, *Os pescadores* (Porto: Porto Editora, 2004 [1923]), 36.

<sup>140</sup> Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, *III Congresso Colonial Nacional*; Silva, "Sob o signo do império," 374–8.

<sup>141</sup> Nuno Simões, *Portugueses no mundo: Esboço para um estudo e notas de campanha* (Lisbon: [Minerva], 1940), 9.

*Fazer a América: Destination Selection*

During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, thousands of Algarvian workers left their villages with hopes of *fazer a América* (to 'make it in America'). There were, however, many Americas. In January 1912, for example, José Barriga, António Viegas, and Manuel Coelho applied for passports to travel overseas. For José, the final destination was Buenos Aires; for António, it was New York; and for Manuel, it was Rio de Janeiro. By migrating to Argentina, José was following the path of the majority of Algarvian migrants at that time. But António and Manuel chose differently. What factors contributed to the composition of the different flows and influenced migrants' choice of destination? While they were all Algarvians, each migrant was linked to particular circumstances that influenced his migratory selection. José was a stone-mason from the rural parish of Estoí; António was a maritime worker from the port-town of Olhão; and Manuel was also a maritime worker, but from the western parish of Ferragudo. The destination of Algarvian migrants varied over time and according to factors such as the migrants' assessment of the changing conditions of transatlantic labor markets, the occupational and demographic characteristics of the migrants, the impact of changing migratory policies in the countries of destination, and the development of migratory networks.

*Assessment*

Information about the possibilities and outlook of the labor markets across the Atlantic circulated through informal networks. Additionally, as the coverage of the Algarvian press of the time shows, the differential economic advantages of the overseas markets were common knowledge for the Algarvian public opinion. The level of detail of the information on the conditions of far-away labor markets was truly remarkable. For example, in October 1911, the newspaper *O Algarve* reported about the promising possibilities for those migrants who decided to go to Argentina and take advantage of the decreased competition of Italian immigrants that resulted from a diplomatic incident between Italy and Argentina. The newspaper speculated that

Portuguese agricultural workers may prefer Argentina to emigrate and work there during the four months from November of 1911 to March of 1912.

Wages will be far superior than those of last year, which reached 450 pesos, or 1,900 réis per day.

One can encouragingly calculate in 1,400 francs, or 280,000 réis the economy made by each agricultural worker during the four above-mentioned months.<sup>142</sup>

This example is by no means an isolated one. There were regular comments in the regional newspapers about the situation in the countries of immigration in the Americas and the condition of Portuguese migrants there. The main transatlantic destinations, however, were presented by the Algarvian newspapers in different and often contrasting ways.

If one were to judge the general feeling in the Algarve about the main destinations of transatlantic migrants by reading the regional press during the first three decades of the twentieth century, the conclusion would be that, with few exceptions, there was a general optimistic view about Argentina as a country of immigration and labor market for Algarvian migrants and a not so positive view about the rest. In Algarvian newspapers one could regularly find reports about the solid economic condition of Argentina, its record-breaking harvests, the growth of its cities, and news about the activities of the Portuguese community, among whom the Algarvians occupied a prominent place. On the other hand, news from Brazil usually stressed the lack of work and the difficult conditions of the disappointed migrants who ventured to the former colony. In several occasions, newspapers asked Algarvians not to migrate there at all. Finally, mixed comments, but mostly silence, prevailed about the situation in the United States.<sup>143</sup> It is hard to measure the real impact of these assessments of the Algarvian press on the choices of Algarvian migrants for particular transatlantic destinations. It is necessary to take into account the high levels of illiteracy in Portugal at that time. For the country as a whole, the rate of illiteracy was 74.0 percent in 1900, 69.6 percent in 1911, 66.3 percent in 1920, and 60.2 percent in 1930; for the Algarve the rates were even higher: 83.4 percent in 1900,

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<sup>142</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Oct. 24, 1911.

<sup>143</sup> Examples of comments about Argentina in: *O Algarve* (Faro), Nov. 28, 1909; Oct. 20, 1912; Apr. 27, 1924; Apr. 17, 1927; *O Sul*, Oct. 20, 1912; Oct. 5, 1913; *Ecos do Sul*, Mar. 23, 1912; Apr. 27, 1912; Apr. 13, 1913; Aug. 30, 1913; *Correio do Sul*, Oct. 5, 1924; Oct. 30, 1924. Comments about Brazil in: *O Algarve* (Faro), Apr. 26, 1908 Apr. 21, 1912; Feb. 16, 1913; Dec. 21, 1913; Dec. 11, 1921; *Ecos do Sul*, Mar. 23, 1912; Apr. 27, 1912; Aug. 30, 1913; *Correio do Sul*, Oct. 5, 1924; Oct. 30, 1924. Comments about the United States: *O Algarve* (Faro), Apr. 26, 1908; Apr. 21, 1912; Dec. 21, 1913; Aug. 23, 1914; Dec. 11, 1921; *Ecos do Sul*, June 7, 1913; Nov. 1, 1913; *O Heraldo* (Faro), Mar. 22, 1913; Mar. 28, 1914; *Correio do Sul*, Feb. 21, 1921.

82.2 percent in 1911, 77.8 percent in 1920, and 73.6 percent in 1930.<sup>144</sup> Despite clear limitations to individual reading, newspapers were read in public spaces such as taverns, stores, and town squares, and news were shared by the population.

The contrast between the perceptions of Argentina and the other destinations for Algarvian migrants is illustrated by the way they are depicted in the February 1, 1914, edition of *O Algarve*. On the same page, the reader could find, on the one hand, news of an official notice sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Civil Governors about the labor crisis in Brazil and, on the other hand, information about an Argentine consular report “by which one can appreciate the growing development and wealth of that privileged land of the New World.”<sup>145</sup> Indeed, the nature of the regional press coverage leaves no doubt that there was a general consensus about the comparative advantages of and the possibilities offered by the labor markets of Argentina to those Algarvians who decided to work overseas. This public consensus mirrored the choices made by the majority of the Algarvian migrants during that period, who selected overwhelmingly Argentina as their transatlantic destination.

### *Occupations*

The characteristics of the labor markets of Argentina, Brazil, and the United States in combination with migrants’ skills clearly affected the flows of migration and the selection of destination. This becomes evident by looking at the composition of Algarvian migration according to occupations. Rural workers and farmers, maritime workers, and artisans constituted the most important occupations of Algarvian male migrants. The general trend was a growth in the number of workers and farmers, who dominated Algarvian migration during the first half of the twentieth century: they represented 23 percent of migrants until 1899, 31 percent from 1900 to 1909, 72 percent from 1910 to 1928, and 75 percent from 1930 to 1940. A closer look, however, reveals important variations in the distribution of Algarvian migrants by occupation according to their destinations (Table 3.2).

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<sup>144</sup> A. H. de Oliveira Marques, ed., *Portugal: Da Monarquia para a República*, vol. 11, *Nova História de Portugal*, ed. Joel Serrão and A. H. de Oliveira Marques (Lisbon: Editorial Presença, 1991), 519–21. For a discussion on literacy in Portugal during this period, see the special issue of *Colóquio: Educação e Sociedade* 2 (Feb. 1993).

<sup>145</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Feb. 1, 1914.

Table 3.2: Emigration from the Algarve by Occupation and Destination (Percentages)  
(Men 14 and older)

Occupation	Southern Iberian and Northern Africa Destinations			Transatlantic Destinations				Total Algarve
	Gibraltar	Morocco	Spain	Argentina	Brazil	U.S.A.	Portuguese Africa	
Rural workers/ farmers	43.5	14.6	9.6	84.2	36.0	60.7	17.5	55.7
Artisans/ skilled workers	25.4	69.6	2.1	12.7	21.6	8.7	19.7	14.3
Maritime workers/ fishermen	20.7	5.6	78.5	0.6	28.7	27.2	32.0	21.1
Commercial employees/ merchants	7.9	8.0	7.9	1.8	11.3	1.9	27.0	6.3
Others	2.5	2.2	1.9	0.7	2.3	1.5	3.8	2.5
Total (Number)	855	460	2,559	7,806	2,801	1,475	595	17,651
Unknown (Number)	92	5	47	30	36	8	25	272

Sources: Livros de registo de passaportes, 1834–1946, Fundo Governo Civil, ADE. Information based on the analysis of the following years: 1834–1925, 1928, 1930, 1933, 1935, 1937, and 1940.

Two-thirds of Algarvian migrants to Brazil were either rural workers and farmers or maritime workers. The other third was composed by about 20 percent of artisans and skilled workers, and 10 percent of commercial employees and merchants. The presence of maritime workers was more substantial until the early 1920s, when—as noted below—restrictions in Brazil produced a sharp decline; up to 1920, they represented 35 percent of the flow to Brazil. The proportion of seamen and maritime workers is even higher in the case of the Algarvian flow to the United States: until 1910, they represented close to 70 percent of the migrant men, most of whom migrated temporarily. This proportion shifted during the following decades, with a growing numbers of rural workers and

farmers from the interior parishes. As a result, the overall proportion of migrants whose main occupation was farming was about 60 percent from the late nineteenth century to the late 1930s, and that of maritime workers was close to 30 percent. By contrast, maritime workers were almost absent among the Algarvian migrants to Argentina, the overwhelming majority of whom declared rural work as their occupation. Rural workers and farmers represented over 80 percent of the adult male migrants to Argentina, followed by about 13 percent of artisans and skilled workers, especially masons, stone masons, and carpenters. Migrants engaged in commercial activities (commercial employees and merchants) only represented 2 percent of the flows to Argentina and the United States.

Differences in labor markets and migrants' skills combined to shape these diverse flows. Skills and occupations had a great impact on the choice of migrants' destinations. Thus, during the period of mass migration, the chances of an Algarvian overseas migrant to choose Argentina as a destination were very high if he was a rural worker or small farmer and almost nonexistent if he was a maritime worker or fisherman. When they went overseas, the latter tended to migrate to the United States and Brazil (as discussed above, until the 1930s, large numbers of Algarvian fishermen also migrated temporarily to southern Spain). If the migrant was an artisan or skilled worker who decided to venture in the transatlantic labor markets, he was more likely to leave for Argentina (more than 5 out of 10) or Brazil (almost 4 out of 10), than to migrate to the United States. By contrast, more than 6 out of 10 commercial employees and merchants chose to migrate to Brazil, while Argentina was a very distant second choice, showing the continuity of the traditional migration of young Portuguese men for commerce to the former American colony.

#### *Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic factors also influenced the composition of each transatlantic flow. As other labor migration movements, Algarvian migration to the Americas was largely a male affair. The proportion of migrant men in the transatlantic flow reached its highest points during the heyday of temporary labor migration. Among Algarvian migrants to Brazil and the United States, the presence of men was particularly high during the first decade of the twentieth century (89 percent and 94 percent, respectively); from 1919 to 1925, however, the proportion of men in these two migratory flows was lower (73 percent and 80 percent,

respectively). In the case of migration to Argentina, the two periods of high temporary labor migration attracted similar proportions of migrant men (83 and 84 percent, respectively). On average, until 1930, women constituted about 20 percent of transatlantic migrants. Only in local and medium-distance migration within the Iberian Peninsula did Algarvian women have a larger presence among migrants (as analyzed earlier, the proportion of women was particularly high in the Algarvian flow to Gibraltar).<sup>146</sup> Argentina, however, attracted a higher number of women than any other transatlantic destination. Except for the period 1914–1918, the majority of Algarvian women who migrated overseas went to Argentina.

Since Algarvian women very rarely migrated to transatlantic destinations alone, their presence invariably indicates either migration of family units or family reunification. In the case of Algarvian migration to Argentina, female migration appeared early on, along with male labor migration. Before 1900, women already accounted for a third of the migrants to Argentina, while they only accounted for 17 percent of the migrants to Brazil. The earlier development of family migration to Argentina is also visible in the proportion of male passport holders who migrated with their families. Before 1900, this was the case of more than 11 percent of male migrants to Argentina and 8.8 percent of the male migrants to Brazil. During this early period, women were absent in Algarvian migration to the United States. In this case, the phase of family migration began slowly during the first decade of the twentieth century and developed fully during the World War I years. Considering Algarvian transatlantic migration as a whole, the proportion of women migrants and families declined during the 1910s and 1920s—during the height of male labor migration—and increased again after 1930 (or after 1921 in the case of the United States).

The influence of other demographic factors in the composition of the main flows of transatlantic migration is less evident. There were, however, some variations according to age and marital status. From 1870 to 1930, the average age of male migrants to the Americas was slightly lower than that of Algarvian migrants as a whole (30.6 and 31.9

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<sup>146</sup> An overview of the role of women in European and transatlantic migration can be found in Moch, *Moving Europeans*, 130–1, 153–4. See also Rita Simon and Caroline Brettell, eds., *International Migration: The Female Experience* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld, 1985); Donna Gabaccia, *From the Other Side: Women, Gender, and Immigrant Life in the U.S., 1820–1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

years, respectively). Algarvian migrants to the United States formed the youngest group. Their average age was about 2 years younger than that of migrants to Brazil and Argentina (29.1, 31.5, and 31.1 years respectively) and almost 90 percent of them were under 40 (compared to 80 percent and 77 percent of migrants to Argentina and Brazil, respectively). With regards to marital status, about two-thirds of all male migrants were married (this group was slightly overrepresented among migrants to the United States: 66.2 percent compared to the 62.2 percent average). In short, whereas the typical migrant from the Algarve to Argentina and Brazil was a married man in his early 30s, the typical migrant to the United States was a married man in his late 20s.

### *Immigration Policies*

Finally, changing migratory policies in the receiving countries also affected the flows of transatlantic migration from the Algarve during the first decades of the twentieth century. In general, open migratory policies prevailed in the main countries of immigration in the Americas until World War I—at least regarding European migration. But the situation began to change in the 1920s.<sup>147</sup> These policy changes were not directed specifically towards Algarvian migration, but they certainly affected it. Whereas migratory restrictions had a clear negative effect on Algarvian migration to the United States and Brazil, they had no negative impact on migration to Argentina.

The consequences of restrictive legislation are visible in the case of the United States, where the quota system established between 1921 and 1924 reduced Portuguese immigration to a few hundred per year.<sup>148</sup> Even though Algarvians represented only a small proportion of the Portuguese migrants to the United States (the majority of whom were from the Azores, followed by central and northern Portugal), when restrictions

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<sup>147</sup> For overviews of immigration policies, see Daniel Castro, *The Development and Politics of Argentine Immigration Policy, 1852–1914: To Govern is To Populate* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1991); C. Thomas Kaesemeyer, “Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: The Formation of Brazilian Immigration Policies, 1812–1945” (master’s thesis, University of Washington, 1969); Hernán Asdrúbal Silva et al., *Legislación y política migratoria en el cono sur de América: Argentina, Brasil, Uruguay* (Washington: Organización de los Estados Americanos–Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1987); William Bernard, “Immigration: History of U.S. Policy,” in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 486–95.

<sup>148</sup> For an analysis of U.S. migration policies and their influence on Portuguese migration to the United States, see Baganha, *Portuguese Emigration*, 51–93.



were established, the number of Algarvian migrants was on the rise.<sup>149</sup> Algarvian migration to the United States grew during the World War I years, and by 1920 it had approached the proportion of migration to Argentina (34 percent and 38 percent of total Algarvian migration, respectively). However, the flow of Algarvian migrants to the United States dropped sharply after the quota system was in place (9 percent in 1921, 0.6 percent in 1925, and 1 percent in 1930).<sup>150</sup>

Conditioned by the double effect of market crises and the rise of nationalism, Brazil also began to reevaluate its liberal immigration policies in the 1920s. But significant restrictions to immigration were not established until the 1930s, with the adoption of a quota system by the constitutions of 1934 and 1937, reaffirmed by a 1938 decree.<sup>151</sup> This system set a limit for each nationality of 2 percent of the number of immigrants arrived in Brazil from 1884 to 1933. Citing historical and cultural affinities between Brazil and Portugal and a shared 'Luso-Brazilian' identity, a 1939 resolution exempted Portuguese immigrants from this restriction.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, other measures enacted during this period to 'nationalize' the Brazilian economy clearly limited the labor opportunities of Portuguese and other immigrants.

In fact, the shift to nationalistic and protectionist measures had started during the previous decade. Of particular significance for Algarvian migration to Brazil was a 1920 law that limited the participation of foreigners in the fishing industry. Known as the Law of Nationalization of Fishing, this measure established that, to continue with their activities in Brazil, migrant fishermen had to become Brazilian citizens. Whereas Brazilian nationalists hailed this measure as another milestone in the nationalization of economic resources, Portuguese authorities considered

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<sup>149</sup> Jerry Williams, *And Yet They Come: Portuguese Immigration from the Azores to the United States* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1982); Baganha, *Portuguese Emigration*. Maria Baganha challenges the traditional picture of Portuguese immigration to the United States as an almost exclusive Azorean movement and shows that a shift in regional composition took place after the 1910s (pp. 257–9).

<sup>150</sup> Portugal, Ministério das Finanças, Direcção Geral da Estatística, *Movimento da População, 1917–1921* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1924), 36–7; Livros de registo de passaportes, 1925 and 1930, Fundo Governo Civil, ADE.

<sup>151</sup> Kaesemeyer, "Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism," chap. 4; Annibal Martins Alonso, *Estrangeiros no Brasil: Legislação anotada e atualizada* (Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo: Livraria Freitas Bastos, 1960), 143–249.

<sup>152</sup> Resolution 34 of the Immigration and Colonization Council, transcribed in Alonso, *Estrangeiros no Brasil*, 160–1.

it an irrational surge of nativism.<sup>153</sup> This imposition on foreign workers met with a strong reaction by immigrant organizations and the Portuguese press in Brazil, and it was officially condemned by Portugal. In particular, the Portuguese press gave ample coverage to the plight of the *poveiros*, the fishermen from Póvoa de Varzim, a port town north of Porto. But the new law affected the migration of Portuguese fishermen in general, including Algarvian fishermen. As a result, the number of Algarvian fishermen going to Brazil dropped dramatically after 1920. Whereas, until 1919, maritime workers and fishermen represented 41 percent of the Algarvian flow to Brazil, in 1925 and 1930, they were less than 4 percent. In Portugal, the government warned potential migrants that fishermen were not welcomed by the Brazilian authorities. This warning was published in the Algarvian press.<sup>154</sup> By 1930, labor limitations to immigrants were extended through the so-called Two-Thirds Act, which established that foreign workers could only account for up to one-third of the labor force in all economic activities.<sup>155</sup>

Despite these restrictions, the 1920s witnessed the highest numbers of transatlantic migrants from the Algarve, the majority of whom went to Argentina. During this decade, Argentina continued the proimmigration policies based on the principles of the 1853 Constitution and formulated by the Immigration Law of 1876.<sup>156</sup> Except for some minor restrictions passed in 1923—which basically clarified and extended restrictions already present in the 1876 law—no major limitations were enacted by the Argentine government until the 1930s. In the context of a general international crisis and growing nationalism, the Argentine authorities required new immigrants to be sponsored by established family members or countrymen who could support them or guarantee them employment, and regulated the reunification of families; later,

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<sup>153</sup> Maria de Fátima Pinto, "Relações Luso-Brasileiras nos anos 20: O 'equivoco nativista,'" *História* (Lisbon) 15, 164 (May 1993): 4–15.

<sup>154</sup> *O Algarve* (Faro), Nov. 14, 1920.

<sup>155</sup> Kaesemeyer, "Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism," 67–8; Alonso, *Estrangeiros no Brasil*, 59–61. Of course, immigrants developed ways of negotiating these restrictions through legal and illegal means. Both ways are illustrated in Alcira Ramos' study of Portuguese fishermen in Rio de Janeiro during the early 1960s. See Alcira Rita Ramos, *Pescadores portugueses no Rio de Janeiro*, Pesquisa Antropológica no. 17 ([Brasília]: n.e., 1977, 19–22.

<sup>156</sup> Juan Alsina, *La inmigración en el primer siglo de la independencia* (Buenos Aires: Felipe Alsina, 1912); Castro, *Development and Politics*; Silva et al., *Legislación y política*; Ofelia Stahringer de Caramuti, *La política migratoria argentina* (Buenos Aires: Depalma, 1975).

they also required proof of an employment contract.<sup>157</sup> Unlike United States and Brazil, however, Argentina did not establish a quota system. By emphasizing family and ethnic connections, the new regulations reinforced the role of social networks of contacts and assistance among family members and countrymen. Consequently, legal restrictions gave more force to an already established and dominant practice among Algarvian migrants to Argentina.

Migrants coped with these restrictions by looking for opportunities elsewhere and by devising ways to circumvent legal barriers. The first strategy was prevalent in the flow to the United States; the second one was used by migrants to both North and South America. Undocumented migration was a long-established practice, and anecdotal evidence suggests that it continued. By its very nature, however, this strategy is difficult to gauge. But migrants also participated in documented clandestine migration—that is, they obtained documentation to travel to one destination with the intention of going somewhere else. This practice becomes apparent by looking at the passport applications of the 1920s and 1930s, when previously unseen destinations began to appear with suspicious regularity. It did not involve large number of migrants, but it is indicative of migrants' creative response to changing circumstances. In the 1920s, the new destinations were Cuba and Mexico; in the 1930s, they included Cuba, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Curaçao, and especially Bolivia. There were a total of 231 passports registered to these destinations; 51 percent to Cuba and Mexico, and 31 percent to Bolivia. The majority of the passport applications for Cuba and Mexico occurred between 1924 and 1926; all the passport applications to Bolivia were granted in 1938 and 1939. The expected final destination of most Algarvian migrants to the Caribbean and Central America was the United States; for those ostensibly leaving for Bolivia, it was Argentina.

The use of Cuba as a way station to reach the United States and the fate of the Portuguese migrants who tried that unpredictable route were described in dramatic terms by a 1930 newspaper article reproduced in the *Boletim de Emigração*, the official publication of the Portuguese Emigration Agency. In it, the Portuguese consul estimated that some 2,000 Portuguese migrants were in Cuba waiting for an opportunity to cross to

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<sup>157</sup> Stahinger de Caramuti, *Política migratoria*; Elvira Rissech, "Migración europea, 1930–1952," unpublished report, Biblioteca DNM; Fernando Devoto, "El revés de la trama: Políticas migratorias y prácticas administrativas en la Argentina, 1919–1949," *Desarrollo Económico* 41, 162 (July–Sept. 2001): 281–304.

the United States. Many attempted the crossing in hazardous conditions, hid in the haul of ships used for the transportation of sugar; some with success, others at the risk of their own lives. “A steamboat delivers them here, or to Mexico, or wherever”—lamented the consul—“because the longer the trip, the more profitable the business is for those who live from this *new form of slavery*.”<sup>158</sup> Portuguese migrants also used Spanish ports to reach the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico as a way to get to the United States. Between 1925 and 1930, Spanish statistics registered the departure of 2,230 Portuguese migrants, two-thirds of whom went to Cuba, Panama, and Mexico. Migrants from other countries in southern Europe and the Middle East also traveled to the United States through clandestine routes in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>159</sup>

As the story of António presented at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, migrating to Argentina by applying for a passport to Bolivia was not as dangerous as clandestine migration to the United States. Initially, however, migrants to Bolivia faced unforeseen difficulties. The flow to Bolivia and the subsequent re-migration to Argentina grew out of organized migration sponsored by the Bolivian government to work in agricultural colonization. In 1939, the Portuguese language newspaper *Ecos de Portugal*, published in Buenos Aires, related the vicissitudes of the initial group of migrants and their decision to leave Bolivia for Argentina.<sup>160</sup> The article presents the testimony of a migrant from Loulé, who recounts the hardship of a long trip across rivers without bridges and mosquito-infected fields, and the disillusion his group found once arrived in the agricultural colony. After that initial flow of re-migration, other migrants ventured in the path of documented illegal migration to Argentina via Bolivia as a way of bypassing the bureaucratic hurdles enacted by the Argentine government in the 1930s that made the passport application process more difficult and considerable more expensive (according to the *Boletim de Emigração*, the visa for Buenos Aires could cost “up or close to 1,000 escudos per person”).<sup>161</sup>

There is some evidence of yet another flow of documented clandestine migration during the 1930s, the magnitude of which is even harder to

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<sup>158</sup> Portugal, Ministério do Interior, Comissariado Geral dos Serviços de Emigração, *Boletim de Emigração*, 12, 1–4 (Jan.–Dec. 1931): 30. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>159</sup> Evangelista, *Um século*, 124. Cuba attracted the largest share, with 46.5 percent of departures.

<sup>160</sup> *Ecos de Portugal*, Aug. 8, 1939.

<sup>161</sup> *Boletim de Emigração* 13, 1–4 (Jan.–Dec. 1932): 5.

measure: re-migration from Brazil to Argentina. Oral testimonies collected among Algarvian migrants in Argentina make reference to this clandestine route. The story of Manuel António illustrates this migratory strategy. In 1939, Manuel applied for a passport to travel to Brazil together with six other men from his village in the county of Loulé. Manuel wanted to go to Argentina, where he had a brother. But, since his brother had arrived a year earlier via Bolivia and was not in the country legally, he could not file an application as Manuel's sponsor. The seven men arrived in Brazil and soon found out that the travel agent had sold them a ticket linked to a contract with the provision of working in the countryside for two years. They all refused to comply and, instead, stayed in São Paulo, where they found work in construction. After four months, five out of the seven men planned the trip to Argentina. They traveled south, to Rio Grande do Sul, from where they crossed into the Argentine province of Corrientes. In the small town of Itaquí, the group secured the services of a guide and waited until nightfall to cross the Uruguay River in a small boat. Once on the Argentine side, they walked across farm fields and made it to the train station in the town of Alvear, where they took the early morning train to Buenos Aires. The following day, they joined family and friends in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. After a few days, all of them started working with relatives or other countrymen. It is hard to gauge the number of migrants who arrived in Argentina this way in the 1930s. As Manuel explained, the train station employee in Alvear understood their situation and helped them without any questions: "who knows how many more had gone that way before us, clandestinely like us"—he speculated.<sup>162</sup> The east and northeast borders of Argentina with Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and the northern border with Bolivia were indeed permeable for clandestine migrants. In an attempt to remedy this situation, in the 1930s Argentine authorities created new control posts along these borders.<sup>163</sup> It is hard to ascertain whether these flows of clandestine migration consisted of a few hundred or a few thousand migrants. Irrespective of the total number of migrants involved, however, these movements illustrate the

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<sup>162</sup> Interview with Manuel António [pseud.] (Villa Elisa, Apr. 24, 1994 and May 18, 1994).

<sup>163</sup> Rissech, "Migración europea." Migrants also re-migrated from Uruguay by crossing from Montevideo to Buenos Aires. See the life-story of an Algarvian migrant in Julián Ripa, *Inmigrantes en la Patagonia* (Buenos Aires: Marymar, 1987), 120–31. There are references to re-migration from Uruguay to Argentina in other oral testimonies that I collected in Argentina.

repertoire of strategies developed by migrant workers to cope with legal restrictions to mobility.

### *Social Networks*

In addition to information, occupation, demography, and the possibilities and limits set by labor markets and migratory policies, destination selection was clearly influenced by social networks that emerged at the local level. Contacts among kin, friends, and neighbors provided information, assistance, and cooperation which formed the basis of migratory chains that connected particular places of origin with particular destinations. The impact of these primary networks becomes apparent when one considers the spatial distribution of Algarvian migration zooming in from the regional to the local level.

Several counties developed migration patterns that did not follow the general migratory flow of the region (Table 3.3). Local patterns also changed over time. Between 1880 and 1907, Brazil attracted the majority of Algarvian migrants followed by Europe, Portuguese Africa, and other destinations in the Americas (namely Argentina and the United States). Emigration from particular counties, however, sometimes differed dramatically from this general distribution by destination. For example, migrants from the county of Olhão, on the eastern side of the Algarve, showed a stronger preference for Portuguese Africa and the United States than the average (21 percent versus 12 percent in 1880–1899 and 38 percent versus 28 percent in 1900–1907, for Portuguese Africa; and 28 percent versus 8 percent in 1900–1907, for the United States). After 1908, when Argentina became the dominant destination for the region as a whole, the majority of the migrants from Olhão followed this general trend, yet in a proportion below the regional average (37 percent versus 49 percent between 1908 and 1921). Meanwhile, during the same period, migrants from Olhão were almost twice as likely to go the United States than the average (33 percent versus 18 percent). Only after 1922, following migratory restrictions in the United States, did emigration from Olhão to Argentina approach the general average (65 percent). Following the general tendency for the region, the proportion of migrants from Olhão going to Brazil dropped steadily during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the case of Olhão, this decline was faster than the average: from 20 percent between 1880 and 1907, to 13 percent between 1908 and 1921, to 7 percent during the rest of the 1920s. Despite the general trend, however, emigration from other counties to Brazil remained strong. In the case of Lagoa, for example,

Table 3.3: Emigration by Selected Counties and Destination (Percentages)

<b>1880–1907</b>							
County	Portuguese Africa	Brazil	Argentina	U.S.A.	Europe	Other	Number
Faro	8.5	30.0	38.7	1.2	20.3	1.3	1,026
Olhão	28.2	20.2	9.6	6.4	33.8	1.7	1,352
Loulé	23.9	32.0	34.0	1.7	7.5	1.0	294
Lagoa	12.2	79.1	1.2	1.9	4.6	1.0	589
Tavira	26.1	20.9	14.7	1.1	35.3	1.8	272
Portimão	18.1	25.5	1.0	1.3	50.0	4.0	298
Lagos	13.4	17.3	—	0.8	68.5	—	127
Silves	35.7	50.0	5.3	—	8.9	—	56
Albufeira	53.1	32.8	3.1	—	9.4	1.6	64
<b>Total Algarve</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>5,572</b>
<b>1908–1921</b>							
County	Africa	Brazil	Argentina	U.S.A.	Europe	Other	Number
Faro	2.9	15.3	62.4	13.7	5.3	0.3	2,670
Olhão	9.7	12.9	37.5	33.2	6.7	—	1,904
Loulé	3.3	10.2	64.9	14.5	6.9	0.1	1,948
Lagoa	2.5	68.5	12.2	7.0	9.7	—	555
Tavira	9.0	15.1	61.0	6.6	8.3	—	762
São Brás	9.3	9.8	38.6	35.2	5.9	1.3	614
Portimão	8.9	42.4	4.3	9.8	34.2	0.5	184
Lagos	6.1	20.8	31.5	8.6	32.5	0.5	197
Silves	7.8	45.0	9.9	3.1	34.0	—	191
Albufeira	6.0	22.5	51.5	6.6	18.1	—	182
<b>Total Algarve</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>9,402</b>
<b>1922–25, 1928, 1930</b>							
County	Africa	Brazil	Argentina	U.S.A.	Europe	Other	Number
Faro	3.1	4.9	73.3	4.0	13.3	1.4	1,051
Olhão	11.0	7.1	65.6	2.7	12.3	1.1	981
Loulé	1.7	10.7	59.9	13.2	11.6	2.9	1,373
Lagoa	12.1	43.9	27.3	3.0	12.1	1.5	66
Tavira	15.0	7.2	65.5	—	8.5	3.8	472
São Brás	6.8	3.0	75.3	6.1	5.0	3.8	999
Portimão	11.8	35.3	13.7	2.0	35.3	2.0	51
Lagos	23.3	3.3	16.7	6.6	46.7	3.3	30
Silves	11.1	19.7	33.3	2.5	33.3	—	81
Albufeira	4.2	9.7	48.5	0.6	35.7	1.2	165
<b>Total Algarve</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5,900</b>

Sources: Livros de registo de passaportes, 1880–1900, 1922–30, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF; *Anuario Estatístico* (Lisbon, 1900, 1921); *Movimento da População* (Lisbon, 1909–21); *Emigração Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1901–12). Data for 1880–1900 and 1922–30 come from the analysis of the passport requests; information for 1901–21 is based on published statistics.

Brazil was the dominant destination during this period in a proportion well above the general average: 79 percent versus 29 percent from 1880 to 1907; 68.5 percent versus 18 percent between 1908 and 1921; and 44 percent versus 7.5 percent between 1922 and 1930. Emigration from Lagoa to Argentina did increase during the first decades of the twentieth century, but it remained considerably below the regional average (12 percent versus 49 percent between 1908 and 1921).

Microregional migration patterns are also visible within counties, as many parishes also developed distinctive patterns according to destination. For example, migrants from the parish of Ferragudo (Lagoa), on the western coast of the Algarve, went mainly to the Brazilian cities of Rio de Janeiro and Manaus; migrants from the parish of Olhão favored New York, Provincetown, and other ports of the Atlantic coast of the United States, Moçamedes and Benguela, in Angola, and Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil; and the majority of the migrants from the nearby port of Fuseta (Olhão) preferred Gloucester and other ports in the northeast of the United States. In the interior of the Algarve, the majority of migrants from the parish of São Brás de Alportel went to Buenos Aires and later to the Patagonian city of Comodoro Rivadavia, in Argentina; to San Francisco, in the United States, and to Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil. Also in the interior, migrants from the parishes of Loulé went mainly to Buenos Aires, and to a lesser extent to the Brazilian cities of Santos and Rio de Janeiro, and to San Francisco, in the United States.

The distribution of migration by destination at the county and parish levels shows the importance of social networks in the formation of these migratory flows. Networks relied on the cooperation of family members and fellow villagers, and were influenced by other factors, such as the occupational background and skills of the migrants. This combination affected not only the selection of the country of immigration, but also the particular destination within each country. The cases of Manuel Coelho, António Viegas, and José Barriga, presented at the beginning of this section, illustrate these different local patterns of destination selection. Migratory flows of seamen, artisans, and laborers developed with their own characteristics regarding destination, length of sojourn, and sociodemographic features. For example, the migrants from the western parish of Ferragudo who went to Rio de Janeiro and Manaus were almost exclusively maritime workers who traveled several times. The same was true for the fishermen of Olhão and Fuseta, on the east coast, who migrated temporarily to Rio de Janeiro, New York, Provincetown, and Gloucester, and to the Angolan port of Moçamedes. Most rural workers and farmers from the parishes of the county of Loulé went to



Buenos Aires, but the second destination of preference varied among migrants from different parishes: those from São Clemente preferred the Brazilian cities of Santos and São Paulo, and those from Salir opted for San Francisco, in California. In nearby São Brás de Alportel, while the overwhelming majority of rural workers and farmers migrated to Buenos Aires, stone masons and other artisans were divided between Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro (and, outside the Atlantic migration system, to the urban centers of French Morocco). Most migrant artisans, rural workers, and farmers also left for temporary stays, but short-term sojourns were not as common as those of maritime workers.

### CONCLUSION

Migration does not occur in a vacuum. People build migration paths on previous traditions, and make use of the knowledge gained from past experiences. From the eighteenth century to the mid-1900s, Algarvians developed strategies of labor migration that linked them to specific labor markets in other regions and countries. The recurrence of these circuits of labor migration over time formed distinctive migration systems: southern Iberian, transatlantic, and European. Thus, Algarvian participation in the transatlantic migration system, which began during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, did not represent a complete break with earlier migratory moves. For Algarvian migrant workers the labor markets of Portuguese Africa, Argentina, Brazil, and the United States emerged as options in the context of previous and existing strategies of labor migration. Algarvian participation in the transatlantic migration system emerged in the context of, and was influenced by, a long-lasting history of migration within the southern Iberian migration system. This transition was possible as a result of cheaper transportation, encouraging or tolerant migratory policies, labor demands, differential wages, and primary contacts at both sides of the Atlantic which provided information and assistance. Transatlantic migratory flows also began as temporary moves—that is, as an extension of existing migratory strategies. Due to the initial investment and the distance involved, however, Algarvian migrants stayed overseas for longer periods. Migrations back and forth between the Algarve and various destinations overseas were also common. With time, temporary labor migration gave way to permanent settlement and family migration.

A systems approach sheds light on the connections between regional patterns of migration and broader patterns of geographic mobility. Recurrent patterns formed identifiable migration systems which emerged, developed, and ended over time. The Algarvian case provides a privileged vantage point to explore how historical migration systems overlapped and emerging systems were connected with existing ones. This interconnectedness among systems is crucial to understand the development of transatlantic migration from Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the case of southern Europe, this broader, systemic approach might also prove useful to examine the post-World War II transition from transatlantic migration to migration to northwest Europe. This analysis emphasizes continuity and adaptability but it does not negate change. Disruption occurred and new patterns emerged, affecting the migrants, the communities of origin, and the immigrant communities (for example, from labor to family migration, or from temporary movements to permanent settlement). Change, however, was gradual rather than radical, and happened within a general background of continuity and adaptation.

Migrants' destination selection was the result of the interplay of macro and micro factors. Migration was a labor strategy and Algarvians made informed decisions to select a place of temporary or permanent settlement according to personal and family objectives. These decisions were influenced by their individual, social, and local circumstances and took place in a changing structural context. At the macro level, forces such as changes in transportation, the labor markets, and migratory policies both created possibilities for and set limits to the development of particular flows of migration. At the micro level, the choice of destination depended on migrants' objectives, sociodemographic attributes, local origins, and the influence of social and occupational networks. The combination of these factors produced a regional flow that set the Algarve apart from the migratory trend of continental Portugal, by making Argentina the preferred transatlantic destination, but it also created other flows of migration to the Portuguese colonies in Africa, Brazil, the United States, and other destinations.

Algarvian patterns of geographic mobility show that different labor markets and economic conditions in combination with socioccupational networks and demographic factors provided a framework for a dynamic process that made migrants more likely to choose particular destinations. This analytical framework challenges the exceptionalist approach that

often characterizes migration scholarship when viewed exclusively from the perspectives of the countries of immigration, and the mechanism of selection through which migrants arrived to particular destinations or the existence or alternative paths are rarely considered. The majority of Algarvian transatlantic migrants went to Argentina, but even this dominant regional pattern varied according to their parish of origin, their occupational background, and the specific set of social networks to which they had access.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHAINS OF GOLD: MIGRATORY NETWORKS IN TWO PORTUGUESE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

In those days, you recognized those coming back from Argentina by their moustaches and some chains that they called *cadena*—that was gold, do you understand?—with a medal [made of a coin] of 1,000 pounds.<sup>1</sup>

In this way, António Carrascalão Junior recalled the impact caused by successful returnees to São Brás de Alportel during the early twentieth century, the heyday of Algarvian transatlantic migration. He was only a child at that time, but his father and several members of his family joined thousands of other Algarvian workers in search of economic opportunities in Argentina. The coin was in all likelihood a one pound sterling, a popular ornament among return migrants that resonated among the local population with a clear message about the possibilities that awaited adventurous spirits beyond the Atlantic. The ‘chains of gold’ displayed by migrants as proof of their success abroad that made such a long-lasting impression on António also serve as a metaphor of the intricate network of family and village connections that created and sustained particular ‘chains of migration’ from the Algarve to Argentina.

The Portuguese communities of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa are clear examples of this historical process. The key role of migratory networks becomes evident when one considers the overwhelming presence of Algarvian migrants in both of them. Their proportion far surpassed the already significant share of this region in the Portuguese flow to Argentina. Whereas Algarvians represented about a third of Portuguese migrants to Argentina during the first half of the twentieth century, they constituted more than 80 percent of the Portuguese immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia and close to 70 percent in Villa Elisa.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with António Viegas Carrascalão Junior (Comodoro Rivadavia, Jul. 1992). *Cadena* means chain in Spanish. The interviewee uses the word in Spanish. Equivalent words in Portuguese include *cadeia* and *corrente*.

<sup>2</sup> The calculation for Comodoro Rivadavia is based on the analysis of the city’s civil marriage records and the membership directory of the local Portuguese Mutual

More importantly, the patterns of origin at the local level offer clear indications of chain migration. The places of origin in the Algarve were not scattered throughout the region, instead migrants hailed from only a few clusters of towns and villages, a clear indication of the workings of primary contacts in circumscribed spaces. Similar movements also formed smaller chains of migration from other regions of Portugal to both destinations.

Migration networks influenced the process of settlement and adaptation in dialectical combination with the conditions of the receiving areas. Portuguese migration to Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa shared significant features and developed along comparable paths, yet the resulting communities exhibited unique characteristics derived from their geographic location, historical evolution, and socioeconomic bases. The centrality of primary social networks in the formation of both Portuguese communities, the common background of the majority of the Portuguese migrants, and the contrasting characteristics of the places of immigration provide an interesting case for comparison.

#### OIL CAMPS AND SUBURBAN GARDENS: PORTUGUESE MIGRANTS IN TWO CONTRASTING RECEIVING SOCIETIES

When the first Portuguese migrants arrived, Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa were towns-in-the-making, growing with the demographic, economic, and social contributions of migrants of diverse origins. In Argentina, urbanization and immigration went hand in hand, as the arrival of large numbers of transoceanic migrants transformed the country's urban landscape. The proportion of population living in urban centers grew from less than a third in the 1860s to more than half in 1914.<sup>3</sup> In the pampas and in the recently settled lands of Patagonia, many towns could only trace their beginnings back a few decades. Urban

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Aid Association: Libros de matrimonio, 1904–60, ARCCR; and Libro de registro de socios, 1923–70, AAPCR. The information for Villa Elisa comes from the analysis of religious and civil marriage records: Libros de matrimonio, 1934–50, ANSCT; Libros de matrimonio, 1939–80, ASLGVE; and Libros de matrimonio, Villa Elisa, Partido de La Plata (Sección 6, 1910–59; Sección 12, 1959–77; Sección 2, 1919–22, 1935–39, 1978–80), ARPPBA.

<sup>3</sup> Zulma Recchini de Lattes, "El proceso de urbanización en la Argentina: Distribución, crecimiento y algunas características de la población urbana," *Desarrollo Económico*, 12, 48 (Jan–Mar. 1973): 869–70; Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración*, 294–6.

settlements had emerged as service, commercial, and transportation centers linked to the expanding agro-pastoral economy; others had been created along new rail lines, through colonization schemes and urbanization projects. At the turn of the century, Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa were new towns that represented both types of urban development. Except for the key role of immigrants in their population, and the significant presence of Portuguese among them, however, both towns had few features in common.

From the moment of arrival, migrants' experiences were markedly different. Until the mid twentieth century, most Portuguese migrants arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia after a long trip by sea from the ports of Buenos Aires, La Plata, or Campana aboard oil tankers or on cargo ships belonging to the Sociedad Anónima Importadora y Exportadora de la Patagonia, the largest commercial company in Patagonia. Railroad connections from the country's capital to coastal Patagonia did not reach beyond the town of San Antonio Oeste, located some 700 km to the north, in the Province of Río Negro; and the first bus service from here to Comodoro Rivadavia began only in 1938.<sup>4</sup> Land travel, however, depended greatly on weather and road conditions, as the only highway that connected Comodoro Rivadavia with the north of the country (National Highway 3) was not fully paved until the early 1970s. Access by sea was also difficult. Since there were no adequate piers, ships anchored close to the coast and passengers were lifted inside a wooden box unto smaller boats which took them ashore. The operation left indelible images on the newcomers. "What impacted me the most," said a migrant who arrived in 1937, "was the way in which they carried us down. They used a basket from the ship... they put six people in it, lifted it with a crane, and the box delivered the people.... Once people were ashore, the basket would go back and so on."<sup>5</sup> After arrival, migrants encountered the arid landscape and the ever-present wind of Patagonia, and for many the isolation of the oil camps. Arriving by air, more fortunate travelers shared the same feeling of strangeness at the sight of the town and its oil fields. Regular

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<sup>4</sup> *Cincuentenario de Comodoro Rivadavia, 1901-23 de febrero-1951* (Comodoro Rivadavia: El Rivadavia, 1951), 238-62.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Ganio Konoff (Comodoro Rivadavia, Jan. 16, 2001). The description belongs to a Bulgarian migrant, but there are many references to disembarking in 'the box' in oral testimonies of migrants to Comodoro Rivadavia of all nationalities. The traditional form of disembarking is also described in *Cincuentenario de Comodoro Rivadavia*, 257.

air connections started with the creation of Aeroposta Argentina in the late 1920s, whose first pilot was French writer and flight enthusiast Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Flying to Comodoro Rivadavia in 1933, his compatriot travel writer Luc Durtain described his impressions of the landscape in the following terms:

To the east, the vicious sea of pale blue eyes. To the west, the rocky edge—cracked, indented, eroded. Immensity and desolation that evoke the canyons of Colorado! ... Here we are at the end of our trip. A broad valley of barren land without a single tree. But all around one thousand and eight hundred metal oil towers emerge up to the sea, looming over the hills and haunting the valley.... Oil. An exaggerated wind descends from the Andes.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, Villa Elisa was anything but isolated, and its landscape could not be greener. The town was connected to the cities of Buenos Aires (48 km to the north) and La Plata (15 km to the south) by train and by two major highways (the Touring Club or Centenario Road, built in 1910; and the General Belgrano Road, constructed between 1912 and 1916).<sup>7</sup> In the early twentieth century, small farms and vegetable gardens sprouted amidst grand country houses and the remnants of old ranches. Because of its location, easy access, and the familiarity of the terrain, stories of arrival are not as prominent in the recollections of migrants to Villa Elisa. In the first decades of the twentieth century, most travelers arrived by train. Leaving the red-brick train station behind, the newcomer found scattered low houses and large chalets with well-maintained gardens. The flat terrain was only altered by the presence of sycamore, casuarinas, eucalyptus, and other shade trees. Like most towns in Argentina, the streets of Villa Elisa followed a grid pattern. Central blocks had residences, a few stores, and service buildings. Outlying blocks were larger and their houses were surrounded by green patches of vegetable gardens and glass-covered greenhouses. Far from the adventurous quality of early-twentieth century trips to Patagonia, the common journey of travelers to Villa Elisa most likely

<sup>6</sup> Luc Durtain [André Nepveu], *Vers la ville Kilomètre 3* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1933), 259.

<sup>7</sup> Distances taken from Javier Marrazzo, *Ciudades, pueblos y colonias de la República Argentina: Diccionario geográfico*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Optimus A. Cantiello, 1910), 461. For the influence of the development of highways in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area, see Margarita Gutman and Jorge Enrique Hardoy, *Buenos Aires: Historia urbana del área metropolitana* (Madrid: Editorial Mapfre, 1992), 178–81.

resembled that of writer Luc Durtain, whose train ride from Buenos Aires to La Plata in the early 1930s revealed a familiar landscape with little surprises:

From Constitución train station you notice, in turn, the tall square blocks with houses, then the ground floors, then the zinc sheets . . . . Little by little, intermingled with vegetable gardens, there appear pastures bristled with light thistles. Sometimes there is a luxurious ranch with its sycamores or eucalyptus . . . . We rolled in that way three quarters of an hour. Then low houses, also arranged along square blocks, began to multiply. Exactly the same houses that at our departure. Have we made a round trip and returned to Buenos Aires? No, here we are, in La Plata.<sup>8</sup>

*Comodoro Rivadavia: The Making of an Oil Town*

The initial settlement of Comodoro Rivadavia at the turn of the twentieth century resulted from the expansion of the rural colonization of central Patagonia. In the late nineteenth century, pioneer families moved south from the Chubut Valley to create rural colonies in the area of the central lakes, and sheep ranchers settled in the hinterland close to the coast. After a failed attempt further south, Italian colonist Francisco Pietrobelli built the first commercial outpost on the gulf of San Jorge in 1900, officially recognized as a town the following year. The area had been sparsely populated by small indigenous groups that migrated seasonally taking advantage of complementary sources of food and who looked for shelter on the coast during the harsh winter months. Comodoro Rivadavia emerged as a shipping post for the wool and agricultural production from ranches and settlements of the interior, as well as their main supply center and their connection with the rest of the country by sea.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Dertain, *Vers la ville Kilomètre 3*, 187–8.

<sup>9</sup> José D'Angelis, *Album de Comodoro Rivadavia, 1934: Reseña gráfica retrospectiva* ([Comodoro Rivadavia]: [El Gráfico], 1934), 5–15. Pietrobelli's explorations are recounted in Francisco Pietrobelli, *Primeras exploraciones y colonizaciones de la Patagonia Central* (Comodoro Rivadavia: Asociación Italiana, 1971). For an overview of the presence of indigenous populations in the gulf of San Jorge before the foundation of Comodoro Rivadavia, see Gloria Arrigoni, "Poblamiento prehistórico de América y Patagonia," available at [http://www.mipatagonia.com/regiones/chubut/comodoro\\_rivadavia/museo\\_del\\_petroleo/institucion/publicaciones/pobprepat.doc](http://www.mipatagonia.com/regiones/chubut/comodoro_rivadavia/museo_del_petroleo/institucion/publicaciones/pobprepat.doc). For an introduction to the historical evolution of Comodoro Rivadavia and its region, see Daniel Márquez and Mario Palma Godoy, *Comodoro Rivadavia en tiempos de cambio: Una propuesta para la revalorización de nuestras identidades culturales* (Comodoro Rivadavia: Ediciones



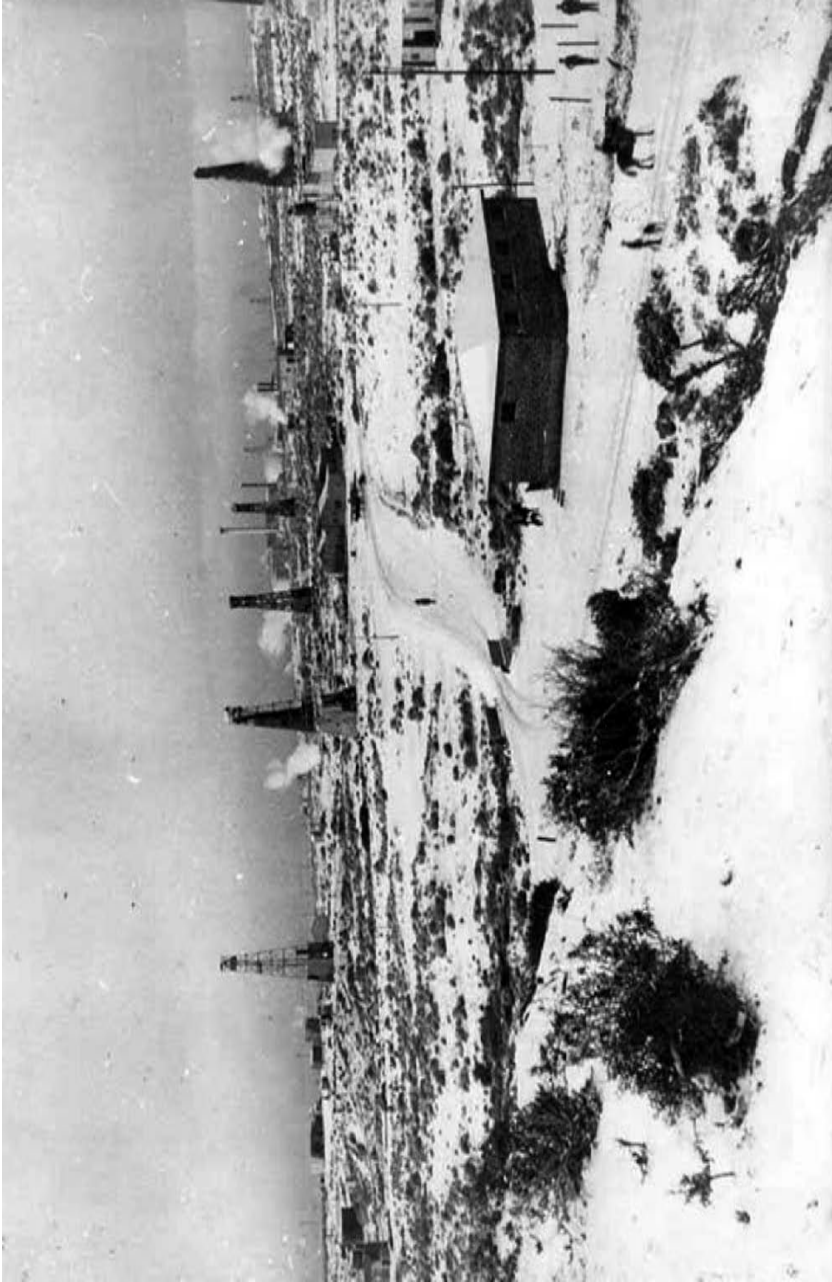


Illustration 1: View of Km 3 oil fields in winter. Courtesy of the Archivo Histórico Municipal de Comodoro Rivadavia—Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College.

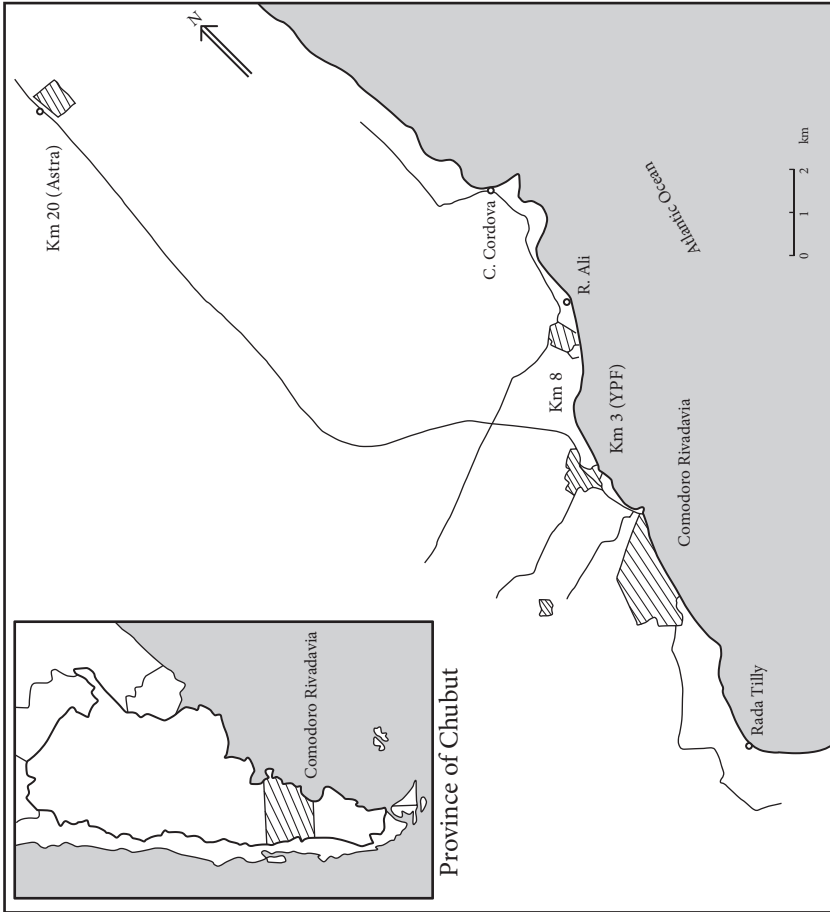
At the end of 1907, a drilling team sent from Buenos Aires to look for much-needed water found oil three kilometers north of the urban area; soon the town became the center of a booming industrial and mining district. Oil extraction attracted public and private capital. The Argentine state moved swiftly to establish an area of exclusive jurisdiction, creating a public company that later became Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (better known for its acronym, YPF), Latin America's first integrated state-owned industry. YPF built a mining, industrial, and residential complex that changed the landscape of the area dramatically. At its core was the central company town located 3 km north of the town of Comodoro Rivadavia that, at its heyday, rivaled in population and infrastructure the port-town itself. Known as 'Central Camp,' or more commonly as 'Kilómetro 3' or simply 'El 3,' it was a veritable town that housed the company's administrative offices, the largest workers' neighborhoods, a post office, hospital, schools, and other services. In addition, YPF had several satellite camps and other residential areas for oil workers and their families. Argentine and foreign capital took advantage of leases for oil prospecting and extraction around the state oil fields. In order to attract and maintain the required labor force, they also created residential complexes and set up services near their oil fields.<sup>10</sup> During the first two decades of the twentieth century, other company towns emerged north and northwest of Comodoro Rivadavia. The main towns were created by the Compañía Ferrocarrilera de Petróleo (financed by British capital and nationalized in the late 1940s under the name Petroquímica), Astra (an Argentine and German venture), and Diadema Argentina (financed by Dutch capital). These towns were located 8, 20, and 27 km from Comodoro Rivadavia respectively, and popularly referred to by their distances from downtown just as YPF's central camp.<sup>11</sup>

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Proyección Patagónica, 1993); and Stella Armesto, Elvira Córdoba, and Raúl Figueroa, *Crónicas del centenario* (Comodoro Rivadavia: Diario Crónica, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales, *Desarrollo de la industria petrolífera fiscal* (Buenos Aires: Peuser, 1932); *Medio siglo de petróleo argentino, 1907–1957* (Comodoro Rivadavia: El Rivadavia, 1957); *Cincuentenario de Comodoro Rivadavia*, chap. 7. The early history of petroleum production and the setting up of company towns is analyzed in Susana Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns in Patagonia: European Immigrants, Class, and Ethnicity (1907–1933)" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> The Ferrocarrilera company was nationalized along with the railroad system in 1948, changing its name to Petroquímica Empresa Nacionalizada in 1950. Its status changed in 1973 and 1977, when it was privatized again under the name Petroquímica Comodoro Rivadavia. The other companies also changed investors and names several



Map: 4.1: Comodoro Rivadavia and Environs

From the beginning, the majority of the population was foreign-born. Opportunities in commerce and transportation attracted adventurers and entrepreneurs to the incipient port town; its population growing from 215 inhabitants in 1902 to 800 in 1906. Availability of land also attracted ranchers to the nearby countryside, where the Argentine government awarded land grants to Boer families from South Africa after their defeat in the Anglo-Boer war. Most of the early inhabitants were European (mostly Spanish, Italian, and French), Chilean, and Boers. Argentine-born residents represented a very small proportion of the population—only 6 percent in 1905.<sup>12</sup> European migrants also provided the bulk of the labor force in the early years of the oil industry. Later, the presence of workers from Chile and from the northwest of Argentina increased. Migrant workers and their families were the key factor in the demographic growth of this largely unpopulated region. The permanent population of the area grew from 215 in 1902, to approximately 10,000 in 1930, to over 30,000 in 1947. Foreign-born residents represented half of the population of the general administrative area of Comodoro Rivadavia (which included the port town, the company towns, and the surrounding countryside) in 1914 and two-thirds in 1920.<sup>13</sup> The proportion of immigrants in the population of the company towns was even higher. For example, in 1926, foreign workers accounted for 79 percent in the state-owned petroleum company, 95 percent in Astra, and 95 percent in the Compañía Ferrocarrilera. The ethnic composition

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times, but they always remained in private hands. See *Cincuentenario de Comodoro Rivadavia*, chap. 7; Torres, “Two Oil Company Towns”; Manuel Fortes Castro, *Diadema Argentina: Nace un pueblo* (Comodoro Rivadavia: author’s ed., 1994); Alberto Muñoz Barra, “Memorias de Barrio Don Bosco y Petroquímica” (typewritten manuscript, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Based on the analysis of the marriage records for 1904 and 1906—the earliest records available. Libros de matrimonio, 1904, 1906, RCCR. See references to other demographic data in D’Angelis, *Album*, 11–3; Márquez and Palma Godoy, *Comodoro Rivadavia*, 31; and Torres, “Two Oil Company Towns,” 25. For the state-sponsored migration of Boer families, see Brian Du Toit, *Colonia Boer: An Afrikaner Settlement in Chubut, Argentina* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995); and Adriana Edwards, “Los inmigrantes boers en Comodoro Rivadavia: Causas y características de su asentamiento,” *Revista Patagónica de Historia Oral* 2, 2 (1998): 57–64.

<sup>13</sup> Torres, “Two Oil Company Towns,” 43–61; República Argentina, Ministerio del Interior, Asesoría Letrada de Territorios Nacionales, *Censo General de los Territorios Nacionales: República Argentina, 1920*, vol. 2 Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz y Tierra del Fuego (Buenos Aires: Establecimiento Gráfico A. De Martino, 1923), 185; *Guía Anuario El Rivadavia 1944–1945* (Comodoro Rivadavia: El Rivadavia, n.d.); Argentina, *IV Censo General de la Nación*. The figure for 1930 is an estimation based on the population of the YPF’s company town in 1929, which was over 6,000 inhabitants.

varied in the different company towns. Spanish, Portuguese, and Russians were the leading national groups in YPF; Portuguese and Eastern Europeans predominated in *Compañía Ferrocarrilera*; and Germans were a significant group in *Astra*.<sup>14</sup> The diversity of migrants made *Comodoro Rivadavia* and the nearby company towns one of the most cosmopolitan areas in the country. According to a census taken in 1944, foreigners constituted a third of the urban population. The Spanish were the largest immigrant group, followed by Chileans, Portuguese, Italians, Polish, Bulgarians, Yugoslavians, Germans, Russians, and a long list that included a total of forty nationalities.<sup>15</sup>

Portuguese migrants were present from the early years of the town and the beginnings of petroleum production. They were the fourth largest group among the European immigrants in the jurisdiction that included *Comodoro Rivadavia* and the company towns in 1914, the third in 1920, and the second in 1947, representing between 7 and 8 percent of the foreign population.<sup>16</sup> Portuguese migrants constituted a larger proportion of the population of petroleum workers, particularly in YPF and in the *Compañía Ferrocarrilera de Petróleo*. In the mid-1920s, for example, Portuguese workers made up 17 percent of the labor force in state-owned company (574 of its 3,300-plus workers) and over 28 percent of the workers of the British company. They were the second largest foreign group after the Spanish in the former, and the largest national group in the latter. Work in petroleum production was characterized by a high turnover. The demands of the backbreaking work in the oil fields were compounded by the harsh weather and the isolation of the Patagonian plateau. Like the rest of migrant workers, initially many Portuguese worked in the area for some time

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<sup>14</sup> For YPF and *Astra*, data come from Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 56–7; for *Ferrocarrilera*, calculations based on the company's workers' registries and workers' employment cards. *Fichas de personal, 1920–37* and *Registro de obreros no. 1, ACP*. The presence of Argentine workers in YPF increased in the 1920s as a result of a policy of direct recruitment of workers in northwest Argentina executed by its director general, General Enrique Mosconi. With this policy of 'Argentinization' of the labor force, General Mosconi hoped to neutralize the activities and demands of organized labor, which he saw as an alien creation of foreign activists. This process is well analyzed in Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns." Foreign workers, however, will remain as a significant part of the labor force in YPF, first European and later Chilean migrants.

<sup>15</sup> *Guía Anuario El Rivadavia 1944–1945*.

<sup>16</sup> Argentina, *Censo 1914*, vol. 2, 355–9; Argentina, *Censo General de los Territorios Nacionales 1920*, 2:218; Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, *Características migratorias*, 111–4.

before returning to Portugal or migrating to other places. But many also stayed, brought their families from Portugal or formed families in the area, and built a vibrant community.

*Villa Elisa: From Bourgeois Retreat to Family Gardening*

Situated about 2,000 km to the north on the fertile countryside close to the country's capital, Villa Elisa was also a world away from Comodoro Rivadavia in terms of its socioeconomic profile and spatial organization.<sup>17</sup> The town was born in the 1880s as a result of the expansion of the railroad system and as a real state venture. The creation of a train station in 1884 on the rail line that connected the cities of Buenos Aires and the recently founded provincial capital of La Plata opened new opportunities. Traditionally the rural area had been devoted to cattle ranching, but land speculation and easy access to major urban centers transformed the countryside and attracted new population. Lured by accessible land within easy reach from the cities and connected to them by railroad, upper class families began building European-style chalets as weekend houses. Financed by big landowners and entrepreneurs, the Mercantile Bank of La Plata received government approval in 1888 for the creation of a town. The development of speculative towns and neighborhoods was a popular entrepreneurial practice in the city and province of Buenos Aires at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> In an effort to target a wide market, developers offered plots of different sizes and cost, all of them payable in monthly installments. As a Mercantile Bank advertisement announced in 1889, in Villa Elisa there were plots for "the wealthy" as well as for "the working class." In an hyperbolic tone characteristic of turn-of-the-century land auctions, promoters presented Villa Elisa as a place with "big palaces and picturesque parks,"

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<sup>17</sup> This discussion is based on Martín Boland, *Villa Elisa: Fragmentos de su historia* (La Plata: [Editorial y Talleres Gráficos de la UCALP], 1993); *La Plata, una obra de arte* (La Plata: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1982), 26–8; "Vástagos: Abasto y Villa Elisa," *El Día* (La Plata), Nov. 11, 1963; "Una progresista población," *El Día*, Dec. 10, 1965; and the copies of land division, surveying maps, and real estate sales advertisements kept in Carpetas de planos 13 and 66 bis D, MOPDG.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the role of speculative towns in the growth of Buenos Aires and its metropolitan area, see Charles Sargent, *The Spatial Evolution of Greater Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1870–1930* (Tempe: Center for Latin American Studies–Arizona State University, 1974), especially pp. 46–55, 93–105; James Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburbs, 1870–1910* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Gutman and Hardoy, *Buenos Aires: Historia urbana*, especially chaps. 8 and 9.



Illustration 2: Weeding the fields in the flower garden of the Carneirinho family, Villa Elisa, 1965.  
Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata.

where there were already “many mansions and many more are under construction; in short, that is paradise and there is no place like it near the Capital [Buenos Aires].”<sup>19</sup>

More important for the transformation of Villa Elisa was the conversion of land formerly devoted to extensive grazing to intensive agriculture that took place around its urban core. The availability of fertile land, the proximity to large urban centers, and the existence of adequate ways of communication and transportation combined to make Villa Elisa (and the larger rural area of the county of La Plata to which it belonged) an important farming center, first producing vegetables and later flowers. Portuguese migrants began arriving in the area in the 1920s, when this process was under way and contributed to its consolidation. This economic shift had also important consequences for the patterns of land tenure, as the new intensive crops required smaller farming units. The original plan for the town provided for plots of different size, including those to be occupied by farms (*quintas* and *chacras*), but the expansion of intensive agriculture was based on the continuous subdivision of nearby ranches or *estancias*. Ranchers and land speculators rented some plots for gardening and sold others in auction to be paid in installments, in a process that mirrored the creation of the town. Land subdivision accelerated during the 1920s and 1930s. The town proper grew as a commercial, service, and transportation center for the surrounding population of small farmers and rural workers. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, Villa Elisa underwent a steady suburbanization with the expansion of La Plata’s urban area along the northern corridor that connected it to the city of Buenos Aires.

Advertisements for land auctions illustrate the changing nature of local agricultural production. Whereas in the early 1920s, auctioneers highlighted the qualities of land for fruit and vegetable gardens, by the end of the decade they emphasized the terrain’s potential for flower gardening.<sup>20</sup> The descriptions of the commercial guides published during the first decades of the twentieth century also illustrate the profound qualitative change experienced by Villa Elisa. A 1910 guide characterized Villa Elisa as a town with “beautiful cattle ranches, with outstanding buildings and beautiful parks and farms,” and listed four major cattle

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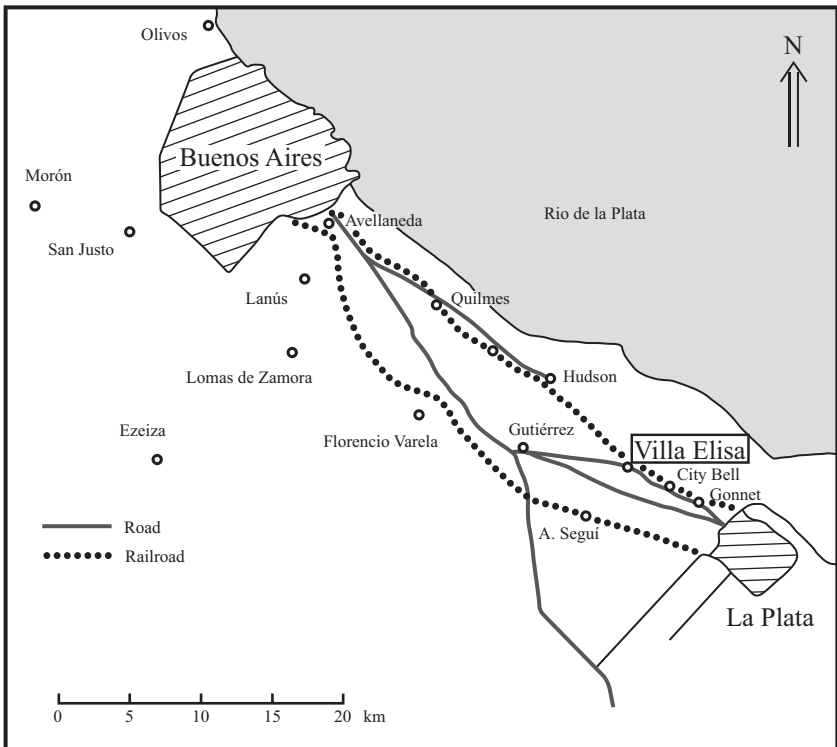
<sup>19</sup> *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), Dec. 11, 1889, cited by Boland, *Villa Elisa*, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Carpeta de planos 66 bis C, MOPDG.





Province of Buenos Aires



Map 4.2: Villa Elisa and Environs

ranches, several farms and dairy farms, three blacksmith shops, three cart factories, a brick factory, a carpenter's shop, six general stores, and other commercial venues.<sup>21</sup> During the following decades the economic base of the area shifted to intensive farming and, by the 1930s, flower gardening became Villa Elisa's signature activity. A 1937 guide listed an important number of farmers occupied in intensive agriculture, particularly in the cultivation of fruit trees, vegetables, flowers, as well as in the production of honey; flower gardeners constituted already the largest group.<sup>22</sup>

The population of Villa Elisa grew slowly but steadily during the first half of the twentieth century, from 566 residents in 1909 to over 3,600 in 1947, and to approximately 6,300 in 1960.<sup>23</sup> Immigrants represented about a third of the population of the area during this period (30 percent in 1909 and 27 percent in 1947). The ethnic composition of the immigrant population changed significantly during those years. Lacking any census data disaggregated by nationality, the information from baptismal records can be used to gauge the town's ethnic makeup.<sup>24</sup> Between 1902 and 1929, foreign-born residents represented over 44 percent of the fathers and 30 percent of the mothers of baptized children from Villa Elisa. Italians constituted the largest group, followed by Spaniards, Uruguayans, French, and others. The Portuguese were not present in the early years of the town's life. There were Portuguese migrants in the county of La Plata since the end of the

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<sup>21</sup> *Anuario Kraft 1910* (Buenos Aires: Guillermo Kraft, [1910]), 477, 2138–9.

<sup>22</sup> *Anuario Kraft 1937* (Buenos Aires: Guillermo Kraft, [1937]), 2:678. See also *Guía Comercial del Ferrocarril Sud y Oeste*, 1937, cited by Boland, *Villa Elisa*, 56–8.

<sup>23</sup> *La Plata, Censo general de la ciudad de La Plata, capital de la Provincia: Población, propiedad raíz, comercio e industrias: Levantado en los días 2 al 3 de mayo de 1909* (La Plata: n.p., 1910), xiii; Provincia de Buenos Aires, *Anuario Estadístico 1944–1948*, 24–5; Provincia de Buenos Aires, *Anuario Estadístico 1924*, 1:34; Argentina, *IV Censo General*, 44; *Anuario Kraft 1960* (Buenos Aires: Guillermo Kraft, [1960]), 3:1010.

<sup>24</sup> *Libros de Bautismos, 1902–40*, ANSCT. Even though Villa Elisa's first catholic church, San Luis Gonzaga, was built between 1911 and 1913, it was not elevated to the category of parish seat until the end of 1939. Until then, the town belonged to the jurisdiction of the parish of Tolosa (La Plata) and all religious ceremonies for the people of Villa Elisa were performed by the priest of Tolosa (either there or in the church of Villa Elisa). Since this information covers the more stable sector of the population (i.e., couples with children), there is a potential underestimation of the younger, mostly single, population of male laborers. Portuguese migrants are not present in this sample of the population because during the 1920s they were mostly men working alone in the area (either single men or married men with their families in Portugal).

nineteenth century, but none in Villa Elisa.<sup>25</sup> The arrival of Portuguese migrant workers in the 1920s began a new trend that transformed the town's population. By the 1930s, the presence of Portuguese families that followed the earlier migration of male laborers is evident by the first baptisms of children of Portuguese parents in Villa Elisa. Between 1930 and 1939, foreign migrants represented 37 percent of the fathers and 24 percent of the mothers of baptized children. Portuguese fathers represented 6.5 percent of the total and 17.5 percent of the foreign fathers, and Portuguese mothers accounted for 2.4 percent of the total and 10 percent of the foreign mothers. The 1930s also witnessed the first cases of Portuguese marriages. The proportion of Portuguese marriages increased from about 8 percent of all marriages between 1930 and 1950, to around 15 percent between 1951 and 1970—when they constituted the largest group among foreign grooms.<sup>26</sup> With continued arrivals until the 1960s—especially through family reunification—the Portuguese became one of the largest migrant groups. In the 1960s, the Portuguese community was estimated in some 4,000 people, including immigrants and descendants.<sup>27</sup> The Portuguese were not the last group to arrive. Beginning in the 1940s and 1950s, Japanese migrants also began to settle in the larger suburban area of La Plata and, like the Portuguese, worked in flower gardening. Finally, in the latter decades of the twentieth century, migrants from neighboring countries also arrived attracted by the possibilities of rural labor.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The local censuses registered 15 Portuguese in 1884, 66 in 1885, and 163 in 1909. The majority of them were living in the city of La Plata, and some in the surrounding rural area. In 1914, the national census reported 487 Portuguese migrants living in the county of La Plata, but there is no information about their specific location. Provincia de Buenos Aires, Ministerio de Gobierno, Oficina de Estadística General, *Reseña estadística y descriptiva de La Plata* (Buenos Aires: Establecimiento Tipográfico de la República, 1885), 152–3, 160–1; La Plata, *Censo general de la ciudad de La Plata 1909*, 117–20; Argentina, *Censo Nacional 1914*, 2:129–219.

<sup>26</sup> Information based on the analysis of civil marriages by nationality. The participation of Portuguese grooms increased from 25.3 percent between 1930 and 1945, to 42.3 percent in the 1950s, and then decreased to 35.7 percent in the 1960s and 32.3 percent in the 1970s. In comparison, Italian migrants, who began settling earlier in Villa Elisa, represented 42.3 percent of foreign grooms up to 1929, 35.4 percent from 1930 to 1945, 30.8 percent in the 1950s, 32.1 percent in the 1960s, and 25.8 percent in the 1970s. For sources, see note 2.

<sup>27</sup> “La flor es el hermoso signo que descata a la colonia portuguesa,” *El Día*, Nov. 19, 1962.

<sup>28</sup> Most Japanese workers and their families did not settle in Villa Elisa, but in gardening centers in the southwest of La Plata County. For Japanese immigration in Argentina in general, and in area of suburban La Plata in particular, see Grupo de Investigación

## THE DYNAMICS OF CHAIN MIGRATION

Since its early use for the study of post-War World II migrations, the concept of chain migration has been the object of debate and redefinition. In the 1960s, John and Leatrice MacDonald proposed what became a classic definition: "Chain migration can be defined as that movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants."<sup>29</sup> In the following decade, Charles Tilly presented a similar definition of chain migration, as a part of a broader migratory typology: "Chain migration moves sets of related individuals or households from one place to another via a set of social arrangements in which people at the destination provide aid, information, and encouragement to new migrants."<sup>30</sup> Reacting to the constraints of the 'chain metaphor' and its limits to grasp the complex web of relationships and the existence of multiple destinations, currently scholars prefer the more encompassing concept of migratory networks. Writing more than a decade later, Tilly

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de la Asociación Universitaria Nikkei, *La otra inmigración* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Universitaria Nikkei, 1990); Horacio Sabarots, "La identidad étnica en los migrantes japoneses de la denominada zona 'sur,' Provincia de Buenos Aires," in *Procesos de contacto interétnico*, ed. Roberto Ringuet (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Búsqueda, 1987), 147–65; idem, "Categorías étnicas y relaciones sociales en colonias florícolas de la localidad de City Bell, Provincia de Buenos Aires," in *Cuestiones agrarias regionales*, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Serie Estudios e Investigaciones no. 6, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación (La Plata: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1991), 55–65; Irene Cafiero and Estela Ceroni, "Una mirada a la inmigración japonesa en la Argentina: El caso de la Colonia General Justo José de Urquiza en el Partido de La Plata, Provincia de Buenos Aires: Formas de adaptación de los Issei y Nikkei" (paper presented at the XI Congreso Internacional Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios de Asia y África, Mexico City, 12–15 Nov., 2003).

<sup>29</sup> John MacDonald and Leatrice MacDonald, "Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighborhood Formation, and Social Networks," *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 42, 1 (Jan. 1964): 82. See also John MacDonald and Leatrice MacDonald, "Urbanization, Ethnic Groups, and Social Segmentation," *Social Research* 29, 4 (Winter 1962): 433–48; and idem, "Italian Migration to Australia: Manifest Functions of Bureaucracy Versus Latent Functions of Informal Networks," *Journal of Social History* 3, 3 (Spring 1970): 249–75. See also: R. Lechore, *From Europe to New Zealand: An Account of Out Continental European Settlers* (Wellington: A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1951); Charles Price, *Southern Europeans in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1963); and Charles Tilly and C. Harold Brown, "On Uprooting, Kinship, and the Auspices of Migration," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 8 (1967): 139–64.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Tilly, "Migration in Modern European History," in *Human Migration: Patterns, Implications, Policies*, ed. William McNeill and Ruth Adams (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 53.

himself titled an essay on this migratory mechanism “Transplanted Networks.”<sup>31</sup> By then, the concept of migratory social networks was also firmly established as a key analytical concept among sociologists and anthropologists interested in the study of contemporary migrations, as a way of examining the meso-level channels between pure agency and structural determinism.<sup>32</sup> Limitations notwithstanding, the ‘chain’ provides a powerful image widely used in migration studies. Either as a web or a chain, this concept puts migrants at the center of analysis by emphasizing the primary social contacts among kin, friends, and countrymen at both ends of the migratory journey and their influence on the nature of the migratory flows, as well as on the migrants’ settlement and economic and social adaptation (access to the job market, housing, family formation, and socialization). Of course, the emphasis on migrants’ agency does not negate the impact of larger economic and political forces beyond their control or the possibility of other forms of geographic mobility.<sup>33</sup> The cases of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa, however, highlight how crucial social networks and the migratory chains they contributed to create were in the formation of

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<sup>31</sup> Charles Tilly, “Transplanted Networks,” in *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, ed. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 79–95.

<sup>32</sup> The scholarship on chain or network migration is too vast to be cited in full. For the evolution of these concepts among historians, see Samuel Baily, “Chain Migration of Italians to Argentina: Case Studies of the Agnesi and the Sirolesi,” *Studi Emigrazione* 19, 65 (Summer 1982): 73–91; Fernando Devoto, “Las cadenas migratorias italianas: Algunas reflexiones a la luz del caso argentino,” *Studi Emigrazione* 24, 87 (Autumn 1987): 355–73; idem, “Algo más sobre las cadenas migratorias de los italianos a la Argentina,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 6, 19 (Dec. 1991): 323–43; Rudolph Vecoli and Suzanne Sinke, eds., *A Century of European Migrations, 1830–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); María Bjerg and Hernán Otero, eds., *Immigración y redes sociales en la Argentina moderna* (Tandil: CEMLA–IEHS, 1995); Hoerder, “Segmented Macrosystems”; Charles Tilly, “Trust Networks in Transnational Migration,” *Sociological Forum* 22 (1) (Mar. 2007): 3–25. For overviews of the uses of social networks among scholars of contemporary migrations, see Monica Boyd, “Family and Personal Networks in International Migrations: Recent Developments and New Agendas,” *International Migration Review* 23, 3 (Fall 1989): 638–70; and Patricia Pessar, “The Role of Gender, Household, and Social Networks in the Migration Process: A Review and Appraisal,” in *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, ed. Charles Hirschman et al. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999), 53–70.

<sup>33</sup> Caroline Brettell, “The Individual/Agent and Culture/Structure in the History of Social Sciences,” *Social Science History* 26, 3 (Fall 2002): 429–45; Clé Lesger, Leo Lucassen, and Marlou Schrover, “Is There Life Outside the Migrant Network? German Immigrants in XIXth Century Netherlands and the Need for a More Balanced Migration Typology,” *Annales de Démographie Historique* 2 (2002): 29–50.

Portuguese immigrant communities in Argentina. Complex sociohistorical phenomena, Portuguese migrant networks showed remarkable flexibility to adapt to changing conditions, sustaining a migratory flow that spanned over five decades.

*Forging the Chains: Origins and Social Spaces*

The movement of Algarvian migrants to Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa was based on networks of assistance and information provided by primary contacts at the local level. In both cases, the majority of the migrants originated in a cluster of Algarvian villages located in the central *Barrocal* and the hills close to the coast. The main centers of emigration, however, were different. The area of emigration from the Algarve to Comodoro Rivadavia was centered in the town of São Brás de Alportel which alone provided a third or more of the Algarvian immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia, and approximately 30 percent of the total immigrants from Portugal in the city. In the case of Villa Elisa, the main focus of emigration from the Algarve was located approximately 25 km to the west, in Boliqueime; migrants from this parish formed more than a third of the Algarvian immigration and a quarter of the total Portuguese immigration to Villa Elisa.<sup>34</sup> The main areas of emigration were not confined, however, to these two parishes. The spaces of interaction that provided the basis for these migratory chains were larger and included a series of nearby localities. Building on the works of other European scholars about the spatial basis of social interaction in rural Europe, Franc Sturino has introduced the concept of ‘social space’ to the study of the dynamics of chain migration. It refers to the area where social interaction was shaped by regular, face-to-face contacts, based on the common participation in social, economic, and religious activities, which also constituted a common space for the circulation of

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<sup>34</sup> See note 2 for sources. The percentages of migrants from Boliqueime in Villa Elisa, however, might have been higher. In several cases, the records only provide information about the place of baptism (not the place of birth) of the spouses. Along with the parish of Boliqueime, the neighboring parish of São Sebastião de Loulé was another major source of emigrants to the area of Villa Elisa. The fact that both parishes have the same patron saint, St. Sebastian, makes some cases impossible to identify. I was able to identify more cases by using other information included in the marriage records as well as in the marginal notes of the baptism records of the parish of Boliqueime, Portugal. In Table 4.2, the cases whose origin remains unclear are identified as “São Sebastião (Loulé) (b).” Additional information comes from the *Livros mistos* (baptismos, casamentos, óbitos), 1878–50, APSSB.

information.<sup>35</sup> Participation in a particular social space influenced the composition of the migratory networks. As Sturino states, “the shape of chain migration is ecologically determined, and the impact of this is felt at all stages of migration.”<sup>36</sup>

This concept of social space is useful to understand the dynamics of emigration from the Algarve to Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa.<sup>37</sup> Over 90 percent of the Algarvian migrants in Comodoro Rivadavia originated in a trapezoidal area with center in São Brás de Alportel and whose corners were roughly formed by Alte and Boliqueime, to the west, and Tavira and the area of Olhão-Faro, to the east. The other parishes within this space were located between 7 and 27 km away from the core of São Brás. Located at the fringe of this larger area, the parish of Boliqueime and the neighboring small village of Vale Judeu (in the parish of São Sebastião de Loulé) constituted, at the same time, the core of emigration to Villa Elisa. Together they provided over 60 percent of the Algarvian migrants and over 40 percent of the total Portuguese in Villa Elisa. As in the other migratory chain, these two villages were at the center of a larger migratory space: over 90 percent of the Portuguese migrants in Villa Elisa originated from an area whose sides followed roughly the main roads from Quarteira to Querença, on the west, from there to São Bartolomeu de Messines, on the north, to Guia and Albufeira on the east, and it was closed by the Atlantic Ocean on the south. This space was smaller than the social space of the migratory chain to Comodoro Rivadavia. Most parishes were located within 10 to 15 km

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<sup>35</sup> Franc Sturino, “Emigración italiana: Reconsideración de los eslabones de la cadena migratoria,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 3, 8 (Apr. 1988): 5–25; idem, *Forging the Chain: A Case Study of Italian Migration to North America, 1880–1930* (Toronto: Multicultural Historical Society of Ontario, 1990). For the concept of social space Sturino follows Morel, “L’espace social.”

<sup>36</sup> Sturino, *Forging the Chain*, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Some studies that have used this concept for the case of European migration to Argentina include: Baily, “Chain Migration”; Dedier Norberto Marquiegui, “Las cadenas migratorias españolas a la Argentina: El caso de los Sorianos de Luján,” *Studi Emigrazione* 29, 105, (Mar. 1992): 69–102; and Hernán Otero, “La inmigración francesa en Tandil: Un aporte metodológico para el estudio de las migraciones en demografía histórica,” *Desarrollo Económico* 32, 125 (Apr.–June 1992): 79–106. In his study of Spanish migration to Argentina, José Moya uses the idea of social space, but he emphasizes geographical expansion and diffusion of information (see *Cousins and Strangers*, 95–117).

from the core, and the more distant points were approximately 20 km away (Tables 4.1 and 4.2 and Map 4.3).<sup>38</sup>

Multiple contacts provided fertile ground for the development of migratory networks within these social spaces. It is possible to identify at least three levels of interaction: social relationships among kin, friends, and neighbors; economic contacts; and flows of information. The resulting social world revolved mainly, but not exclusively, around the parish. Contacts with nearby parishes were common and built on kinship and family ties, as well as on agricultural, commercial, religious, and social practices. These practices were reinforced by the nature of Algarvian farming, by the dominant pattern of disperse residential settlement, and by the predominance of egalitarian partible inheritance.

Family and kinship ties were crucial in shaping the social space of the migratory networks that linked the Algarve with Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa. This connection becomes apparent when crossing the data on the social space of marriages in both parishes (analyzed in chapter 2), and the geographical origins of Algarvian migrants in both destinations. In the case of São Brás de Alportel, for example, neighboring parishes such as Santa Bárbara, Estoi, São Clemente de Loulé, Santa Catarina, and Salir which provided the majority of the nonresident grooms and brides, were also present with significant numbers of immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia. Likewise in the case of emigration from Boliqueime to Villa Elisa, in which there is a remarkable concurrence between the main area of social interaction of the inhabitants of the parish—as measured by their marriage patterns—and the spatial basis of origin of the immigrants in Argentina. Along with migrants from Boliqueime, people from the parishes of São Sebastião de Loulé, Paderne, Albufeira, and Alte accounted for about 80 percent of the Algarvian immigrants in Villa Elisa (and more than half of the total immigrants). In Boliqueime, the same neighboring parishes provided over 70 percent of the nonresident spouses. Thus, the bulk of the Algarvian emigration to Villa Elisa originated in an area tightly linked by kinship and family ties.

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<sup>38</sup> In addition to São Brás de Alportel, the main parishes of origin of the migratory flow from the Algarve to Comodoro Rivadavia were: São Sebastião de Loulé, São Clemente de Loulé, Santa Bárbara de Nexe, Estoi, Boliqueime, Moncarapacho, Almancil, Olhão, Santa Catarina da Fonte do Bispo, Luz de Tavira, and Santo Estevão de Tavira. In addition to Boliqueime, the majority of the Algarvian migrants in Villa Elisa were from the parishes of São Sebastião de Loulé, Paderne, Alte, Albufeira, São Clemente de Loulé, Salir, and São Bartolomeu de Messines.



Table 4.1: Portuguese Immigrants by District of Origin  
(Percentages)

District	Comodoro Rivadavia		Villa Elisa	Portuguese Immigration to Argentina (1914–55)
	Mutual Aid Members (1923–70)	Grooms/Brides (1913–60)	Grooms/Brides (1930–80)	
Faro	85.6	82.2	67.4	33.0
Viseu	0.3	—	13.9	5.4
Coimbra	4.2	4.9	0.4	3.5
Guarda	2.7	4.0	4.7	25.0
Leiria	2.7	1.5	6.3	4.7
Castelo Branco	1.1	—	1.6	5.4
Bragança	0.2	0.6	1.2	2.9
Others/Unidentified	2.8	6.8	4.3	20.1

Sources: Marriage records and Portuguese Mutual Aid Association's membership records (see note 2); Portuguese emigration statistics (see chap. 2).

Table 4.2: Local Origins of the Algarvian Immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa (Percentages)

Counties	Comodoro Rivadavia		Villa Elisa
	Mutual Aid Members (1)	Brides/Grooms (2)	Brides/Grooms
Albufeira	1.8	1.3	8.8
Faro	14.9	11.6	1.2
Loulé	25.6	22.0	50.4
Olhão	8.8	7.2	0.6
São Brás de Alportel	27.2	30.5	0.2
Silves	0.3	—	1.4
Tavira	3.3	2.5	0.2
Others/Unidentified	4.3	7.0	4.8
Total Algarve	85.9	82.2	67.4
Main Parishes			
Comodoro Rivadavia	(1)	(2)	
São Brás, S. Brás	27.2	30.5	
Moncarapacho, Olhão	5.7	5.3	
Almancil, Loulé	5.7	4.9	
Boliqeime, Loulé	6.1	4.9	
Santa Bárbara, Faro	5.6	3.8	
Estoi, Faro	4.5	2.3	

Table 4.2 (*cont.*)

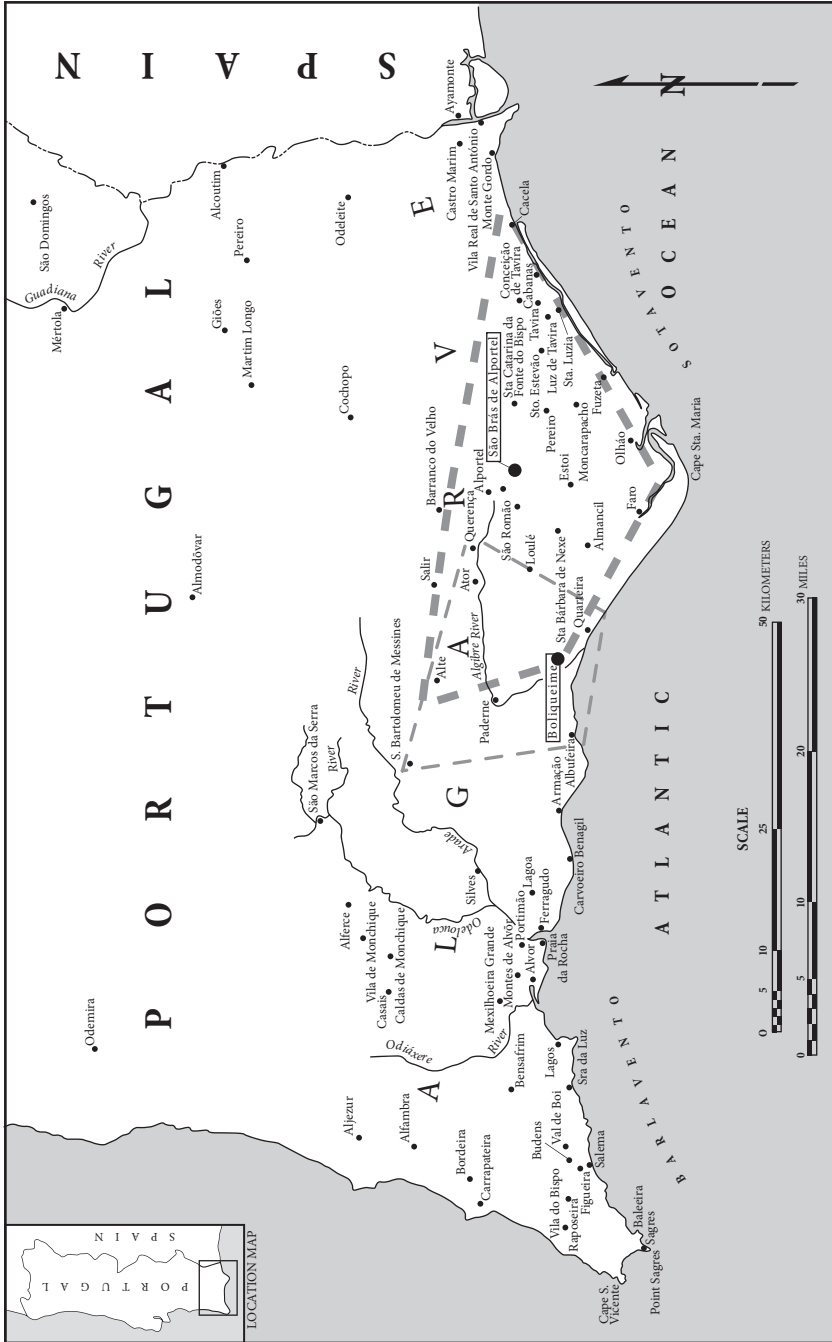
Counties	Comodoro Rivadavia		Villa Elisa
	Mutual Aid Members (1)	Brides/Grooms (2)	Brides/Grooms
Luz, Tavira		1.4	1.3
Loulé (unidentified parish)		10.3	7.8
Faro (unidentified parish)		4.5	5.5
<hr/>			
Villa Elisa			
Boliqueime, Loulé		24.8	
São Sebastião, Loulé (a)		10.9	
São Sebastião, Loulé (b)		3.9	
Albufeira, Albufeira		5.3	
Paderne, Albufeira		3.5	
Alte, Loulé		3.3	
Salir, Loulé		1.4	
Loulé (unidentified parish)		3.7	

Note: (a) cases from S. S. de Loulé; (b) cases that can be from S. S. de Boliqueime or S. S. de Loulé.

Sources: Marriage records and Portuguese Mutual Aid Association's membership records (see note 2).

Other factors were also important in the formation of migratory networks and in the expansion of the social space of these networks beyond the parish limits. The socio-ecological conditions of rural Algarve, the characteristics of the farming economy, and the existence of roads fostered these contacts. Farmers cultivated plots of land scattered in the home parish and in nearby parishes. For instance, the social interaction among the people of Boliqueime and São Sebastião de Loulé, whose migrants constituted the majority of the Portuguese community of Villa Elisa, was reinforced by their common experience as renters of *quartos* in the Quinta de Quarteira, a widespread practice among the small landowners of both parishes.<sup>39</sup> In addition, rural Algarvians traveled regularly to sell and buy their products in the markets and

<sup>39</sup> More information on farming in the *quartos* of Quarteira in chapter 2.



Map 4.3: Social Space of Origin of Algarvian Immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa

fairs of nearby towns, to participate in religious festivities, and to deal with bureaucratic matters in the larger urban centers, thus enlarging the spaces of social interaction beyond the parish level. For example, some parishes with important representation among Algarvian migrants in Comodoro Rivadavia played little or no role in the marriage patterns of the parish of São Brás de Alportel. The cases of Boliqueime and Almancil are the most striking, given the significant number of migrants from these parishes in the Patagonian city. The area covered by the flow and exchange of information, the common links to the important regional center of Loulé, as well as the existence of important ways of communication, played a major role in extending the social spaces of interaction beyond marriage and family ties in these cases. The town of Loulé acted as a place of contact and diffusion of information which extended the spatial base of the migratory chains. Boliqueime and São Brás are located 13 km west and east of Loulé, respectively; Almancil is approximately 6 km to the south. Loulé was an important commercial, administrative, and religious center. The people from nearby towns participated in its markets and fairs and used its services (for example, notaries). It was also a vital communication hub connected by major roads to other towns. As the head of the largest county in the Algarve (to which both Boliqueime and Almancil belong), Loulé was also a significant political center.

Loulé's weekly market was an important event for social interaction and exchange of information for the residents of nearby parishes. In the historical vignettes *Quadros de Loulé antigo* [Scenes from Old Loulé], Pedro de Freitas describes the transformation of the town during market days with the arrival of people from the countryside and neighboring towns:

Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays were, then, three different days that gave the town an air of great commercial activity, business, religiosity, extraordinary bustle, leisure, pleasure, and rest...

By Saturday evening, movement began to pick up with those coming from the [rural] parishes...

Public offices, Town Hall, county administration, Justice, Finances, notaries, shops, all social life worked in feverish activity...

Afterwards, people returning home in all directions always made for a happy spectacle. Loulé makes a big rotunda. For several hours, its six highways—Faro, São Brás de Alportel, Querença, Salir, Boliqueime, Quarteira—were extraordinarily animated.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Pedro de Freitas, *Quadros de Loulé Antigo* (Loulé: Santa Casa da Misericórdia e Hospital de Nossa Senhora dos Pobres de Loulé, 1964), 141–50.

Finally, religious festivities such as the celebration of Our Lady of Piety (popularly known as *Mãe Soberana* or Sovereign Mother) in Loulé or the commemoration of the much-revered Saint Sebastian in São Brás de Alportel attracted large crowds from other towns. These religious celebrations had also important economic and social components, as they offered occasions to exchange goods, visit family and friends, learn the latest news and gossip from home and outside, and socialize.<sup>41</sup>

If dominant, the presence of Algarvians among the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa was not exclusive. In Comodoro Rivadavia, there were also migrants from the districts of Coimbra, Guarda, Leiria, Castelo Branco, and isolated cases from other regions. In Villa Elisa, the rest of the Portuguese migrants were from Viseu, Leiria, Guarda, Castelo Branco, Bragança, as well as other regions with only a few individuals. The relative proportion of migrants from the different regions varied in both destinations. Although Algarvians formed the bulk of both immigrant communities, their proportion was higher in Comodoro Rivadavia; the other regions contributed with less than 5 percent each. In Villa Elisa, however, the district of Viseu stood out, contributing over 14 percent of the Portuguese migrants (almost a half of the migrants from regions other than the Algarve). There were also significant intra-regional and local variations in the patterns of migration from these regions. As in the case of the Algarvian flow, migration from the rest of Portugal originated in a limited number of villages, showing that it too was largely shaped by the contacts and assistance of social networks (Maps 4.4 and 4.5). In Comodoro Rivadavia, it is possible to distinguish two main areas of origin for these smaller chains of migration which involved towns in the districts of Coimbra and Leiria, in the center, and from the mountains of Guarda and Castelo Branco, in the interior, respectively.<sup>42</sup> In Villa Elisa, we can also distinguish secondary

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<sup>41</sup> For religious festivities in the town of Loulé, see the historical vignettes in Freitas, *Quadros de Loulé Antigo*. In chapters 10 and 13, the author describes the festivities for Our Lady of Piety (*Mãe Soberana*) and Holy Week, respectively. Writer Boaventura Passos, born in São Brás de Alportel, left a vivid account of the religious and social festivities in honor of St. Sebastian in the 1920s, for which people from nearby and far away hamlets came to town, in his *Aldeia em festa* (São Brás de Alportel: Câmara Municipal, 1988; orig. 1934).

<sup>42</sup> The distribution of migrants from these secondary chains by district of origin was: Coimbra, 4.2 and 4.9 percent (for members of the Portuguese Mutual Aid Association, and Portuguese brides and grooms, respectively); Leiria, 2.7 and 1.5 percent; Guarda, 2.7 and 4.0 percent; Castelo Branco, 1.1 percent; other districts, 3.3 and 7.4 percent. The first area of origin included the parishes of the county of Penela (Coimbra), as well as the neighboring parishes of Aguda and Figueró dos Vinhos (county of Figueró dos

chains of migration from northern and central Portugal. The main area of origin was located in the zone of contact between the districts of Viseu and Guarda, in the mountainous interior region of Beira. The majority of these migrants came from the county of Nelas (Viseu), representing 10 percent of the total Portuguese community in Villa Elisa.<sup>43</sup>

The life-stories of Portuguese migrants and their descendants in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa confirm the importance of primary networks in the formation of both communities. The image of chains of migration often appeared in the oral testimonies. Comparing this dynamic to a 'contagion,' a migrant from Boliqueime explained the migration of so many people from that area of the Algarve to Villa Elisa as follows: "We all came here because of the first one who came. Because the first one who arrive[d] calle[d] people and as he ke[pt] calling them, so they gather[ed] [here]." In Comodoro Rivadavia, a migrant from northern Portugal expressed a similar idea: "First, one person pulls another one, and then that one pulls another one, and so on. It is a chain."<sup>44</sup>

#### *Phases: Pioneers, Migrant Workers, and Families*

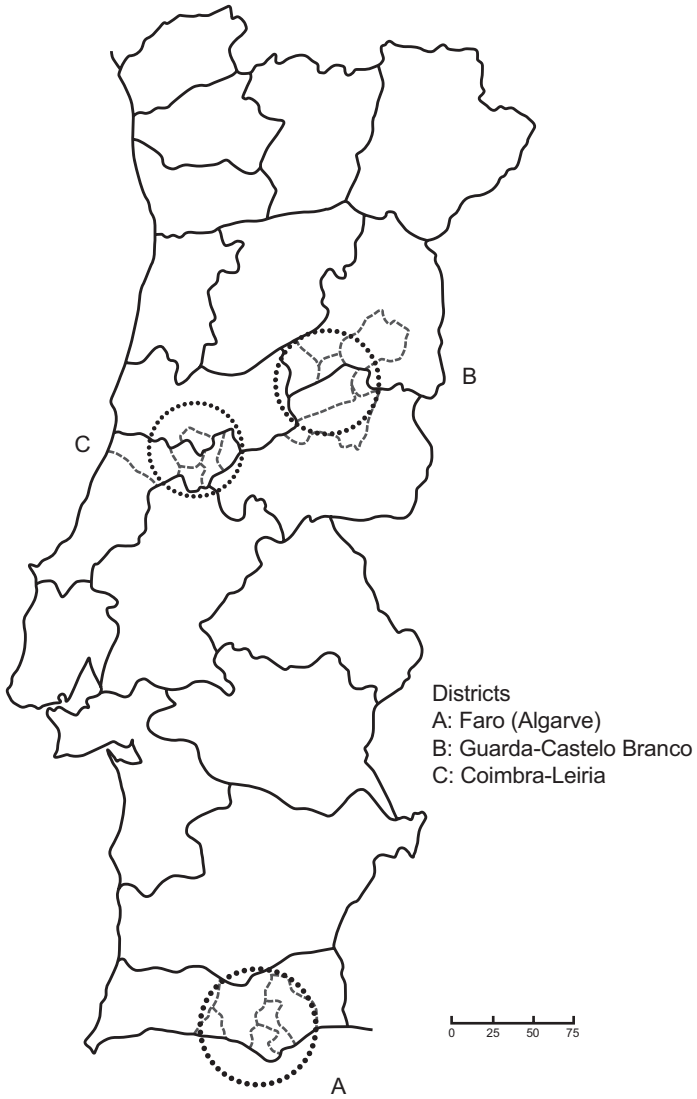
In their influential study of Italian migration to North America, John and Leatrice MacDonald proposed the existence of three types or

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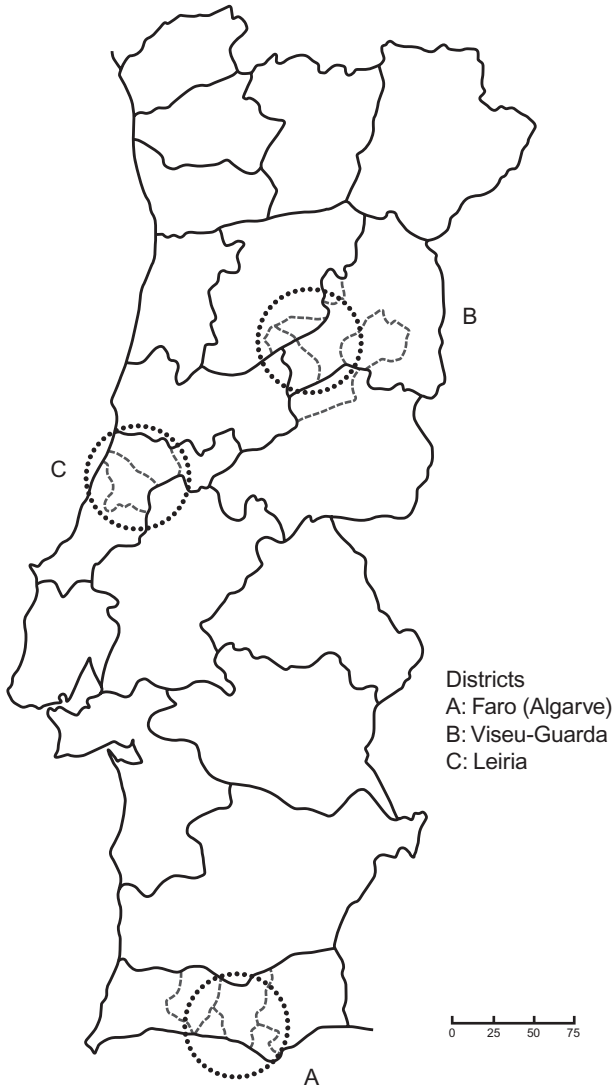
Vinhos, in Leiria), the parish of Ancião and Avelar (county of Ancião, in Leiria), and the parish of Redinha (county of Pombal, in Leiria). The second area was formed by migrants from the region of the Serra da Estrela, Portugal's highest mountain range, especially the parish of Paranhos (county of Seia, in Guarda). Secondary centers of this area of emigration to Comodoro Rivadavia included Mangualde da Serra and Vila Nova de Tazem (county of Gouveia, in Guarda), Pega (county of Guarda, in Guarda), and the parish of Paul (county of Covilhã, in the neighboring district of Castelo Branco).

<sup>43</sup> Migrants from these secondary chains were from the following districts: Viseu, 13.9 percent; Leiria, 6.3 percent; Guarda, 4.7 percent; Castelo Branco, 1.6 percent; other districts, 5.9 percent. In addition to the parish of Senhorim (county of Nelas), the parishes of Mangualde (in the same county) and Paranhos (county of Seia, in the district of Guarda) were also important places of origin. Finally, migrants from a few parishes in the counties of Leiria and Pombal (in the central district of Leiria), and in the counties of Covilhã and Fundão (in the mountains of Castelo Branco) formed a secondary flow of migration to Villa Elisa.

<sup>44</sup> Interviews with José Viegas (Arturo Seguí, Aug. 1, 1991 and Aug. 3, 1991); and António Conceição Marques (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 13, 1994). António was from the north of Portugal (Paranhos, Guarda). The mechanisms of migration, however, were similar for the north and the south, giving origin the regional chains. José was also interviewed for a documentary video about Portuguese immigration in Argentina produced by an Argentine television channel. It is in that interview that he used the contagion image. See Argentina Televisora Color (Buenos Aires), "La puerta del Océano: Los portugueses en Argentina," Series La otra tierra, which aired on Feb. 8, 1988.



Map 4.4: Areas of Origin of Portuguese Immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia



Map 4.5: Areas of Origin of Portuguese Immigrants in Villa Elisa



phases in the process of chain migration. First, some immigrant pioneers already established abroad, acting as labor agents, encouraged the immigration of male immigrants. That initial phase was followed by a second flow of migrant laborers who, in turn, assisted fellow countrymen to migrate. Finally, the third phase was characterized by delayed family migration, which started when these male breadwinners began calling their wives and children to join them and settled in the country of immigration. Other scholars of southern European migration have proposed variations to this typology. In another study contemporary to that of the MacDonalds, for example, Charles Price proposed the existence of four phases in the process of chain migration (migration of pioneers, occupational and spatial mobility, stabilization and family migration, and maturity of the second generation).<sup>45</sup> One of the main elements of contention is the role of direct recruitment in the first phase through the activity of labor agents such as Italian bosses or *padroni*. In effect, as several studies about Italian and Spanish immigration in Argentina indicate, labor bosses were not always present.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, there was no direct recruitment in the case of Portuguese migration to Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa. Contacts among family, kin, and neighbors were more important in the early stages of the migratory flow.

Taking these variations into account, this general approach provides a useful framework for analyzing the arrival and settlement of Argavians and Portuguese from other regions in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa. Both movements presented a parallel, three-stage pattern of migration that included migrant pioneers, migrant male workers, and family migration. An important distinction can be made regarding the length and nature of the migration between the second and third phases. While the second phase was usually characterized by temporary movements, with a high proportion of remigration, the third phase implied a more permanent or definitive settlement, marking the passage from the sojourn to immigrant phases.<sup>47</sup> Of course, this does not mean that all the

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<sup>45</sup> MacDonald and MacDonald, "Chain Migration" and idem, "Italian Migration"; Price, *Southern Europeans*, especially pp. 169–99. An overview of the literature and the evolution of the debate in Devoto, "Las cadenas" and "Algo más sobre las cadenas." In the case of Portuguese migration, Maria Baganha presents alternative phases of migration according to destination, including direct recruitment, in the Portuguese flow to the United States (see Baganha, *Portuguese Emigration*).

<sup>46</sup> Devoto, "Las cadenas," 119–20; Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 71–2.

<sup>47</sup> Sturino, *Forging the Chain*, especially chapters 4 and 5.

migrants made the transition from temporary migrations to permanent settlement. Temporary migration continued even after the period of settlement through family formation or reunification started. Finally, there were also differences between the two immigrant communities. The significance of each phase varied according to the timing of migration, the local economic and labor conditions, migrants' objectives, and the historical context in which both migratory flows developed.

### *Comodoro Rivadavia*

Migration from Portugal to Comodoro Rivadavia followed the three classic phases (pioneers, temporary male labor migrants, and family formation or reunification). These phases, however, overlapped, making it difficult to present a rigid chronology. The pioneering phase went approximately from 1903 to 1910, the heyday of labor migration went from the early 1910s until the 1930s, and family migration became the predominant pattern during the 1940s and 1950s. The Portuguese community of Comodoro Rivadavia also witnessed a fourth, secondary movement of internal migration which took place in some cases after several years of settlement in the area. The latter was common in the 1950s and 1960s and surely continued afterwards.

The pioneer phase of Portuguese immigration in Comodoro Rivadavia coincided with the pioneer years in the city's history. Portuguese migrants were associated to both the early years of the town and the beginning of petroleum production. In the first case, the Portuguese pioneer was the Algarvian Sebastián [Sebastião] Peral, who arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia in 1902. Born in Pechão (Olhão) around 1847, Peral migrated to Argentina in 1869, settling in Rauch, a rural town in the center-east of the province of Buenos Aires, where he owned a general store. The central part of Buenos Aires was a mobile frontier settled as a result of several military campaigns against Native nations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Like other towns in this expanding rural area, Rauch offered opportunities to entrepreneurial individuals. Yet lured by the potential of bigger opportunities in newest 'frontier' of Patagonia, the restless Peral moved south to the recently founded town of Comodoro Rivadavia along with his wife and many children. After working as a laborer and a mason, he opened a blacksmith's shop and cart factory that serviced the numerous carts and wagons that made the route between the coast and the rural settlements in the west. Peral became a successful businessman and an influential

figure in local society. He became active in local politics and was one of the main supporters of the establishment of the Salesian Order of Don Bosco which was to become a central player in the religious and educational life of the town. His accomplishments and reputation made him the natural leader for the Portuguese community. The Portuguese authorities offered him the post of consul in the area, but he declined.<sup>48</sup> For the people of Comodoro Rivadavia, Peral is not an ‘immigrant’ but one of the ‘*pobladores*’ (settlers, founders).<sup>49</sup> According to popular lore, Peral arrived on the coast of Patagonia with a big family (including an Argentine wife of probable Indian origin) and some animals, a fact that further reinforces his image as *poblador*. As a Portuguese woman who migrated in the 1920s stated: “The first Portuguese man who came to Comodoro arrived by boat. He brought everything with him: horses, sheep, hens... All the animals died. But he already had thirty years of Argentine life.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, for the Portuguese migrant community, Peral became an important symbolic link with the very origins of the town.

Other Portuguese migrants followed Peral’s path and settled as blacksmiths and cart manufactures in other towns that emerged along the routes between Comodoro Rivadavia and the mountains to the west. These towns thrived as way stations for the horse-driven carts that provided the essential link between the coast and the interior, and as service and mercantile centers for the rural hinterland. Most of these towns did not survive the changes in transportation after the 1930s and later disappeared. Located 112 km west of Comodoro Rivadavia, Cañadón Lagarto illustrates the trajectory of these short-lived towns that attracted several Portuguese families to Patagonia in the early twentieth century. Joaquim de Brito, a blacksmith from Faro, settled

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<sup>48</sup> Information about Sebastián Peral based on: D’Angelis, *Album*, 88–9, 109; “La colectividad portuguesa en Comodoro Rivadavia,” *Crónica*, Oct. 5, 1993, 22–3; Márquez and Palma Godoy, *Comodoro Rivadavia*, 32; *Cincuentenario de Comodoro Rivadavia*, 297 (in which Peral appears on a picture from a Red Cross benefit party for the Allies in 1915); “Quasi centenario, deixou de existir um fundador português de Comodoro,” *Ecos de Portugal*, July 31, 1945, 6; and interviews with Leonor and Herminia Guerreiro da Costa (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 18, 1994), and Mariana Silva (Comodoro Rivadavia, May 27, 1994), three of Peral’s granddaughters. I was not able to find any record of Peral’s departure from Portugal in the passport request books of the district of Faro.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, the list of pioneer families in *Medio Siglo de Petróleo*, 32.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Alexandrina Viegas (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 7, 1994). Other references to Peral’s arrival and the animals in the interview with Antonio Gonçalves and Teresa de Jesús Lázaro (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 10, 1994).

there in 1910. His cart shop grew with the flourishing transportation business. After 1912, the arrival of the train increased traffic and opened more economic opportunities. Four years after Joaquim's arrival, he arranged for his wife and 9 year old daughter Amelia to join him from Portugal; nine more children were born in Cañadón Lagarto. Amelia recalls growing up in a lively small town whose commercial activity rivaled that of Comodoro Rivadavia:

My father had a cart factory.... It was where they built the carts that were used for transportation around there. They were carts pulled by 18 horses which carried up to 7,000 kg. That was my father's job.... It was a pretty, little town with a lot of activity because it was not only a way station for the cart drivers, but also the beginning of the main road to the mountains.<sup>51</sup>

In 1920, Amelia married José Pires, a migrant from São Brás de Alportel who worked in her father's shop. The introduction of trucks in the 1920s caused a steady decline in towns like Cañadón Lagarto whose lives were linked to the traffic of traditional horse wagons. Like most of their neighbors, Amelia's family moved to Comodoro Rivadavia where the rapid expansion of oil production offered more opportunities. "Lagarto disappeared faster than any other town," reflected Amelia. Little traces of the former town remain today, except for a cemetery with about two hundred graves.<sup>52</sup>

It was the oil boom that attracted the majority of migrants to Comodoro Rivadavia. The Portuguese community can also claim a part in the beginning of the petroleum age that transformed the small port town into a bustling mining and industrial center. Two Algarvian migrants, António Viegas Carrascalão, from the parish of São Brás de Alportel, and his fellow countryman José Barracosa were among the eleven members of the drilling team that found petroleum for the first time in 1907. Carrascalão returned shortly after to Portugal, but Barracosa

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<sup>51</sup> Elvira Córdoba, "Por andar este sur: Amelia do Brito de Pires, 88 años y la buena amistad," *Crónica*, Jan. 30, 1993, 25 (also published in Elvira Córdoba, *Raíz y memoria: Historias de vida* [Comodoro Rivadavia: author's ed., 2007, 19–21]).

<sup>52</sup> Córdoba, "Por andar este sur: Amelia do Brito de Pires"; interview with Manuel Galván (Comodoro Rivadavia, July 25, 1991); interview with Mariana Silva (who was born in Cañadón Lagarto, where her father, an Algarvian, worked as a blacksmith); Alejandro Aguado, *Cañadón Lagarto, 1911–1935: Un pueblo patagónico de leyenda, sacrificio y muerte* (Comodoro Rivadavia: Municipalidad de Comodoro Rivadavia, 1997).

stayed.<sup>53</sup> Soon they were followed by other Portuguese migrants who also participated in the early years of oil production.<sup>54</sup> In the Algarve, news spread fast, originating a flow of labor migration that had its heyday during the 1910s and 1920s. This movement was composed largely of young men who migrated to Comodoro Rivadavia to work for a period of time, save money, and go back to their villages; it was common for migrant workers to repeat the cycle of migration and return migration several times.

Migration to Patagonia emerged as a secondary flow in the circuits of labor migration from Algarve to Argentina and as a part of the broader system of transatlantic labor migration that developed during the nineteenth century. Initially, Portuguese migrants arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia after working in the city of Buenos Aires, in the harvests of the pampas, or on seasonal work in other regions. By the 1920s, an expanding labor market with high wages and possibilities for savings, plus the establishment of migratory chains, made Comodoro Rivadavia and its oil fields a major destination. Comodoro Rivadavia became a household name among Algarvian workers wishing to migrate overseas. A farmer from São Brás de Alportel, José Viegas, arrived in Argentina in 1910. Like many other Algarvian farmers, before migrating overseas, José had combined rural work at home with temporary work in the mines of Aljustrel, in the Alentejo. He spent ten years as a temporary laborer in different regions of Argentina: harvesting grains in the countryside of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe, blasting rocks in the construction of a tunnel in the Andes, picking grapes in the vineyards of Mendoza, manufacturing boxes in the city of Buenos Aires. Back in Portugal, José learned of the possibilities for lucrative work in the oil fields of Patagonia and decided to leave for Argentina again in 1922,

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<sup>53</sup> For the members of the drilling team of the so-called Well No. 2, see Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales, *Desarrollo de la industria petrolífera*, 18; and *Medio siglo de Petróleo*, 46 (in these lists, Barracosa appears as “Barravoz” and “Barrabosa”); “Faleceu um dos homens que acharam petróleo no Chubut,” *Ecos de Portugal*, Nov. 30, 1951, 5; interview with António Viegas Carrascalão Junior. José Barracosa died in Comodoro Rivadavia in 1951. António Carrascalão was the father of the person whose recollections of migration in São Brás de Alportel open this chapter.

<sup>54</sup> For example, Manuel da Silva, who arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia in September of 1907 and started to work as a laborer in the first drilling team in January 9, 1908 (less than a month after the discovery of petroleum), and Joaquín da Silva, who arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia in March of 1907 and, after working briefly as a blacksmith with Sebastián Peral, worked in the construction of the so-called Well No. 3. See the summaries of their life-stories in *Medio siglo de petróleo*, 32, 34.

accompanied by his oldest son, a cousin, and an uncle. They joined other countrymen in the oil fields, first in the state company YPF and later in British-owned *Compañía Ferrocarrilera*.<sup>55</sup> With channels of information and assistance in place, it was common for migrants to be working in the oil fields shortly after their arrival in the country. In YPF, for instance, almost a quarter of the Portuguese workers admitted in 1922 began to work there less than four months after arriving at the port of Buenos Aires, and 18 percent entered the company less than two months after their arrival.<sup>56</sup> These migrants knew where they were going and what to expect. They followed a path that was paved by earlier migrants, relying on the information, contacts, and assistance provided by family members and *paisanos* (fellow countrymen). Family connections were valuable in assisting newcomers to find a job. Over a quarter of the new Portuguese workers in YPF during the 1920s declared at least one sibling already living in the company town, and 9 percent had more than one. In 8.4 percent of the cases, Portuguese migrant workers joined their fathers already working in the oil fields. In addition, 19 percent of the new Portuguese workers reported other relatives living in Argentina, 80 percent of whom were in the area of Comodoro Rivadavia. Most of these relatives were uncles or cousins who were already working in the oil fields.<sup>57</sup>

The overwhelming majority of Portuguese migrants were young men. Oral testimonies abound in references to the number of Portuguese men who worked in the oil fields and in the town of Comodoro Rivadavia. According to one testimony, “Comodoro was the land of men. There were lots of men alone. There was a time that when a female relative

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<sup>55</sup> Interviews with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (Comodoro Rivadavia, Jan. 9, 2001 and Jan. 12, 2003). Additional information about labor trajectories of other Portuguese migrants in interviews with Leonor and Herminia Guerreiro da Costa, Silvina de Sousa (Comodoro Rivadavia, May 27, 1994), Mariana Silva, Alexandrina Viegas, Maria José Viegas (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 7, 1994), Maria Martins de Belchior (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 5, 1994), Manuel Galván; and the life story of Joaquín Felipe, an Algarvian migrant from Almancil, in Ripa, *Inmigrantes en la Patagonia*, 120–31.

<sup>56</sup> Legajos de Personal, 1916, 1922, AYPF. Close to two-thirds of them had been in Argentina less than eleven months at the time they entered the company. Unfortunately, the sample does not include comparable information for the 1910s—only nine cases of Portuguese workers who began to work in 1916 and all of them had arrived in the country between 1909 and 1913.

<sup>57</sup> Legajos de Personal, AYPF. Calculations based on the analysis of the files of Portuguese workers who entered the company in 1920 and 1928, and a few other cases between 1920 and 1929.

would arrive from Europe, there were four or five men waiting for the ship, to see their faces, and to go ask for their hands the following day.”<sup>58</sup> A Portuguese woman who lived in the company town of *Compañía Ferrocarrilera* since the mid 1920s recalled, “There were a lot of Portuguese men in those years—young men. In Kilometer 8, there were four [young Portuguese] women in those years; and Portuguese men, there were more than fifty.”<sup>59</sup> Many of the workers were single, but there were married men as well who usually migrated alone, leaving their families in Portugal. As a migrant who grew up in São Brás during the 1920s explained, “Men got married and left. They came to Patagonia.”<sup>60</sup> In the smaller oil camps scattered on the deserted plateau around Comodoro Rivadavia, the presence of women and families was even more rare. After ten years of working in the oil fields and living alone, Maria de Mendonça’s father arranged for his family to join him in Patagonia. They arrived in the mid-1930s and settled in a small oil camp set up by the *Diadema Argentina Company* out on the windswept plateau. Maria recalls her initial impressions:

When we arrived, our father was waiting for us. It was my sister and I. She was 8 years old and I was 10. We arrived at night. . . . And when we arrived and saw all the lights we were happy. How beautiful was Comodoro! Early in the morning, we got up and saw the deception. . . . [My father] took us to an oil camp called Camp Y. It was just our family and no one else, and six or seven male workers. But families, it was just ours.<sup>61</sup>

The demographic profiles of the oil workers confirm the migrants’ recollections. For instance, half of the Portuguese migrants who started working in YPF before 1930 were in their twenties, and over 73 percent were younger than 35 years. In the case of the private company *Astra*, incoming Portuguese workers were even younger: the same age groups accounted for about 70 percent and more than 86 percent, respectively. In both companies, more than a half of them were single. Both single and married workers migrated to the oil fields leaving their immediate families in Portugal. Among the single workers of the state-owned company, 93 percent stated that their mothers were living in Portugal, and 84 percent said the same regarding their fathers. The difference is

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with Antonio Gonçalves and Teresa de Jesús Lázaro.

<sup>59</sup> Interviews with Maria Martins de Belchior; and Alexandrina Viegas.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Maria Dias Neto de Valagão, José Dias Sancho, and Rosa Viegas Valagão (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 16, 1994).

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Maria de Mendonça (Comodoro Rivadavia, Jan. 12, 2001).

explained by the cases of labor migrants who followed their fathers to the area of Comodoro Rivadavia and children of widows. In the case of the married workers, 98 percent of them had left their wives in Portugal, and 95 percent had children there as well.<sup>62</sup>

Unlike the internal and medium-distance migrants who left seasonally to work in other Portuguese regions or in southern Spain, the Portuguese who migrated temporarily to Comodoro Rivadavia stayed for several years. "Everybody came for four years," explained one migrant. "[You asked them] so how long are you going to stay: four years [they said]. It was a matter of paying the debt and taking some pesos back." Another migrant expressed, "During those years there were Portuguese men who came here to work for a while; looking for money because it [Argentine currency] was strong.... They stayed for two, three, four years and went back with their money." An immigrant woman also recalled, "they saved money, went back, then came back again.... I have a nephew who came back three times."<sup>63</sup> The pattern of recurrent temporary migration becomes apparent through the analysis of the workers' files of the national oil company. There are numerous cases of Portuguese migrants who worked for a period of time, left, and later went back to their previous job in the company. Many asked for a temporary leave of absence with the possibility of reentry, sometimes stating that they were traveling to Europe. Some later returned to Comodoro Rivadavia alone but others did so with their existing or newly formed families. For example, José Francisco, a 19 year old single man from Loulé, started working in YPF in July 1922. He left the company in March 1926 and when he applied for reentry in December of the following year, he stated he had a wife in Europe. It is not clear for how long he stayed in YPF the second time but, when he started working again in 1936, he also had a 3 year old son in Portugal. He finally left the company in August 1937. Thus, José worked in YPF from 1922 and

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<sup>62</sup> Legajos de personal, 1916, 1922, and 1928, AYPF; Libros de registro de obreros, 1909-29 and Libros de registro de personal, 1926-39, AA. Figures based on the analysis of workers' files and personnel records from both companies. In the case of YPF, I have analyzed all the available files from Portuguese migrants who began to work in 1916, 1922, and 1928. For Astra, the information comes from the analysis of the files of all Portuguese workers entering the company between 1915 (first recorded case) and 1930.

<sup>63</sup> Interviews with Antonio Gonçalves and Teresa de Jesús Lázaro; José Dias Sancho; and Maria Martins de Belchior.



1937, making several trips back and forth from Loulé to Comodoro Rivadavia while forming and supporting a family in Portugal.<sup>64</sup>

Whether they were married men supporting their families and looking to improve their resources in Portugal, or single men contributing to the parental household or working for the establishment of a future family, migrant workers sought to save and send money home. As one migrant put it, “everybody saved... Everybody sent money home... One was here but piling [money] up in Portugal.” Another Portuguese migrant, who grew up in São Brás de Alportel in the 1920s, remembered that in those years labor migrants “stayed here for two, three, or four years and went back with a little money. They made 100 or 200 *contos*, and that was a lot of money then... Maybe they bought some property, more land, a mule, or a new cart. They improved their situation but continued working.”<sup>65</sup> The purchase of land was an important objective for Algarvian migrants and, at least in the collective memory, one of the predominant ways of investing the money earned in Argentina.<sup>66</sup> Maria João Bordeira’s father and father-in-law migrated to Comodoro Rivadavia several times before arranging for their families to join them in the 1920s. “In those times, they used to come here to make money,” she says. “My father-in-law came here four times. As soon as he learned that there was a piece of land for sale in Portugal and he saw that he could come... One time he came and stayed for eight months. He earned enough to buy land and went back.”<sup>67</sup> This is just one of many such stories. Manuel Sousa was only a small child when his father left Santa Bárbara de Nexe for Comodoro Rivadavia around 1909. He always sent money home which his mother used to buy several pieces of land; so many, he said, that people in the village called her the *brasileira*. In 1924, when Manuel was 22 years old, he too migrated to Argentina and joined his father in Comodoro Rivadavia, where they both worked in the oil fields of YPF. It was hard labor; Manuel first worked digging ditches and then as a member of drilling crews in what was known

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<sup>64</sup> Legajos de Personal, No. 7143, AYPF.

<sup>65</sup> Interviews with Antonio Gonçalves and Teresa de Jesús Lázaro; and José Dias Sancho. One *conto* was equivalent to 1,000 Portuguese escudos.

<sup>66</sup> Interviews with Manuel Francisco de Sousa and Catarina Chernela Borralho (Comodoro Rivadavia, Sept. 1, 1992); João do Carmo Madeira and Maria Olívia dos Santos (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 6, 1994); and Horacio Gago de Brito (Florencio Varela, July 31, 1991).

<sup>67</sup> Interviews with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira.

as ‘oil well mouth.’ By the time he decided to go back to Portugal in the early 1930s, Manuel had managed to save enough to buy a house and to invest in some land. Three months after his return, he married Catarina Borralho and together they set up a new home. Catarina, who remembered bidding farewell to her neighbor a decade earlier, as a 10 year old child, was impressed with how much Manuel had accomplished abroad. Three years after their marriage, Manuel returned to Comodoro Rivadavia and Catarina stayed in Portugal, taking care of the land and the house. Manuel intended to repeat the previous, successful experience of temporary migration, and return home after three or four years. He went back to his old job in YPF, saved money as before, and sent some to Portugal with which Catarina fixed up the house. Before investing more savings in land, however, they decided to relocate to Comodoro Rivadavia, where Catarina arrived in 1938. Manuel’s father, however, returned to Portugal.<sup>68</sup>

Migrants’ remittances were crucial for the reproduction of many rural households in the Algarve. Remittances were sent in pounds sterling, the dominant international currency in the early twentieth century. The money sent by the migrants in Argentina made a profound impact on the villages of emigration, both real and symbolic. As the testimony that opens this chapter and the characters in the novels of *Boaventura de Passos* discussed in chapter 3 illustrate, it was common for *brasileiros* returning from Argentina to display their success in the form of watch chains with shiny pounds sterling.<sup>69</sup> The following account, by a migrant from São Brás, further illustrates the effect of the riches from Argentina in the home villages:

There were young men who came for four or five years, went back to Portugal, bought land, came back for another four or five years and bought more.... Because at that time the currency was stable.... I know a man who came when he was 18 years old, he is now 86 years old. He says that the shops’ windows were full of pounds sterling. When they went back to Portugal... they took pounds sterling. They bought pounds sterling with

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Manuel Francisco de Sousa and Catarina Charneca Borralho; and interview with Catarina Charneca Borralho (Comodoro Rivadavia, Jan. 6, 2001).

<sup>69</sup> Interview with António Viegas Carrascalão Junior. References to remittances and images of pounds sterling from Argentina, in interviews with Manuel Galván and Horacio Gago de Brito. For the image of migrants from Argentina as *brasileiros*, or successful return migrants, see chapter 3.

the Argentine money. There were lots of them in the shops' windows. It was golden Argentina then.<sup>70</sup>

Male labor migration was the dominated pattern of migration to Comodoro Rivadavia during the 1910s and 1920s and continued with less strength during the 1930s and 1940s. In many cases the younger generations of men in the villages followed the familiar paths of their fathers and other family members. International conditions, however, were not the same for the post-1930s migrants. The Argentine economy suffered the consequences of the 1930 crisis and the comparative value of the Argentine currency declined. For some of those who had lived the heyday of temporary migration to the oil fields of Patagonia, the deterioration of the Argentine money was hard to believe. A story that circulates in São Brás tells about a return migrant from Patagonia who became a successful store owner with his savings and always saved money in Argentine currency. Refusing to believe that a permanent decline was possible, he lost a good deal with the changing monetary conditions. This story serves to reinforce the idea of how crucial remittances from Argentine had been during the first three decades of the century and the profound imprint they had made in local memory.

A combination of increasing economic difficulties in Argentina, an international situation that did not create an adequate climate for migration, and restrictive migratory measures both in Portugal and Argentina contributed to the debilitation of the temporary male labor migration pattern. A final blow to this practice came in the late 1940s with the restrictions imposed by the Peronist government to international transfers of money. Restrictions to remittances created problems not just for Portuguese migrants in Comodoro Rivadavia but in Portuguese communities throughout Argentina. The Portuguese government exerted pressure before the Argentine authorities to lift these limitations. In May 1949, the Portuguese ambassador in Buenos Aires met with the Political Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the head of the National Direction of Migrations to express his government's concerns with the difficulties caused by the change in policy among thousands of Portuguese families who depended on the money sent from Argentina. The ambassador reported that the Director of Migrations "assured me that he would meet with President Perón that same day, and that he would talk with him about that matter

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<sup>70</sup> Interview with Horacio Gago de Brito.

for which he anticipated a satisfactory solution.”<sup>71</sup> João de Mendonça Nunes, a leading member of the Portuguese community of Buenos Aires, commented in an interview published after a trip to Portugal in 1949 in *Ecos de Portugal*, the main Portuguese language newspaper in Argentina, that the situation of many families in Portugal was increasingly hard as a result of the lack of remittances. “They used to live with some comfort, even when remittances from here were not very regular, as the grocer, the baker, the store owner knew that, sooner or later, the money would arrive. . . . But now they don’t have that resource.” He also remarked that the restriction to send money from Argentina was a major obstacle for a migratory agreement that was being discussed at that time between the Portuguese and Argentine governments. The crisis strained the traditional flow of labor migration to Argentina and confronted transnational families with difficult decisions. A 1959 memo from the Portuguese Junta da Emigração cited the difficulties with transferring money abroad experienced in the previous decade as one of the main causes of the decline of labor migration to Argentina.<sup>72</sup>

This labor strategy was so important for Portuguese migrants in the area of Comodoro Rivadavia, that in 1950 the board of the local Portuguese Mutual Aid Association called for an emergency meeting to discuss a plan of action. They decided to ask for the mediation of the military governor to allow the members of the Portuguese community to send up to 250 pesos per month, as it had been granted to the Spanish and Italian immigrants. The authorities of the Portuguese Association assessed that a quarter of the Portuguese in the area (500 out of an estimated 2,000 immigrants) were sending money to their families in Portugal. It is not clear whether this petition was granted but, according to several testimonies, restriction in remittances forced many wives and children to leave Portugal and join their husbands and fathers in Comodoro Rivadavia, strengthening a trend of family migration that was already dominant.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ofício 126 and Ofício 147, from Legação de Portugal em Buenos Aires to Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Buenos Aires, May 20, 1949 and June 11, 1949, 2P, A41, M89, AMNE.

<sup>72</sup> “Impresões de Portugal,” *Ecos de Portugal*, Dec. 31, 1949, 4; Colonel António Manuel Baptista, President of the Junta da Emigração, to the Director-Geral dos Negócios Económicos e Consulares, Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Lisbon, Dec. 3, 1959, marked urgent, 2P, A8, M720, AMNE.

<sup>73</sup> Libros de Actas, 1950, May 11, 1950 and June 16, 1950, AAPCR; interviews with José Dias Sancho and Rosa Viegas Valagão, Fernando Mendes Nunes and Maria

Family reunification increased in the 1940s, but women and children had been migrating to Comodoro Rivadavia for three decades. For example, the first recorded Portuguese marriage in Comodoro Rivadavia took place in 1913, between two migrants from São Brás de Alportel—the groom had migrated to join his brothers, the owners of a small general store in town since 1907; the bride had arrived from Portugal in 1913.<sup>74</sup> During the 1910s, many women and children migrated to Comodoro Rivadavia to reunite with their husbands and fathers.<sup>75</sup> There was also a rise in family reunification during the war years. With increased insecurity to transatlantic travel brought about by World War I, labor migrants could not move back and forth as easily as before. Adding further uncertainty for the family future, most male laborers were of military age and also risked being drafted if they returned to Portugal. In 1918, when António Serões, a migrant from Estoi, asked his wife to join him in Comodoro Rivadavia, he explained:

I am going to send you the money for the ticket, so see if you can come. Here they say that the government does not let anybody leave, so look into that and tell me if they let people travel or not.... Here I talked with António Victorino and he is also thinking about having his family join him, so here we are thinking to have you travel together.... So you can start getting ready to come.... And you can start looking into renting what we own for several years.<sup>76</sup>

For women, family reunification generally meant permanent relocation, but that was not always the original intent of migrant families. As it was the case with the migration of families to medium-distance destinations within the Iberian Peninsula—namely Gibraltar—many transatlantic

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Fernanda dos Santos (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 2, 1994), and Manuel Gomes Correia (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 4, 1994).

<sup>74</sup> *Libros de matrimonio*, 1913, ARCCR. Interview with Elvira Correia de Souza (Comodoro Rivadavia, 1991).

<sup>75</sup> The first cases in which Comodoro Rivadavia appears explicitly as a destination were recorded in the passport request books in 1913 (a 12 year old boy who migrated from São Brás to join his father) and 1918 (a group of three women from the parish of Almancil, in Loulé, who requested passports to migrate to Comodoro Rivadavia with their six children). I was able to identify several other cases, however, looking at individual dossiers with passport applications. In most cases, the declared destination was Buenos Aires, regardless of the actual final destination in Argentina. *Livro de registo de passaportes* No. 13, 1912–15 (Oct. 16, 1913), *Livro de registo de passaportes* No. 14, 1915–20 (Feb. 27 and Mar. 7, 1918), and passport requests dossiers, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF.

<sup>76</sup> Antonio Gonçalves Serões to Maria Silvestre, Comodoro Rivadavia, Sept. 23, 1918, Passport Dossier 8, Feb. 1919, Fundo Governo Civil, caixa E1068, ADF.

families considered family reunification as part of the broader strategy of temporary migration. As the previous example illustrates, it was common for migrant families to rent their land and houses, or put their plots under the care of a family member who would keep them under production—or at least who would watch over them. Migrant families sometimes decided to sell only what could not be useful for their time abroad or what they could not use in the future, or items that run the risk of being damaged or devalued if unattended for a long period of time. As Francisco Cruz, a migrant from São Brás, told his wife Gertrudes as she was getting ready to join him in Patagonia, “Do not sell anything that will not rotten, as I don’t intend to live here all my life.”<sup>77</sup> Others, however, suspected from the beginning that their move was more likely than not a permanent one. Thus, Manuel Ignacio wrote to his wife in Almancil in 1919:

Ana, I think that here I can always earn something to eat and to send you something for you and the children to eat. And if I go there, I will have to walk in misery and see my children without being able to feed them, and see them without clothes and shoes without being able to earn enough to clothe them. And at the same time, I see that some women from there write to their husbands asking them to bring them here, saying that it is not possible to live in our villages....

Ana, if you have not yet started building the small house, then do not start.... At the end of this month I am going to send you 40 pounds so you can buy the tickets. If you find somebody who would buy anything from our house, go ahead and sell it, because if it stays there under the care of somebody else, it will be lost.<sup>78</sup>

More women and children arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia during the 1920s, when many male migrants who had spent more than a decade in the transatlantic circuit of temporary labor migration and return were faced with the decision of whether to settle more permanently with their families. The availability of housing in the company towns and the enactment of company policies that encouraged the establishment of families in the hopes of building a more stable labor force added other incentives.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Francisco Braz Cruz to Maria Gertrudes, Colonia Sarmiento, Aug. 7, 1914, Passport Dossier 174, Oct. 1914, Fundo Governo Civil, caixa E1175, ADF.

<sup>78</sup> Manuel Ignacio to Ana do Rosario, Comodoro Rivadavia, Nov. 17 and 20, 1919, passport dossiers 202 and 203, Feb. 1920, Fundo Governo Civil, caixa 1, ADF.

<sup>79</sup> Torres, “Two Oil Company Towns,” 38, 47–9, 75, 79, 170.

During the 1940s and 1950s, when family reunification became the main form of migration to Comodoro Rivadavia, the intention of most migrants was long-term or permanent relocation. In 1948, the Portuguese Mutual Aid Association noted that the increase in the number of members was largely the result of the arrival of the wives and children of Portuguese migrants already living in the area. The number of members increased from 677 in 1947 to 819 in 1953. The proportion of women among the new Portuguese members rose from 15 percent between 1940 and 1949 to 38 percent from 1950 to 1959, and to 41 percent from 1960 to 1970.<sup>80</sup> The evolution of Portuguese marriages in Comodoro Rivadavia also shows, indirectly, the greater presence of women and children during the 1940s and 1950s. Almost 70 percent of the marriages involving Portuguese brides or grooms between 1913 and 1960 occurred during those decades. In the case of Portuguese women, approximately half of them took place between 1951 and 1960. Since Portuguese women very rarely migrated alone, these brides were certainly the children of previous migrants who joined their fathers in Comodoro Rivadavia during those decades.<sup>81</sup> The predominance of family migration during those years is also confirmed by numerous oral testimonies.<sup>82</sup>

Finally, there was a fourth phase in Portuguese migration in Comodoro Rivadavia. It was a movement of internal migration that generally occurred after retirement. It was common for petroleum workers' families to move north after retirement. Reasons such as the harsh climate of Patagonia and the high cost of living often prompted this decision. Retirees moved to Buenos Aires and its suburban area, La Plata, Mar del Plata, among other places. Social and family networks were key

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<sup>80</sup> Libros de Actas, 1948, Nov. 18, 1948, and 1947–53, AAPCR; Libro de registro de socios, 1938–80, AAPCR.

<sup>81</sup> This is confirmed by the analysis of the places of residence of the parents of the Portuguese who married in Comodoro Rivadavia. The proportion of brides living in the area of Comodoro Rivadavia with their fathers was 73 percent in 1941–50 and 70 percent in 1950–60; those living with their mothers represented 75 percent in 1941–50 and 68 percent in 1950–60. By comparison, the proportion of grooms living with their fathers at the time of marriage was 23 percent in 1941–50 and 29 percent in 1950–60; those living with their mothers accounted for 18 percent in 1941–50 and 34 percent in 1950–60. Libros de matrimonio, 1941–60, ARCCR.

<sup>82</sup> Interviews with Alexandrina Viegas; Maria José Viegas; Manuel Gomes Correia; Manuel Francisco de Sousa and Catarina Charneca Borralho; Maria Dias Neto Valagão, José Dias Sancho, and Rosa Viegas Valagão; Antonio Gonçalves and Teresa de Jesús Lázaro; João do Carmo Madeira and Maria Olívia dos Santos; and José Silvestre.

facilitators of this movement. The primary relationships that brought Portuguese migrants to Comodoro Rivadavia were also instrumental in this internal re-migration, as it was common for retirees to settle in other areas of Argentina where they had family members and friends. In addition, new relationships that resulted from their long experience as workers and residents of Comodoro Rivadavia also proved important in this movement, expanding the network of contacts which paved the way for this secondary step in the chain migration. For example, the town of Florencio Varela, the seat of a large complex of YPF laboratories in the southeast of the Greater Buenos Aires area, attracted several families of former oil workers. This was not always a permanent move. Changes in the life cycle, such as the death of a spouse, sometimes motivated a return to Comodoro Rivadavia.<sup>83</sup>

### *Villa Elisa*

Portuguese migration to Villa Elisa shared with the flow to Comodoro Rivadavia the succession of phases: an initial or 'pioneer' stage, a period of labor migration, and a time of maturity and community formation with family reunification. Both flows, however, also present distinctive features. To fully grasp the timing and dynamics of Portuguese migration to Villa Elisa, it is necessary to consider it within the broader context of Portuguese migration to the county of La Plata (to which Villa Elisa belongs) and to various rural areas in the pampas. Portuguese migration to Villa Elisa began in the 1920s as an extension of migration to La Plata and as an alternative to seasonal work in the harvests and to temporary work in vegetable gardens. From the late 1930s onwards, Portuguese migration to Villa Elisa was characterized by family migration and long-term settlement.

The pioneer phase developed in the city of La Plata. Migrants from the Algarve settled in La Plata soon after its foundation as the capital of the province of Buenos Aires in 1882. The construction of the new city was considered by the Algarvian press as a sign of the dynamism and the economic possibilities of turn-of-the-century Argentina. In 1890, the weekly *O Porvir* reprinted a French article about the rapid

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<sup>83</sup> Interviews with Maria Dias Neto; and Horacio Gago de Brito. Additional information provided by Susana Torres.



growth of La Plata and used it to explain the attraction Argentina had on growing number of Algarvian migrants.

It is unquestionable that North America offers a spectacle that is unique among all countries of any time; cities rising almost by enchantment is something not seen before... Now an analogous event, and even more extraordinary if it is possible, has just happened in South America, without receiving the attention it deserves... the development, almost magical, of the city of La Plata, the new capital of the Province of Buenos Aires... Just after seven years of existence, the city of La Plata has more than 60,000 inhabitants; it has a magnificent port and a splendid train station; its streets are lit with gas and electric lights; its public buildings are big and luxurious like palaces; its theaters can rival those in Europe...<sup>84</sup>

The vast majority of the city's early residents were immigrants, mostly from Italy.<sup>85</sup> Some Algarvians were also attracted by the possibilities offered by the budding city. There are references to Algarvian migrants settled in La Plata as early as 1888, and the first passports from the Algarve that stated La Plata as their destination were issued in the 1890s. Information about this early group, however, is scarce.<sup>86</sup>

The pioneers of Algarvian migration to La Plata were small merchants. There were occasional references to members of this early settlement in the social sections of the Algarvian newspapers, which celebrated the achievements of their compatriots abroad.<sup>87</sup> Marriage records for La Plata also show the presence of manual workers and day laborers

<sup>84</sup> *O Porvir*, Mar. 9, 1890.

<sup>85</sup> La Plata, *Censo general de la ciudad de La Plata 1909*; Alberto S. J. de Paula, *La ciudad de La Plata: Sus tierras y su arquitectura* (La Plata: Ediciones del Banco de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1987), 224–6.

<sup>86</sup> José Gago Barroca, a laborer from Estoi (Faro) who had migrated to Argentina in 1885, was working in La Plata in 1888 when his wife joined him. The following year, when they had their first child, they were living in the southern section of the city. The first Algarvian passports explicitly stating La Plata as their destination in Argentina were issued in 1897 to a migrant worker from Faro traveling for the second time and his wife, and to a farmer from Estoi, traveling for the third time and his wife. There were other passports that stated La Plata as destination in 1899, 1900, 1905, 1909, 1912, 1913, and 1915. The first recorded passport to a migrant from Boliqueime dates from 1909. Since the declared destination in Argentina was usually Buenos Aires, regardless of the final destination, these passports were probably not the first ones issued to people going La Plata. Passport dossiers, Jan. 8, 1889 (caixa 153) and July 7, 1899 (caixa E955), and Livros de registo de passaportes, Nos. 6–7 (1880–87), 8–14 (1895–1915), Fundo Governo Civil, ADF.

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, *Algarve e Alentejo*, July 4, 1897; *O Povo Algarvio* (Loulé), Dec. 24, 1910, Oct. 7, 1911, and Jan. 29, 1912; and *Ecos do Sul*, Apr. 27, 1912.

among the initial migrants.<sup>88</sup> One of the early entrepreneurs became a key figure in the transition to the phase of labor migration from the Algarve to La Plata. Born in Albufeira around 1862 and established as a merchant in Boliqueime, Francisco Estevão de Sousa migrated to Argentina in 1889. By the following year, Sousa already had a general store in southern section of La Plata and in the next decades he made a solid position for himself. He kept close connections with his homeland, visiting Portugal at least in two occasions accompanied by his wife, his daughter, and a niece who also worked for the family. People at home praised Sousa's commercial career and accomplishment. The Algarvian press reported his sojourns and presented him as an example of a successful migrant, a true self-made man who had become an "honest capitalist" in Argentina.<sup>89</sup>

Located just two blocks from the train station of the Provincial Railroad La Plata-Meridiano V, inaugurated in 1910, Sousa's store became a meeting place and a source of information about availability of work for newly arrived migrants from Boliqueime and other Algarvian villages. Sousa owned rooms and other properties near the store that provided temporary accommodation for newcomers. Labor migrants could stay at a familiar place and take advantage of Sousa's knowledge and contacts. Migrants worked in gardens, brick factories, and construction and public works projects in La Plata and its suburban area, as well as with Sousa in his store. Portuguese migrants also took advantage of Sousa's connections in the Provincial Railroad which became another source of labor for Algarvian migrants. "He knew a lot of people in the Provincial Railroad," recalled one migrant, "so he found them jobs... he recommended them. And those workers got their supplies in his store. Some retired as railroad workers."<sup>90</sup> Sousa's store also became a base for many more migrants who worked seasonally in the pampas' harvests. José Pereira arrived from Boliqueime as a small boy with his parents and a sister in 1913; his father worked at Sousa's store and the family lived in one of Sousa's houses. He witnessed the arrival of large groups of seasonal workers from the Algarve who stayed in La Plata in the

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<sup>88</sup> *Libros de matrimonio*, La Plata, Sección 1 (1889–90), ARPPBA.

<sup>89</sup> News about the return of Sousa and his family to La Plata appeared in Loulé's *O Povo Algarvio*, Oct. 10, 1911. Information about his visits to Portugal also comes from: *Livros de registo de passaportes*, Passports 5 (Aug. 3, 1889), 11 (Nov. 9, 1897), and 390 (Sept. 11, 1911), Fundo Governo Civil, ADF. Even though he was traveling to La Plata, in all cases the destination stated in the passport requests was Buenos Aires.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with José Dias Pereira (La Plata, Sept. 2, 1994).

dead season, estimating that there were up to 20 men staying at one time in the rooms next door to Sousa's store. "Here it was like a sort of Immigrant Hotel," he explained—comparing it to the immigrant arrival facilities at the port of Buenos Aires—"because this man had a very large shed where he had built an attic, and the Portuguese came and set up their cots there.... They went to the harvests and then came back here.... They stayed two or three years here [in Argentina] and then returned." João Martins, who arrived in La Plata from Boliqueime in the 1920s, described a similar migration pattern, adding:

The Portuguese came, and they went directly there [Sousa's store] to go to the corn harvests. They slept there and ate there.... They had one of those Primus heaters, and they prepared their food.... Here they could make money.... They came here, they went to the corn harvests, and they made money. Some went back the same year, others stayed for two years, but more than two or three years they did not stay... and they sent money to Portugal.<sup>91</sup>

With the growth of intensive agriculture in the rural area along the corridor between the cities of Buenos Aires and La Plata, migrant workers found new opportunities for agricultural labor. João's father had also come to Argentina as a temporary migrant and, when João arrived in La Plata, he was working in the vegetable gardens of Florencio Varela, only a few kilometers north of Villa Elisa. The Railroad of the South (later called General Roca) and the Provincial Railroad crossed the gardening belt southeast of Buenos Aires (i.e., the counties of Quilmes and Florencio Varela) and connected it with La Plata and its suburban towns. Located near the terminus of one of these lines, Sousa's store was also a good source of information about job possibilities and working conditions in nearby gardens.<sup>92</sup>

Migrant laborers from the Algarve and other Portuguese regions found work in the suburban *quintas* (vegetable gardens). Before mechanization and chemical fertilizers, vegetable gardens required intensive labor and constant care, creating opportunities for both long-term and temporary work. Amadeo Monteiro, a migrant from Nelas, in northern

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<sup>91</sup> Interviews with José Dias Pereira; and Juan Martins Barriga (La Plata, Sep. 3, 1994). Additional sources: interviews with Diniz Viegas (Villa Elisa, July 20, 1991); José Viegas; and Manuel Alferes dos Ramos (Villa Elisa, Apr. 24, 1994).

<sup>92</sup> Interviews with Francisco Mendes (Villa Elisa, Aug. 14, 1991); Amadeo Ferreira Monteiro (Villa Elisa, Aug. 20, 1991); Elvira Rosa Risso (Villa Elisa, Apr. 19, 1994); Juan Martins Barriga; and Diniz Viegas.

Portugal, worked in two of these *quintas*. “In those years it was all done by hand; hands and horses, there were no tractors,” he explained. One of the *quintas* had eighteen workers and the other one had seven, the majority of whom were Portuguese migrants. Work was not specialized and migrants had to work in many and diverse tasks: tending the gardens, cutting grass and wood, cooking for the workers, shoveling manure that the owner bought from meatpacking plants. Workers lived in the premises and shared rooms. “We used to sleep ten or fifteen in the same room. The beds were set together, the floor was made of dirt, the light came from a small kerosene lamp.” In 1932, after two years of work, Amadeo decided to seek other horizons and look for a distant relative who was working in a flower garden in Villa Elisa. Amadeo soon realized this was a different type of job. “I looked at the little room he had,” he recalled. “It had a few boards on top, brick floors, a small bed. It had no plaster on the walls but it was a nice room. I fell in love with the room.” Amadeo started working in a flower garden and, even though the initial pay was lower than in the previous job, he was still able to save and send money home. “I was happy: I was in a town, there was electric light, they had *romerías* (popular festivals), they had a cinema!” Early Algarvian migrants followed a similar path. Francisco Mendes arrived in Argentina in 1928 from the parish of São Sebastião (Loulé). After an unsuccessful attempt to join a relative in Comodoro Rivadavia, he began working in a large vegetable garden owned by a Japanese migrant in Gutiérrez, a few kilometers north of Villa Elisa, where he joined other Portuguese laborers. “It was all vegetable gardens around there [and] there were all Portuguese workers,” he recalled. “I worked for a Japanese, who was the owner of the vegetable garden. He had four big trucks and sixty or eighty workers, all of them working in the garden. It was more like a factory.... It looked like a military barracks.” After six years, Francisco too decided to try his luck a few kilometers down the road, in the vegetable gardens of Villa Elisa. He recalls few Portuguese at that time, “but then they started to arrive until there were lots of them. One called the other, the other called another one, until they settled here.”<sup>93</sup>

The transformation of Villa Elisa into a major center of flower gardening that began during the 1920s attracted migrant workers. Portuguese migrants were well positioned to take advantage of the

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<sup>93</sup> Interviews with Amadeo Ferreira Monteiro; and Francisco Mendes.

new labor opportunities—some were already working in and around the area, others used the channels of information available in the Portuguese community of La Plata. The area of Villa Elisa, however, did not become as big a destination for temporary male labor migration as Comodoro Rivadavia or the ranches of the interior of the province of Buenos Aires. Instead, it soon developed into a destination for long-term or permanent settlement, and it attracted family migration early on. Flower gardening opened opportunities for migrants to become independent producers thus changing their initial strategies. In the mid-1930s, after several years of dependent work for other gardeners, Portuguese migrants started to work as sharecroppers or as independent producers in rented land; later that decade, they began buying plots of land, a trend that accelerated during the 1940s and 1950s. Within a decade, Portuguese migrants became a well-established group among the landowning gardeners. In the late 1930s, they created their first organization, the Union of Portuguese Flower Gardeners. Founded in 1938 by fifteen Portuguese gardeners, the main objective of this cooperative was to facilitate the transportation of cut flowers to the Buenos Aires market. Even though it later became more inclusive, changing its name to Cooperative of Flower Gardeners of Villa Elisa, the Portuguese continued as the cooperative's main constituency and provided most of its officials.<sup>94</sup>

The paths followed by Amadeo and Francisco illustrate the evolution in the patterns of migration and settlement of Portuguese migrants in Villa Elisa. They both arrived in Villa Elisa in the early 1930s and began working as field hands in flower gardens. Amadeo worked for an Italian gardener; Francisco worked first for a German and then for an Italian gardener. Most of the gardeners and workers were of migrant origin. In Francisco's words, "There were some Italians, there were some Spaniards, but there were no Argentines to speak of at that time." After a few years of learning and saving money, they both began working as sharecroppers (for Francisco it took around two years, and for Amadeo it took six years). Sharecropping allowed them to save more money, find better living conditions, and reunite with their families. Amadeo, who had left his fiancée in Nelas, married by proxy in 1938. Francisco

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<sup>94</sup> "Um grande exemplo: O triunfo colectivo dos floricultores portugueses em Villa Elisa," *Ecos de Portugal*, Sept. 3, 1941. Portuguese flower gardeners dominated the cooperative's board even as late as the 1980s. Board's composition in: Legajo de la Cooperativa de Floricultores de Villa Elisa (7891), ADPPJ.

had left his wife and a son in the Algarve, and arranged for them to join him in 1935. Francisco explained:

I was saving money here to send there [to Portugal], so they [his wife and son] could live better. So when I could be on my own—after seven years of being here alone—then was when I had my family come. I said: She is going to come when I have a house to put them in.<sup>95</sup>

Once reunited with their families in Villa Elisa, Amadeo and Francisco decided to use their resources towards a new end: becoming independent producers. They both rented land for a few years, and then bought their own land. Francisco bought 1½ hectares in 1938; Amadeo bought 2 hectares in 1940. Since the main goal of the early labor migrants was to send money to their families in Portugal, this change of strategy resulted in a redirection of their savings from rural Portugal to the Argentine countryside. This was a clear change in the original purpose of male labor migration: from becoming landowners in Portugal to becoming landowners in Argentina.

The Portuguese community of Villa Elisa strengthened from the 1940s to the 1960s as a result of a steady process of family migration and reunification. The increasing number of Portuguese marriages during those decades offers a clear indication of this development. Considering all the marriages from 1939 to 1980, almost 90 percent of the Portuguese women and more than 84 percent of the Portuguese men married after 1950. In both cases, the 1960s witnessed the largest number of marriages. The overwhelming majority of the brides had migrated with their parents to Argentina (83 percent were living with their mothers and 91 percent with their fathers at the time of marriage). The parents of most grooms were also living in Argentina at time of their sons' marriage, but the proportion was not as high as in the case of the brides: 53 percent had their mothers and 57 percent had their fathers living in Argentina. The difference derives from the presence of young, single men who had migrated on their own among the Portuguese migrants of Villa Elisa. Most of these marriages took place within families of flower gardeners: more than 70 percent of the grooms and 76 percent of the brides' fathers were flower gardeners and small farmers.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with Francisco Mendes.

<sup>96</sup> Calculations based on the analysis of marriage records. See note 2.

Several factors contributed to the emergence of settlement and family migration in Villa Elisa. The possibilities for savings and the continuous availability of land, first for rent and later for purchase at accessible prices and in installments, were important incentives for migrants' settlement. Second, timing was also important. The arrival of the Portuguese migrants coincided with the transformation of Villa Elisa and other areas of suburban La Plata into important centers of flower production. Portuguese migrants benefitted from this situation and, at the same time, were agents of this change (along with other migrants, especially the Japanese). Third, the characteristics of this activity favored family migration. Flower gardening used a variety of work arrangements, namely wage work, sharecropping, and independent work as renter or proprietor. Except for the first form, family labor predominated. This is clear in the expression commonly used among flower gardeners to refer to the act of giving land to sharecroppers: *poner familia a trabajar* (to put a family to work). Finally, the career path set by early Portuguese gardeners provided a tested way for newcomers to follow, while the possibility to work with their countrymen gave Portuguese migrants access to knowledge and social capital.

As more land became available with the subdivision of large farms and ranches, Portuguese gardeners and their families moved to nearby localities, such as Arturo Seguí, El Peligro, Los Porteños, and Estancia Chica.<sup>97</sup> Often their geographic mobility was linked to the strengthening of their position as flower gardeners, and it coincided with an occupational mobility from wage workers to sharecroppers to proprietors. For example, Rufina Rodrigues and her husband José Cavaco migrated to Villa Elisa from the Algarve in 1950. Taking advantage of the relationships established by Rufina's brother, who had been in Argentina since 1939, they were able to start in the usual flower gardening career at a higher level. The day after their arrival, they were working as sharecroppers in the lands of a fellow countryman. In addition to Rufina's family, two other Algarvian families were working as sharecroppers in the same land. After ten months of sharecropping in Villa Elisa, they

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<sup>97</sup> Interviews with Diniz Viegas; José Viegas; Belmiro Pais Figueiredo and Maria Isabel Rodrigues (La Plata, Aug. 22, 1994); Adelino Mendes Amaro (Villa Elisa, July 15, 1994); Rufina Martins Rodrigues (City Bell, Apr. 16, 1994). There are some examples of acquisition of land by Portuguese families in the 1940s and 1950s in the subdivision maps and auction pamphlets kept in the map files of the Department of Geodesy of the Province of Buenos Aires (La Plata). See *Carpetas de Planos* 66 bis A, 66 bis B, and 229, MOPDG.

rented 3 hectares of land in neighboring Arturo Seguí. Six years later, they took advantage of a large land sale in nearby Los Porteños and bought 1½ hectares which they paid in monthly installments. Several Portuguese families bought land at the same time. Rufina recalled at least thirteen families who acquired between 1½ and 2 hectares of land. All but two families were from the same *sítio* of Vale Judeu (in the parish São Sebastião, bordering Boliqueime to the west), and some were related. As a result, this section of Los Porteños became known as ‘Little Vale Judeu.’<sup>98</sup>

The combination of the above-mentioned factors enabled Portuguese migrants to create an ethnic economic niche built around flower gardening. The success of this economic strategy kept the flow of Portuguese migrants and their families alive for several decades. The migrant families who arrived in Villa Elisa in the 1940s and 1950s knew what to expect and used the information and contacts of family members and *paisanos* to establish themselves as flower gardeners. Rufina and José shared their trip to Argentina in the steamship *Córdoba* with several families bound for Villa Elisa. “There were quite a few in that boat,” she recalled. “Three couples, two young women, others from Boliqueime, others from Loulé. Some went to El Peligro, others went to Villa Elisa. Everybody went into flower gardening.”<sup>99</sup>

Just like the return of rich *brasileiros* from Argentina had contributed to keeping the flow of male labor migrants alive during the first decades of the twentieth century, success stories of friends and relatives who owned incredibly fertile parcels of land in Villa Elisa sparked the imagination of Algarvian farmers used the toiling the rocky plots of the dry Algarvian countryside. José Viegas, who migrated from Boliqueime in 1955 with his family, recalled the appeal produced by the success stories of previous migrants to Villa Elisa:

[Returned migrants] who had been here told me: go to flower gardening, go, don’t delay. There, flower gardeners are getting rich.... I also had a cousin who lived here in Villa Elisa and was there visiting. You know, he came back with a nice suit, good clothes, good things, and he looked like a capitalist.... And I asked him [whether or not to emigrate] and he said: if you go to be a flower gardener, then go; a flower gardener who works hard can make a nice position for himself.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Interviews with Rufina Martins Rodrigues; and Adelino Mendes Amaro.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Rufina Martins Rodrigues.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with José Viegas.



As it was true for the early stories of *brasileiros* with shinny gold chains and pounds sterling, the ultimate validation of the more prosaic success stories of the flower gardeners of the 1940s and 1950s took place in their places of origin. Few migrants were able to complete the cycle of success, but those who did contributed to the larger narrative of migration alive in the home villages. Readapting the script of the turn-of-the-twentieth century *brasileiro*, José validated his decision to leave the Algarve and settle in Villa Elisa during his first visit home. After fifteen years in Argentina, and securely established as an independent flower gardener, José bought a sport car and went to Portugal for a three-month visit with his family, taking the new car with them. “In 1970...I bought a Super Sport Chevy in La Plata and in two weeks I left for Portugal for a visit....It was the first Super Sport Chevy that went through Portuguese customs.” The statement was clear; his decision and work had been compensated. In José’s own words: “I am an *americano*, I thought to myself.” Migration is always an open-ended process. By then, Algarvian migrants were choosing other destinations, mostly France but also the United States. After returning to Argentina, José’s youngest son decided to start the cycle of migration once more and, using the connections of relatives on his mother’s side of the family, migrated to Queens, New York, in the early 1970s. In addition to this case, there are a few other examples of re-migration in the 1970s to the United States. In all cases, it was the children of the migrants who decided to use side links of the larger web of family networks to look for other horizons.

Finally, the Portuguese community of Villa Elisa also participated in the secondary phase of internal migration, as the destination of some families that relocated from Comodoro Rivadavia after several years of work in the petroleum industry. It is, however, hard to specify the number of migrant families involved in this movement. Several oral testimonies refer to families from the county of Loulé who moved to the area to be closer to relatives either after a long period of work in Patagonia or after retirement.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Interviews with Diniz Viegas; and Rufina Martins Rodrigues.

OS *ESQUECIDOS*: THE BROKEN LINKS OF CHAIN MIGRATION

In the tradition of Algarvian labor migration, married migrants were expected to work abroad to save money and provide for their families at home; those who settled for long periods abroad were expected to reunite with their families. The timing, motives, and characteristics of family migration and reunification varied among the Portuguese migrants of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa. For the flower gardeners of Villa Elisa, that transition usually happened with the migrants' establishment as sharecroppers or independent producers for whom family reunification also meant the possibility of family labor. To be sure, regardless of the generalized acceptance of social rules and marital expectations among migrant families, not all Portuguese migrants followed the anticipated path. Some migrants settled permanently in Argentina without calling their families or ever returning home. These migrants who broke with the accepted pattern of migration, remittances, return to the villages, or family reunification became known as *os esquecidos* (the forgetful).<sup>102</sup> Of course, this behavior was not exclusive of married migrants. There were also single men who lost contact with their families in Portugal. In a letter sent by a migrant from Santa Bárbara de Nexe in 1916, for instance, he wrote to his wife:

Tell the old godmother to be patient because I have not been able to give her any news from her son. I assure you it was the first person I asked after when I arrived. Some people told me he was in the countryside, others told me he was in Montevideo, still others said he was in Comodoro Rivadavia. So nobody knew for sure.<sup>103</sup>

In the case of married migrants, the consequences were even more far reaching and the *esquecidos* had their counterpart at home in the *viúvas dos vivos* or 'widows of the living,' who remained in Portugal waiting for the return of their husbands. The latter became a common social type in areas with high rates of male emigration throughout Portugal.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The translation of the word *esquecido* into English presents some difficulties. In Portuguese, the word could mean both 'forgetful' and 'forgotten.' In this case, since the notion of *esquecido* refers to the migrant who 'forgot' his homeland—especially the husband who 'forgot' his wife—I have translated it as 'forgetful.'

<sup>103</sup> José Fonseca to Maria Senhorina de Brito, Buenos Aires, May 1, 1916, Passport Dossiers, June 1916, Fundo Governo Civil, caixa 169, ADF.

<sup>104</sup> This pattern of temporary family separation through migration that in some cases became permanent had important social, cultural, and demographic consequences not only for the immigrant communities but also for the villages of origins. For other cases

The numerical significance of this pattern is difficult to assess, but the *esquecidos* made a lasting impression on the collective memory of the Algarvian migrant families. In the Algarve, Argentina earned itself the nickname of ‘*o país dos esquecidos*’ (the country of the forgetful). Stories about the *esquecidos* belong to the realm of oral tradition and gossip. I was first confronted with this concept when living in Faro, in 1992, and visiting a local chapel. When the custodian learned I was from Argentina, he immediately responded “Oh, the country of the *esquecidos*.” He then explained that his wife’s father had migrated to Argentina and nobody ever knew about his fate. After that episode, I found occasional but intriguing references to fathers who were “absent in unknown place abroad” in marriage records and other documents kept in the local parish archives. Additional references to the forgetful appeared later in the oral testimonies of migrants and their descendants in Argentina. “They called it the land of the *esquecidos* because many Portuguese came here and got lost,” explained one interviewee in Comodoro Rivadavia. “My grandmother was one of them. Her husband came here, and he stayed in Buenos Aires, in La Plata, and nobody knew anything about him anymore.... Poor little thing [my grandmother], always waiting and waiting.”<sup>105</sup>

Stories about the *esquecidos* served several purposes in the general narrative of Algarvian migration to Argentina. By condemning the behavior of migrants who disappeared in the grand mass of Argentine population and forgot their places of origin, they reinforced the significance of male labor migration as a family strategy with expectations and obligations. More than imply that this was a dominant conduct among labor migrants, these stories show a strong collective censure to a behavior that broke so blatantly with the general pattern accepted by the society of emigration. In rural Algarve and in other regions in Portugal, emigration to Argentina played an important role in household reproduction. The *esquecidos* disrupted that pattern. Equally important, since the *esquecidos* distanced themselves from their family and kin, they broke with their key role of potential assistance and sponsorship in the process of migration, of acting as links in the migratory chain. Sometimes their children, when they became old enough to migrate,

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in northwestern Portugal, see Brettell, *Men Who Migrate*, 95, 182–4, 193–8; and idem, “Emigration and Household Structure in a Portuguese Parish, 1850–1920,” *Journal of Family History* 13, 1 (1988): 33–57.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Rosa Viegas Valagão.

restarted the contacts. José Sousa recounts in his autobiography the profound impact his father's absence had on his family and on his life as an adult. Born in 1940, he grew up with his mother and grandparents in the countryside of Loulé without having any news about his absent father, who left for Argentina when José was only a year old. He had to tolerate the gossip of the neighbors and the suffering of his mother. When he was almost 16 years old, José joined an uncle in Venezuela, where he worked as a mechanic. José reflected: "I have a great desire to know my father and I think that in Venezuela I have more possibilities of seeing him one day." José's desires had to wait another fifteen years to come true, when he visited his father in Buenos Aires. The situation of his father was not that of successful migrant: "he spent everything he earned, plus what he received as inheritance from Portugal. His past was full with numerous adventures with women, but he was now living alone."<sup>106</sup> References to migrant men lost to local women are common in these stories. The sexual component further reinforcing the *esquecido*'s brake with his origins. As one migrant explained, an *esquecido* was "that man who went to work as a rural hand in those remote ranches, in those farms. Sometimes they became involved with some little Argentine woman out there, and that was it."<sup>107</sup>

The Portuguese press in Buenos Aires sometimes published requests for information on the whereabouts of migrants in Argentina sent by their relatives or by the Portuguese consulate. In 1944, the Buenos Aires Portuguese-language *Ecos de Portugal* published the story of a migrant who had lost all contact with his family in Portugal. In this case it was also the migrant's son, who had in turn migrated to Brazil, who was trying to reconnect with his absent father. After its publication in the newspaper, the son's quest was also covered by the radio show in Portuguese language, *Hora da Saudade* (The Nostalgia Hour), that appealed to its listeners for information. The story had the elements of the classic *esquecido* tale. Mateus Carlos had migrated from Boliqueime to Argentina around 1909. "He came seeking fortune," wrote *Ecos de Portugal*, "like hundreds, thousands of others who left the pleasant southern countryside. Then, months and years went by.... Then, the infinite silence." After fifteen years of sporadic contact with his family,

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<sup>106</sup> José Mendes de Sousa, *Venci o inferno* (Loulé: [Gráfica Comercial Arnaldo Matos Pereira], 1997), 17, 178.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with José Viegas.

the letters stopped and the speculations about his fate began. "According to some people, he is still alive; according to others, he is already dead. Still others say he was the owner of a garden on the road between Buenos Aires and La Plata." The story, however, ended tragically. After several months, another Portuguese migrant informed that Mateus had drowned four years earlier while working in the islands of the Paraná River Delta, north of Buenos Aires.<sup>108</sup>

The figure of the *esquecido* seemed to have emerged after the heyday of temporary labor migration which lasted until the 1930s. International and local conditions were not as propitious and many migrants found it difficult to attain their original goal of migrating temporarily to save money and return to Portugal. Sometimes migrants kept postponing the projected return for better days that never materialized. According to most stories, migrants could not succeed because of life's circumstances, changing economic conditions, or lack of discipline and spirit of progress. Restrictions to remittances in the late 1940s further complicated the scenario. As one immigrant in Comodoro Rivadavia suggested, some men never returned "because of pride; because those who went back brought money with them and they also wanted to return with money." He added, "They later called their families, but some not even that." A female migrant who settled with her husband and children in Villa Elisa in the 1950s commented, "We have several neighbors whose husbands were here, and they didn't know anything about them. . . . They earned little, they didn't earn enough to send to their families, and they began giving up and staying."<sup>109</sup> Thus, the stories about the *esquecidos* serve to relativize the notions of success and failure that traditionally have been associated with settlement and return, respectively. In these cases, settlement in the country of immigration meant failure and the impossibility to achieve migrants' original objectives.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Ecos de Portugal*, June 30, 1944 and Mar. 30, 1945. The Portuguese language program *Hora da saudade* started in May 1939 in Radio Porteña; in the 1940s, it aired three times a week. See *Ecos de Portugal*, Apr. 30, 1943. Charged with deep cultural connotations, *saudade* is a hard concept to translate into another language. Writers, linguists, and philosophers have discussed its meaning for Portuguese culture. Portuguese migrants used this concept to refer to a feeling for the home country that includes nostalgia, longing, yearning, and homesickness.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with José Viegas and Angélica Lopes; and Manuel Gomes Correia.

<sup>110</sup> Caroline Brettell presents a story of two men of the parish of Lanheses, in the Minho, who migrated to Brazil leaving their wives and never returned to Portugal. Their descendants made a similar assessment of the reasons for that behavior: "They were not able to make it rich in Brazil" and were "too ashamed to come back." In her

## CHAIN MIGRATION AND ETHNIC MIDDLEMEN

In addition to family and friends, Portuguese migrants also used other forms of assistance and mediation. National and local ethnic leaders emerged in Buenos Aires and among the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa, playing an important role as middlemen between their group and the local society. These leaders were usually merchants and, in some cases, travel agents who provided services and gained material and symbolic benefits in their transactions.<sup>111</sup> These ethnic entrepreneurs acted as brokers between their countrymen and the larger society as well as patrons. They constituted a group of middle class intermediaries that emerged at both sides of the journey and

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study of Hungarian migration to the United States, Julianna Puskás also states that among the immigrants who remained in the United States some did it “because they were ashamed to return home without money.” Brettell, *Men Who Migrate*, 195–96; Julianna Puskás, “Hungarian Overseas Migration: A Microanalysis,” in Vecoli and Sinke, *A Century of European Migrations*, 227. For an overview of the literature regarding return migration between Europe and the United States, see Ewa Morawska, “Return Migrations: Theoretical and Research Agenda,” in *Ibid.*, 277–92.

<sup>111</sup> For an overview of the issue of ethnic leadership in the United States, see John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), especially chapters 4 and 5. A comparative approach to ethnic mediation, labor, and politics in Donna Gabaccia and Fraser Ottanelli, eds., *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001). For Portuguese immigrants in other countries, see Marilyn Trueblood, “The Melting Pot and Ethnic Revitalization,” and Caroline Brettell, “Ethnicity and Entrepreneurs: Portuguese Immigrants in a Canadian City,” both in *Ethnic Encounters: Identities and Contexts*, ed. George Hicks and Philip Leis (North Scituate, Mass.: Duxbury Press, 1977), 153–67 and 169–80, respectively. Some works that discuss diverse aspects of ethnic leadership among European immigrants in Argentina are: Romolo Gandolfo, “Notas sobre la élite de una comunidad emigrada en cadena: El caso de los agnoneses,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 3, 8 (Apr. 1988): 137–55; Fernando Devoto and Alejandro Fernández, “Asociacionismo étnico, liderazgo y participación en dos grupos étnicos en áreas urbanas de la Argentina finisecular: Un enfoque comparado,” in *L'Italia nella società argentina: Contributi sull'emigrazione italiana in Argentina*, ed. Fernando Devoto and Gianfausto Rosoli (Rome: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1988), 190–208; María Bjerg, “Como faros en la tormenta: Los líderes étnicos de la comunidad danesa,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 21, 7 (Aug. 1992): 291–307; María Da Orden, “Liderazgo étnico, relaciones personales y participación política: Los españoles en Mar del Plata, 1883–1930,” in Bjerg and Otero, *Inmigración y redes sociales*, 133–67; idem, “Liderazgo étnico y redes sociales: Una aproximación a la participación política de los españoles en la Argentina,” in *La inmigración española en la Argentina*, ed. Alejandro Fernández and José Moya (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1999), 167–93; Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración*, especially pp. 145–59 and 345–52; and Alicia Bernasconi and Carina Frid, eds., *De Europa a las Américas: Dirigentes y liderazgos, 1880–1960* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2006).

whose social standing was largely linked to their successful careers in what Robert Harney calls the “commerce of migration.”<sup>112</sup> The activities of these ethnic middlemen did not lessen the centrality of migratory chains but contributed to their strength and adaptability.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Francisco de Sousa provided guidance, services, and labor connections to fellow migrants from Boliqueime and other Algarvian towns who arrived at his general store located in the southern section of La Plata. The pioneering role of Sousa as mediator and his services expanded when another migrant from Boliqueime, António Bento das Neves, married Sousa’s daughter and continued his business. Born in Boliqueime, Neves migrated to Argentina in 1923, when he was 17 years old.<sup>113</sup> By 1933, he was managing a general store with the patriotic name of ‘The 5th of October’ (so named in honor of the 1910 revolution that created the Portuguese Republic), which succeeded Sousa’s store. Later that decade, he opened a new store with the more inscrutable name of ‘El destino’ (The Fate), also in the southern part of the city, and expanded his services by delivering groceries and other goods to the growing number of Portuguese flower gardeners of Villa Elisa. In the following years Neves diversified his business, becoming a travel and migration agent. His ‘Agencia Luso Internacional’ offered a full range of services to the immigrant community: tickets, migration paperwork, and purchase of houses and land in Portugal. One of his brothers, who was a merchant in Boliqueime, acted as his representative in Portugal.<sup>114</sup> A local newspaper estimated

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<sup>112</sup> Robert Harney, “The Commerce of Migration,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 9, 1 (1977): 42–53, and idem, *Dalla frontiera alle Little Italies: Gli italiani in Canada, 1800–1945* (Rome: Bonacci Editore, 1984), especially pp. 73–91. See also, Brettell, “Ethnicity and Entrepreneurs”; Sturino, *Forging the Chain*; and John Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875–1988* (Toronto: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988). Intermediaries and ethnic middlemen also existed among other migrant groups in Argentina. Some examples include the local entrepreneurs and agents involved in migration from the Italian town of Agnone and the Batzán Valley, in Navarre, Spain, to Buenos Aires, and Danish migration to the pampas. See, Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise*, 49–51; Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 76–80; Bjerg, *Entre Sofie y Toleville*, 51–71 and 133–61.

<sup>113</sup> Rol dos confessados, 1912, APSSB; Livro de registo de passaportes, 1923, Fundo Governo Civil, ADF.

<sup>114</sup> Interviews with Diniz Viegas, José Viegas, Juan Martins Barriga, José Dias Pereira, Adelino Mendes Amaro; advertisements published in *Jornal Português*, Dec. 16, 1933; *Ecos de Portugal*, Sep. 5, 1939; *La Gaceta*, Dec. 10, 1965.

that by the mid-1960s more than one thousand Portuguese migrants had arrived “through his mediation.”<sup>115</sup>

António das Neves became the most visible leader of the Portuguese community of La Plata and Villa Elisa. He solidified his role as an ethnic entrepreneur with a prolific activity as a community organizer. Several Portuguese associations were formed under his auspices and depended on his support. In 1934, he organized and became the president of the Portuguese Mutual Aid Society of La Plata, which during two decades provided medical assistance and organized social activities for the area’s Portuguese residents and their families. In 1957, he organized the Portuguese Social and Cultural Committee of La Plata, later renamed the Casa de Portugal (Portuguese House), which concentrated the social activities of the Portuguese of La Plata, Villa Elisa, and environs during the 1960s and 1970s; Neves donated the building for the institution and supported it financially.<sup>116</sup> For the larger Portuguese community of Argentina this “meritorious man” became a veritable ethnic patriarch who provided for and guided his countrymen.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, Neves’ activities grew beyond the original ethnic limits and connected the Portuguese migrants with the broader local society. He became a benefactor of local institutions and was particularly interested in education. In the 1940s and 1950s, he donated images of Saint Anthony of Lisbon and Our Lady of Fátima—two central religious figures in Portuguese popular lore—to the parish church of Villa Elisa. In 1957, he funded the construction of a special classroom for Portuguese children attending Villa Elisa’s Saint Francis of Assisi School. In the 1950s and 1960s, he also acted as ‘protector’ of a public school in Bosques, another area with Portuguese gardeners north of Villa Elisa, appropriately named ‘Republic of Portugal.’ These occasions were marked by celebrations attended by local authorities and Portuguese representatives in Argentina in which Neves usually delivered the keynote address. He was also the keynote speaker in a 1949 ceremony dedicating one of Villa Elisa’s main streets after Luís de Camões, Portugal’s national poet, a public

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<sup>115</sup> *El Día*, Oct. 7, 1967.

<sup>116</sup> *Jornal Português*, Dec. 16, 1933; Mar. 16, 1934, 6; Mar. 5, 1935, 1, 3; Aug. 20, 1935, 2; July 3, 1937, 3. *Ecos de Portugal*, Oct. 12, 1934, 8, 10; Sept. 5, 1939; Oct. 5, 1940, 17; July 31, 1941, 8; Dec. 31, 1951; Nov. 15, 1957, 4. *El Día*, June 10, 1962; Oct. 7, 1967; interviews with Juan Martins Barriga and Diniz Viegas. In the 1980s, the Portuguese House was reorganized, renamed after the Virgin of Fátima, and its main center moved to a large recreational facility in Villa Elisa.

<sup>117</sup> *Ecos de Portugal*, Aug. 15, 1957.



recognition of the influence of the local Portuguese community.<sup>118</sup> In short, building on the early commercial success of his father-in-law, António das Neves consolidated his immigrant services and skillfully developed channels of mediation to become, as a local newspaper stated, the veritable “representative in La Plata of the brother country” of Portugal.<sup>119</sup>

Likewise, during the early days of Portuguese immigration in Comodoro Rivadavia, it was merchants and small entrepreneurs who emerged as ethnic mediators by providing assistance, guidance, services, and connections with the local community. Among them, José Guerreiro became the preeminent ethnic leader and entrepreneur. An Algarvian from Santa Bárbara de Nexe, Guerreiro arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia in 1910, following a brief stay in Buenos Aires. Around 1918, after working with Portuguese pioneer Sebastián Peral in his cart factory, in the state-owned petroleum company, and driving carts to the interior of the Chubut Territory, Guerreiro opened a bakery on Brown Street. During the heyday of labor migration, the bakery and other small stores owned by other countrymen in the same street became a gathering place for Portuguese newcomers. Similar to Francisco de Sousa’s general store in La Plata, Guerreiro’s bakery had several rooms that served as temporary housing for Portuguese migrants. Since strict regulations limited the possibilities of their countrymen working in the oil fields and living in the company towns for having guests and boarders, this arrangement provided an important service.<sup>120</sup> Other Portuguese merchants also offered accommodations to migrant laborers. Some migrants found temporary jobs with these merchants, mainly as cart drivers for bread delivery. Guerreiro’s contacts and acquaintances helped them to secure

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<sup>118</sup> *Ecos de Portugal*, Apr. 30, 1950, 5; June 30, 1950, 5; Aug. 15, 1957, 5; Sept. 9, 1949, 4. *El Día*, Oct. 7, 1967.

<sup>119</sup> *El Día*, Oct. 7, 1967.

<sup>120</sup> Of course, rules were there to be broken. There are many examples of oil workers who had family members and friends living with them in company housing. Oil companies enforced their regulations and penalized families who did not comply. Although possible, these arrangements were also precarious. These prohibitions were part of a broader set of rules and regulations used by oil companies to strengthen social control, including not only housing but also hygiene and leisure. See Torres, “Two Oil Company Towns,” 173–81.

jobs in the area as well.<sup>121</sup> This assistance and mediation complemented migrants' own family and personal connections.

Building on his entrepreneurial activities and web of connections, Guerreiro forged an undisputed leadership of the local Portuguese community for over five decades. Portuguese journalist Armando de Aguiar, who visited Comodoro Rivadavia in the 1940s, portrayed him as the foremost member of the "Portuguese colony."<sup>122</sup> In addition to his commercial activities, the main base of his ethnic leadership was the Portuguese Mutual Aid Association, created in 1923. Guerreiro was one of the founding members and its first president, position that he kept continuously for thirty years. In his role of president of the Portuguese association, Guerreiro was the visible link between his countrymen and the local society and authorities. For example, he was the representative of the Portuguese community in the town's official celebrations, national holidays, and receptions of important visitors from the national government.<sup>123</sup> He also became the representative of the local Portuguese community for the Portuguese authorities in Argentina. In 1943, when the Portuguese consulate in Buenos Aires requested the Portuguese association's board to suggest a candidate for the possible opening of a consulate in Comodoro Rivadavia, the members of the directive commission (whose president was Guerreiro himself) presented his name "unanimously and by acclamation."<sup>124</sup>

At the national level, immigration from Portugal in general, and from the Algarve in particular, had another key middleman in the person of José Dias, who founded the travel agency 'La Lusitana' in Buenos Aires, in 1915. An immigrant from São Brás de Alportel, Dias was instrumental in maintaining the chains of migration from the Algarve to Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa. Based on his activities as a migration agent, Dias developed a wide range of services for fellow Portuguese migrants, in both Argentina and Portugal, such as translations of legal documents, food imports, restaurant, lodging, real state

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<sup>121</sup> Interviews with Manuel Galván; Sebastián Correia (Comodoro Rivadavia, July 26, 1991); Herminia Guerreiro da Costa and Leonor Guerreiro da Costa; Silvina de Sousa; and Antonio Gonçalves and Teresa de Jesús Lázaro.

<sup>122</sup> Armando de Aguiar, *O mundo que os portugueses criaram*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Edição da Empresa Nacional de Publicidade, 1954; orig. 1945), 156.

<sup>123</sup> See, for example, *El Chubut*, May 17, 1927, 3; Libros de Actas, passim, AAPCR.

<sup>124</sup> Libros de Actas, May 19, 1943, AAPCR.

dealings, and mortgages of properties in Portugal.<sup>125</sup> The Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia used these services and relied on Dias' mediation for official business with the Portuguese authorities, as well as for advice in a variety of matters. He developed a close connection with the members of the local mutual aid society and with the leader of the community, José Guerreiro, who became Dias' personal friend.<sup>126</sup> Stories about Dias' help and services appear regularly in the testimonies and life histories of Algarvians migrants in Comodoro Rivadavia, but are less common among Portuguese migrants from other regions. This suggests that regional and local networks were important in building mechanisms of mediation. References to Dias are also less frequent among the Portuguese of Villa Elisa. In part this was related to geographical location. For Portuguese migrants heading to Comodoro Rivadavia, located far away from the port of arrival in the country (i.e., Buenos Aires), Dias' services were not limited to migration to Argentina but continued after their arrival. Family members usually arranged for their relatives in transit to Comodoro Rivadavia to stay at Dias' hotel in Mexico Street or were told to do so until they hear from them. It was common for Dias himself to accompany newly arrived migrants to the ship that took them to Patagonia. This personal assistance and care was depicted in photographs published in the Portuguese press of Buenos Aires, no doubt as a form of hidden publicity.<sup>127</sup> Located only a short train ride away from the port of arrival, the Portuguese of Villa Elisa did not need the same type of assistance.

As other ethnic entrepreneurs, Dias was active in community organizations and social life. A front-page article of the official bulletin of the Portuguese Club of Buenos Aires from 1957 that celebrated Dias' successful career, highlighted his vocation for service in ethnic organiza-

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<sup>125</sup> *Jornal Português*, July 20, 1936, 4.

<sup>126</sup> In the archive of the Portuguese Mutual Aid Association of Comodoro Rivadavia there is an extensive collection of letters exchanged between José Dias and his agent in Comodoro Rivadavia, José Santos Quintas, during the 1960s and 1970s. Quintas was also a member of the board of the Portuguese association. These letters referred to a varied range of activities: purchase of tickets, documentation in Portugal, information about purchase of land in Portugal, personal documents, etc. As president of the mutual aid association, Guerreiro relied on Dias's contacts and advice in the legalization process that took place in the 1930s. Quintas was also the owner of a commercial establishment on Brown Street, that served as a gathering place for Portuguese newcomers (see interview with Sebastián Correia).

<sup>127</sup> See, for example, *Jornal Português*, Mar. 4, 1934, 4; Apr. 1, 1934, 8; May 1, 1934, 5.

tions: “He always participated in Portuguese associations as shown by the various cards he exhibited: the Republican Center, the Portuguese Center, and the United Portuguese Center, today the Portuguese Club, among others.” As one of the founder’s of the Portuguese Club in 1918, he was also the first to receive a “merit membership” in the 1930s.<sup>128</sup> Dias’ ethnic leadership was also recognized by the Portuguese government. In 1934, the Portuguese Ministry of Interior bestowed him with the Red Cross of Dedication “for the moral and economic protection of the Portuguese Colony.” The most influential members of the Portuguese community and the diplomatic authorities accompanied and celebrated each step of his career. For example, the guest list for the opening of the restaurant ‘Lusitano,’ located next-door from the travel agency, in 1934, and the expansion of the agency’s offices, in 1938, read as a veritable ‘Who’s Who’ of the Portuguese in Argentina.<sup>129</sup>

José Dias became the leading ethnic entrepreneur for the city’s (and country’s) Portuguese migrants. He was not, however, the only entrepreneur servicing the Portuguese immigrant market in Buenos Aires. Other agents competed for the same market trying to take advantage of their location near the main port of arrival (such as Manuel Guerreiro Matias, Casa Barracosa, and Agencia Sagres). Competition often produced conflict. The Portuguese immigrant press served as an outlet for these agents who not only advertized with expensive full-page ads, but whose activities were regularly covered in the same press (trips, expansion of offices, etc.). The ethnic press also served as a medium to voice controversy or to denounce deceptive practices. For example, in 1934, two business rivals of José Dias denounced his claims of being the only authorized Portuguese agent in Argentina.<sup>130</sup>

In some cases, ethnic cooperation and assistance gave way to abuse. In 1936, for instance, the newspaper *Ecos de Portugal* revealed that “a well-known agent of tickets and passports” was under investigation for fraud with the selling of immigration permits. The agent charged migrants up to ten times their value and provided false work guarantees with the help of friends who owned industries or businesses. Another agent was charged with fraud twice, in 1941 and 1951, and

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<sup>128</sup> José Mendes Pereira and José Dias Rato, *Historia del Club Portugués de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: [Impresora Sur], 1969); Club Portugués, *Boletín Informativo Mensual*, Oct. 31, 1957.

<sup>129</sup> *Jornal Português*, Nov. 20, 1934, 1; Jan. 5, 1935, 2; Nov. 8, 1938, 1.

<sup>130</sup> *Ecos de Portugal*, Sept. 10, 1934, 8.

sentenced to six and ten years in prison, respectively, for failing to embark passengers with prepaid tickets in Europe. Other cases of fraud with tickets or unfulfilled payment of remittances were also reported in the Portuguese ethnic press.<sup>131</sup> The activities of agents and ethnic entrepreneurs developed within the broader sphere of migratory chains, representing what José Moya describes as “a more formal aspect of microsocial networks.”<sup>132</sup> Cases of abuse such as these were, therefore, the more devastating because they questioned the basic principles of trust on which these relationships were built. In many cases, the travel agent was not only a fellow countryman, but from the same region or village that the migrants who lost their remittance money or the money of tickets for relatives in Portugal. But tension and abuse were an integral part of the dynamic of migration chains. Situations like these were not only a potential negative element of the more formal connections between migrants and ethnic travel agents, but were also present within the more intimate realm of family networks. Glimpses of abusive situations within migratory chains appear in some life-stories and personal documents. In oral testimonies, for instance, these stories serve to highlight the narrator’s agency and decisiveness in difficult circumstances. They also function as reminders of the possible down sides of chain migration by illustrating that the security of sponsorship through primary social networks may come at a price. Common examples of these situations include migrants who believed were not appropriately compensated for their labor by their relatives, or who did not find the expected conditions after arrival. Another important aspect of chain migration these stories illustrate is its adaptiveness. Migrants’ oral narratives use these stories to stress agency, showing they were able to overcome a situation they perceived as abusive by moving laterally within the chain (relying on the assistance of other relatives or friends) or outside of it (making use of the new knowledge and connections acquired after arrival).<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> “Exploradores!,” *Ecos de Portugal*, Nov. 1, 1936, 4. For the second case, see “Um agente de passagens burlou a Colónia em milhares de pesos,” *Ecos de Portugal*, Aug. 30, 1941, 9; and “Um agente condenado a 10 anos de cadeia: fez 394 vítimas,” *Ecos de Portugal*, Sept. 30, 1951, 5. Other cases of abuse in: *Jornal Português*, Mar. 1, 1934; Apr. 1, 1934; May 1, 1934.

<sup>132</sup> Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 77.

<sup>133</sup> Observations based on oral interviews conducted among migrants in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa. See also José Sousa’s depictions of the working conditions at his uncle’s auto repair shop in Venezuela and the effects the experience had on his life

The role of ethnic middlemen like José Dias or António das Neves became more important as a consequence of the post-1930 restrictions to immigration in Argentina and similar restrictions to non family migration in Portugal. The requirements for the *cartas de chamada* (call letters) made the mediation of migration agents necessary. They also required a closer connection of agents and contacts in Argentina and Portugal. Thus, at the same time that these legal requirements reinforced the existing mechanisms of cooperation and assistance between kin and acquaintances, they also gave new importance to the role of agents. Agents also became instrumental in securing sponsors among their countrymen settled in Argentina in cases in which family contacts in the area of reception were not able or willing to offer would-be migrants support in writing (as required by both governments). Agents' mediation enlarged the original networks of assistance and information within the Portuguese communities. Through them, migrants were able to get call letters assuring them work in businesses and farms belonging to countrymen beyond their immediate network. As it became evident in several oral testimonies, often this was done only to meet the legal requirements for migration; once in Argentina, these migrants did not always work in the jobs stated in the call letters.

In the 1950s, another regulation gave new importance to the mediation of local agents, at least in Villa Elisa. By a 1952 decree, the Argentine government prohibited the concession of immigration permits to foreigners who intended to reside in the city of Buenos Aires or in an area of 100 kilometers around it.<sup>134</sup> Since Villa Elisa was located within the banned area, prospective migrants to this area were required to secure job offers from the interior of the province of Buenos Aires or from other provinces. As a result, travel agents's connections were crucial for obtaining appropriate job offers. These migrants never intended to venture in unknown territories. Instead, like previous migrants, they settled among their community of kin and friends, using their assistance to adapt successfully to the new circumstances, securing a place to live and to work.

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as a migrant, in his autobiography *Venci o inferno*. For conflicts within a family chain using immigrant letters, see Eduardo Ciafardo, "Cadenas migratorias e inmigración italiana: Reflexiones a partir de la correspondencia de dos inmigrantes italianos en Argentina, 1921-1938," *Studi Emigrazione* 28, 102 (June 1991): 233-56.

<sup>134</sup> This decree was abolished in 1956. Rissech, "Migración europea," 313-9.

## CONCLUSION

Social networks built on primary contacts at the local level sustained chains of migration that connected specific areas of rural Portugal with the Argentine towns of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa. One of the most salient characteristics of these migratory chains was their flexibility and adaptability, lasting for more than five decades of changing circumstances. These chains developed in several phases, from the pioneers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, to a flow of male labor migration, to a period characterized by family reunification. The mechanism of migration was similar in both cases, but the composition of the flows, the dominant type of migration, and the timing varied. The contrasting receiving environments of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa in combination with migrants' objectives produced different migratory experiences. Labor and family migration existed in both communities, but with different timing and overall relevance. Whereas Comodoro Rivadavia was an important center of temporary male labor migration, Villa Elisa emerged primarily as a place of more permanent family migration. The possibility of land ownership led migrants to reevaluate their initial strategy. In this case, the original objective of labor migrants changed from temporary migration to become a landowner at home, to a future as an independent producer and landowner in Argentina.

In addition to migratory chains, ethnic middlemen and entrepreneurs were also part of the process of migration and settlement. These ethnic mediators, however, did not emerge outside of the chains, but as part of them. The Portuguese leaders analyzed in this chapter were linked by family ties and social networks to the main towns of origin in the Algarve (Boliquireime, São Brás, and nearby towns). They became effective leaders and brokers in the context of the primary networks that formed their communities. The mechanism of chain migration was not weakened by their mediation but reinforced. Family- and village-based assistance and the auspices of ethnic middlemen and entrepreneurs complemented each other. Migration agents and local ethnic middlemen benefitted from their services with material gain and social prestige, and their roles allowed them to build positions of leadership among their countrymen. At the same time, they performed valuable activities as brokers and patrons that assisted migrants in dealing with larger impersonal structures, such as the Argentine and Portuguese

bureaucracies. Thus the migrants themselves also benefitted from their services, as well as with their help in meeting and circumventing the bureaucratic requirements to migrate, adapt successfully to the new environment, and deal with a diverse array of situations in the receiving country and in the homeland. It was a symbiotic relationship that benefitted both sides.

Portuguese migrants were able to take advantage of access to a web of informal or formal relationships to control many aspects of the migration process (through information, sponsorship, and the assistance and cooperation of relatives and friends in the places of settlement). Yet, they also had to contend with larger structural forces that constrained their choices and behavior, such as changes in politics, economics, and migration policies. In some cases, migrants had to adjust to new circumstances and change their original plans. In others, they used the larger web of informal and formal relationships to deal with changing situations creatively. Whereas changes in migration policies in Argentina in the 1930s served to reinforce the already-central role of family and village-based chains, the new regulations of the 1950s led some migrants to work closer with ethnic entrepreneurs to work around limitations for immigration permits. Other policy changes were harder to circumvent. When the Argentine government established restrictions to remittances abroad in the 1940s, many Portuguese migrants were confronted with the need to rethink their original migratory strategy. This change led to a resurgence of family migration and a strengthening of family chains. These restrictions also had larger implications for Portuguese migration to Argentina as a whole, marking the end of a long-lasting strategy of temporary labor migration.

During at least half of the long period of activity of these migratory chains, circular labor migration and settlement migration coexisted—the former, overwhelmingly male; the latter, including more women and families. What made for the transition from one type of migration pattern to the other? In other words, what prompted the transition from temporary labor migration to community formation? The possibility of the first type of migration alone to create immigrant communities was minimal. During the heyday of labor migration, Algarvian migrants worked in many places throughout Argentina but Algarvian immigrant communities only emerged in a few of those places. Similarly, since Argentina was part of a larger web of destinations in the Americas and Europe, migrants moved within a multipolar web of options. As the



cases of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa show, strong, long-lasting chains like the ones that developed from a specific set of Algarvian villages to both destinations in Argentina originated in labor opportunities but depended on other factors for their full development. The existence of well-position immigrant pioneers and other channels of ethnic mediation was crucial. Also decisive were the existence of dependable, trusted mechanisms of information and assistance. Finally, as it will become apparent in the following chapter, the success of the labor strategies of earlier migrants, the expansion of labor opportunities, and the existence of conditions for family settlement were also important. In Comodoro Rivadavia, stable jobs in the oil industry, the benefits of a labor career in the oil companies with possibilities for mobility across generations, and company policies that favored the settlement of families encouraged the transition. In some cases, changes in national policies also contributed to accelerating the decision (i.e., limitations to remittances). In Villa Elisa, the opportunities created by changes in rural production, the possibilities for family labor in intensive farming, and access to land had similar effects. Timing was also a significant factor. Portuguese migrants in general, and Algarvian migrants in particular, were present in both communities when crucial opportunities were opening and were able to take advantage of them.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MAKING A LIVING AND MAKING A LIFE: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADAPTATION

In her novel *O dia dos prodígios* (The Day of Wonders), Portuguese writer Lídia Jorge tells the story of the family of José Jorge Junior, whose sons had migrated from the fictional Algarvian village of Vilamaninhos to several destinations overseas. Approaching the end of his life, and wishing the return of his absent children, José tried to picture the new life they had built for themselves so far away from the village. The letters and the stories of returned migrants spoke of hard-to-fathom extensions of fertile land near Buenos Aires, where he imagined one of his children watering “a gigantic garden of flowers . . . where all the blooming plants within sight belonged entirely to him.”<sup>1</sup> Boliqueime-born Lídia Jorge, most certainly had numerous examples from her hometown to create a story that captures so well the lives of Algarvian migrants in Villa Elisa. The description contrasts with the immigrant experience that Portuguese journalist Armando de Aguiar witnessed when he visited Comodoro Rivadavia and its oil fields as part of a world tour in the 1940s. Aguiar described Comodoro Rivadavia as “the most cosmopolitan city of Argentina after Buenos Aires,” but its physical and social make-up reminded him of the towns of “the old American Far West,” with its “dusty streets and low houses” and a population made of “an heterogenous multitude” that grew every Sunday with the presence of the oil workers from the nearby company towns. For him, what lured migrants to this distant land was the promise of a new El Dorado “in the form of oil that had to be extracted from the deepness of the earth.” Like other migrant workers he encountered in Comodoro Rivadavia, the Portuguese “lived with the petroleum, for the petroleum, and only from the petroleum.”<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, the intensive farming economy of Villa Elisa and the petroleum economy of Comodoro Rivadavia offered Portuguese migrants

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<sup>1</sup> Lídia Jorge, *O dia dos prodígios*, 7th ed., Complete Works, vol. 1 (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1995), 85.

<sup>2</sup> Aguiar, *O mundo que os portugueses criaram*, 155–6.

two very different choices. The selection of destination was influenced by migrants' goals and by the availability of information and contacts. Migrants' skills and previous occupations were of limited importance in their economic adaptation. It was the characteristics of the places of immigration that shaped migrants' work experiences. The contrast between work in Portugal and in Argentina was greater among the Portuguese migrants in the Patagonian oil fields. Migrants to both destinations hailed from rural communities and their work experiences were limited to agriculture, except for the occasional temporary work in the mining centers of the Alentejo and Spain. Labor differences between home and destinations notwithstanding, Portuguese migrants adjusted successfully to local conditions in both places. Migrant networks were crucial in the integration of Portuguese migrants both in the familiar rural economy of Villa Elisa and in the more alien industrial world of Comodoro Rivadavia. The interaction between migrants' objectives and local conditions created distinctive communities with different labor opportunities for men and women and with unique paths for social mobility across generations.

#### MAKING A LIVING

Foreign and Argentine workers presented different labor profiles in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa. The economic trajectories of Portuguese migrants followed the general pattern of migrant workers in both communities, but their concentration in the leading economic activities was greater (see Table 5.1). In Comodoro Rivadavia, oil production offered employment opportunities for most migrant workers. According to marriage data, during the first three decades of the twentieth century, half of the foreigners in Comodoro Rivadavia worked in blue collar activities (mostly as day laborers, mechanics, and a variety of oil-related jobs). Among the Portuguese, these activities concentrated close to two-thirds of workers in average until 1960 (also, with a predominance of those related to the oil industry). Most Argentine young men worked in commercial and clerical activities (34 percent), followed by unskilled and rural work (18 percent and 11 percent respectively). In Villa Elisa, until the 1970s, close to a third of all foreigners were gardeners, and a little over a quarter worked in non specialized activities. The proportion of migrants working in intensive

gardening was particularly high in the 1950s, reaching over a half of all foreign grooms. In contrast, whereas a similar proportion of Argentines worked in unskilled activities, less than 7 percent became rural producers. Finally, as in Comodoro Rivadavia, the service sector employed considerably more Argentine men than migrant men, accounting for over half of the grooms. The vast majority of these men worked in commerce and clerical activities, but a growing number also worked in transportation (in all likelihood in connection with the gardening economy). For their part, seven out of ten Portuguese immigrants worked in agriculture, a proportion unmatched by any other group (and until 1960 that proportion was ten percent higher). Thus, the economic activities that defined each community were overwhelmingly in the hands of immigrant workers. This was particularly true in the foundational moments of both economies—the first three decades of the twentieth century for the oil fields of Comodoro Rivadavia and from the 1930s through the 1950s for Villa Elisa—which coincided with the peaks of Portuguese migration and settlement.

General employment categories, however, blur a more complex reality of diverse labor experiences, occupational trajectories, and avenues of internal mobility that can only be perceived when looking through the combined lenses of working conditions and possibilities, and migrants' objectives and strategies.

### *Black El Dorado: Working in Comodoro Rivadavia*

Oil production was the main activity of Portuguese migrants in Comodoro Rivadavia. The analysis of local marriage records reveals that unskilled workers formed the main occupational group until the 1930s, and skilled workers and artisans replaced them as the largest group from then on. Service occupations, such as drivers, and commercial activities also occupied an important number of Portuguese migrants who earned a living as merchants or employees. A few small farmers and gardeners settled in the surrounding areas of the town of Comodoro Rivadavia. Even though they constituted a small proportion of the Portuguese working population, gardening is frequently mentioned as a Portuguese activity in the early days. The fact that fresh produce did not abound in the arid terrain of the area helped to emphasize the importance of this activity and, as a result, the figure of the Portuguese gardener or vegetable merchant is very much alive in the memory of the residents

Table 5.1: Portuguese Grooms in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa by Occupation (Percentages)

Type of occupations	Comodoro Rivadavia				Total	Argentines	Foreigners
	1913–29	1930–39	1940–49	1950–60			
I. Unskilled workers	42.3	39.7	24.0	10.9	24.3	17.6	18.7
II. Skilled and artisans	3.8	23.5	43.0	57.7	41.0	22.0	31.7
III. Rural activities	7.7	4.4	1.3	3.6	3.5	10.6	15.6
IV. Others	19.2	32.3	31.6	32.7	31.1	50.2	37.5
Selected occupations (by type)							
Day laborers/ laborers (I)	38.5	39.7	24.0	10.9	24.0	17.6	17.6
Mechanics (II)	3.8	4.4	5.0	19.1	10.2	6.7	10.1
Oil-related activities (II)	11.5	4.4	12.6	11.8	10.2	7.2	8.5
Merchants (IV)	7.7	4.4	11.4	13.6	11.3	3.9	10.1
Clerical, commercial, or service employees (IV)	3.8	10.3	5.1	9.1	7.8	34.5	15.5
Number	(26)	(68)	(79)	(110)	(283)	(255)	(795)
Unknown/no occupation	(1)	(4)	—	(3)	(8)	(9)	(29)
Total number	(27)	(72)	(79)	(113)	(291)	(264)	(824)
Villa Elisa							
Type of occupations	1930–49	1950–59	1960–69	1970–80	Total	Argentines	Foreigners
I. Unskilled workers	5.9	4.6	2.8	17.1	6.7	22.7	25.9
II. Skilled and artisans	—	7.7	8.6	7.3	6.7	20.0	18.6
III. Rural activities	88.2	75.4	70.0	48.8	70.5	7.0	27.0
IV. Others	5.9	12.3	18.6	26.8	16.2	50.2	28.2
Selected occupations (by type)							
Day laborers/ laborers (I)	5.9	4.6	2.8	17.1	6.7	22.7	25.9
Gardeners (III)	88.2	75.4	70.0	48.8	70.5	6.2	26.6
Merchants (IV)	—	9.2	10.0	9.7	8.1	8.0	10.4

Table (cont.)

Type of occupations	Villa Elisa				Total	Argentines	Foreigners
	1930–49	1950–59	1960–69	1970–80			
Clerical, commercial, or service employees (IV)	—	1.5	2.8	14.6	4.3	28.1	9.6
Number	(34)	(65)	(70)	(41)	(210)	(725)	(259)
Unknown/no occupation	—	(1)	(2)	(1)	(4)	(16)	(4)
Total number	(34)	(66)	(72)	(42)	(214)	(741)	(263)

Sources: Marriage records. Data for Argentine and foreign grooms for Comodoro Rivadavia cover until 1933; for Villa Elisa, data cover all cases until 1945 and every five years after that. Data on oil-related activities provide only an approximate number, as occupations such as technicians or electricians were not included if other information was not available, even though they were most likely associated with petroleum production. The same was more likely true for other occupations such as mechanics and drivers.

of Comodoro Rivadavia.<sup>3</sup> There were, however, significant differences in the economic integration of Portuguese migrants according to their age. The previous characterization applies to the younger cohort of migrants who married in Comodoro Rivadavia. The analysis of the occupational distribution of the members of the Portuguese Mutual Aid Association, that included a more heterogenous cross-section of the local Portuguese community in terms of age, reveals a larger proportion of unskilled workers. Whereas the proportion of skilled and unskilled workers among Portuguese grooms was 41 percent and 24 percent respectively, the same type of occupations accounted for 36 percent and 41 percent of the Portuguese population as a whole (as represented in the mutual aid society's membership register).<sup>4</sup> The proportion of unskilled workers was also larger among Portuguese grooms in the earlier decades of the twentieth century. Many of those who married in the 1940s and 1950s arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia as children during the process of family

<sup>3</sup> There are many references to Portuguese vegetable gardeners in the oral history interviews collected in the area. See also "Los viejos quinteros," *Revista de la Asociación Portuguesa de Socorros Mutuos de Comodoro Rivadavia* 2, 2 (1999–2000): 20–1.

<sup>4</sup> This is an approximation to the age structure of both groups of Portuguese men based on the assumption that the population of grooms was younger than the men who joined the Mutual Aid Association. The average and modal age attest to this difference. In the case of the Portuguese grooms, the average age was 32.4 and the modal age was 23. For the Portuguese men who joined the Mutual Aid Association, the average age was 33.1 and the modal age was 35.



Illustration 3: Oil Well 2 drilling team, 1907, Courtesy of Ignacio Locco-Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College.

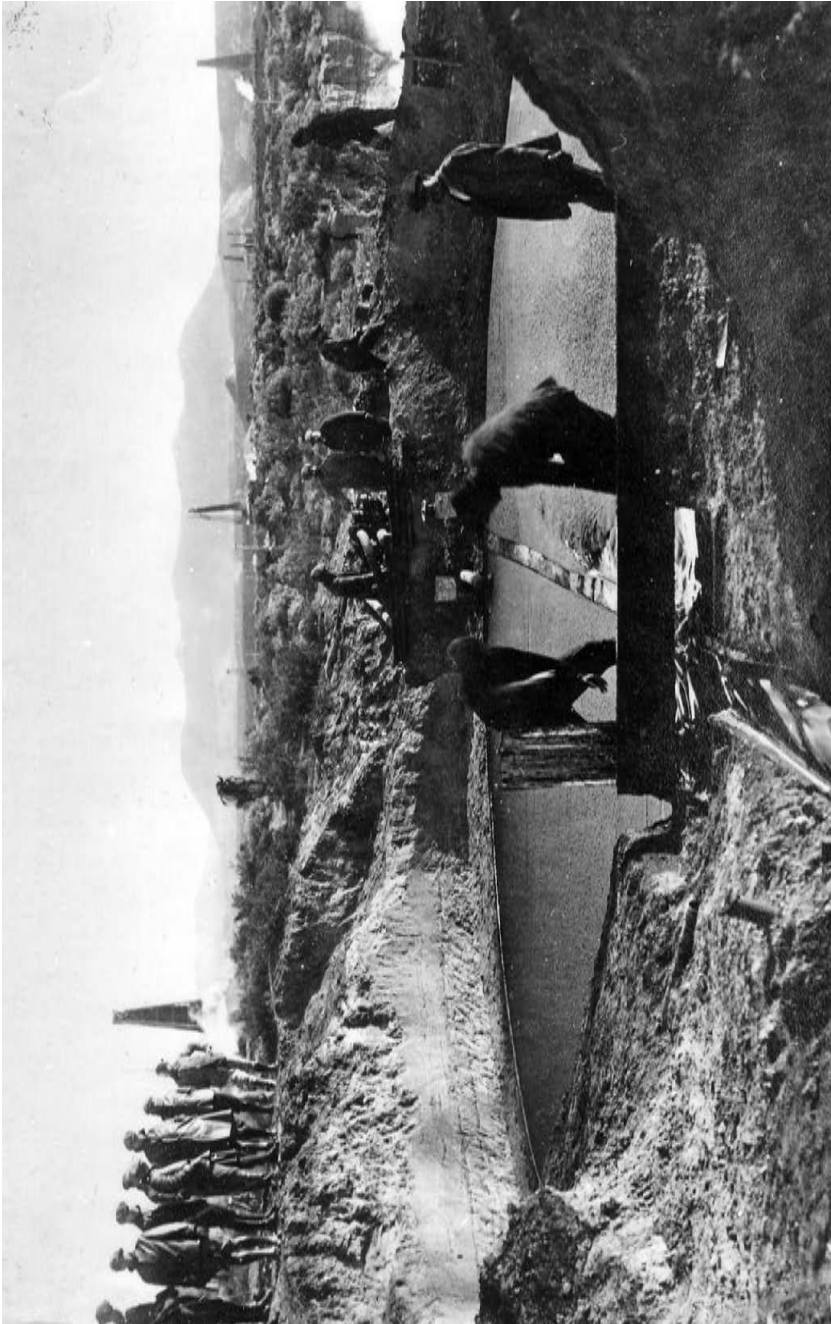


Illustration 4: Oil workers on Well 218, 1923. Courtesy of the Archivo Histórico Municipal de Comodoro Rivadavia-  
Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College.



reunification. These young men had access to education and technical apprenticeship and were better prepared to enter the industrial labor force, as it is reflected in an increase of skilled workers among grooms over the next decades.

Most Portuguese migrants who went to Comodoro Rivadavia during the early decades of the twentieth century envisioned the hard work in the oil fields as a means to accomplish their primary goal as labor migrants: to settle temporarily and find a job that would enable them to save money to elevate their position in the homeland, especially through the acquisition of land. The advantages of employment in the oil fields made this strategy possible. Located in a sparsely populated region and in need of a stable labor force, petroleum companies offered good comparative wages to attract workers.<sup>5</sup> Migrant workers earned higher wages in the oil fields of Comodoro Rivadavia than in the city of Buenos Aires—and probably than in most other areas of the country—especially during the 1920s. They could get a full-time job with the possibility of working extra-hours. Their sight clearly set on improving their lot in the home village, most Portuguese migrant workers led a spartan lifestyle in Patagonia. Frugality was considered a part of a labor strategy that measured the reward of a stint in the oil fields of Patagonia by the possibility of acquiring another plot of land at home. As a Portuguese migrant who grew up in Km 8's company town explained:

At that time, people came to Argentina to make money... And they did not want to spend [it] in clothes... They say that my father-in-law would buy one of those Sanforized suits and while it was new, he would wear it to go out, and when it was dirty, he would use it to work. Those were his suits.<sup>6</sup>

Despite a higher cost of foodstuffs, resulting from the area's isolation and its ecological conditions, oil workers had no need to spend in transportation and were provided with a series of benefits by the petroleum companies that allowed them to maximize income. Labor conditions improved over the years as a consequence of workers' demands and strikes, and with the implementation of welfare policies during the

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<sup>5</sup> This characterization of life and labor conditions of migrant workers in the petroleum company towns follows Torres, "Two Petroleum Company Towns."

<sup>6</sup> Interviews with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira.

1940s. Thus, the combination of advantageous opportunities, a sparing lifestyle, and hard work gave migrants workers the possibility of savings.

This strategy of temporary work with the objective of maximizing income and savings manifested itself clearly in the reaction of migrant oil workers to the Argentine government's attempt to pass a retirement law in 1924 based on the withholding of money from workers' wages. Migrant workers all over the country reacted with protests and strikes to the state's interference in their labor strategy. In the oil fields of Comodoro Rivadavia, workers' reaction was resolute. The conflict between migrant workers and the state was based on a total opposition of interests. As the administrator of the national petroleum company recognized, "Having come to the country for two or three years to collect money and go back to their homeland, [migrant workers] cannot accept the discount on their wages."<sup>7</sup> This was certainly the case for most Portuguese migrants working in the oil fields during the 1920s, who participated very actively in the 1924 strike. Portuguese workers accounted for approximately a quarter of the workers dismissed and a quarter of the workers expelled in YPF as a result of the strike—rates that far exceeded their proportion in the total population of oil workers.<sup>8</sup>

The combination of workers' objectives, strenuous working conditions, and labor conflicts resulted in a high rate of turnover. In her study of labor-capital relations in the oil company towns, Susana Torres describes the relationship between oil companies and migrant workers as one of "reciprocal dependency."<sup>9</sup> In the early twentieth century the companies were in a vulnerable position as it was difficult to maintain a regular, dependable labor force. Only later, the development of networks of information and assistance among migrant workers resulted in a steady arrival of potential laborers and created occasional surpluses. Labor turnover was particularly high among Portuguese workers, especially during the heyday of temporary migration in the 1920s and early 1930s. This high level of geographic mobility becomes clear when looking at the evolution of Portuguese workers in YPF—the company with the largest share of the local labor force. Almost 75 percent of

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 287. For an analysis of petroleum workers' reaction to the Pension Law of 1924, see *Ibid.*, 286–94.

<sup>8</sup> Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 290–3. Figures refer to 1924 as a whole. There were two strikes that year.

<sup>9</sup> Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 64.

the Portuguese workers who entered YPF from the late 1910s to the 1950s began working in the 1920s, followed by 11 percent in the 1930s; but the same two decades concentrated 60 percent and 20 percent of the departures of Portuguese workers, respectively. There was also an important level of short-term turnover, as it was common for oil workers to leave temporarily and then reenter the same company. In YPF, 38 percent of the Portuguese workers left the company temporarily at some point during their period of employment; over a third of them left and returned more than once. Temporary absences were both for involuntary and voluntary reasons. The causes stated in workers' files included a variety of disciplinary sanctions but equally common were references to voluntary absences, in some cases with permission for reentry.<sup>10</sup>

Migrant workers in the oil fields of Comodoro Rivadavia needed to adjust to a highly structured labor system and to a demanding work schedule based on round-the-clock activity and rotating work shifts. The organization of work changed over time as a result of technical innovations, and there were variations among the different oil companies, but overall similarities were more important. Oil had to be found, extracted, transported, and processed, and these steps determined the primary areas of production. Drilling and pulling were the main activities, along with related tasks such as tower assembly, pipe installation, and energy control (first with steam power and then with electricity). All these tasks were performed by crews that included technicians, bosses, and skilled and unskilled laborers. In addition to the harsh natural conditions of the Patagonian plateau and its inclement weather, workers were exposed to the risks of common work accidents like exploding pipes or fires, and to the perils of handling heavy and often unfamiliar machinery. Other sectors that involved a significant proportion of migrant workers were workshops, piers, pumps, distilleries, laboratories, transportation, and construction. The tasks performed in these sectors required more skilled workers, including founders, lathe operators, blacksmiths, carpenters, plumbers, riveters, assemblers, electricians, masons, and many others. Warehousing, housing, general administration, and auxiliary services completed the work structure of the oil companies. These last divisions,

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<sup>10</sup> Fichas de personal and Legajos de personal, AYPF. Calculations based on the analysis of 762 personnel cards and summaries of service of Portuguese workers from 1919 to the 1950s. Unless otherwise noted, data on YPF workers come from these sources.

however, required fewer workers (for instance, in 1919, they accounted for only 5 percent of YPF's work force).<sup>11</sup>

With limited training and no previous experience in the oil industry, most Portuguese migrants found work in areas that did not require specialized knowledge or with skills that could be acquired with practice in the field. Unskilled labor was also the activity that offered opportunities for temporary work. In YPF close to 90 percent of the incoming Portuguese workers were hired as unskilled laborers (most as general laborers and a few as entry-level laborers in a specialized task) and less than 10 percent performed a skilled job, such as mason, stoker, or pipe installer. Entry-level jobs, however, were not always dead-end positions. On the contrary, there was a high degree of internal mobility among oil workers that may escape the eye of the outside observer. Over two-thirds of all Portuguese workers in YPF changed occupations during their time of service, close to half of whom changed occupation three times or more. Mobility was sometimes horizontal, such as changes of category within similar occupations, and there were even instances of downward mobility as a result of reentry after a long period of inactivity or penalties for participation in strikes. But an important proportion of migrant workers were able to acquire skills and build an upward trajectory within the ranks of blue collar labor. A comparison between the occupation of Portuguese workers in YPF when they were hired and when they left the company highlights the significance of this path of internal occupational mobility: the proportion of unskilled laborers drops to two-thirds among outgoing Portuguese workers (although by then 86 percent worked in a specialized task) and the proportion of skilled laborers grows to over a quarter of the total. Equally significant, 6 percent of the Portuguese workers had reached the lower level of the overseeing ranks when they left the company—as shift bosses, foremen, or crew leaders. Few Portuguese workers, however, moved beyond the ranks of manual labor and into administrative positions (1 percent); language barriers and low levels of schooling limited the prospects of Portuguese migrants in this sector. Time was crucial for internal occupational mobility. Few temporary workers were able to take advantage of possibilities for upward occupational mobility. As more Portuguese workers decided to settle in Comodoro Rivadavia with

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<sup>11</sup> Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 94–105; Fortes, *Diadema Argentina*, 89–101; personnel records for Astra, Ferrocarrilera/Petroquímica, and YPF.

their families after the 1930s, these opportunities became a central part of a new strategy of economic integration that gave more importance to job security and career-building.

Experience and on-site training were important avenues for advancing workers' positions and some Portuguese migrants moved up in the occupational ladder as they became seasoned workers after years of service in the oil fields. This mobility increased earnings and it was important for peer recognition. Clearly, long-term workers had both more incentives and opportunities than temporary migrant workers to take advantage of the possibilities of skill-building and occupational mobility. The career path of Custódio Neto within the ranks of YPF illustrates the possibilities for internal mobility of long-term workers. Custódio arrived in Comodoro Rivadavia from São Brás de Alportel at the beginning of 1923, when he was 16 years old, to join his stepfather who had been working in YPF for ten years. In São Brás, Custódio had worked as a farmer in the family lands and had no previous experience with extractive industries such as oil production. A few months after his arrival, he joined the labor force of YPF as a unskilled laborer (*peón*) in exploratory drilling. In his thirty years of service, Custódio changed occupation six times (without taking into account lateral changes in category within each occupation): unskilled laborer, drilling machinist, shift boss, drilling boss, drilling overseer, and general overseer of the damaged equipment recovery section (a task known as 'fishing'). More common, however, were occupational trajectories that resulted in modest gains in positions that took advantage of skills learned in the field. For instance, Manuel Arroja began working in YPF in 1933 as an unskilled laborer and in the following seventeen years moved to different positions in the drilling and workshop sections as he learned new skills—as an exploratory drilling laborer, an assistant boiler, a semi-skilled welder, and a full welder. Joaquim Neves followed an even more varied course over twenty-six years of service. An unskilled worker when he joined YPF in 1923, Joaquim later worked as a production worker, a crane foreman, a machinist, a floating motor maintenance inspector, and a battery operator.

The trajectories of Portuguese migrants with long service in the Ferrocarrilera Company (later renamed Petroquímica), in Km 8, where there was a high concentration of workers from Portugal, further illustrate how a long permanency in the ranks of the oil companies increased opportunities for learning a trade and building an upward

occupational career. The analysis of a group of 167 Portuguese workers who joined the company between 1921 and 1961, and resigned or retired between 1949 and 1975, leaves no doubts: whereas 80 percent of them entered as unskilled laborers and 15 percent as entry-level skilled workers (apprentices or assistants), by the time they left the company only 6 percent remained in unskilled positions and 80 percent had become skilled workers. Additionally, over 17 percent of the outgoing Portuguese workers had reached overseeing positions, as foremen and bosses. Here too the limit was the blue-white collar divide. The proportion of white collar workers in administrative positions, however, remained stable (4 and 5 percent in both cases) and limited to those with the necessary year of schooling and language proficiency (as a rule, those who had migrated as children and had access to formal education in Argentina).

In addition to the influence of short- or long-term settlement strategies and the length of working careers in the oil companies, the adjustment of Portuguese migrants to the labor market of Comodoro Rivadavia varied greatly according to age and generation. The children of Portuguese migrants who arrived with their families at an early age or who were born in Argentina had access to an expanding public educational system and benefitted from training opportunities specifically designed by the oil companies to meet their labor needs. Access to general and specialized education resulted in upward inter-generational mobility among Portuguese migrant families—from unskilled to skilled labor and from manual to non-manual occupations. This trend is observable in the occupations declared by the Argentine-born children of Portuguese migrants at the time of marriage. Whereas close to a quarter of the Portuguese male migrants who married in Comodoro Rivadavia performed an unskilled activity, these occupations drop to only 2 percent among the Argentine men of Portuguese descent (and the decrease is even more dramatic when compared to the 40 percent of unskilled workers among the Portuguese population of Comodoro Rivadavia at large). Most men of the second generation worked in mechanical and technical activities (53 percent) followed by white collar occupations such as clerical and commercial employment (20 percent), transportation (10 percent), and commerce (10 percent). The first group was composed of mechanics, lathe-makers, electricians, carpenters, and oil workers with a variety of specialized jobs. The increase in the number of skilled laborers, technicians, and even a few university-trained

professionals, highlights the significance of education in this process of occupational mobility across generations.

Oil companies played a key role in the creation of opportunities for occupational mobility, as they sought to incorporate the children of migrant workers as skilled labor through two main channels: formal apprenticeship and technical education. This strategy assured oil companies access to its own pool of qualified laborers and served to solidify companies' role as providers thus reinforcing the loyalty and dependability among their workers. For migrant families, this represented an opportunity for earning additional income while securing a position for their sons in the oil industry. Apprenticeship was reserved for workers' sons. In YPF and Astra, apprentices began their training under the supervision of an experienced skilled laborer when they turned 14 and completed it in four years. José Tomé, the son of an Astra Portuguese worker who became an apprentice in the late 1930s, explained that it was common for workers' sons to start as apprentices. "Some worked with mechanics, others with blacksmiths, and the workers taught you how to do the work"—he said. They worked six hours a day and received a daily payment that went from 1.20 pesos the first year to 4.80 pesos the final year. Like the other apprentices, after completing his training José joined the company labor force as an auto mechanic, earning an initial salary of 6.40 pesos a day—considerably higher than the 5.44 pesos that an incoming unskilled worker received.<sup>12</sup> The Ferrocarrilera Company, in turn, organized the education of its own apprentices in what became known as the Factory School. Located in an annex to the main workshops, the school began in 1940 as an extension of the company town's primary school, and it was opened not only to young apprentices, but also to older workers interested in acquiring new technical expertise. In 1943, it was reorganized as a factory-school for workers' sons. In fact, Ferrocarrilera was among the first companies to promote formal on-site technical training for workers' children. A local yearbook described the school's mission as follows:

Enrollment in the school is reserved for the sons of the company workers who, at the same time they receive the benefits of instruction in a manual specialization, they earn a starting monthly salary of 40 pesos.... Each

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with José Tomé Gago (Rada Tilly, Jan. 9, 2001). More information on apprenticeship in YPF and Astra in Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 73–5; and Graciela Ciselli, *Pioneras astrenses: El trabajo femenino en el pueblo de una compañía patagónica, 1917–1962* (Buenos Aires: Dunken, 2004), 58–9.

student receives a working table, a tool box, and in many cases, he even gets his professional working clothes. In three years he graduates as a technician and joins the company's workshops.<sup>13</sup>

After 1946, with the advent of the Peronist government, initiatives like this were developed by other industries around the country, encouraged by educational policies aimed at incorporating the children of the working classes to the expanding industrial world through technical education.<sup>14</sup>

In the late 1930s, the Deán Funes School, run by the Salesian Order of Don Bosco, opened an arts and crafts section that provided another option for technical education for the sons of YPF workers. This initiative put Comodoro Rivadavia at the forefront in the development of technical secondary education. Similar schools later flourished throughout the country under the auspices of the Peronist government. The arts and crafts school of Comodoro Rivadavia was the result of an agreement between the Salesians and the YPF authorities, who funded the program, paying for instructors and students' stipends. It took five years for students to complete the courses. They could select from a variety of specialties, including forging, turnery, milling, radio and electricity, model carpentry, and auto mechanic—"the most adequate professions for local needs," as a commemorative publication put it.<sup>15</sup> Classes were later opened to young men from outside the YPF community thus making this channel of technical specialization and occupational mobility available to the sons of oil workers from other companies. Having a diploma from the technical school gave graduates a guaranteed position in the oil companies. Astra, for example, awarded fellowships to

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<sup>13</sup> *Guía Anuario El Rivadavia 1943*, n.p.; Eugenio Zacharko, *Historia de un inmigrante* (Buenos Aires: Dunken, 2004), 173–5, 182–3; interview with Alberto Muñoz Barra, Casimiro Flydlwecz, Luis Rodríguez, and Alberto Pugh (Km 8, Jan. 13, 2005). According to Alberto Muñoz, a former student of the Factory School, the training of specialized laborers capable of maintaining and manufacturing equipment parts, also enabled the company to withstand the restrictions on machinery imports during World War II.

<sup>14</sup> Pablo Pineau and Inés Dussel, "De cuando la clase obrera entró al paraíso: La educación técnica estatal en el primer peronismo," in *Discursos pedagógicos e imaginario social en el peronismo, 1945–1955*, vol. 6 of *Historia de la educación en la Argentina*, ed. Adriana Puiggrós and Sandra Carli (Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1995), 107–76.

<sup>15</sup> *Cincuentenario de Comodoro Rivadavia*, 99–100; *Medio siglo de petróleo argentino*, 180; Ana Infeld, "Una vía viva para los alumnos artesanos: La Escuela de Artes y Oficios del Colegio Salesiano Deán Funes de Comodoro Rivadavia (1938–1961)," unpublished. For general information on education in the oil company towns, see Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 191–9; Ciselli, *Pioneras astrenses*, 99–116.



the best graduates of its elementary school to enroll in courses at the Deán Funes. Joaquim Dias Guerreiro, the son of an Astra Portuguese worker who received the fellowship in 1947, described his experience as follows: “There were large workshops where students were trained as skilled workers—mechanics, lathe-makers, carpenters, blacksmiths, casters. After five years, I became a skilled auto mechanic... and Astra hired me.” “Graduates from the school were sought after by the companies,” explained another former student. “We did not have much practice, but we had a comprehensive technical knowledge... At that time, pretty much all specialized workers were from the school.”<sup>16</sup>

For Portuguese migrant families in the 1940s and 1950s, securing a position for their children in one of the local oil companies was an important step into long-term job security. This strategy transcended ethnic origins, and it was common to migrant families of diverse origins. As the Argentine son of a Bulgarian family who started working in YPF in the 1940s explained, working in an oil company like YPF “gave families tranquility, security, and economic and job stability. People would start working at whatever age, at 20 in my case, and when you turn 60 you could retire with a good pension.” This view was also common among the working families of the private oil companies which relied on recruitment practices that favored the access of workers’ sons to the labor force. “The company wanted the employees to progress,” explained a Portuguese migrant from Km 8, “especially the sons of the workers, the young people... If there was a family with a son who was of working age, the company would give him work... in the factory school or as office help (*cadete*).”<sup>17</sup> Arguably, images such as these, common in oral testimonies of people who came of age during the 1940s and 1950s, are in part the result of reminiscing about the ‘good old days’ of the company towns as big families and the companies as providers. (Additionally, these images are often used to further contrast the golden days of the company towns with the dismantling of services and the privatization of YPF that occurred at the end of the twentieth century.) But the practice of family recruitment was used extensively by oil companies and the sons of most migrant families initiated their working lives in the ranks of the oil companies.

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Joaquim Dias Guerreiro (Rada Tilly, Jan. 9, 2001); interview with José Tenorio Montes (Astra, Jan. 10, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Juan Ivanoff (Comodoro Rivadavia, Jan. 12, 2001); interview with Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (2001).

In fact, there was a coincidence of interests between migrant families and the oil companies that fostered the incorporation of young men in the oil industry. On the one hand, a transition from temporary to long-term or permanent settlement occurred after the 1930s as more Portuguese migrants brought their families to or formed families in Comodoro Rivadavia after several temporary stays in Argentina. Restrictions to remittances overseas established by the Argentine authorities in the 1940s further reinforced this trend. At the same time, oil companies began to rely almost exclusively on primary networks to recruit new workers thus creating opportunities for workers' children. In addition to granting them access to a secured job, relying on family networks increased workers' loyalty and contributed to forming an image of company towns as families with shared interests. Feeling a part of this larger community gave working families a sense of identity and belonging reinforced by company-sponsored social and leisure activities, and daily life in a common physical space. Locally, these developments coincided with a general decline in the level of confrontation and labor conflicts during the 1940s and 1950s. Security and access to occupational mobility came with increased social control that rewarded workers' performance and loyalty to the companies.<sup>18</sup> In both discourse and action, these developments in the oil companies of Comodoro Rivadavia coincided (and were reinforced by) the establishment of elements of a welfare state system at the national level by the government of Juan Domingo Perón.

The objectives of Portuguese migrants to Comodoro Rivadavia changed during the first four decades of the twentieth century. During the first two decades after the discovery of petroleum, thousands of migrants arrived in the oil fields attracted by the opportunities for high earnings and savings that would form the basis for building a better

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<sup>18</sup> Susana Torres, "Las relaciones laborales en YPF entre 1930 y 1955," unpublished; Márquez and Palma Godoy, *Comodoro Rivadavia*, 66–70, 75–7, 85–7, 100–6; Daniel Márquez, "Hacia la definición de un modelo de bienestar: Estado, trabajadores y políticas socio-laborales en los Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales de Comodoro Rivadavia, 1915–1930," in *Distinguir y comprender: Aportes para pensar la sociedad y la cultura en Patagonia*, ed. Daniel Márquez and Mario Palma Godoy (Comodoro Rivadavia: Proyección Patagónica, 1995), 127–66; Daniel Cabral Marques and Edda Crespo, "Entre el petróleo y el carbón: Empresas estatales, trabajadores e identidades sociolaborales en la Patagonia Austral, 1907–1976," in *Hecho en Patagonia: La historia en perspectiva regional*, ed. Susana Bandieri, Graciela Blanco and Gladys Varela (Neuquén: CEHIR, Universidad Nacional del Comahue, 2006), 301–47.

future for their families back in Portugal. As local and international circumstances changed after the 1930s, long-term or permanent settlement replaced the original objectives and Portuguese migrants sought to build secured positions in the local industry and more solid prospects for their children in Argentina. Stories of successful returnees in Portugal and the upward occupational trajectories of Portuguese migrants and their children in Comodoro Rivadavia attest to the fact that both strategies fulfilled some expectations for many migrants. The promise of a black El Dorado did not make them rich; instead, it took the more modest form of some savings with which to buy a plot of land in Portugal or the security of a stable job in the oil industry with the possibility of a better starting point for their children in Argentina. Yet there were also migrants who could not fulfill their expectations—be it a successful return to the homeland or a promising relocation in Argentina. These stories are harder to uncover, as failure is certainly not celebrated and it is seldom spoken about in migrant narratives. One such story recounts the fate of a man from São Brás who, having arrived at a young age, spent the money he earned carelessly for his own enjoyment, and eventually stopped sending any monetary assistance to his family. He never returned to Portugal and ended his days as a white-bearded, poorly dressed, shoe shinner in the streets of Comodoro Rivadavia. Commonly, these stories function as cautionary tales that reinforce the traits required for at least moderate success: hard work, self-sacrifice, thriftiness, and the necessary dose of good fortune.

### *Women and Work*

The petroleum economy in the company towns or the service economy in the town of Comodoro Rivadavia offered few possibilities for Portuguese migrant women outside the home. The structural limitations imposed by the dominant industry were reinforced by language constraints and by cultural values that encouraged female work that could be compatible with the maintenance of household responsibilities and child rearing. Preparing meals, cleaning, taking care of the children, and managing the daily life of the home while adjusting to the work schedule of their husbands who provided the family wage took up most of the time of married women. Among many oil families, wives had to adjust the household schedule to the industrial clock of rotating shifts, which were the norm among workers in the oil fields and

in processing plants where tasks could not stop. As the wife of a Portuguese oil worker explained, “My husband worked 40 years in YPF in the three shifts. He did a different shift each week—from 12 to 8 at night, then from 8 at night to 4 in the morning, and then from 4 in the morning till noon. Forty years.”<sup>19</sup> In other activities, the normal work schedule was from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 to 6 p.m. In both cases, the husband’s departure to and arrival from work along with the preparation of meals marked the rhythm of the household. Given the high demands of household work, it is not surprising that when asked to declare their occupation the overwhelming majority of Portuguese women stated ‘household chores’ (such was the case for 87 percent of the female members of the Portuguese Association and 77 percent of the Portuguese brides in Comodoro Rivadavia).<sup>20</sup> Yet this label covered a myriad of activities that in many cases also included paid work for people outside the household. Though largely invisible in traditional sources, home-based paid labor was in fact a widespread practice among immigrant families. Workers’ wages were not enough to cover all needs and married women devised ways of contributing to the family economy while remaining at home. This form of paid labor also enabled married women to adjust extra-domestic work to the family life cycle and its changing needs.

Portuguese women in the oil company towns found opportunities for paid work in the needs of the population of male workers without families living in single workers’ housing, namely by washing clothes and cooking meals. Money earned in these tasks amounted to an important part of the household income among oil workers’ families. This economic strategy was an adjustment to local structural factors which clearly limited the availability of wage labor or of traditional forms of paid homework that were common for women in larger urban centers with manufacturing and processing industries (i.e., Buenos Aires, Rosario, La Plata, or the coastal meatpacking districts of the province of Buenos Aires) as well as to the social mores of Portuguese immigrant families that discouraged other forms of wage work such as domestic labor.<sup>21</sup> Maria João Bordeira, who grew up in a Portuguese home in

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Maria de Mendonça.

<sup>20</sup> Libro de registro de socios, AAPCR; Libros de matrimonio, 1904–60, ARCCR.

<sup>21</sup> Carina Frid de Silberstein, “Immigrants and Female Work in Argentina: Questioning Gender Stereotypes and Constructing Images: The Case of the Italians, 1879–1900,”

Km 8 in the 1920s, explained the key role played by female work in workers' families in very clear terms:

[Migrant] women arrived here and worked side by side with men. They did not go outside the home to work, but they did all the household chores, they educated the children...single workers brought their clothes to be washed... So Argentina was not made only with the work of men. It was made with the effort of men and women. And even children started at a very early age.<sup>22</sup>

Laundering workers' clothes was the most common type of paid work performed by married women in the company towns. "My mother washed clothes for up to thirty men," recalled Maria João. "Life was hard and they needed to help...When I got married...in the 1940s, I also washed clothes. My son was born, and the [family] salary was not enough."<sup>23</sup> Alexandrina Viegas, another female migrant from Km 8, recalled helping her mother before she got married in the 1930s. They got up early in the morning and prepared two large vats where they washed workers' clothes. "All those people worked in petroleum, and we had to put the clothes in kerosene," she said.<sup>24</sup> She also remembered the prices paid for each garment washed and pressed: a shirt was 30 cents, towels were 10 cents, and sheets were 50 cents. Considering that at that time the starting daily wage of unskilled workers was 5.44 pesos, this monetary contribution could amount to a sizable part of the workers' family income. Washing for 20 men like Alexandrina's mother did, married women could conservatively add to the family income about

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in *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America*, ed. Samuel Baily and Eduardo Míguez (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 195–218; Mirta Lobato, *La vida en las fábricas: Trabajo, protesta y política en una comunidad obrera, Berisso, 1904–1970* (Buenos Aires: Entrepasados–Prometeo, 2001), 118–25, 144–6; Ciselli, *Pioneras astrenses*, passim. For a discussion of paid homework and immigrant women negotiation of household and wage work in other immigration contexts, see Eileen Boris and Cynthia Daniels, eds., *Homework: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Paid Labor at Home* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), chaps. 6–7; Gabaccia, *From the Other Side*, 55–8; Diane Vecchio, "Gender, Domestic Values, and Italian Working Women in Milwaukee: Immigrants Midwives and Businesswomen," in *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World*, ed. Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 160–85.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (2003).

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (2001).

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Alexandrina Viegas.

a third of their husbands' wages. As Alexandrina's testimony shows, it was common for children to assist their mothers. Unmarried daughters helped their mothers with the washing; sons collected and delivered clothes among the workers living in single workers' rooms—as it would have been considered inappropriate for women to venture into single workers' quarters to deliver the clothes themselves.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to washing clothes, the mother of Maria Francisca Viegas also cooked for fellow Portuguese workers in Km 8 when the children were growing up in the 1930s. "We were three siblings," she explained. "If my parents bought a pair of shoes for one of them, they could not buy it for the other one. That is how it was in those times."<sup>26</sup> Locally known as *dar pensión* (giving board), cooking meals for workers was the other main form of paid work among Portuguese married women in the company towns. Unlike classic boarding and lodging, *pensionistas* did not share the same house but only frequented it for meals. Boarding was forbidden in company housing, and workers' families needed permission to give even temporary lodging to a family member. Oil workers without families could eat their meals in one of the workers' cafeterias or become a boarder with the family of a fellow worker. Similarly to boarders and lodgers in other immigrant societies, *pensionistas* sought not only to fulfill a particularly need at an affordable cost, but also the valued reassurance of a familiar environment. Cultural and language affinities were as important as economic considerations. Families who offered *pensión* and their *pensionistas* were often from the same town or region. From the perspective of the host, this familiarity certainly diminished the level of potential threat posed by outsiders, especially in households with young females.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Interviews with Alexandrina Viegas; Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (2001 and 2003); Joaquim Dias Guerreiro and José Tomé Gago; Ciselli, *Pioneras astrenses*, 89–90.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (2001).

<sup>27</sup> John Modell and Tamara Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household: An Examination of Boarding and Lodging in American Families," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 35, 3 (Aug. 1973): 467–79; Mark Peel, "On the Margins: Lodgers and Boarders in Boston, 1860–1900," *Journal of American History* 72, 4 (Mar. 1986): 813–34; Peter Baskerville, "Familiar Strangers: Urban Families and Boarders, Canada, 1901," *Social Science History* 25, 3 (Fall 2001): 321–46. Among the Portuguese families of the company towns, from the 1920s through the 1950s, young women were protected from male outsiders and they were heavily chaperoned in social events and throughout courtship, as many stories in oral testimonies illustrate.

Laundering and cooking for people outside the household constituted forms of transient paid labor that ended once sons had completed their education or work training and could earn a wage, and daughters got married. In addition to the family cycle, these forms of home-based work were also linked to occupational mobility. Anecdotal evidence suggests that when wages increased as a result of upward occupational mobility, Portuguese married women in the oil towns did not occupied themselves in paid household work.

The limitations of the local labor market and dominant values among Portuguese families also left few work options outside the home for single women. "In those years the families that had many women had a problem because...there was no work for women," recalled Maria Francisca. Maria João concurred and added: "Yes, families were quick to marry them off."<sup>28</sup> In fact, both of them married very young in the late 1930s, when they were 17 and 14 respectively. Their cases were far from unique as the daughters of most Portuguese families married at a young age. Until 1940 the average age of marriage among second generation women of Portuguese descent was 16.9 and after 1940 it increased to 20.6; in contrast, the average ages for the other Argentine brides were 21.0 and 22.7, respectively. Overall, most daughters of Portuguese migrants got married at the age of 18 while most Portuguese women of the first generation did so at 19.<sup>29</sup>

The limitations to female work and the dependance on marriage to find means of support in the company towns became even more evident in the case of widows. As the story of Maria José illustrates, they were in a particularly vulnerable position. Maria José arrived in Argentina with her sister and step mother in 1925 to join her father, who was working in Ferrocarrilera and lived in Km 8. At 17, she hardly knew her father since he had been working in the oil fields since she was 3 and had only gone back briefly to São Brás once, in 1922, after Maria José's mother died, to remarry. In their new home, Maria José and her sister helped her step mother with the washing of workers' clothes. Seven months after her arrival, she got married to a fellow Portuguese migrant who also worked in the Ferrocarrilera Company. After eight years of marriage, Maria José became a widow and was

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (2003).

<sup>29</sup> *Libros de matrimonio, 1904–60*, ARCCR.

faced with limited options to support herself and a young child. Even the usual alternative of clothes washing was not a viable option for a young widow. As she explains:

There was nothing here for a woman to make an honest living; only to wash somebody else's clothes. Men going in and out of the house looking for their clothes. What does that bring? Gossip. They did not want me as a domestic worker because I had a child. So I had to remarry quickly because there was no other way.<sup>30</sup>

Even if it had been socially acceptable, the money earned would not have been sufficient as most female paid work was considered a complement to regular male wages. Furthermore, since the presence of families in the company towns depended on the status of husbands or fathers as workers, widows also faced the danger of losing their right to company housing. Recognizing this instability and lack of protection, oil companies regularly offered employment to workers' widows as building cleaners, bathroom attendants, or telephone operators.<sup>31</sup> When Antonio G., a YPF worker from Estoi, died in 1927, he left his wife Maria S. and seven small children between 1 and 16 years old under her care. After several months of mourning and uncertainty, Maria began working as a bathroom attendant, earning 3.50 pesos a day—about half the daily wage of her deceased husband and hardly enough to support her family. Her older daughter, the eldest of the children, got married at the beginning of the following year, when she was 17, and Maria herself remarried six months later to a Portuguese laborer who also worked in YPF. Maria resigned from her job as a bathroom attendant two days before the wedding. Marriage provided her with security and support for her children, and dissipated the ominous specter of losing her home.<sup>32</sup>

Sewing and dress-making provided another common way for Portuguese women of earning an income by combining a home-based task with full time household work. This activity was the single largest occupation declared by Portuguese female migrants after household work. Overall, 18 percent of the Portuguese women who got married in Comodoro Rivadavia declared themselves to be seamstresses (among

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<sup>30</sup> Interviews with Maria José Viegas (Km 8, Jan. 4 and Jan. 6, 1994).

<sup>31</sup> Ciselli, *Pioneras astrenses*; idem, "Familia, mujeres y trabajo en YPF, Comodoro Rivadavia, 1930–1955," unpublished; interview with Augusta Miehler de Segovia (Astra, Jan. 9, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Fichas de personal and Legajos de personal, AYPF; Libros de matrimonio, 1928, ARCCR.



the older female members of the Portuguese Mutual Aid Association, the proportion of seamstresses decreases to 7 percent). In many cases, Portuguese seamstresses also gave sewing lessons at their homes. Among Portuguese families, it was common to encourage unmarried daughters to take sewing lessons, as they could contribute to the family economy by making clothes for family members and by taking outside work.<sup>33</sup>

New possibilities for work outside the household appeared after the 1940s as the schooling opportunities for women grew and oil companies and local businesses began hiring female workers for administrative and retail positions.<sup>34</sup> It was younger women, particularly from the second generation, who were able to take advantage of this expansion of the local labor market for female workers. Tellingly, the proportion of women who declared household work as their occupation drops significantly with age. This is clear if one considers the older cohort represented by the members of the Portuguese Association (87 percent), the younger group of Portuguese brides (77 percent), or the Argentine daughters of Portuguese families (67 percent).<sup>35</sup> A comparison between Portuguese female immigrants and their daughters indicates that 1950 marked a turning point after which their labor paths took different directions. Until then, there were only minimal differences in the occupations of first- and second-generation brides: about 79 percent declared household work as their occupation and around 20 percent identified themselves as seamstresses. But after 1950, the centrality of housework as the main occupation among Argentine women of Portuguese descent declined from 79 to 57 percent, and the proportion of other work outside the house in non domestic occupations grew considerably—especially as clerical and retail workers (15 percent) and teachers (7 percent). These changes point to a clear trajectory of intergenerational occupational mobility among Portuguese women and their Argentine daughters.

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<sup>33</sup> Interviews with Alexandrina Viegas; Maria José Viegas; Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (2001 and 2003); Áurea de Abreu (Astra, Jan. 15, 2003); Ciselli, *Pioneras astrenses*, 62–4.

<sup>34</sup> Ciselli, *Pioneras astrenses*, 93–6, 106–8; idem, “Familia, mujeres y trabajo en YPF.”

<sup>35</sup> Libro de registro de socios, AAPCR; Libros de matrimonio, 1904–60, ARCCR. As in the case of men, my assumption that the Portuguese Association represented an older cohort than the marriage records is based on the age analysis of both groups. The average age for Portuguese women was 23.6, in the case of the brides, and 30.2 among the women who joined the Mutual Aid Association; the modal age was 19 and 30, respectively.

In general, the children of Portuguese migrants gained from the expansion of the educational and training system, and were able to take advantage of the opportunities generated by the changes in the oil industry and the urban growth of Comodoro Rivadavia in the 1950s. Since to a large extent the technical education of the younger generation was reserved to the children of oil workers, their families' position gave them an advantage in the local labor market that outsiders did not have. This may have been a modest occupational mobility and one that certainly had plenty of examples of no or little gain, but the overall picture is of a clear upward trend that resulted in a more secure position for the second generation in skilled occupations in the oil industry and related technical activities among men, and clerical and white collar work among women.

*Gigantic Gardens of Flowers: Working in Villa Elisa*

Intensive agriculture concentrated more migrants than any other single economic activity in Villa Elisa. In fact, the town became a prime gardening center as a result of the settlement of large numbers of migrant workers during the first half of the twentieth century. Among Portuguese migrants, this economic specialization was unparalleled both in proportion and number. The occupational profile that emerges from the marriage records data is clear. Until the late 1960s, 76 percent of all Portuguese grooms were small farmers, two-thirds of whom were flower gardeners. This concentration far surpassed the proportion of small farmers among both foreign grooms as a whole (27 percent) and Argentine grooms (7 percent). Even as late as in the 1970s, when access to land for flower and vegetable gardening became more difficult—as a result of the development of a more lucrative land market for urban use—and factories and the expanding urban service economy provided employment alternatives for young men entering the workforce, half the Portuguese grooms worked as small farmers (compared to a third of foreign men as a whole and 4 percent of Argentine men).<sup>36</sup>

The units of production of intensive agriculture were generally known as *quintas*, but the preferred term among flower gardeners was *jardín* (pl. *jardines* or gardens). In the early decades of flower gardening, most production took place in small plots of rented land. In the

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<sup>36</sup> Libros de matrimonios, 1934–50, ANSCT; Libros de matrimonio, 1939–80, ASLGVE; and Libros de matrimonios, Villa Elisa, Partido de La Plata, 1910–80, ARP-PBA.



Illustration 5: Preparing the field in the *quintas* of La Plata County. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata.



Illustration 6: Cutting chrysanthemums inside a Villa Elisa glasshouse. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata.

late 1930s, the average flower garden in the province of Buenos Aires (which concentrated 85 percent of the gardens in the country) was 0.3 hectares. Close to half of all producers were renters and 39 percent were property owners, with other forms of land tenure accounting for only 10 percent.<sup>37</sup> The consolidation of flower gardening over the following decades resulted in an overall increase of land under cultivation and of landownership among flower gardeners. By the late 1980s, most of the flower production in the county of La Plata took place in tracts of less than 5 hectares and the majority of producers were proprietors.<sup>38</sup> The growth in landownership was the consequence of the availability of land, the expansion of market opportunities from the 1940s to the 1960s, and the attraction of an ascending course of occupational mobility that developed among flower gardeners—from wage work to proprietorship. In Villa Elisa and surrounding flower gardening centers, Portuguese migrants were key actors in this socioeconomic transformation.

Flowers were cultivated both in open air fields and greenhouses (and to a lesser extent, under shade shelters). Locally known as *vidrieras* or glasshouses, greenhouses required more investment but the protection from the elements and the possibility of manipulating cultivation in a controlled environment, assured growers a higher yield as well as flowers of superior quality. Widespread use of greenhouses took time. By the late 1930s, open air cultivation accounted for 72 percent of the land devoted to commercial flower gardening in the country; by the 1990s, in the green belt around Buenos Aires, the situation had reversed completely and the same percentage corresponded to land cultivated under cover. The turning point occurred during the 1950s, when open air flower cultivation diminished approximately by half.<sup>39</sup> Since demand for cut

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<sup>37</sup> Argentina, Ministerio de Agricultura de la Nación, Dirección de Economía Rural y Estadística, *Primer Censo Nacional de Floricultura: Ley 23.343: años 1938–39* (Buenos Aires: Dirección de Propaganda y Publicaciones, 1940), 7–10.

<sup>38</sup> Nilda Tadeo et al., “Agricultura en espacios periurbanos: Aspectos de la floricultura en el Sureste de la Región Metropolitana de Buenos Aires,” in *Territorio y producción: Casos en la Región Metropolitana de Buenos Aires*, Serie Estudios e Investigaciones no. 10, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación (La Plata: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1991), 69–84; Carmen Mao et al., “Floricultura periurbana,” in *Contribuciones científicas—Congreso Nacional de Geografía 1998* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Argentina de Estudios Geográficos, 1998), 293–9; Daniela Nieto and Estela Palacios, “Estado de la situación de la actividad florícola en el Partido de La Plata,” *Anales de la Sociedad Chilena de Ciencias Geográficas* (2000): 269–77.

<sup>39</sup> *Primer Censo Nacional de Floricultura*, 5, 8; Susana Curto de Casas et al., *La floricultura en la Argentina: Algunos aspectos*, Serie Contribuciones no. 229, Segunda Época, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, Instituto de la Producción (La Plata: Universidad

flowers depended on fluctuating market preferences and taste, there were variations in the type of flowers cultivated over time. In the 1930s, roses and gladioli occupied most of the cultivated surface, followed by jonquils, chrysanthemums, dahlias, carnations, and others. In the following decades, the cultivation of chrysanthemums became dominant in Villa Elisa and other gardening communities in the southern zone of the suburban green belt. By the late twentieth century, carnations and chrysanthemums accounted for approximate two-thirds of the cultivated surface in the county of La Plata, followed by roses, freesias, and gypsophila (also known as baby's breath). More resistant to the weather than other ornamental flowers, gladioli constituted the most common type of cultivation in the dwindling open air fields.<sup>40</sup>

Portuguese migrants in Villa Elisa were certainly not alien to intensive agriculture.<sup>41</sup> Algarvian families had worked in the dry gardens of the *Barrocal* and the highlands, and had cultivated small irrigated plots for consumption and to sell in local markets for generations. And family farming was also the norm in the other regions of origin of Villa Elisa's Portuguese migrants. As one Portuguese gardener put it, "To work the land there or to work the land for flowers here is more or less the same and one can figure it out rapidly. Working the land is like being an electrician: here or there is the same."<sup>42</sup> Preparing the land for flower gardening and caring for flowers, however, required specific knowledge that was acquired with experience in the field. Migrants started working with family members or fellow countrymen and they learned the new work by doing it. Most flower gardeners were involved in all aspects of production—from land preparation, to cultivation, to marketing. Learning the new skills and becoming acquainted with the demands of the job through association with already established gardeners was

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Nacional de La Plata, 1977), 6; Daniela Nieto and Estela Palacios, "Transformaciones tecnológicas recientes en las unidades productivas florícolas del Partido de La Plata," *Anales de la Sociedad Chilena de Ciencias Geográficas* (1999): 390.

<sup>40</sup> *Primer Censo Nacional de Floricultura*, 16–7, 27–8; Tadeo et al., "Agricultura en espacios periurbanos," 74; Nieto and Palacios, "Estado de la situación," 272; interviews with José Viegas; and Manuel Alferes dos Ramos.

<sup>41</sup> Unless other sources are cited, the following discussion of the evolution of flower gardening in Villa Elisa and of the experience of Portuguese flower gardeners is based on interviews with the following informants: Francisco Mendes, José Viegas, Angélica Lopes, Diniz Viegas, Manuel Alferes dos Ramos, Amadeo Ferreira Monteiro, Adelino Mendes Amaro, Rufina Martins Rodrigues, Elvira Risso, Belarmino Pais Figueiredo, and Maria Isabel Rodrigues.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Manuel Alferes dos Ramos.

the first step in reaching the much-coveted position of independent gardener in the future.

Flower gardening was a demanding, year-long activity. Gardeners' lives were regulated by the exigencies of agriculture and therefore highly dependent on the vagaries of nature, but also on the changes in technology. In the early years, Portuguese gardeners did not have access to machinery and could count only on horse and manpower to prepare the land for cultivation. The grassland of the Argentine pampas differed greatly from the rocky lands of the Algarvian countryside or the hills of Viseu or Leiria. Still, before planting could begin, flower gardeners had to devote careful attention to land preparation. First, the soil was broken up with a horse plow, after which gardeners continued with fine cleaning and leveling of the field by hand using a hoe and a three-pronged weeding fork. After land clearing, the most demanding job was setting up greenhouses. Measuring approximately 6 by 40 meters, each greenhouse had to be assembled by hand. Glass panes were set on a wooden framework supported by wood poles. As the panes were vulnerable to inclement weather, particularly to strong winds and hail, gardeners used a wire mesh to protect both people and production.<sup>43</sup> A labor-intensive task, assembling was done more than once. Glass panes were removed every summer. In addition, complete greenhouses were moved often to improve cultivation. Experience had shown gardeners the benefits of regular moves to avoid overuse of the soil and what it was commonly perceived as a damaging, burning effect of the sun magnified by the glass on the soil.

The introduction of technical innovations in the 1960s, namely the use of tractors and the replacement of glass panes for polyethylene sheets eased land preparation and maintenance tasks considerably. As an old-timer explained:

Work changed a lot. Before, you had to plow the land with horses, then you had to comb it with hooks to weed out the grass, and you had to level it well, prepare it well. It was crazy work. And the glasshouses were set up and a year later you had to move everything—stick by stick, nail by nail—because planting was done somewhere else. It is not like today

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<sup>43</sup> As several reports in the local press illustrate, this protection was of limited value in cases of unusually strong storms accompanied by large hail. See, for example, "Fue algo devastador," *La Gaceta*, Nov. 5, 1968; "Floricultores de Villa Elisa: Pérdidas por más de 250 millones," *La Gaceta*, Mar. 8, 1972 and "Los cuatro minutos de la pedrea fatal," *El Día*, Dec. 17, 1988.

when the glasshouses are ten or fifteen years in the same place, and when you have a little tractor that leaves the land leveled and you can plant right away. You don't work even a tenth of what you used to.<sup>44</sup>

Other technological innovations came with the extension of power lines to the rural area of the county of La Plata in the 1960s. Before electricity was available, farmers used gas oil-powered motors for irrigation and plant treatments. In addition, the use of electric power and dark polyethylene sheets allowed for other technical innovations such as the possibility of altering the plants' exposure to light thus 'forcing' them to grow out of season.<sup>45</sup> The overall evolution of technology had a positive impact on gardening. However, the incorporation of technical innovations was limited and most Portuguese gardeners relied on time-tested techniques. Traditional approaches to gardening included the cultivation of vegetables alongside flowers (a familial strategy of diversification of production of extensive use in domestic agriculture, but considered less than optimal by technical observers). In addition, technological transitions required considerable capital investment and the consequent obsolescence of the equipment or infrastructure already in use, resulting in what gardeners referred to as 'dead capital.' Even as late as in the 1980s, field reports highlighted the prevalence of traditional ways and low technological investment among the flower gardeners in Villa Elisa and other gardening centers in La Plata County.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to cultivating the land, flower gardeners were also involved in the commercialization of their production. In the early years, it was the producers themselves who traveled daily to the city to sell their flowers, first in the streets and later in wholesale markets. The most important concentration market was initiated in the late 1930s by Japanese gardeners settled north of Buenos Aires. In the early 1940s, Portuguese flower gardeners joined this market along with gardeners of diverse origin (mostly Italians, Spaniards, and some Argentines). The central flower market moved in the early 1950s to its own building

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Manuel Alferes dos Ramos.

<sup>45</sup> Interviews; "Floricultores de Villa Elisa: Las flores que deben seguir cultivándose," *El Día*, Sept. 28, 1980.

<sup>46</sup> Technical innovation and modernization accelerated in the 1990s. See Curto de Casas et al., "La floricultura en la Argentina," 9; Tadeo et al., "Agricultura en espacios periurbanos," 74-5; Nieto and Palacios, "Transformaciones tecnológicas recientes," 391.



in the western section of the city.<sup>47</sup> Wicker basket in hand, gardeners traveled first by train and later, as production grew, by truck. During the 1930s, Portuguese gardeners organized a cooperative to control transportation costs by using their own trucks. Created in 1938, the Cooperative of Portuguese Flower Gardeners became the first formal organization among the Portuguese of Villa Elisa (originally an ethnic institution, it later welcomed members regardless of their national origin).<sup>48</sup> Since the wholesale market opened before daybreak, preparing the flowers for transportation and sale extended the gardeners' work-day considerably. Gardeners needed to cut the flowers during the day, wrapped them carefully in paper, and arranged them in baskets at the end of the day to have them ready for pick up after midnight. With time, a formal system of commercialization emerged and with it the specialized figure of the 'market seller.' The flower seller took the production of several gardeners to the market and represented them in the general sale for a commission (usually 10 percent). To be admitted in the wholesale market, a seller had to represent a minimum of two producers. Trust was a fundamental element in the relationship between sellers and gardeners. Market sellers originated among producers and were generally from the same national group and linked by kin and neighborhood ties.<sup>49</sup>

With the exception of market sellers, in the world of flower gardening there were no great distinctions in the type of labor performed. In the gardens, labor arrangements ranged from wage work to independent farming. Properties were small and most labor was in the hands of gar-

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<sup>47</sup> The central flower market stood in the same location in the western neighborhood of Almagro for over 50 years until it moved south to Avellaneda, in the province of Buenos Aires, in 2003. Located on the Buenos Aires–La Plata highway, it was accessible to both the main markets in the city of Buenos Aires and the leading producing area of La Plata County, which by then concentrated about 70 percent of production. After two years, it moved back to the city of Buenos Aires, this time to the southern neighborhood of Barracas. Enzo Mauri, "Reseña histórica e importancia económica de la floricultura," *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), Oct. 19, 1969, 9–10; Curto de Casas et al., "La floricultura en la Argentina," 9–12; Silvina Heguy, "Los últimos días del Mercado de Flores en la Capital," *Clarín* (Buenos Aires), Mar. 19, 2003; Constanza Durán, "El mercado de flores recuperó su público," *Clarín*, Jun. 21, 2005.

<sup>48</sup> Legajo de la Cooperativa de Floricultores de Villa Elisa (7891), ADPPJ.

<sup>49</sup> Curto de Casas et al., "La floricultura en la Argentina," 16–8; Sabarots, "La identidad étnica," 151–2; idem, "Categorías étnicas," 59–60. A mid-1960s newspaper article commented on the reticence of Villa Elisa Portuguese flower gardeners to delegate marketing of their production to outside sellers. Only when local sellers emerged was this transition possible. See "El mundo de las flores," *La Gaceta*, Dec. 8, 1967.

deners and their families. Wage workers were mostly hired for special tasks or for seasonal work. Only large producers with many greenhouses had permanent workers year-round. In addition, sharecropping emerged as a significant intermediate position between wage labor and independent gardening. Work varied little but of course socioeconomic status and income were very different at both ends of the gardening continuum. It was access to landownership (and the capital associated with it) that separated one end from the other.

Becoming independent producers in a garden of their own was the main objective of most Portuguese migrants in Villa Elisa. In fact, it was the pursuit of that goal that marked the shift from temporary labor migration to settlement and family reunification among early migrants. As in other social groups linked to rural production, horizontal mobility (changes in occupation) was minimal among Portuguese gardeners, but a distinctive form of vertical mobility developed that is aptly captured by the metaphor of the agricultural ladder. Originally used by rural historians and sociologists of England and the United States, this concept posits the existence in some agricultural systems—especially in family farming—of a hierarchical arrangement akin to “the rungs of a ladder with the agricultural laborer standing on the lowest rung, various stages and degrees of tenancy occupying intermediate rungs, and with the mortgage-free, owner-occupied farmer standing on the topmost rung.”<sup>50</sup> An important element in the ladder concept is that sharecropping and tenancy constitute steps toward full ownership. This was clearly the case for Portuguese flower gardeners among whom the prospect of reaching the top of the ladder served as the central guiding principle of the family economy.

The flower gardening ladder was not rigid and its structure changed over time. In the early years, the main rungs were wage worker, renter, and proprietor. Later, sharecropping became a crucial step. The 1938–39 flower gardening census made no explicit reference to sharecropping (it reported that 90 percent of flower gardeners in the province of Buenos Aires were renters and proprietors, without mentioning what

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<sup>50</sup> Jeremy Atack, “The Agricultural Ladder Revisited: A New Look at an Old Question with Some Data from 1860,” *Agricultural History* 63, 1 (Winter 1989): 1. See also T. Lynn Smith, *The Sociology of Rural Life* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1940), 510–4; Carl Wehrwein, “An Analysis of Agricultural Ladder Research,” *Land Economics* 34, 4 (Nov. 1958): 329–37.

the remaining forms of production were).<sup>51</sup> The trajectories of most Portuguese pioneers in Villa Elisa confirm that sharecropping was not originally a universal step in the flower gardening ladder. For instance, Amadeo Monteiro arrived in Villa Elisa in 1932. He worked as a wage laborer for Portuguese and Italian gardeners, both in vegetable and flower cultivation. After six years, he joined two other countrymen to tend several greenhouses as sharecroppers. Two years after that, and less than a year after Amadeo's wife arrived from Portugal, he joined forces with his longtime partner to rent 6 hectares of land thus beginning the transition into independent gardening. By contrast, the occupational course of his fellow countryman Manuel Ramos, who arrived in Villa Elisa in 1939, did not include sharecropping. He worked as a wage laborer during two years with two different Portuguese gardeners, after which he pooled resources with his brother to rent land and, after two more years, to buy land for their own garden.<sup>52</sup>

As more Portuguese migrants arrived, sharecropping became more prevalent. In Villa Elisa sharecropping developed as a prevalent strategy of socioeconomic mobility among flower gardeners in parallel with Portuguese immigration. Family labor was a perfect fit for sharecropping. Hence, as the arrival of families intensified in the 1950s, this form of land tenure and production became more important. When José Viegas and his family arrived in the 1950s, the itinerary had been clearly laid out by the experiences of previous migrants and there were plenty of possibilities for sharecropping among fellow countrymen. Soon after arrival, José received several sharecropping offers. Expressing his intent to bypass the customary labor sequence and rent land, he was mocked by his *paisanos*: "Gardening on your own!—they would tell me. Then you have no idea how that works. There are people who have been here for twenty years and have not been able to have a garden of their own and you want to do it right away!" After only a month as a wage laborer, pooling resources with a brother, an uncle, and a former neighbor from Portugal—all of whom had been working as sharecroppers—José and his partners rented land and divided it up in equal parts for gardening. As the cases of José's partners make clear, sharecropping was then the rule in the flower gardening ladder of Villa Elisa. In addition to work-

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<sup>51</sup> *Primer Censo Nacional de Floricultura*, 9–10. The province of Buenos Aires concentrated 85 percent of all flower gardening in the country.

<sup>52</sup> Interviews with Amadeo Ferreira Monteiro; and Manuel Alferes dos Ramos.

ing on his own on rented land, José too tended a few greenhouses in sharecropping.<sup>53</sup>

A common practice in many rural societies, sharecropping has assumed a wide variety of arrangements over time and space. The basic format comprises the provision of land and other forms of capital by a landowner, and the provision of labor by a tenant with a shared division of the product.<sup>54</sup> Known among flower gardeners as *mediería* or *medianería*, sharecropping was a contractual agreement through which the gardener contributed with capital in the form of terrain for cultivation and the sharecropper provided the labor, while expenditures and total output were divided in half. After the 1980s, other arrangements became also common—namely a smaller fixed share of the product by the tenant in exchange for not having to be responsible for expenses. Among flower gardeners, sharecropping was based not on land extension but on a variable number of *vidrieras* (greenhouses). Therefore, *mediería* did not depend on landownership and it was not unusual for renters to have sharecroppers in charge of *vidrieras* (or for landowners to do the same in rented land). Scholars have debated the reasons for the survival of this form of precapitalist land tenure and labor contract in commercial agriculture, emphasizing its role in securing labor and lowering the producer's monitoring costs, as well as in decreasing risks in uncertain market conditions. Among Portuguese flower gardeners, sharecropping was a way of expanding production without losing control over it. It was also a way of avoiding potential conflicts between capital and labor. As one flower gardener explained, sharecroppers "worked on their own as if they were owners." Another gardener further elaborated on this idea: "With a sharecropper, the *patrón* (boss or owner) had more security in the garden, more assurance in the work done, and could guarantee more interest on working more hours and with higher output."<sup>55</sup> The common national (and in most cases local) origin of owners and sharecroppers further contributed to cementing a bond of trust and mutual responsibility.

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<sup>53</sup> Interviews with José Viegas and Angélica Lopes.

<sup>54</sup> Phillipp Schofield and Benedita Câmara, "Introduction: Sharecropping in History," *Continuity and Change* 21, 2 (Aug. 2006): 209–11; Giovanni Federico, "The 'Real' Puzzle of Sharecropping: Why Is It Disappearing?" *Continuity and Change* 21, 2 (Aug. 2006): 261–85.

<sup>55</sup> Interviews with Francisco Mendes; and José Viegas and Angélica Lopes.

The benefits of an arrangement that emphasized the idea of engagement in a common enterprise and contributed to diminishing the risk of conflict became clear in times of labor volatility and mobilization. Anecdotal evidence points to an attempted organization of wage flower workers in the 1950s and to an escalation in labor disputes in the 1960s and 1970s as turning points in labor-capital relations. In effect, gardeners perceived the increase in laborers' demands as a threat. Before the transition from glass to polyethylene-covered greenhouses the demand of labor per greenhouse was large and wage work was used at that time in combination with sharecropping in order to meet the labor demand of an expansion in flower gardening. By then, most wage laborers were Argentine migrants from other provinces, thus compounding a growing sense of alienation between owner and laborer. As a Portuguese gardener put it, "the 'family' became agitated." He explained:

What happened is that politics began to interfere and people became uneasy. . . . It was a great complication for owners and for workers. With union laws and things like that, laborers would work for a short while and take the *patrón* to court claiming years of previous work, laws, and other things imposed on them by the unions. As a result, the gardeners, for security, limited themselves to giving land on sharecropping.<sup>56</sup>

For their part, Portuguese migrants saw sharecropping not as a permanent position but as a means to achieving a status of independent gardener in the future. For newly arrived immigrant families with no previous experience on flower cultivation and with little or no capital, it was a crucial time both for learning the necessary skills for this form of specialized agriculture and for accumulating savings to move into the next rung of the ladder. It was also a well-suited form of economic integration, as it benefited from the cooperation of the members of the family unit.

The flower gardening ladder relied on the growth of cultivation through the incorporation of new land for rent and, more importantly, for purchase. Portuguese gardeners took advantage of the expansion of

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<sup>56</sup> Interviews with José Viegas and Angélica Lopes. There are references to similar situations in other interviews. José's use of 'family' as a singular noun meaning 'people' is common in popular speech in southern Portugal. I opted for a literal translation closer to the original in the quotation because it accentuates the impact of conflict among a seemingly cohesive 'family' of flower gardeners and workers. For the use of this expression in the Algarve, see Eduardo Brazão Gonçalves, *Dicionário do falar algarvio*, 2nd ed. (Faro: Algarve em Foco Editora, 1996), 100.

intensive agriculture to other rural areas of La Plata County, particularly to localities to the south of Villa Elisa. Portuguese migrants obtained land in the same way than in Villa Elisa—buying plots that became available through the subdivision of large properties and ranches in installments. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were also several agricultural colonies created under official auspices and with the intervention of Japan's International Cooperation Agency.<sup>57</sup> Japanese migrants had been present in Villa Elisa and surrounding rural communities for several decades, but Japanese migration took off after the creation of these agricultural colonies. Japanese migrants also became flower gardeners. In the new agricultural settlements, Portuguese and Japanese became the largest groups. Unlike the Japanese, however, Portuguese migrants acquired land individually, not through official sponsorship. By the 1980s, land competition with urban use—a common problem of farming in the urban-rural fringe—and a general economic crisis put clear limits to the spatial expansion of flower gardening.<sup>58</sup> The prospects of the agricultural ladder, however, did not disappear, but attracted newcomers to the rural area of La Plata, namely Bolivian migrant workers. Following the example of previous migrants, Bolivian workers have developed a strategy of socioeconomic mobility based on the ladder principle, but applied to vegetable gardening instead of to flower gardening. Gradually, they began to replace vegetable gardeners of Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish origin throughout the gardening belt around Buenos Aires and La Plata.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Sabarots, "La identidad étnica"; idem, "Categorías étnicas"; Caferio and Cerono, "Una mirada a la inmigración japonesa en la Argentina."

<sup>58</sup> As new land was incorporated in the southwest of La Plata County and the pressures of urbanization increased in older areas, the core of flower gardening shifted. After the 1980s crisis, flower gardening revived and well-established gardeners began investing considerably in technology and overall modernization of productive practices—among them many descendants of Portuguese migrants. See Mao et al., "Floricultura periurbana"; Nieto and Palacios, "Transformaciones tecnológicas." For a discussion of the shifting nature of the rural-urban fringe, see Owen Furuseth and Mark Lapping, eds., *Contested Countryside: The Rural Urban Fringe in North America* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Andrés Barsky, "El periurbano productivo, un espacio en constante transformación: Introducción al estado del debate, con referencias al caso de Buenos Aires," *Scripta Nova* 9, 194, 36 (Aug. 2005), <http://www.ub.es/geocrit/sn/sn-194-36.htm>.

<sup>59</sup> Roberto Ringuélet et al., "Tiempo de medianero," in *Cuestiones agrarias regionales*, Serie Estudios e Investigaciones no. 6, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación (La Plata: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1991), 36–53; Roberto Benencia, "De peones a quinteros: Movilidad social de familias bolivianas en la periferia bonaerense," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 12, 35 (Apr. 1997), 63–102; idem, "Transformaciones en la horticultura periurbana bonaerense en los últimos cincuenta

Like any other system of socioccupational mobility, the agricultural ladder did not guarantee an upward-moving process, nor was it a one-way route. It is difficult to determine how many Portuguese migrants were not able to climb all the rungs in the ladder or whether many moved in a reverse direction. In the few references in which such cases are mentioned in the oral narratives of flower gardening families, not being able to move upward is sometimes presented not as a problem with the system but with the behavior of the individuals who could not make it. In effect, the capitalist logic of the ladder emphasizes individual drive and makes self-sacrifice and savings the keys to ascending from one rung to the next. Thus, references to lack of achievement serve to reinforce the validity of this collective strategy and to highlight individual accomplishments. Within that logic, lack of drive or frugality is to be blamed in cases of failure. By and large, however, this was a rather successful strategy of socioeconomic mobility as it is clearly illustrated by the predominance of Portuguese migrants and their families among Villa Elisa flower gardeners (and by how quickly Portuguese migrants came to dominate this activity). The occupational data from marriage records leave little doubt. By the late 1930s, 60 percent of all flower gardeners who married in Villa Elisa were Portuguese; and between 1950 and 1970, Portuguese migrants and their Argentine children represented over two-thirds of all flower gardeners.<sup>60</sup>

#### *A Family Affair: Generations and Gender*

The overall success of the first generation influenced the occupational choices of the second. As a result, intergenerational horizontal mobility was less pronounced among the Argentine children of Portuguese descent in Villa Elisa than among their counterparts in Comodoro Rivadavia. As it was true in other rural societies, flower gardening was an inherited occupation. Thus, all the Argentine flower gardeners of Portuguese descent who married in Villa Elisa belonged to flower gardening families. Conversely, there were no gardeners among the children of Portuguese migrants who were not gardeners. Flower

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años: El papel de la tecnología y la mano de obra” (paper presented at the XIII Congress of the Economic History Association, Buenos Aires, July 22–26, 2002).

<sup>60</sup> Libros de matrimonios, 1934–50, ANSCT; Libros de matrimonio, 1939–80, ASLGVE; and Libros de matrimonios, Villa Elisa, Partido de La Plata, 1910–80, ARP-PBA.



Illustration 7: Juan Ferreira and his sons fumigating a glasshouse with carnations, Villa Elisa, 1965.  
Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata.





Illustration 8: A flower gardener and his family cleaning broken glass after a hail storm, Villa Elisa, 1972. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata.

gardening remained the single most important activity among Portuguese-Argentines in Villa Elisa (45 percent of young men at the time of marriage). Of course, there were variations over time. Whereas before 1960 almost 60 percent of all Portuguese-Argentine children worked in flower gardening or other forms of intensive agriculture at the time of marriage, that proportion decreased to around 40 percent after that year. This proportion, however, was very high in the local context. During the same period, only 3 percent of the young Argentine men of non-Portuguese descent were involved in flower gardening and almost a third were occupied in industrial and technical activities. Despite the growth of industrial activities around Villa Elisa (in particular, in the suburban area of Buenos Aires, just north of Villa Elisa), only 10 percent of Portuguese-Argentine men worked as factory laborers, while 9 percent worked in a technical occupation such as mechanics. Most young Argentine men of Portuguese descent who did not go into flower gardening worked in the service economy, as commercial employees or small merchants. Commercial activities were sometimes connected to flower gardening as it was transportation (which occupied 10 percent of the Portuguese-Argentine men after 1970).

The established career of Portuguese flower gardeners gave their Argentine children a privileged access to this economic activity. Not only were they socialized in the context of family gardening and knowledgeable about its demands and possibilities, they could also start working on the family land without having to retrace each step of their fathers' occupational ladder. A comparison between the age of marriage among Portuguese migrants and their children is indicative of the second generation's advantages in accessing the gardening world of Villa Elisa in the upper rungs of the agricultural ladder. Most Portuguese gardeners only considered marriage (or family reunification for those who had left their families in Europe) when they had secured a more stable economic position in the middle rungs of the agricultural ladder. For the early generation, that meant having to wait at least until becoming sharecroppers or possibly renters which explains the high average age among Portuguese grooms in Villa Elisa (28.3 compared to 27.7 among other foreigners and 27.3 among Argentines). In contrast, Portuguese-Argentines gardeners married much earlier: 4.4 years earlier than their fathers and 3.7 years earlier than Argentine men of non-Portuguese origin. This is a clear indication, albeit an indirect one, of the advantages of the occupational inheritance among flower gardeners for whom intergenerational mobility meant the consolidation of their family's

position as independent producers. To be sure, not all the children of Portuguese gardeners followed on their fathers' footsteps. Even though a general profile of the career path of all Portuguese-Argentines is not possible with the available information, anecdotal evidence provides many examples of children who became flower sellers or small merchants, worked in transportation, or in a few cases became university-trained professionals. An old timer was quoted in a 1980 report published in a local paper expressing disappointment with the lack of willingness of the younger generation to continue with family gardening.<sup>61</sup> Personal choices notwithstanding, there were also structural restrictions to this strategy for all children as land was limited and acquisition of new land encountered insurmountable barriers in the growing urbanization that the county of La Plata underwent after the 1970s (especially along the La Plata-Buenos Aires corridor that runs through Villa Elisa).<sup>62</sup> What is clear, however, is that all Portuguese-Argentines who became flower gardeners were themselves the children of gardeners and that they became a part of a larger family enterprise.

Flower gardening was a family endeavor. For most Portuguese flower gardeners, the family was both the unit of reproduction and of production as well as the core of the working force. As it was common in family farming at large, the members of the domestic unit shared a common economic objective and contributed to it according to the possibilities and limits created by gender, age, and the life cycle.<sup>63</sup> For the outside world, women may have been invisible gardeners, but married women in particular worked alongside their husbands thus playing an active

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<sup>61</sup> "Floricultores de Villa Elisa: Las flores que deben seguir cultivándose," *El Día*, Sept. 28, 1980. Based on fieldwork done among Portuguese and Japanese gardeners in the late 1980s, Nidia Tadeo and her collaborators estimated that only 15 percent of the children were expected to continue with gardening. But, as explained above, that projection was also the product of a context of generalized crisis that was reverted in the following decade resulting in increased capitalization and modernization. See Tadeo et al., "Agricultura en espacios periurbanos," 81.

<sup>62</sup> María Alejandra González and María Gabriela Peirano, "El mercado de tierra urbana en el Gran La Plata," in *Territorio y producción: Casos en la Región Metropolitana de Buenos Aires*, 47–55; Barsky, "El periurbano productivo."

<sup>63</sup> Guido Galafassi, "Explotaciones familiares, división del trabajo y producción en el Delta del Paraná," *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 11, 1 (Jan.–July 2000), available at [www.tau.ac.il/eial/XI\\_1/galafassi.html](http://www.tau.ac.il/eial/XI_1/galafassi.html). Family labor was also predominant among the Portuguese vegetable gardeners who settled in the 1940s and 1950s in the western counties of the Greater Buenos Aires region. See Svetlitz de Nemirovsky and González, "Saudade," and idem, "Produtores agrícolas."

role in flower gardening.<sup>64</sup> Even though only 2 percent of the mothers of Portuguese-Argentine men and women who married in Villa Elisa declared to be gardeners (in contrast to 72 percent of the fathers), in the households where the husband was a gardener so was his wife. "Back then, it was always the family group that worked together," said the daughter of a flower gardening family. "Working together, my father and my mother would dig the land of a glasshouse in one morning by themselves. . . . They would end up exhausted. They put their backs into all they did."<sup>65</sup> Their case was far from unique. Examples of flower gardening as a joint effort by husband and wife abound among the Portuguese families of Villa Elisa. For instance, in addition to taking care of the home and raising the children, Angélica Lopes always worked with her husband in the greenhouses. "We all worked according to our possibilities," she said. Ten years after their arrival from Boliqueime, they were able to buy land for their own garden in a former cattle ranch west of Villa Elisa. Working during the weekends, Angélica also collaborated with her husband in the construction of their house before they moved to the new land. "He would build the walls and I would prepare the mortar and hand him the bricks, the bucket, everything," she explained. When their two sons were of working age, they also helped in the garden. "My children worked with us. We all worked together. It was one pot for all. With my children and us it was as if we were one person."<sup>66</sup>

For most immigrant women the combination of household chores, agriculture, and sometimes domestic work for pay was not new, as it was the norm among farming families in rural Portugal. Before migrating from the Algarve to Villa Elisa with her husband, Rufina Rodrigues had worked in the land and as a seamstress. "I have done everything," she said. "I have digged land. . . then I learned how to sew. And when I arrived here, I worked the land too."<sup>67</sup> At home in Portugal, most of the family production was for subsistence. They could sell some surplus of almonds, carob pods, and especially potatoes that they cultivated

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<sup>64</sup> For an overview of the scholarships on the hidden role of women in agriculture in general, and in family agriculture in particular, see Carolyn Sachs, *The Invisible Farmers: Women in Agricultural Production* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983); Sarah Rickson, "Outstanding in Their Field: Women in Agriculture," *Current Sociology* 45, 2 (1997): 91–133.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Maria Isabel Rodrigues.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with José Viegas and Angélica Lopes.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Rufina Martins Rodrigues.

in a rented plot of irrigated land. Rufina and her husband traveled on foot to the nearby market of Loulé or to the more distant market of Portimão, some 44 km away. Among gardening families in Villa Elisa, however, the market was a male territory. The commercialization of flowers was the only activity that was exclusively performed by men. It was common for sons to be involved in this facet of flower gardening, both in transportation and sale. Specific conditions of flower marketing contributed to making this an exclusive male practice. In addition to requiring regular contact with the outside world—not only outside the home but also out of town—transactions in the central flower market were conducted between midnight and the hours before dawn. Thus, structural limitations, prevailing social practices, and cultural values regarding gender roles, as well as the demands of daily household routines contributed to this gendered division of labor.

If following their fathers' occupation was an obvious path for the sons of flower gardeners, as in fact many did, a comparison between the occupation of Portuguese immigrant women and Portuguese-Argentine women at the time of marriage shows a higher level of horizontal mobility. The proportion of women who declared household work at the time of marriage decreased greatly according to generation: from 92 percent among the mothers of Portuguese-Argentine grooms and brides, to 84 percent among Portuguese immigrants, to 59 percent among the Argentine-born generation. The significance of household work was higher before 1960. After that, there was an increase in the proportion of seamstresses among Portuguese immigrant women (14 percent) and a significant growth first of seamstresses and later of commercial and clerical employees among their Argentine daughters (11 and 21 percent respectively). After 1960, the occupational distribution of Portuguese-Argentine women resembled that of Argentine women of non-Portuguese origin, except for a smaller proportion of seamstresses among the latter. Considered an extension of traditional domestic female chores, Portuguese women and their daughters could combine sewing with other household tasks to supplement the family income with paid work and to save on household expenses. This was also the case among their counterparts in Comodoro Rivadavia. Also, as in Comodoro Rivadavia, it was clerical and retail employment that provided an outlet for a growing number of women of the second generation—although in the case of Villa Elisa this transition took place two decades later. Still, the largest group of women of the second generation worked in a myriad of household chores most likely complemented

by gardening. Close to a third of second-generation women married a gardener and the overwhelming majority of these women declared themselves to be housewives (82 percent which represented a quarter more than the average). In almost all the cases, these young women came from gardening families. Thus, far from any traditional middle class ideal of a detached domestic world, it is most likely that these housewives, just like their mothers, were also commercial gardeners who worked alongside their husbands preparing the fields, tending the glasshouses, and arranging cut flowers for the market.<sup>68</sup>

### SOCIAL NETWORKS AND OCCUPATIONAL CHAINS

Most Portuguese migrants used the contacts of family and friends to access the local labor markets. Social networks were equally important to negotiate the recognizable world of family farming of Villa Elisa and the industrial organization of the company towns of Comodoro Rivadavia. In both cases, migratory chains transformed themselves into occupational chains and, in the case of Villa Elisa, they contributed to the formation of an ethnic economic niche.

Portuguese immigrants to Villa Elisa encountered a local economy characterized by family agriculture in small plots of land that resembled somewhat the agricultural economy they had left behind. The occupational path established by early migrants in intensive gardening was generally followed by their successors, using their example as well as their knowledge and contacts. Social networks and family cooperation proved crucial in each step of the agricultural ladder. Family and friends provided new immigrants with information, assistance with initial accommodation, and access to work. It was common for established kin and countrymen to arrange for jobs and places to live before migrants arrived, and often newcomers found themselves working in the gardens only a few days after their arrival. Since most migrants started as laborers or sharecroppers, they could find work in the gardens of family members and acquaintances. As early migrants moved up the flower gardening ladder and became independent producers, new jobs

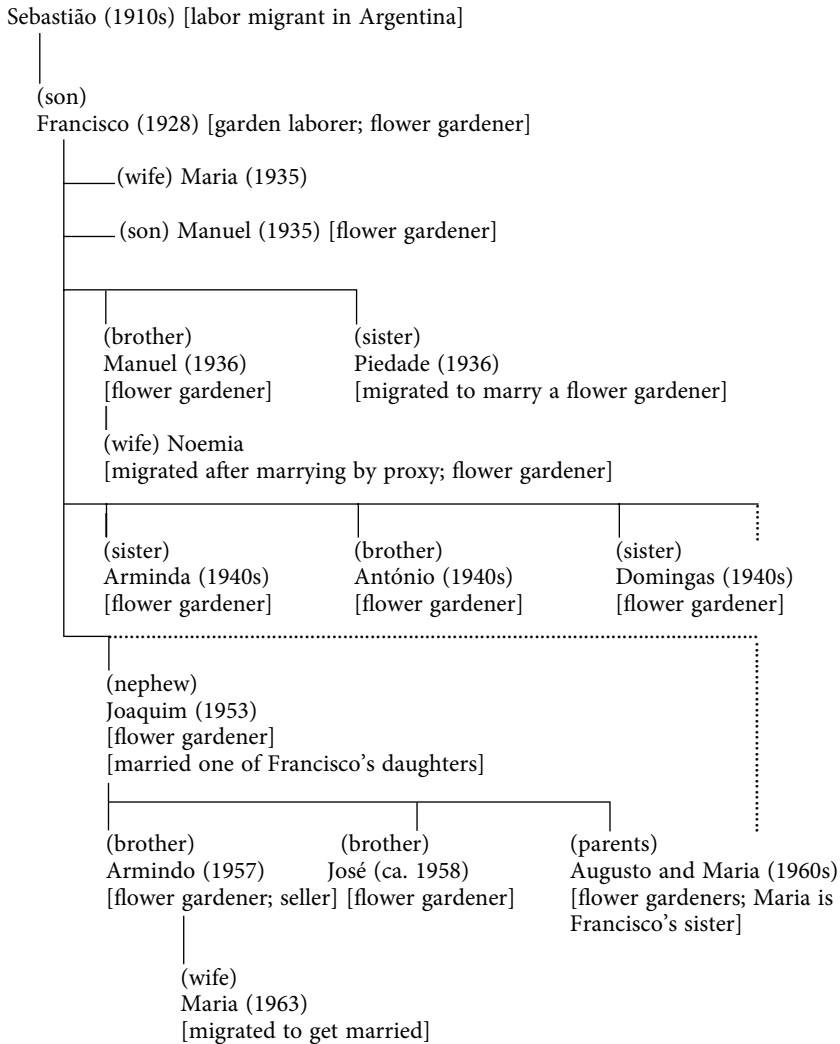
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<sup>68</sup> Eduardo Míguez, "Familias de clase media: La formación de un modelo," in *La Argentina plural: 1870-1930*, vol. 2 of *Historia de la vida privada en la Argentina*, ed. Fernando Devoto and Marta Madero (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 1999), 21-45.

opened for arriving migrants and their families. Later in their farming life, migrants commonly pooled resources with kin and paisanos to rent or buy plots of land.

The central role of kin networks in the process of migration and in the economic adaptation of Portuguese migrants in Villa Elisa is illustrated by the case of the family chain presented in Figure 5.1. In 1928, after several harvesting seasons in the Alentejo and southern Spain, Francisco decided to follow the example of his father a decade earlier and leave the Algarve for Argentina. Although he intended to migrate to Comodoro Rivadavia, he found work as a laborer in the vegetable gardens southeast of the city of Buenos Aires, from where he soon moved to the nascent flower gardening center of Villa Elisa. The area was not completely alien to Francisco, who had heard the stories of his father and other men from the county of Loulé who worked in and around La Plata in the 1910s. Wage work in the flower gardens of other migrants gave Francisco the possibility to save money and to gain valuable experience. He continued sending money home to support his wife and child, but after a few years he decided to stay and become an independent gardener. Eight years after his arrival, Francisco managed to save enough money to rent land for a garden of his own, at which point he was joined by his wife and child. Working together, Francisco and his wife were able to save money and four years later, when a horse ranch was divided into smaller tracts for gardening that were sold in ten-year mortgages, they became proprietors. Other early Portuguese gardeners also bought plots in that land auction, and many more did in similar divisions of large ranches in the 1940s and 1950s.

The itineraries of Francisco and of the relatives who migrated under his auspices to Argentina are representative of the occupational chains created by the Portuguese of Villa Elisa. They illustrate the durability of the links of chain migration as well as their central role in migrants' economic adaptation. Over a period of three decades after Francisco's arrival—and for a total span of five decades counting from the original temporary migration of Francisco's father—all the siblings were reunited in Villa Elisa. In 1936, Francisco helped a brother and a sister to migrate. The latter migrated to get married with a fellow flower gardener. His brother also chose a spouse from the homeland, who migrated after they were married by proxy. The rest of Francisco's siblings migrated during the 1940s, except for a married sister who remained in Portugal until the 1960s. In 1953, one of this sister's sons, Joaquim, also migrated to Villa Elisa with his uncle's sponsorship. Joaquim was later



Source: Interviews; marriage records. Names have been changed. Between parentheses, year of migration.

Figure 5.1: Family Chain from the County of Loulé to Villa Elisa, 1910s–1960s



followed by his brothers, one of his brother's fiancée, and their parents (Francisco's sister and brother-in-law). Benefiting from Francisco's knowledge, assistance, and contacts, all of his relatives journeyed along the same occupational course to become flower gardeners. As Armindo, a nephew who arrived in 1957, explained, the occupational path of the majority of the Portuguese migrants to the area was clearly influenced by the experience of the pioneers: "one arrive[d] and work[ed] as a sharecropper a couple of years; then one beg[a]n to work alone—renting or buying land and installing greenhouses—during two or three years, and then one [wa]s a proprietor." He summarized the impact of occupational chains as follows:

As they say in Portugal, '*cada ovelha busca sua parelha*' [birds of a feather flock together].... Those of us who have come to Argentina, we all came because somebody from the family, a relative, called us.... The same is true regarding the type of economic activity we pursued.... In Portugal, ever since I left school and until I came to Argentina, I worked in a general store. But I came here and... what did I start working in? In flower gardening, because that was what my uncles and my brother did. And the same happened with the other people that came from the Algarve.<sup>69</sup>

In the absence of direct recruitment or any other form of artificial sponsorship, chance developments were crucial in the early stages of chain migration. Thus, Francisco migrated to Argentina following the strong link provided by a cousin who was working in the oil fields of Comodoro Rivadavia. Once in Argentina, however, that connection fell through, and Francisco found work in the gardens around Villa Elisa, in an area where his father had worked temporarily a decade earlier without establishing a strong connection and where other Portuguese migrants were also settling at that time. In this way, a serendipitous development transformed itself into a system of migration and chain employment.

Students of social networks have debated about the role of strong and weak link in access to employment. At one end of the debate, scholars stress the role of weak ties, while at the other the emphasis lies on the steady flows of information and sponsorship provided by strong kin

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<sup>69</sup> The literal or formal equivalent of the Portuguese phrase '*cada ovelha busca sua parelha*' is 'each ewe looks for its mate.' The dynamic equivalent would be 'birds of a feather flock together.' The reconstruction of this family chain is based on interviews, passport requests, and marriage records. Names have been changed.

ties.<sup>70</sup> Family connections were crucial among Portuguese migrants in Villa Elisa as it was through their links that information about economic opportunities circulated and forms of assistance developed. Yet the strong connections of direct family members were not exclusive and migrants also benefited from lateral links that connected them to more distant relatives, friends, and neighbors from Portugal, and new acquaintances from the larger immigrant community. Portuguese migrants relied on these connections to navigate the flower gardening ladder. The move from Portugal to Argentina was commonly facilitated by direct kin, but it was not uncommon for migrants to rely on contacts from their extended social network to find a job or move from one rung of the ladder to the next. For instance, information about possibilities for sharecropping flowed along those extended channels as did news about land auctions or changing market opportunities. Transitions from one occupational rung to the next were sometimes facilitated by these extended contacts too. The story of José Viegas, whose example appears earlier, is a case in point. José received his brother's help to migrate to Villa Elisa and to find initial employment, but he also joined forces with his wife's uncle and a former neighbor to transition to independent gardenening, and he benefited from the financial help of another friend for the initial investment in glass panes for the greenhouses. Informal arrangements of economic assistance like lending money, equipment, or flower bulbs to set up new greenhouses were common among Portuguese gardeners. They were exchanges based on the principle of reciprocity, another important bonding element in the consolidation of occupational chains. As José explained, the *paisano* who lent him the money for glass did so based on mutual trust:

[He said:] I don't charge you any interest, nor do I want a receipt. I know you well and you know me well too. I make this favor for you and tomorrow you will make another one for me. We are friends. End of story.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> For a discussion of the first position, see Mark Granovetter, *Getting a Job: A Study of Contacts and Careers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974); Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited," *Sociological Theory* 1 (1983): 201–33. For a critique of the previous position and several case studies that focus on migrant workers, see Margaret Grieco, *Keeping It In the Family: Social Networks and Employment Chance* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1987).

<sup>71</sup> Interview with José Viegas and Angélica Lopes.

Thus, from gardening to commercialization and transportation, immigrants benefited from contacts that run along both kin and social ties. In the case of transportation, this extended network became formalized with the creation of the Portuguese cooperative in the 1930s.

Access to a trusted network through well-established occupational chains became an important resource for Portuguese flower gardeners that contributed to their predominance in flower gardening. In effect, family and ethnic occupational chains constitute a form of what scholars of contemporary migrations have termed ‘ethnic resources.’ Originally used to refer to the comparative advantages among certain migrants groups that would explain a higher rate of immigrant entrepreneurship in urban settings, the concept sheds light on the economic adaptation of Portuguese migrants in the world of intensive farming of Villa Elisa. According to Ivan Light and Edna Bonacich, these advantageous “social features” include “values, knowledge, skills, information, attitudes, leadership, solidarity, an orientation to sojourning, and institutions.”<sup>72</sup> In combination with “class resources”—including cultural components such as skills transmitted intergenerationally as well as material components such as private property—ethnic resources facilitated an economic strategy based on economic specialization. In urban North America and Europe, most immigrant specialization occurred in commerce and other forms of small entrepreneurship. Similarly, flower gardening was a form of economic specialization that benefited from the combined effect of ethnic and class resources. Among Portuguese flower gardeners, the circulation of information about farming, the economic and labor assistance of family and friends, and the transmission of knowledge, skills, and capital across generations constituted different aspects of ethnic facilitation that aided Portuguese migrants in building and becoming the leading group of an economic niche based on flower gardening.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ivan Light and Edna Bonacich, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles, 1965–1982* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 18–9. See also Edna Bonacich and John Modell, *The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity: Small Business in the Japanese American Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Ivan Light, “Immigrant and Ethnic Enterprise in North America,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7, 2 (Apr. 1984): 195–216; Curt Stiles and Craig Galbraith, eds., *Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Structure and Process* (Amsterdam: Elsevier JAI, 2004).

<sup>73</sup> As I have discussed above, their predominance was not absolute and other immigrant groups shared that economic niche with them, especially the Japanese. A great proportion of the latter, however, settled in nearby agricultural colonies created through official sponsorship. The predominance of Portuguese flower gardeners in Villa Elisa

The socioeconomic characteristics of Comodoro Rivadavia differed greatly from those of Villa Elisa, thus presenting an interesting case of analysis of the resilience of kin and social ties in an industrial and mining environment. The personnel departments of the oil companies hired workers through a seemingly impersonal process that relied on labor demand and qualifications. By their very nature, these mechanisms were not conducive to nurturing occupational chains based on kin and social ties. In addition, the hierarchical organization of the petroleum company towns, where most Portuguese migrants worked and lived, affected not only immigrants' working conditions but also housing arrangements, possibilities of socialization, and their families' daily lives. However, traditional assumptions about the weakening of kin relationships with the rise of industrial life have been challenged by scholars both in historical and contemporary cases. Focusing primarily on North America and northern Europe, these studies have shown that primary social ties proved resilient in the transition to industrialization and urbanization.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, as the case of the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia shows, social networks not only were able to adapt to that transition, but they were instrumental in assisting migrants to access labor markets even in an industrial world as unfamiliar and distant—in geographic, cultural, and occupational terms—as the oil fields of Patagonia. The social ties that brought them

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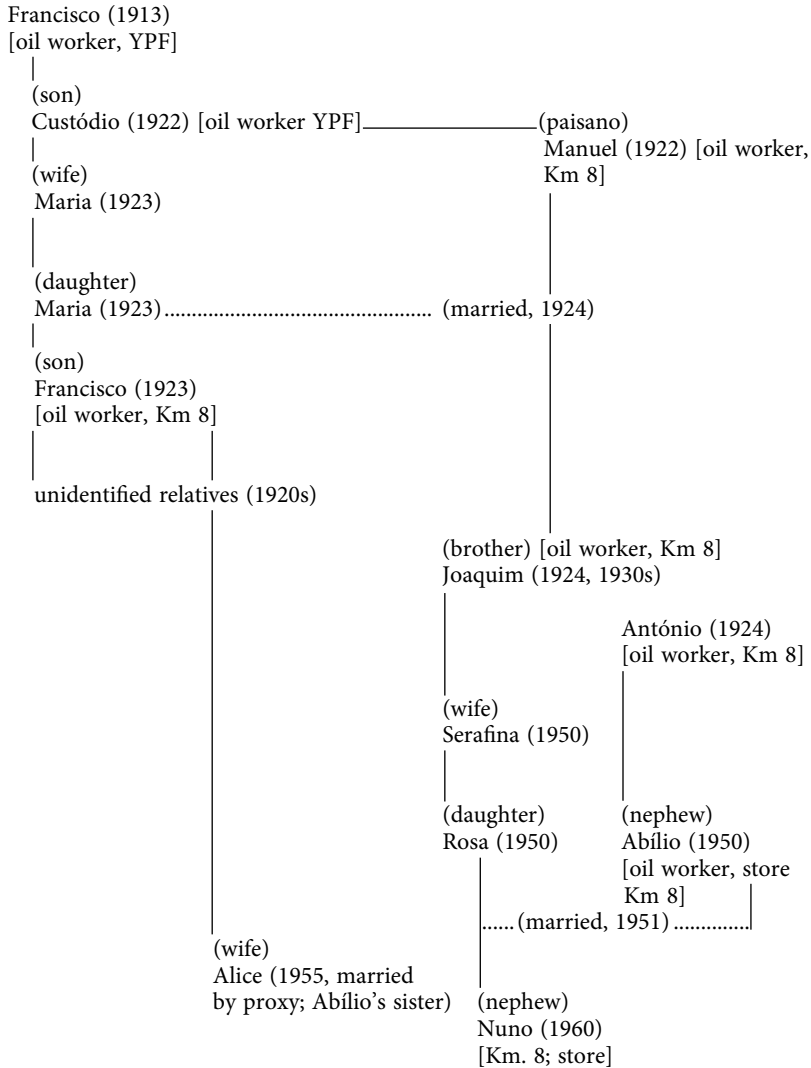
is illustrated by their leading role in the flower transportation Cooperative (based on the analysis of the board lists contained in the cooperative's petition for legal status with the provincial government). See Legajo de la Cooperativa de Floricultores de Villa Elisa (7891), ADPPJ. For a comparison with other cases of ethnic occupational specialization in Argentina, see Carina Frid de Silberstein, "De la red al mercado: Procesos de especialización profesional en tres grupos regionales españoles en Rosario y el sur de la Provincia de Santa Fe, 1890–1930," in Bjerg and Otero, *Immigración y redes sociales*, 67–80.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Yans MacLaughlin, *Family and Community*; Tamara Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); John Bodnar et al., *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900–1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Maurizio Gribaudi, *Mondo operaio e mito operaio: Spazi e percorso sociali a Torino nel primo Novecento* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1987); Grieco, *Keeping It In the Family*. For a historiographical overview, see Tamara Hareven, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change," *American Historical Review* 96, 1 (Feb. 1986): 96–124. For Argentina, see Mariela Ceva, "Movilidad social y movilidad espacial en tres grupos de inmigrantes durante el período de entreguerras: Un análisis a partir de los archivos de fábrica," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 6, 19 (Dec. 1991): 345–61; idem, "Las imágenes de las redes sociales de los inmigrantes desde los archivos de fábrica: Una comparación de dos casos: Flandria y Alparatas," in Bjerg and Otero, *Immigración y redes sociales*, 203–19.

to Patagonia provided Portuguese migrants with a flexible framework to set up reliable, long-lasting occupational chains. The structure was flexible because it expanded by incorporating ties that emerged among migrant workers in their new environment (for instance, through marriage or workplace experience).

Both the malleability and longevity of occupational chains are illustrated in the family chain presented in Figure 5.2. Francisco migrated from São Brás to Comodoro Rivadavia in 1913. He joined a brother who had been working in the state-run oil company for two years. Approximately ten years later, his stepson Custódio joined Francisco in Argentina, followed soon after by Francisco's wife, stepdaughter, and youngest child. Custódio migrated with another paisano, Manuel, who was his neighbor in Portugal and who married his sister Maria a year after their arrival. Custódio married a few years later with a relative of his stepfather. Like his stepfather and uncle, Custódio found work in YPF, but his friend and now brother-in-law Manuel began working in the oil drilling section of the nearby *Compañía Ferrocarrilera*. After their marriage, Manuel and Maria settled in *Ferrocarrilera's* central company town in Km 8. Maria's younger brother joined the workforce of *Compañía Ferrocarrilera* where, through on-site training, he became a mechanic. During the succeeding years, several relatives of Manuel and Maria migrated to Comodoro Rivadavia. They too relied on the sponsorship of kin to find work. As Maria said, "The way to get work was by recommendation.... Since my husband was hardworking, they held him in high regard.... He found work for many other Portuguese."

This occupational chain was alive for several decades. Manuel's brother Joaquim migrated several times to Comodoro Rivadavia in the 1920s and 1930s. He relied on his brother's assistance to find work in *Compañía Ferrocarrilera*. After a brief period in the early 1930s, when he had some difficulty finding employment, he joined the company's labor force as part of a drilling team in 1935 and remained there until retirement in 1965. Twenty years after his last trip to Portugal, Joaquim arranged for his wife Serafina and their youngest daughter Rosa to join him in Patagonia. After such a long separation "not even my mother really knew my father," said Rosa. The following year, Rosa married Abílio, a recent migrant from São Brás, who also worked in the same oil company. The connections between the families and the occupational chains further strengthened when Maria's youngest brother got engaged with one of Abílio's sister during a visit to Portugal in the



Source: Interviews. Names have been changed. Between parentheses year of migration.

Figure 5.2: Family Chains from São Brás de Alportel to Comodoro Rivadavia, 1910s–1960s

1950s and married by proxy before reuniting in Argentina. The last to arrive to Comodoro Rivadavia using the auspices of this chain was Nuno, a nephew of Abílio and Rosa who migrated in 1960 and also became an oil worker in *Compañía Ferrocarrilera* (by then renamed *Petroquímica*). He later left the company to work in a grocery store Abílio opened after almost twenty years in the oil industry.<sup>75</sup>

In addition to the life histories of Portuguese migrants and their families in Comodoro Rivadavia, an examination of the oil companies' personnel files provides numerous examples of occupational chains. Personnel departments included information about family members of their laborers who also worked in the company. For instance, more than a quarter of the newly hired Portuguese workers in YPF in the 1920s had at least one relative already working for the company. Personnel records also contain examples of workers' petitions on behalf of family members or fellow countrymen. These job petitions were addressed to the company's administrator and followed a general formula that usually appealed to the administrator's "known altruistic qualities" or "magnanimous nature," and commonly cited the candidates' good behavior and referred to the difficulties of the job market.<sup>76</sup>

Further evidence of the role of family members and *paisanos* in the incorporation of Portuguese migrants to the workplace can be found in the existence of recruitment chains linked to specific places of employment. Even though Algarvian migrants were predominant among Portuguese oil workers, it is possible to identify cases in which migrants from other regions were able to create a successful occupational chain. The regional composition of the Portuguese workers of *Astra* reveals such a pattern. In *Astra*, there was a significant presence of migrants from the parish of Penela, in Coimbra, and from the parishes of Figueró dos Vinhos and Anciã, in Leiria, which together represented over 40 percent of the Portuguese workers. This proportion was almost seven times higher than the share of migrants from these localities among the Portuguese

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<sup>75</sup> The reconstruction of this family chain was based on interviews, passport requests, personnel records, and marriage records. Names have been changed. Of course, when seen from the country of destination chains may seem unidirectional, but, as it was shown before, family chains were multidirectional. Some links become stronger than others according to shifting structural circumstances. Both family chains used as illustrations here are cases in point. Manuel's chain had side links to the United States and Venezuela; and Francisco's to Brazil.

<sup>76</sup> Examples taken from Legajos de personal 7508, 17665, and 17714, AYPF.

in Comodoro Rivadavia as a whole.<sup>77</sup> (By way of comparison, whereas Algarvian workers represented only 50 percent of the Portuguese labor force in Astra, in YPF and Ferrocarrilera/Petroquímica they constituted an overwhelming 82 and 93 percent of the Portuguese workers respectively.) Immigrants from central Portugal began working in the oil fields during the 1920s and 1930s, and it is likely that the pioneers of this regional flow found it difficult to build occupational chains.<sup>78</sup> In the case of YPF, during those years the company had embarked on a policy of ‘Argentinization’ of the labor force which sought to hire more native-born workers—particularly from northwestern Argentina—in order to counteract immigrant-led labor activism.<sup>79</sup> Algarvian workers, however, had been part of the labor force of YPF since the beginning of oil production and their occupational chains were well grounded. In the case of Compañía Ferrocarrilera/Petroquímica, Algarvian workers had also been present since the 1910s. Some evidence suggests that kin and *paisano* ties also extended to the administrative level, which helped to strengthen their possibilities for jobs, particularly in times of restrictions or low demand. In the words of one immigrant from northern Portugal, “Not just anybody got work in YPF.... Algarvians

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<sup>77</sup> Libros de registro de obreros, 1909–29, AA; Libros de registro de personal, 1926–63, AA; Legajos de personal, AA; Libro de registro de socios, AAPCR.

<sup>78</sup> Libros de casamiento 1904–60, ARCCR; Libro de registro de socios, 1923–70, AAPCR; interviews with Fernando Mendes Nunes and Maria Fernanda dos Santos (June 2, 1994), Silvino Simões (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 1, 1994), Anibal da Costa Teixeira and Idalina Fernandes (Comodoro Rivadavia, May 28, 1994), and Áurea de Abreu. Data from marriage records and the membership ledger of the Portuguese Mutual Aid Association provide some evidence about the timing of arrival of migrants from central and northern Portugal. For instance, considering marriage records until 1960, 61 percent of the grooms from those regions got married after 1949 and so did 68 percent of the brides (if only the period 1940–1960 is considered, those proportions rise to 87 and 77 percent, respectively). In contrast, 35 percent of the Algarvian grooms and 46 percent of the Algarvian brides got married after 1949. Data regarding new members of the Portuguese Association by region should be considered with caution. Reliable membership information is available from 1938 on, when the first membership book was compiled. It is not clear whether all the members who joined the association from 1923 to that year and left or died were considered. Limitations aside, it is clear that migrants from the center and north of Portugal and from the Algarve present different features regarding the timing of their membership. While almost 40 percent of the Algarvians who joined the association from 1923 to 1970 did so before 1940, only 27 percent of their countrymen from central and northern Portugal became members before that year, thus indicating a later arrival to the area.

<sup>79</sup> Torres, “Two Oil Company Towns”; Daniel Márquez, “Conflicto e intervención estatal en los orígenes de la actividad petrolera: Comodoro Rivadavia, 1915–1930,” in Márquez and Palma Godoy, *Distinguir y comprender*, 89–126.



did because they had contacts inside the company.”<sup>80</sup> As late arrivals to the oil fields, workers from central Portugal had to create alternative channels of access to labor opportunities, and they were successful in securing a reliable occupational chain in the case of Astra.

Clearly, occupational chains based on kin ties—extended laterally to include fellow countrymen and coworkers during the process of migration—were beneficial to migrant workers. Through them, migrants had privileged access to channels of information and job sponsorship. Another dimension of the occupational chain can be found in the system of apprenticeship and technical education for the children of workers instituted by the oil companies in the 1940s. These forms of recruitment extended the occupational chain from the first to the second generation (for instance, in the case of the family chain presented earlier, Manuel’s son attended Ferrocarrilera’s factory school and joined the company as a mechanic).

Occupational chains were equally valuable for the oil companies which came to rely heavily on social networks for labor recruitment.<sup>81</sup> For employers, the advantages of this form of recruitment included the availability of a dependable source of labor, its low cost, the efficiency of the screening process, and its role as an effective mechanism of labor control. In effect, as Margaret Grieco explains, in network recruiting “the new worker is constrained by the interests and reputation of his sponsor” and the act of giving employment to a new member of the chain could be considered a form of reward for a worker’s dedication and loyalty.<sup>82</sup> Reputation was an important currency in the labor market of the oil fields. This sentiment could manifest itself as a general assessment about the dedication or work habits of groups such as ‘foreigners’ or members of specific nationalities that circulated in the area, or more importantly as the standing of particular individuals whose regard among supervisors gave credibility to their role as sponsors. Reputation affected not only the individual but also his kin, as an example from the family chain presented above illustrates. A cousin of Manuel and Rosa’s father who had migrated to Comodoro Rivadavia to join his father became a labor leader in the oil fields. As a result of his activism and alleged links to the Communist Party, he was impi-

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Sebastián Correia.

<sup>81</sup> Torres, “Two Oil Company Towns,” 77–81.

<sup>82</sup> Grieco, *Keeping It in the Family*, 37, 66–7.

sioned, expelled from the country, and blacklisted in the oil companies. In the 1930s, when Manuel contacted the company administration to petition on behalf of his brother, his name was flagged in the personnel office for possible association with his radical cousin. In this case, the family name became an obstacle that was solved with the guarantee of Manuel's own reputation as a loyal worker with a decade of service to the company. This example shows how closely oil companies monitored incoming workers and the importance employers assigned to family sponsorship to secure a dependable labor force.

### MAKING A LIFE: MARRIAGE PATTERNS

A window into immigrants' social world, marriage patterns provide a way to examine whether the networks of contacts that formed the basis of migratory and occupational chains also influenced social relations and family formation. The concepts of homogamy and exogamy (marriages that involve spouses from the same group or from different groups, respectively) are useful for the analysis of marriage practices among immigrant populations.<sup>83</sup> In Argentina, studies of marriage selection among immigrant groups have used two ways of measuring ethnic homogamy: percentages and indexes. The first approach measures the proportion of people from a given immigrant group that chooses spouses within that group from the total marriages of the group. A few studies have also used the homogamy index applied by Franco Savorgnan in his 1950 study of "social amalgamation" of immigrants in Boston and Buenos Aires.<sup>84</sup> This index estimates the relationship between the

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<sup>83</sup> For a general introduction to these concepts, see Segalen, *Historical Anthropology of the Family*, chaps. 2, 5, and 6.

<sup>84</sup> Franco Savorgnan, "Matrimonial Selection and the Amalgamation of Heterogeneous Groups," in *Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants*, ed. International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (London: UNESCO–Population Investigation Committee–Cambridge University Press, 1950), 59–67. After Savorgnan, Samuel Baily was the first scholar to apply the homogamy index to the historical analysis of immigrants' marriage patterns in Argentina. See Samuel Baily, "Marriage Patterns and Immigrant Assimilation in Buenos Aires, 1882–1923," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60 1 (Feb. 1980): 32–48. For a discussion of the benefits and limits of percentages and indexes applied to the Argentine case, see Eduardo Míguez et al., "Hasta que la Argentina nos una: Reconsiderando las pautas matrimoniales de los inmigrantes, el crisol de razas y el pluralismo cultural," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, 4 (Nov. 1991): 791–2.



Illustration 9: Portuguese wedding picture. Alexandrina Viegas and João Madeira, Km 8, 1927. Courtesy of Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús-Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College.

number of homogamic marriages and the probability that they may happen by chance (a value of +1 denotes complete homogamy; 0 marks independence; and -1 indicates complete exogamy). Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. Whereas the first allows for a distinction between the patterns of men and women, it does not give full consideration to the total number of potential spouses in a particular place. The opposite is true for the index—it considers the potential marriage pool within a particular social space, but it does not differentiate according to gender. In both cases, there is also the problem of considering a local marriage ‘market’ as a closed space, without taking into account potential partners in nearby localities. This is of particular importance in places like Villa Elisa, located in the suburbs of the city of La Plata and on the southern fringe of the Greater Buenos Aires urban expanse, an area that, over the course of the twentieth century, concentrated the largest share of the country’s population.<sup>85</sup> Limitations aside, by considering a measurable practice, an examination of marriage patterns sheds light on the process of immigrants’ adaptation as well as on the recreation and transformation of social networks in the places of settlement.

In Comodoro Rivadavia, the percentages of ethnic homogamy among Portuguese men were high until 1930, dropped drastically during the 1930s and 1940s, and increased again in the 1950s. Portuguese women presented higher proportion of homogamy until the 1940s and decreased significantly in the 1950s (see Table 5.2). These variations were related to the gender composition of the immigrant population, the timing of migration, and the characteristics of the supply—influenced by the changing rhythm of arrival of new immigrants. The imbalance between marriageable males and females in a particular society creates what Robert Schoen has called a “marriage squeeze.”<sup>86</sup> Like other immigrant

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<sup>85</sup> The fluidity of social contacts with nearby localities is apparent in the case of Villa Elisa, as it is illustrated by a 66 percent correspondence between civil and religious marriages for the Portuguese population. Some couples opted for performing the religious ceremony in the parish church of Villa Elisa and the civil one elsewhere, or viceversa. In some cases, couples most likely chose not to celebrate religious ceremonies. There are also many cases that only appear in the religious records for Villa Elisa; these couples had to marry under civil law somewhere else. I have tried to minimize this limitation by incorporating both sets of records in a general database. Because of its geographical isolation in a sparsely populated region, the potential influence of nearby marriage markets was not as prevalent in the case of Comodoro Rivadavia.

<sup>86</sup> Robert Schoen, “A Methodological Analysis of Intergroup Marriage,” *Sociological Methodology* 16 (1986): 50.

Table 5.2: Marriage Patterns of Portuguese Immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia, 1913–1960 (Percentages)

Nationality of Spouse	1913–30		1931–40		1941–50		1951–60	
	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women
Portuguese	78.8	83.9	35.9	87.5	39.5	73.2	51.0	58.9
Argentine (A)	6.0	—	11.5	—	11.8	4.9	8.6	3.3
Argentine (B)	9.1	3.2	34.6	6.2	36.8	19.5	21.1	30.0
Foreigner	6.0	12.9	17.9	6.2	11.8	2.4	19.2	7.8
Number	(33)	(31)	(78)	(32)	(76)	(41)	(104)	(90)
Homogamy index	0.804		0.544		0.527		0.536	

Note: (A) Argentines with at least one Portuguese parent; (B) Argentines of other descent.

Sources: Marriage records.

populations, the Portuguese communities of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa were characterized by a significantly higher number of men than women.<sup>87</sup> This sex imbalance meant that Portuguese women had a larger pool of potential spouses from their own ethnic group than Portuguese men. Additionally, the cultural values and social mores of both Argentine and Portuguese society discouraged women to socialize beyond the realm of family acquaintances. This tendency was reinforced by structural limitations to women's work outside the home. This practice no doubt accounted for a stronger influence of primary social

<sup>87</sup> Census data about Portuguese immigrants by sex are limited. In Comodoro Rivadavia in 1920, the sex ratio among the Portuguese (number of men for every 100 women) was 594. In 1947, only information about the distribution by gender for the foreign population exists, with an average sex ratio of 193 men for every 100 women. For Villa Elisa in 1914, there is only information for the county of La Plata as a whole. The sex ratio of the Portuguese population of the county of La Plata was then 516; but, in the county's rural area, there were only 7 Portuguese women and 130 Portuguese men. In 1947, the census provides information for Villa Elisa, but only for the foreign population as a whole. Foreigners presented a ratio of 229 men for every 100 women. Finally, in 1960, the gender composition of the Portuguese immigrants living in the province of Buenos Aires, indicates that by then family reunification had begun to have an effect: there were 162 men for every 100 women (if local numbers were available, the ratio would be considerably lower in Villa Elisa). In the same year, in the province of Chubut—where Comodoro Rivadavia is located—there were 152 Portuguese men for every 100 women. Since family reunification continued into the early 1960s, these figures were most likely lower in that decade.

networks among Portuguese women and contributed to the higher proportion of homogamous marriages among them.

The impact of the timing of migration and the arrival of new Portuguese immigrants is also clear in the evolution of the Portuguese marriage patterns over time. Thus, before the 1930s, when there was a steady flow of immigrants, both men and women presented high percentages of homogamy. During the 1930s, when immigration decreased, the percentages of marriages within the group dropped significantly among Portuguese men while it increasing slightly among Portuguese women. Beginning in the second half of the 1940s, a new wave of family migration and a consequent greater presence of children resulted in a growing percentage of homogamous marriages among Portuguese men (from 39.5 percent in 1941–50 to 51.0 percent in 1951–60). However, the percentage of women who married within the Portuguese group declined.

Over the years, the tendency was toward more marriages between Portuguese and Argentines. Some unions were between Portuguese immigrants and Argentines of Portuguese descent. The proportion of this 'hidden homogamy' was significant among Portuguese men during the 1930s and 1940s, representing 11.5 percent and 11.8 percent, respectively. However, more Portuguese men married Argentine women of non-Portuguese descent. Among Portuguese women, this practice grew considerably in the 1950s to account for a third of the total marriages. Given the demographic characteristics of the local society, the majority of these non-Portuguese spouses were the children of other immigrants. Over two-thirds of the fathers and half of the mothers of the Argentine spouses were foreigners. Spanish parents constituted the most numerous group, accounting for more than half of the foreign parents. By contrast, only 4 percent of the parents were Chileans, a group with an otherwise large presence in Comodoro Rivadavia.<sup>88</sup> In the 1950s, Chileans accounted for almost 13 percent of the spouses among Portuguese men—certainly a result of demographic changes in the immigration to the area during that decade—but they never reached

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<sup>88</sup> Susana Torres, "La inmigración chilena a Comodoro Rivadavia," *Revista de Estudios Trasandinos* 5 (1st semester 2001): 39–69; idem, "La inmigración chilena en la Patagonia Austral en la primera mitad del siglo XX y su inserción en los centros urbanos de Comodoro Rivadavia, Río Gallegos y Ushuaia," in *Cruzando la Cordillera: La frontera argentino-chilena como espacio social*, ed. Susana Bandieri (Neuquén: Centro de Estudios de Historia Regional–Universidad Nacional del Comahue, 2001), 421–58.

any significant number among the spouses of Portuguese women. Thus, Euro-Argentines, and particularly those of Spanish origin, clearly predominated among the Argentine spouses of Portuguese immigrants.

Before any conclusion about the apparent sharp decline in 'ethnic preference' among the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia in the 1940s can be drawn, it is necessary to look at the evolution of homogamy indexes to consider the influence of the local population and the number of choices outside the group. The evolution of homogamy indexes confirms the importance of marriages within the Portuguese group until the 1930s. The index was higher than the average during the years 1925 to 1930, when it reached 0.830. It declined in the following decades but, in contrast with the fluctuations in the percentages, the index remained rather steady from 1931 to 1960. Therefore, more than a drastic change in the patterns of marriage selection among Portuguese immigrants, the increase in the numbers of marriages between Portuguese and Argentines was linked to demographic changes in the local population, namely a growing participation of Argentines in the marriages of Comodoro Rivadavia.

The marriage patterns of the Portuguese immigrants of Villa Elisa also present variations by gender and over time (see Table 5.3). As in the case of Comodoro Rivadavia, Portuguese women presented higher percentages of marriages with other Portuguese than Portuguese men. During the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s, when the population consisted mainly of male laborers working their way up to the ownership of small plots of land for gardening, the percentage of homogamy among Portuguese men was only 25 percent. In contrast, Portuguese women were overwhelmingly homogamous. The proportion of in-group marriages among Portuguese women remained high until the 1970s. Portuguese men presented a comparatively lower percentage of endogamous marriages in the 1930s and 1940s, but the proportion increased during the 1950s. Family migration certainly made the sex imbalance of the Portuguese community less dramatic. As new families arrived using the assistance of family and friends, primary social networks influenced the socialization of new arrivals and the formation of new families. As a result, in Villa Elisa, Portuguese men presented the highest proportions of endogamous marriages during the 1950s and 1960s.

The evolution of homogamy indexes further highlights this pattern, showing a clear peak in the 1950s which contrasts with the case of Comodoro Rivadavia. A product of the period of mass migration, the Portuguese community of Comodoro Rivadavia received the largest

Table 5.3: Marriage Patterns of Portuguese Immigrants in Villa Elisa, 1930–1980 (Percentages)

Nationality of Spouse	1930–50		1951–60		1961–70		1971–80	
	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women
Portuguese	46.4	100.0	65.5	82.6	56.6	69.8	29.5	47.4
Argentine (A)	16.1	—	12.6	1.4	14.1	8.1	31.1	15.8
Argentine (B)	26.8	—	13.8	10.1	25.5	12.8	36.1	34.2
Foreigner	10.7	—	8.0	5.8	3.8	9.3	3.3	2.6
Number	(56)	(26)	(87)	(69)	(106)	(86)	(61)	(38)
Homogamy index (religious)	0.708		0.724		0.593		0.318	
Homogamy index (civil)	0.621		0.714		0.574		0.253	

Note: (A) Argentines with at least one Portuguese parent; (B) Argentines of other descent.

Sources: Marriage records.

number of migrants by 1930. Consequently, it was during that period that its homogamy index achieved its highest point. The index steadied at a much lower level in the following decades, and it was higher in the 1950s than in the 1940s (here too, showing the influence of family reunification). As a community that developed after the classic period of mass labor migration, the impact of family migration on marriage selection was even more evident among the Portuguese of Villa Elisa. Here, the migration of women and children in the late 1940s and 1950s was responsible for the highest point in the homogamy index. Thus, in Villa Elisa as well as in Comodoro Rivadavia, the impact of the flow of immigration, the rhythm of arrival of the immigrants, and the nature of the flow (i.e., gender and age composition) all had a clear impact on the marriage patterns of Portuguese immigrants.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> For comparisons with other cases in Argentina, see, for example, Hernán Otero, “Una visión crítica de la endogamia: Reflexiones a partir de una reconstrucción de familias francesas, Tandil, 1850–1914,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 5, 15–16 (Aug.–Dec. 1990): 343–78; Míguez et al., “Hasta que la Argentina nos una”; Carina Frid de Silberstein, “Inmigración y selección matrimonial: El caso de los italianos en Rosario, 1870–1910,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 6, 18 (Aug. 1991): 161–90; idem, “Más allá del crisol: Matrimonios, estrategias familiares y redes sociales en dos generaciones de italianos y españoles, Rosario, 1895–1925,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 9, 28 (Dec. 1994): 481–520; Sergio Maluendres, “Los migrantes y sus hijos ante el matrimonio: Un estudio comparativo entre alemanes de Rusia, españoles e



As in Comodoro Rivadavia, the marriages of Portuguese with Argentines in Villa Elisa also increased over time; but there were interesting differences between the two communities. The Portuguese immigrants of Villa Elisa presented a greater tendency to marry Argentines of Portuguese descent than their counterparts in Comodoro Rivadavia. In the 1950s, this form of extended homogamy accounted for the marriages of 63 percent of the men and 62 of the women in Comodoro Rivadavia, and 78 percent of the men and 84 percent of the women in Villa Elisa. Thus, the proportion of endogamous marriages among the Portuguese population of Villa Elisa in the 1950s was almost identical to that of the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia before 1930. Its impact was important as late as the 1970s. Taking into account this extended form of ethnic homogamy, two-thirds of the marriages among both Portuguese men and women in Villa Elisa during the 1970s occurred within the immigrant group.

The Portuguese of Villa Elisa presented lower proportions of marriages with other foreigners than their countrymen in Comodoro Rivadavia. Unlike in Comodoro Rivadavia, in Villa Elisa the majority of the Argentine spouses were the children of Argentines not of other immigrants. Most of the Argentines spouses of the Portuguese immigrants had been born in Villa Elisa, La Plata, other localities of the province of Buenos Aires, and the nearby city of Buenos Aires to Argentine parents (82 percent of the grooms and 86 percent of the brides). Argentines accounted for 74 percent of the fathers and 80 percent of the mothers in this category. The rest of the parents were Europeans, mainly Italians. Judging from their names and the places of birth of the children, the majority of the Argentines parents of Argentine spouses were most likely first generation Argentines of European descent.

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italianos en Guatraché, La Pampa, 1910–1939,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 6, 18 (Aug. 1991): 191–222; idem, “De nuevo sobre las pautas matrimoniales de los migrantes y sus hijos: Piamonteses y leoneses en Trenel, Territorio Nacional de La Pampa, 1911–1940,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 9, 28 (Dec. 1994): 449–80; Dedier Norberto Marquiegui, “Revisando el debate sobre la conducta matrimonial de los extranjeros: Un estudio a partir del caso de los españoles y franceses en Luján, 1880–1920,” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 7, 20 (Apr. 1992): 3–36; Susana Torres, “Pautas matrimoniales e identidades de los españoles y europeos del Este en la zona de Comodoro Rivadavia, 1901–1947” (paper presented at the 50th International Congress of Americanists, Warsaw, Poland, July 10–14, 2000); idem, “La inmigración chilena en la Patagonia Austral”; Eduardo Míguez, “Marriage, Household, and Integration in Mass Migration to Argentina: The Case of Tandil,” in Baily and Míguez, *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America*, 167–94.

Despite variations in timing and evolution, and the different impact of factors such as the rhythm of arrival of immigrants, the compositions of the flows, and local conditions, taking the period as a whole, the vast majority of the Portuguese in both communities showed a preference to marry with other Portuguese and their children. In average, 60 percent of the Portuguese men and 78 percent of the Portuguese women who married in Comodoro Rivadavia from 1913 to 1960 joined a Portuguese or Argentine of Portuguese descent, as did 68 percent of the Portuguese men and 81 percent of the Portuguese women who married in Villa Elisa from 1930 to 1980.

In both communities, marriages within the ethnic group were more prevalent among the Portuguese than other major immigrant groups. In Comodoro Rivadavia, Portuguese men presented the highest proportions of endogamous marriages among the largest immigrant groups until 1930; during the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s, they were second only to the Eastern Europeans. In Villa Elisa, Portuguese men followed the lead of Italian men in the period 1930 to 1945. In-group marriages were particularly prevalent among Portuguese immigrant women. They presented the highest proportion of endogamous marriages in both communities. Unfortunately, comparable information is not available for the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, when the highest proportion of homogamous marriages among Portuguese men occurred.<sup>90</sup> As the available data about marriage patterns of the Portuguese population of the province of Buenos Aires as a whole suggest, the homogamous tendency of these two Portuguese communities also stood above that of most other Portuguese immigrant settlements.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Libros de matrimonio, ARCCR; Torres, "Pautas matrimoniales e identidades." For more information, see Marcelo Borges, "Network Migration, Marriage Patterns, and Adaptation in Rural Portugal and Among Portuguese Immigrants in Argentina, 1870–1980," *The History of the Family* 8 (2003): 465.

<sup>91</sup> Homogamy percentages for Portuguese men in the province of Buenos Aires were: 6.4 percent in 1883–8, 23.8 percent in 1923–4, and 18.5 percent in 1937–50; for Portuguese women, they were 33.3 percent in 1883–8, 64.4 percent in 1923–24, and 54.1 percent in 1937–50. These percentages encompass the marriage selection of Portuguese immigrants who lived in a variety of places and circumstances, from concentrated immigrant communities like Villa Elisa to men working in isolated parts of the countryside. Provincia de Buenos Aires, *Anuario Estadístico*, 1883–8, 1924, 1937–1950; Provincia de Buenos Aires, *Boletín de la Dirección General de Estadística*, no. 225 (1924).

*Old and New Social Ties*

Patterns of marriage selection among Portuguese immigrants reveal a social world in which existing ties were certainly re-created, but new ones also arose along family, ethnic, and occupational lines. The influence of social networks becomes evident when marital selection is considered in conjunction with the social spaces of marriage and the social spaces of origin of the migratory chains in Portugal. In the case of Algarvian migrants, there was an apparent persistence and readaptation of Old World primary relationships in the formation of new families in Argentina. This pattern is particularly noticeable among Algarvian women in both communities. In the case of Comodoro Rivadavia, until 1950, close to 70 percent of the women and 43 percent of the men married spouses that originated either in the same social space of marriage of São Brás de Alportel or in the extended area of origin of chain migration from the Algarve (discussed in chapter 4). The correspondence between social spaces in Villa Elisa was slightly higher for women and similar for men (75 percent and 45 percent respectively). The proportion of marriages within the enlarged social space of origin of migratory chains was higher among the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia (13 percent of all marriages for men and 17 percent for women), showing how social networks created by the experience of migration also influenced the marriage patterns of the immigrants and, by extension, their social adaptation.<sup>92</sup>

The importance of premigratory social networks in shaping the social adaptation of Portuguese immigrants as measured by marriage selection is further illustrated by those cases in which migrant men returned to the homeland to marry or married by proxy. In the case of marriages by proxy—known in Portuguese as marriages *por procuração*—immigrants either were acquainted with their brides-to-be from the home villages, or they were introduced to them by relatives and friends. In the latter case, they usually ‘met’ through the exchange of pictures. Thus, this is another instance of recreation of Old World social networks along with an enlargement of these networks as a result of migration. Fam-

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<sup>92</sup> The percentages of marriages between spouses from the social spaces of origin of the migrant chains and the social spaces of marriages in the Algarve were probably higher, as there is incomplete information about parish and counties of origin for an average of 5 to 7 percent of the cases. For a more detailed analysis of these and other aspects of marriage selection in both immigrant communities, see Borges, “Network Migration, Marriage Patterns, and Adaptation,” 455–79.

ily members also used the channels provided by *paisanos* from other parishes, thus incorporating possible brides who otherwise would not have been a part of the potential pool of marriage in their hometowns in Portugal. This constitutes another illustration of the enlargement of original social networks mentioned above.

It is difficult to assess how extensive the practice of marriages by proxy really was, but there are regular references to them in family histories. Stories about marriages 'fixed' through *paisanos* and picture brides have survived in the collective memory of both communities.<sup>93</sup> These stories are sometimes presented with a tragicomic twist, such as the confusion caused by the interchange of pictures that were outdated or belonged to someone else, the refusal of the bride to accept her husband, and even the loss of the expected wife-to-be to another immigrant once she arrived in Argentina. This practice was highlighted in a profile about Portuguese immigration in Argentina published in the national general interest magazine *Mundo Argentino*, in 1939. The article stated that the Portuguese immigrants of Comodoro Rivadavia kept a "closed nationalistic" behavior regarding marriage selection and that "a great number" of them got married by proxy, adding:

Many of these men meet their wives for their first time when the ship in which they are embarked brings them to their port of residence. The brides of these marriages *por procuração* usually are sisters, daughters, or relatives of coworkers. These men praised their marriageable female relatives among the single men, and arrange with them and with the middlemen in charge of taking care of everything, all the details of the wedding.<sup>94</sup>

In his 1940 visit to Comodoro Rivadavia, journalist Armando de Aguiar also noted the pervasiveness of this practice among the local Portuguese community. Following a familiar narrative, Aguiar tells the story of a picture bride who, disappointed about the appearance of her chosen husband, returned to Portugal at the first opportunity.<sup>95</sup>

Marriages by proxy also took place among the Portuguese of Villa Elisa. That was the case, for instance, of at least two members of

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<sup>93</sup> In the interviews, immigrants commonly use the Portuguese verb *arranjar* (to arrange or to fix) when they refer to these marriages settled at distance.

<sup>94</sup> Zúlma Núñez, "Los extranjeros en la Argentina: Los portugueses," *Mundo Argentino*, Jan. 4, 1939, 39.

<sup>95</sup> Aguiar, *O mundo que os portugueses criaram*, 156–7. A similar story appeared in the *Mundo Argentino* article cited above.

Francisco's family chain, analyzed above. One of the sisters migrated to marry a friend of Francisco's, and one of his brothers married by proxy once settled as a flower gardener in Argentina. This is how Francisco recounted his sister's experience:

First, I asked my sister to come. She came here single. Her husband was my friend. He was single. And I told him—since I had two or three single sisters over there [in Portugal]—that if he wanted one, I would ask her to come. And that's the way it was. So he agreed and I asked...her to send him her picture so he could get to know her, and I also asked him to send her his picture. And that's the way it was. So he liked her and asked her to come... He was also Portuguese. He was Algarvian but from another *sítio* [hamlet].

These two stories illustrate some of the ways in which social ties linked to network migration were used and modified in the process of social adaptation by Portuguese immigrants in both communities. Social networks also showed resilience and adaptability to environments as different as the flower gardens of suburban Villa Elisa and the industrial world of the company towns of Comodoro Rivadavia. Old ties persisted and new ones emerged.

Ethno-cultural preferences among Portuguese families also seemed to have played some role in marriage selection. Anecdotal evidence points to the existence of family pressure for Portuguese women to marry within the ethnic community. Parental expectations are illustrated in the following exchange between the daughters of Portuguese immigrants who came of age in Comodoro Rivadavia in the 1930s and early 1940s:

Silvina: I remember it well. There was no Portuguese man who came to town that my parents did not invite home.

Mariana: See what I tell you? My father did the same... [Your parents] did not say anything to you directly, but they invited the Portuguese men home to see if...

Silvina: Yes, as marriage prospects.<sup>96</sup>

In other cases, parental sentiments about non-Portuguese suitors were clearly expressed. As Maria Francisca, who also came of age in the late 1930s, put it: "Our fathers were very conservative and they did not want

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<sup>96</sup> Interviews with Silvina de Sousa, Mariana Silva, and Lidia da Cruz (Comodoro Rivadavia, May 27, 1994).

us to marry with other nationalities. . . . It had to be with a Portuguese. That was the tradition.” She recalled her father’s disapproving reaction when, still a teenager, she demonstrated some interest for a young Chilean man who used to walk past her house on his way to and from work. “For my father, the idea of me being involved with a Chilean was like throwing oil on the fire.” Clearly, parental expectations about marriage choices seem to have been greater for daughters—who, given the sex imbalance of the immigrant population, had also a greater choice from within the national group—than for sons. Accordingly, Maria Francisca and her sister married Portuguese immigrants, but her two brothers married outside the Portuguese group.<sup>97</sup> Oral testimonies stress that this sentiment of ethno-cultural preference did not carry from the first to the second generation.

#### *Occupation and Marriage Selection*

In addition to family and ethnic ties, other factors certainly affected the process of marriage selection, namely the socio-occupational background of the spouses and their families. This becomes evident when one considers the levels of occupational homogamy—that is, those marriages in which the grooms and the fathers of the brides share the same type of activity. Also, the different socioeconomic environment of both communities produced different patterns of marital selection (see Table 5.4).

Among the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia, day laborers and unskilled workers constituted the group most likely to marry the daughters of other unskilled workers. (The proportion is even higher in the case of farmers and ranchers, but the number of cases in this category is very small.) Portuguese grooms in the rest of the occupational categories present a general tendency to marry within the same occupational group, but at lower rates. White collar workers constitute the exception. Commercial and service employees were more likely to marry into families whose heads of household were either unskilled or skilled workers, followed by merchants’ and farmers’ families. In part, this pattern can be explained by the somewhat vague nature of the category of *empleado* (employee) in Argentine society, a term used to refer to a salaried worker in general or, more specifically, to a commercial or

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<sup>97</sup> Interviews with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira; *Libros de matrimonio*, ARCCR.

Table 5.4: Occupational Homogamy (Percentages)

Comodoro Rivadavia					
Grooms					
Brides' Fathers	unskilled workers	skilled workers and artisans	merchants	employees	farmers and ranchers
unskilled workers	52.4	26.0	13.3	25.0	16.7
skilled workers and artisans	19.0	32.5	20.0	25.0	—
merchants	11.9	6.5	26.7	16.7	—
employees	2.4	7.8	13.3	8.3	—
farmers and ranchers	11.9	20.8	22.0	16.7	83.3
others	2.4	5.2	4.7	8.3	—
Number	(69)	(117)	(27)	(22)	(10)
Villa Elisa					
Grooms					
Brides' Fathers	unskilled workers	skilled workers and artisans	merchants	employees	farmers and ranchers
unskilled workers	30.8	14.3	15.4	12.5	11.0
skilled workers and artisans	—	14.3	23.1	12.5	4.7
merchants	23.5	7.1	15.4	—	3.1
employees	7.7	—	—	12.5	2.4
farmers and ranchers	38.5	57.1	38.5	37.5	64.6
others	—	7.1	0.8	25.0	14.2
Number	(14)	(14)	(16)	(9)	(148)

Sources: Marriage records.

a clerical worker. More significantly, however, this pattern illustrates the fluidity of relationships that white collar workers enjoyed with others at the lower and upper ranks of the occupational hierarchy.

Portuguese immigrants presented different degrees of ethnic homogamy according to their occupational backgrounds. In Comodoro Rivadavia, for example, ethnically homogamous marriages were more frequent at both extremes of the occupational hierarchy (especially at its bottom, among unskilled laborers). The same is apparent when the occupations of the fathers of the Portuguese brides are considered. Grooms who worked as unskilled laborers and the daughters of unskilled laborers presented proportions of ethnic homogamy well above the general average of 47.1 percent (60.9 percent and 87.2 percent, respectively). Therefore, unskilled workers were both ethnically and occupationally more homogamous than other Portuguese immigrants.

In contrast, with percentages of ethnic homogamy just below 41 percent, merchants and white collar workers (*empleados*) were the least ethnically homogamous. The same is true for the daughters of white collar workers (45.4 percent of ethnically homogamous marriages) but not for the daughters of merchants. The latter had higher percentages of ethnic homogamy than the average for Portuguese immigrant women (76.9 and 70.6 percent, respectively).

Thus, marital selection within the immigrant group varied according to the socioeconomic background of spouses (see Table 5.5). These variations suggest different living experiences and access to different spaces of social interaction that created conditions for more open or close social networks. Social ties based on common ethnic origin were more decisive among unskilled workers and their daughters to form new families. These ties were reinforced by their experience as laborers. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Portuguese immigrant men who worked as merchants and clerical employees had more opportunities to forge a wider social net that went beyond their ethnic ties and the social networks that brought them to Argentina. They were, however, a small group among the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia, whose working population was largely composed of skilled and unskilled workers in the oil industry.

The greater socioeconomic homogeneity of the Portuguese community of Villa Elisa produced a different situation. The families of flower gardeners and other small farmers married largely among themselves. In addition, men from every other economic group married mostly with the daughters of flower and vegetable gardeners. Flower gardeners and small farmers also presented the highest levels of ethnic homogamous marriages. A conservative estimate would put the proportion of these unions at 52 percent, and it would grow to 70 percent if the Argentine children of Portuguese descent were taken into account. Proportions of ethnic homogamy among the Portuguese daughters of flower gardeners and small farmers were 68 percent in the first case and 74 percent in the latter.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> These estimates are based only on civil marriages, not on the complete database used for other calculations for Villa Elisa, as religious records do not provide information about occupation.



Table 5.5: Ethnic Homogamy by Occupation of Portuguese Grooms (Percentages)

	Comodoro Rivadavia				
	Grooms' occupations				
	unskilled workers	skilled workers and artisans	merchants	employees	farmers and ranchers
With Portuguese	60.9	45.3	40.7	40.9	50.0
With Argentine of Portuguese descent	10.1	14.5	7.4	4.5	10.0
Total ethnic homogamy	71.0	59.8	48.1	45.4	60.0
Number	(69)	(117)	(27)	(22)	(10)
	Villa Elisa				
	Grooms' occupations				
	unskilled workers	skilled workers and artisans	merchants	employees	farmers and ranchers
With Portuguese	21.4	50.0	37.5	11.1	52.6
With Argentines of Portuguese descent	42.8	14.3	18.7	33.3	17.6
Total ethnic homogamy	64.3	64.3	56.2	44.4	70.3
Number	(14)	(14)	(16)	(9)	(148)

Sources: Marriage records.

Clearly, among the Portuguese of Villa Elisa, economic activity and ethnicity acted together to determine the choice of spouse. Homogamous marriages occurred not only among Portuguese but largely among Portuguese and Portuguese-Argentines who were also flower gardeners. Two-thirds of the marriages between Portuguese spouses were in this category: almost 60 percent were between flower gardeners and flower gardeners' daughters (35 percent of the total marriages), followed by marriages between families of vegetable gardeners and small farmers (14 percent), and flower gardeners who married the daughters of vegetable gardeners and small farmers (10 percent). Occupational homogamy among flower gardeners and other small farmers also influenced the marriages between Portuguese and Argentines of Portuguese descent. More than half the marriages between Portuguese men and Portuguese-Argentine women occurred between grooms and fathers-in-law in this occupational category. Moreover, the proportion of marriages between gardeners and gardeners' daughters increased when these mar-

riages occurred within the Portuguese group, especially for Portuguese women. While an average of 65 percent of the daughters of flower gardeners and other farmers married men in the same occupations, the same was true for over 82 percent of those who married other Portuguese.

For the Portuguese of Villa Elisa, ethnic homogamy was intrinsically tied to occupational homogamy. Social ties based on common local, regional, and national origins, and occupational ties reinforced one another. Here, marriage appeared more clearly as a socioeconomic strategy that involved economic considerations such as access to land, family labor, and the transmission of patrimony. Becoming a flower gardener required the know-how as well as access to land and commercialization. All these elements required considerable time and investment. As a community, the Portuguese of Villa Elisa worked their way up the occupational ladder of intensive gardening. An important proportion of the producers were able to maintain their place and consolidate it through marriage. This was more likely the result of the socialization process and daily interaction among gardeners' families, as well as an established strategy of social reproduction. The exact ways in which this strategy worked cannot be gauged from available information. It could have meant access to assistance, contacts, markets, materials, family labor, and land. Their economic lives characterized mainly by wage work in the oil fields, these issues were not as critical in the strategies of economic adaptation and success of the Portuguese immigrants of Comodoro Rivadavia.

#### *Changes and Continuities in the Second Generation*

The majority of Argentines of Portuguese descent married other Argentines. However, as in the case of their parents, there existed interesting differences in their patterns of marriage selection according to gender, as well as between the Portuguese-Argentines of both communities (see Table 5.6). The influence of social ties based on ethnic origin was greater among women than men, and among the Argentines of Portuguese descent of Villa Elisa than their counterparts in Comodoro Rivadavia. Whereas the percentages of marriages with Portuguese or Argentines of Portuguese descent were 13.5 percent for men and 22.9 for women among the latter, they reached 29.8 percent for men and 41.9 percent for women among the former.

Socioeconomic factors clearly affected the patterns of marriage in the second generation. There were important differences in ethnic selection according to the occupations of the grooms and the fathers of

Table 5.6: Marriage Patterns of Argentines of Portuguese Descent (Percentages)

Nationality of Spouse	Comodoro Rivadavia (1904–1960)		Villa Elisa (1930–1980)	
	men	women	men	women
Portuguese	5.2	17.9	12.9	30.2
Argentine (A)	8.3	4.9	16.9	11.7
Argentine (B)	68.4	68.5	66.1	53.1
Foreigner	18.8	8.6	4.0	5.0
Number	(96)	(162)	(124)	(179)

Note: (A) Argentines of Portuguese descent; (B) Argentines of other descent.

Sources: Marriage records.

the brides, particularly among the children of Portuguese immigrants in Villa Elisa. Here, the proportion of marriages with Portuguese or Portuguese-Argentines was higher among flower gardeners and flower gardeners' daughters. It grows nine points among both men and women: from 29.8 percent to 38.7 percent, and from 41.9 percent to 51.0 percent, respectively. Thus, among Portuguese flower gardeners and their families, ethnic origin and occupation reinforced each other and contributed to a greater continuity of marriage patterns not only among the immigrants but also among their Argentine children.

By contrast, the children of Portuguese immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia present only small variations in their patterns of ethnic selection according to occupation. The only exception was the small group of daughters of Portuguese vegetable gardeners and small farmers. Half of them married either a Portuguese immigrant or another Portuguese-Argentine. Tellingly, as in the case of Villa Elisa, rural producers were the only socioeconomic group among the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia in which parents' nationality played an above-average role in the marriage patterns of their Argentine children.

Variations according to occupation also occurred among the Argentine women of Portuguese descent. Even though the majority of them, like their mothers, declared housekeeping as the main occupation at the time of marriage, the proportion of women engaged in occupations outside the home grew considerably in the second generation. This group of women presented percentages of marriages with other Portuguese-Argentines or Portuguese immigrants far lower than the average. These percentages were particularly low among clerical and commercial

employees, who formed a sizable group in both communities. While in Comodoro Rivadavia none of them married grooms of Portuguese origin or descent, in Villa Elisa only 13.6 percent did (that is, almost a third less than the average). Conversely, in both communities the percentages of marriages with grooms of Portuguese origin or descent was above the average among the Argentine women of Portuguese descent who identified themselves as housewives.

Clearly, the influence of ties based on ethnic and family links in the socialization of Argentine women of Portuguese descent decreased as the distance between home and work increased. The spaces of social interaction were more diverse among the women who worked outside the home and that diversity contributed in the creation of relationships beyond the realm of family and ethnicity. In general, while there were evident changes in behavior from the first to the second generation in both communities, in Villa Elisa they occurred in a context of greater continuity, especially among the daughters of Portuguese immigrants.

#### SOCIAL AND ETHNIC LIFE

Portuguese immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia lived in a social world characterized by the demands of a double allegiance—to a patriotic sentiment colored with a hue of cosmopolitanism nurtured by oil companies and the local society, and to their ethnic and cultural origins. The tension was particularly palpable for migrants living in the largely autonomous spaces of the company towns. The result was a multifaceted social life that amalgamated both aspects into a new reality, particularly for the second generation. The gardening world of Villa Elisa set the stage for a different social reality in which Portuguese migrants built a tighter social world around family relations and in which ethnic and occupational identity went hand in hand.

The residential patterns of most Portuguese immigrant families in Comodoro Rivadavia depended on outside factors, mainly the housing policies of the oil companies. The majority of Portuguese families lived in residential spaces created by the oil companies, mostly in the company towns of YPF (Km 3 and environs) and Ferrocarrilera/Petroquímica (Km 8), with smaller concentrations in Astra (Km 20) and Diadema Argentina (Km 27). Close to 60 percent of the Portuguese grooms and 52 percent of the Portuguese brides lived in these residential



Illustration 10: Live tableau to commemorate the anniversary of the Portuguese Republic and the foundation of the local Portuguese Mutual Aid Association, Comodoro Rivadavia, 1943. Courtesy of Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús-Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College.



Illustration 11: Portuguese festivities, Comodoro Rivadavia, 1950s. Courtesy of Idalete Madeira and Manuel Gomes Correia-Patagonia Mosaic Project, Dickinson College.

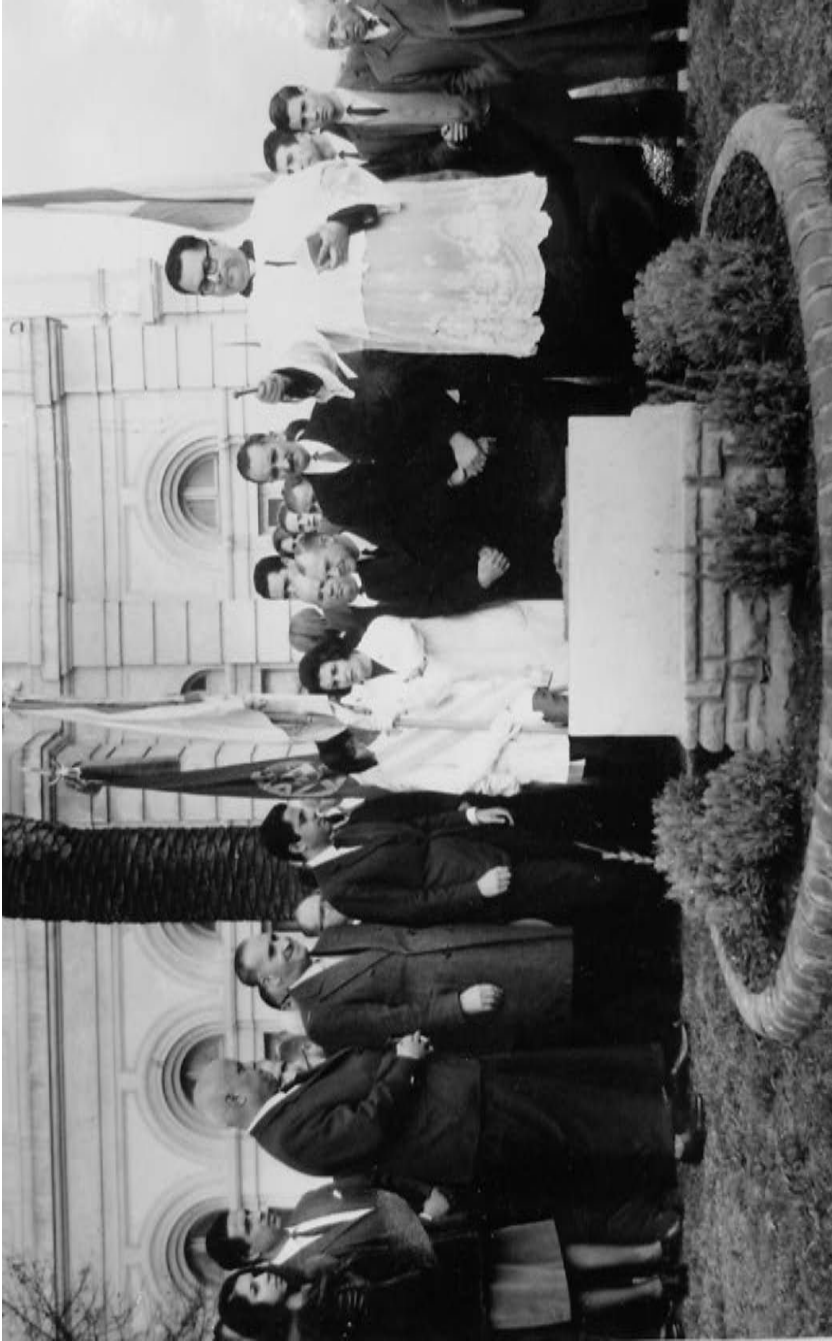


Illustration 12: Ceremony commemorating Portugal Day in a downtown La Plata park, organized by the Portuguese Club of La Plata, 1965. Courtesy of Diario El Día, La Plata.

settlements whose social lives were shaped by industrial time and company policies.<sup>99</sup> In effect, beginning in the 1920s, life in the oil company towns offered immigrant workers and their families access to housing, health services, education, leisure activities, and even utilities and subsidized goods. But in exchange for these benefits, oil workers' families relinquished part of their autonomy, and accepted formal and informal norms through which companies exerted social control.

Immigrant workers living in company towns had no control over their residential patterns. Oil companies assigned housing in their neighborhoods according to occupation and marital status; workers' national origin or kin and *paisano* networks had no place in that decision. Male immigrants living alone (single men or married men whose families stayed in the homeland) shared accommodations with fellow workers of diverse nationalities.<sup>100</sup> Workers had little control over their living environment. For instance, they were not permitted to share rooms with friends or family members without the explicit authorization of the company administration. In 1922, Ventura F., a worker from São Brás de Alportel living in YPF's central company neighborhood received his 17 year-old son who had just arrived from Portugal and stayed with him while looking for a job. What Ventura saw as a fulfillment of his paternal obligation, the director of housing interpreted as a violation of company's rule and sent the police to evict Ventura's son. Only after pleading with the administrator did Ventura obtain an authorization to live with his son. Having borders was also prohibited, as Francisco B., an oil worker from Boliqueime learned in 1931, when he was suspended along with other workers for boarding in a company family house.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Libros de matrimonio 1913–60, ARCCR. Overall, around a quarter of both grooms and brides lived in YPF's company town, followed by 14 of the grooms and 11 percent of the brides who lived in Ferrocarrilera/Petroquímica's company town. Both places accounted for two-thirds of the Portuguese spouses who lived in company towns at the time of marriage. Of course, the proportion of Portuguese men living in company towns and oil camps was higher, as marriage records only provide information about the more stable immigrant population. These figures would certainly increase if there were residential data available for the most mobile sector of temporary labor migrants.

<sup>100</sup> Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 139–43, 163–81; Márquez and Palma Godoy, *Comodoro Rivadavia*, 75–80; Márquez, "Hacia la definición de un modelo de bienestar"; Fortes Castro, *Diadema Argentina*; Alberto Dropulich, *Diadema en blanco y negro, 1921–1961* (Buenos Aires: Editorial CLM, 2005). In addition to these analyses and historical descriptions, the discussion that follows is based on the oral history interviews cited above.

<sup>101</sup> Legajo No. 649 and Legajo No. 6741, AYPF.



Workers living in company housing had to follow strict rules of behavior. Even personal and domestic choices were regulated by oil companies' moral and cultural conventions. For example, in YPF, only legally married workers were permitted in family housing. Thus, João B., a worker from São Brás, saw his request for family housing summarily rejected when the authorities discovered that his family unit included his unmarried companion, and their two children.<sup>102</sup> Likewise, common cultural strategies for household reproduction among Portuguese families and other immigrant workers, such as tending vegetable gardens or keeping animals were heavily monitored. For single workers, prohibitions included cooking in their rooms, a common way of saving money among workers. These rules can be seen as an extension of the close supervision workers faced in the workplace, where idleness or lack of proper behavior were closely watched and sanctioned. To be sure, oil companies' attempts to supervise their workers' daily lives were not always passively accepted. The mere fact that rules existed and violations were not unusual is a proof of the system's permeability. In a dynamic process of accommodation and resistance, immigrant workers and their families frequently broke the rules or found ways of circumventing them.

Policy enforcement had a clear impact on workers' social lives, but it was not the main instrument used by oil companies to regulate community life. More important were the many ways through which companies sought to fashion a sense of common identity among their diverse working population. In addition to creating multi-ethnic living spaces in their neighborhoods, companies built other spaces of interaction and socialization dedicated to promoting a sense of belonging to the larger family of oil workers through leisure, recreation, and commemoration. Companies provided workers' families with sporting facilities, social clubs and movie theaters, and organized picnics, special social gatherings, and public commemorations. In companies like Astra and Compañía Ferrocarrilera/Petroquímica, year-end picnics were common ways of fostering a sense of community. In YPF, company-sponsored festivities included distribution of toys for workers' children for Three Kings Day, the Christian feast of the Epiphany on January 6. Patriotic commemorations further contributed to building a sense of common belonging, in this case to the Argentine nation. Celebratory

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<sup>102</sup> Legajo No. 8110, AYPF.

gatherings were common in the town of Comodoro Rivadavia, but oil companies also contributed to cementing a sense of nationalism among their diverse population. Occasions such as May Revolution Day and Independence Day were observed with a religious ceremony and public gatherings both by the state-owned YPF and by the private companies. Beginning in the 1940s, the yearly celebration of Petroleum Day, in mid-December, provided another occasion for communal festivities that included dances, theatrical representations, a parade of floats from each company and other local organizations, and the election of the 'petroleum queen' selected among the daughters of oil workers. Petroleum Day festivities acquired an elaborate civil ritual during the 1940s and 1950s, encouraged at the local level by the military authorities that administered the territory of Comodoro Rivadavia and its oil company towns during the Peronist government, and by a country-wide sentiment of national pride promoted by the national government, particularly regarding economic activities considered central to the national interest such as oil production.<sup>103</sup>

Portuguese immigrants participated in these events and, judging from oral testimonies, considered themselves part of the larger community of oil workers. This sentiment is clear in the oral histories of migrants and their children who came of age from the 1930s to the 1950s. Food is used as a common metaphor to express this sentiment of belonging to a larger, multi-ethnic community of oil workers in these testimonies. It constitutes an extension of the idea of Argentine society as a melting pot that was prevalent in local and national narratives. "It was all a conglomerate [of nations]," said a Portuguese immigrant who grew up in Ferrocarrilera/Petroquímica company town. "You were used to eating foods from all nationalities. If there was sauerkraut, we ate sauerkraut. . . . Everyone ate everyone else's type of food."<sup>104</sup> The child of

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<sup>103</sup> Interviews; D'Angelis, *Album*, passim; *Cincuentenario de Comodoro Rivadavia*, passim; *Medio siglo de petróleo*, passim; Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," chap. 6; Torres, "Las relaciones laborales en YPF entre 1930 y 1955"; Márquez and Palma Godoy, *Comodoro Rivadavia*, 85–93, 100–6, 112–7, 119–21; Márquez, "Hacia la definición de un modelo de bienestar"; Edda Crespo, "Madres, esposas, reinas: Petróleo, mujeres y nacionalismo en Comodoro Rivadavia durante los años del primer peronismo," in *Cuando las mujeres reinaban: Belleza, virtud y poder en la Argentina del siglo XX*, ed. Mirta Lobato (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2005), 143–90.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Maria Francisca Viegas de Jesús and Maria João Bordeira de Parreira (2001). The quotation belongs to Maria Francisca.

Portuguese immigrants who also grew up in Km 8 expressed the idea of company towns' cosmopolitanism using similar imagery:

Our next door neighbor was Polish; and my father's supervisor, when he was a foreman, was a German; and also next door to us, there was another Portuguese. We all lived together without problems. So, for example, my mother learned how to prepare sauerkraut, just like they enjoyed the *filhoses* [Portuguese fried sweets] that my mother made for the New Year holidays.<sup>105</sup>

In spite of the dominant rhetoric about common identity and communal harmony, there were company-enforced differentiations among oil workers. Boundaries run along occupational rather than national or ethnic lines; they manifested themselves more clearly in a symbolic use of social space. In effect, white collar workers and high-ranking personnel had access to specific recreational and social facilities that were banned to blue collar workers and their families. Social clubs and casinos were for the exclusive use of the former, and a two-tier seating system in the company theaters kept blue and white collar workers' families separated. Subtle as they may have been, these distinctions left a clear mark on the collective memory of life in the company towns, as it is evident in the regular references to them in oral history testimonies.

A vibrant ethnic social life also developed in parallel with the leisure and commemorative activities sponsored by the oil companies and the state. It took place mostly in the town of Comodoro Rivadavia, which in addition to representing a space free of company control, also housed a diverse immigrant population linked to service activities and commerce, including a sizeable number of Portuguese immigrants. Like in other parts of Argentina, ethnic social life revolved mostly around the activities organized by immigrant associations, mainly by mutual aid societies.<sup>106</sup> Following the pioneer example of the local Spanish com-

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Julio Belchior (Comodoro Rivadavia, June 3, 1994).

<sup>106</sup> The scholarship on ethnic associations in Argentina is too vast to cite here fully. Some key examples include: Samuel Baily, "Las sociedades de ayuda mutua y el desarrollo de una comunidad italiana en Buenos Aires, 1858-1918," *Desarrollo Económico* 21, 84 (Jan.-Mar. 1982): 485-514; idem, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise*, 172-81, 191-5; Devoto and Fernández, "Asociacionismo étnico"; Fernando Devoto and Eduardo Míguez, eds., *Asociacionismo, trabajo e identidad étnica: Los italianos en América Latina en una perspectiva comparada* (Buenos Aires: CEMLA-CSER-IEHS, 1992); Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 277-305; Eduardo Hourcade, "La pampa gringa, invención de una sociabilidad europea en el desierto," in *Historia de la vida privada en la Argentina*, ed. Devoto and Madero, 2: 163-87; Xosé Núñez Seixas, "Asociacionismo local y movilización sociopolítica: Notas sobre los gallegos en Buenos Aires, 1890-1936," in

munity and several other immigrant groups, the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia founded a mutual aid society in October 1923.<sup>107</sup> The association provided assistance with medical and burial expenses, and represented the interests of Portuguese immigrants with the authorities and local society. The Portuguese Mutual Aid Association served immigrants living in Comodoro Rivadavia and all the surrounding company towns. Medical services were more crucial for Portuguese migrants who did not work in the oil companies and did not have access to health benefits. The leadership came from merchants, shopkeepers, commercial employees, and artisans settled in the town, along with a handful of key figures from the company towns.<sup>108</sup>

In addition to a crucial role in adaptation and mediation between Portuguese immigrants and the multiethnic local milieu, the Portuguese Association was the hub of ethnic life, providing a space for the recreation of immigrant solidarity and for ethnic celebration. Every year, week-long festivities commemorated both the anniversary of the Portuguese Republic of 1910 and the foundation of the organization (October 5 and 7, respectively). Frequented by hundreds of people, the Portuguese festival became a popular event in the town's social calendar. Considerable planning and resources were devoted each year for the October celebrations. Dances, popular fairs (popularly known in Argentina by the Dutch word *kermesse*), and other social and recreational activities took place during the week. The beginning of the festivities was announced with sound bombs and a marching band that performed around the main streets of downtown. The main evening was devoted to a celebration of patriotic spirit and ethnic pride through dance, music, and performances. Programs represented a cautious negotiation of ethnic celebration and a commemoration of the culture of the host society, evident in the inclusion of Argentine folkloric dances and songs as a counterbalance to the regional Portuguese dances, musical excerpts from popular Portuguese music-hall reviews, and theatrical

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Fernández and Moya, *La inmigración española, 195–233*; Bernasconi and Frid, *De Europa a las Américas*.

<sup>107</sup> D'Angeli, *Album*, passim.

<sup>108</sup> This analysis of ethnic life is based on interviews, coverage of social events in the local press (newspapers *El Chubut* and *El Rivadavia*) and in the Portuguese newspapers published in Buenos Aires (*Jornal Português* and *Ecos de Portugal*), and on the following sources produced by the local Portuguese Association: *Estatutos de la Asociación Portuguesa de Beneficencia y Socorros Mutuos de Comodoro Rivadavia*, 1935, 1950; and *Libros de actas, 1923–56*, AAPCR.

representations in Portuguese. These combinations certainly had the intention of appealing to a wider audience as well as to the taste of both first generation immigrants and their Argentine children.

A typical program started with the Argentine and Portuguese national anthems, and included dramatization of historical events, dances, music, poetry declamation, and short plays. Allegories and live tableaux provided moments of patriotic symbolism. Two in particular became staple features of these representations. Photographs from the 1930s and 1940s show the allegory of fraternity between Portugal and Argentina, personified by two young women dressed with tunics with the color of both countries' flags and Phrygian caps, holding the flags of Argentina and Portugal. Variations of this allegorical tableau included an honor guard of young women in sailor-suit dresses flanked by placards with fragments from an Argentine patriotic song and Portuguese national epic poem, Luís de Camões' *Os Lusíadas*; or a group of young men and women from the association in formal attire, accompanied by two boys guarding the Argentine and Portuguese national shields.<sup>109</sup> The most dramatic live tableau commemorated the Triumph of the Republic by depicting the showdown of Republican and loyalist forces at the Rotunda of Liberdade Avenue, in downtown Lisbon, and the death of the 'Rotunda heroes' celebrated in Portuguese patriotic texts, with a backdrop of a burning palace and a sun rising in the horizon signaling a new dawn. In addition to the October festivities, dances and other events were organized throughout the year as fundraisers for local projects (e.g., the municipal hospital), to contribute to victims of national catastrophes (e.g., earthquakes), and for social and humanitarian projects in Portugal (such as the building of a hospital in São Brás de Alportel or to aid victims of natural disasters). In the 1940s, the Portuguese association bought a movie theater and converted it into a dance hall and entertainment center; renamed *Salón Luso* (Portuguese Hall), it became the core of Portuguese social life for decades to come.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Some photographic depictions of ethnic celebrations and other social gatherings are available at the Resource Center of Dickinson College's Patagonia Mosaic project, <http://deila.dickinson.edu/patagonia/newsite/en/center/index.html>. See, for example, photographs PAT01799, PAT01800, PAT01812, PAT01598, and PAT01605. Image searches available at <http://deila.dickinson.edu/cdm4/search.php?CISOROOT=/patagon>. See also Illustrations 10 and 11, and cover illustration.

<sup>110</sup> "El Salón Luso: Seis décadas de vida social y cultural de la ciudad, 1942–2002," *Revista de la Asociación Portuguesa de Socorros Mutuos de Comodoro Rivadavia* 3, 3 (2001–2002): 33–7.

Assertion of ethnicity occurred in a context of multiculturalism celebrated by local society, for which the Portuguese festivities as well as similar events organized by the other ethnic associations throughout the year, constituted a central part of social life during the first five decades of the twentieth century. Also, Portuguese immigrants found ways of publicly asserting their belonging to the host society by participating in Argentine patriotic and civic celebrations. The 1920s and early 1930s was a period of heightened nationalism and nativism marked not only by the policy of 'Argentinization' of the state-owned company, but also by developments at the national level such as the 1930 military coup. Nationally and locally, there was a cultural resurgence of Argentine patriotism.<sup>111</sup> Tellingly, the first significant public manifestation honoring the host country occurred in 1931, as the Portuguese workers of YPF organized themselves to collect money for a bronze plaque to José de San Martín, Argentina's main hero of independence and its most revered historical figure. The week following the October festival, and coinciding with the holiday celebrating Columbus Day (which, in Argentina had become a tribute to the country's Spanish legacy), a commission of Portuguese immigrants gathered for the unveiling of the plaque. This well-attended ceremony included YPF's authorities and employees, and took place around the bust to General San Martín that faced the company's main administrative building. It was not only a manifestation of loyalty to their host country, but also to the company. The monument had been inaugurated in July 1930. In the words of General Enrique Mosconi, then YPF's director, it was erected as "an example of great civic virtues" and to "inspire the men who work in this distant place."<sup>112</sup> In representation of the Portuguese workers, David Luz Clara, a YPF white collar worker who was also a member of the Portuguese Association's board, reminded the Argentine audience of the "sincere and honorable effort of the Portuguese workers who had contributed with their honest labor to the growth of these oil fields" since oil was first discovered; and he urged his countrymen to "honor the Argentine fatherland that has sheltered us with its protective mantle as well as our remote fatherland that looks at us [with

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<sup>111</sup> Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 218–27; María Inés Barbero and Fernando Devoto, *Los nacionalistas* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983); David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History, and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>112</sup> Cited in Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns," 226.

pride].”<sup>113</sup> This was the only plaque from an immigrant community to be placed on this monument. A second plaque from the Portuguese community to General San Martín, “the Great Captain of the Andes,” was dedicated in the 1970s on a monument located in downtown Comodoro Rivadavia.

It would be much later, in the late 1990s, when the first public monument to the Portuguese community would be unveiled—a product of a general immigrant cultural resurgence, mostly among second- and third-generation descendants, encouraged by preparations for the centennial of the city’s foundation in 2001. A grand sculptoric group that rises at the beginning of a broad boulevard named Portugal Avenue, the monument combines symbolic elements of the Portuguese ‘spirit of discovery’ (a caravel that emerges from the opened pages of Luís de Camões’ *Os Lusíadas*) and of the pioneer character of Portuguese immigrants in Argentina (a migrant family arriving to their new land). Connecting the diverse elements to the land of arrival, the entire composition is set on a platform with the shape of the province of Chubut. Its inauguration coincided with the 75th anniversary of the Portuguese Association.<sup>114</sup>

For its part, Villa Elisa also acquired spatial markers of Portuguese ethnicity over the years, but in an understated way. It started with the dedication of one of the main streets to Portugal’s national poet Luís de Camões in 1949, followed by the naming of a cluster of three smaller streets closer to the flower gardens—after Portugal, the university city of Coimbra, and Batalha (which commemorates the key battle of Aljubarrota that sealed the defeat of the Castilian troops and the independence of Portugal in 1385).<sup>115</sup> The most distinct manifestations of ethnic social life were concentrated in the city of La Plata—beginning in the early 1930s, with the foundation of a Portuguese Mutual Aid Society, and continuing through the 1940s and 1950s with the creation of the Portuguese Club, the Social and Cultural Portuguese Committee, and later the Portuguese House. Spearheaded and largely financed by local ethnic leader and entrepreneur António Bento das Neves, these institutions

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<sup>113</sup> “Los portugueses homenajearon al Libertador,” *El Chubut*, Oct. 14, 1931; 6. Libro de registro de socios and Libros de actas, AAPCR.

<sup>114</sup> “Monumento al inmigrante portugués,” *Revista de la Asociación Portuguesa de Socorros Mutuos de Comodoro Rivadavia* 2, 2 (1999–2000): 43. Images of the monument are available at the Resource Center of the Patagonia Mosaic project cited above. See photographs PAT00142 and PAT00144.

<sup>115</sup> *Ecos de Portugal*, Sept. 30, 1949.

provided their members with typical mutualist services (e.g., medical and burial assistance), but with time their cultural and recreational functions became more important. As in Comodoro Rivadavia, the high point in the calendar of these associations was the yearly commemoration of the 1910 Revolution that marked the beginning of the Portuguese Republic. The Portuguese Club and the Social and Cultural Committee also commemorated Portugal's restoration of independence from Spain and the instauration of the Braganza dynasty in 1640, observed on December 1. The latter was a popular patriotic commemoration in Portugal that pre-dated and survived the advent of the Republic.<sup>116</sup> Including orations to the Argentine and Portuguese flags and poetry and music from both countries, programs for these festivities were of a decidedly eclectic nature. Portuguese associations honored their cultural heritage and patriotic spirit while affirming their allegiance to the host country. In a way characteristic of the assertion of this double allegiance, the 1957 event to observe the Restoration of Portuguese independence culminated with a public homage to Argentine hero José de San Martín, in one of La Plata's central squares. Portuguese immigrants from Villa Elisa belonged to these organizations, but their participation seemed to have been limited by distance to the city center.<sup>117</sup>

Among the Portuguese gardeners of Villa Elisa, social life developed locally as an extension of family and neighborhood ties. Ethnicity was not at the forefront of social activities, but embedded in events and initiatives linked to the improvement of neighborhood life and the promotion of gardening interests. The focal point of local social life was the Curuzú Cuatiá, a social club and neighborhood association created in 1946. Located on General Belgrano Road, in the heart of

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<sup>116</sup> Maria Isabel João, *Memória e império: Comemorações em Portugal, 1880-1960* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian-Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, 2002), 75-7. Interestingly, the commemoration of Luís de Camões, on June 10, that became known as Portugal Day and promoted during the era of the Estado Novo's dictatorship, was not popular among the Portuguese in Argentina. In Brazil, by contrast, it became the main celebration of the Portuguese immigrant community. See Heloisa Paulo, *Aqui também é Portugal: A colônia portuguesa do Brasil e o Salazarismo* (Coimbra: Quarteto Editora, 2000), 278-83.

<sup>117</sup> *Jornal Português*: Mar. 16, 1934; Aug. 10, 1934; Sept. 20, 1934; Mar. 5, 1935; July 3, 1937; July 25, 1939; *Ecos de Portugal*: Sept. 10, 1934; Oct. 12, 1934; Oct. 5, 1940; Mar. 31, 1941; Sept. 30, 1941; Nov. 30, 1941; Oct. 31, 1944; Aug. 31, 1945; Oct. 22, 1957; Dec. 15, 1957; *Boletín de la Sociedad Portuguesa de Socorros Mutuos* (Buenos Aires) 7, 43 (1944): 85-6. Interviews with José Dias Pereira; and Juan Martins Barriga. Legajo de la Casa de Portugal Virgen de Fátima (14427), ADPPJ. See Illustration 12.



Portuguese gardening, the association was born with a clear mission: to work for the “urban needs” of the community and to “foment and stimulate the members’ sociability and sporting spirit.”<sup>118</sup> The original statutes and bylaws elaborated on the association goals stating that it sought to provide the local community with “the urban improvements that its constant progress deserves and, at the same time, to foment social, cultural, and sports activities.” Some of its projects included the creation of an elementary school and a first aid facility for the neighborhood, public lighting and bus shelters on the main thoroughfare, the extension of telephone lines, and the upgrading of bus services. In addition, the association was committed to organizing social gatherings, dances, and *kermesses*, as well as a local soccer team. The Curuzú Cuatiá also became a channel of communication with local and provincial authorities who recognized its standing in the community by attending ceremonies and social events.

By combining neighborhood promotion and recreation, the Curuzú Cuatiá Club represented a type of socialization in tune with the sociopolitical climate of the 1940s and 1950s that downplayed social differences such as class or ethnicity and emphasized the idea of working for the common good. Neighborhood clubs and associations thrived during the first half of the twentieth century as important outlets for social life and popular participation, adapting to changing political circumstances. In particular, *sociedades de fomento* (neighborhood improvement organizations) functioned as platforms for lobbying government officials for infrastructure or to organize the neighbors themselves to work on common projects. Along with neighborhood clubs, these associations became the main centers of communal social life in working- and middle-class neighborhoods throughout the country.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Copy of Minutes, Acta No. 1, Aug. 3, 1946, Legajo del Centro de Fomento Curuzú Cuatiá (12120/nov.), ADPPJ (hereafter Legajo Curuzú Cuatiá). Unless otherwise noted, information on this organization comes from the documentation included in its petition of legal status to the provincial government in 1969 (including copies of minutes, balance sheets, membership lists, lists of board members, and correspondence); from interviews with Francisco Mendes, Manuel Alferes dos Ramos, and Adelino Mendes Amaro; and from historical profiles published in the local press, usually around the time of its anniversary. See profiles published in *El Día*, Aug. 3, 1961; Aug. 3, 1963; Aug. 3, 1966; Aug. 13, 1968; Jan. 2, 1971; and Sept. 14, 1982.

<sup>119</sup> Omar Acha, “Sociedad civil y sociedad política durante el primer peronismo,” *Desarrollo Económico* 44, 174 (July–Sept. 2004): 199–230; Eduardo Elena, “What People Want: State Planning and Political Participation in Peronist Argentina, 1946–1955,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37, 1 (Feb. 2005): 81–108. For an earlier period

Even though it was named after a city in the Argentine province of Corrientes, the Curuzú Cuatiá was largely a Portuguese social space and became popularly known as the 'Portuguese club.'<sup>120</sup> In the 1960s, over half of its members were Portuguese or Argentines of Portuguese descent, as was 40 percent of the Board; the overwhelming majority of them were gardeners (over 80 percent).<sup>121</sup> Evocatively, the association's distinctive colors were the red and green of the Portuguese flag, and its shield included the traditional Portuguese coat of arms framed by the armillary sphere that celebrated Portugal's overseas expansion. Thus, symbols closely associated to Portuguese identity and heritage decorated the association's meetings and festivals. At the height of its popularity, the Curuzú Cuatiá developed a full program of community activities, including the sponsorship of the local elementary school and charitable organizations, collaboration with health campaigns, and lobbying the local government for services and infrastructure. It also became one of Villa Elisa's main social and recreation centers, whose dances attracted large audiences with big radio names, such as the renowned tango orchestras of Feliciano Brunelli and Juan D'Arienzo. In addition to partaking in festivals and dances with the most Argentine of musical expressions, Portuguese immigrants and their families could 'kill some nostalgia' (*matar saudades*, as the Portuguese expression goes) by playing the traditional Portuguese game of *malha* and by listening to popular

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(and a different interpretation about the adaptability of these organizations during the Peronist era), see Leandro Gutiérrez and Luis Alberto Romero, *Sectores populares, cultura y política: Buenos Aires en la entreguerra* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1995).

<sup>120</sup> The name was the result of a fortuitous circumstance. The association began as a joint initiative of a group of Portuguese flower gardeners and Vicente Edreira, an Argentine neighbor whose wife was from Curuzú Cuatiá. Well-respected in the area, Edreira was able to gain the support of other people in the community. Cultural and language fluency clearly made him the visible head of the initiative and that influenced the decision about the association's name. According to oral testimonies, the decision was initially resisted by many Portuguese members, but in the end it was accepted as the association was open to members regardless of their nationalities. The association has been known as the 'Portuguese club' ever since, particularly in reference to its soccer team. See, for example, *El Día*, Dec. 9, 1961; *El Día*, Nov. 19, 1962; *Diario Hoy*, July 8, 2007 (Sports Supplement); "Curuzú Cuatiá: El nombre de un club en Villa Elisa," *Diario de Curuzú* (Curuzú Cuatiá), Mar. 11, 2008, <http://www.eldiariodecuruzu.com>.

<sup>121</sup> Calculations based on the membership list cross-referenced with marriage records. I only used male members for this calculation, as women's names were not always included in full in the membership list. Legajo Curuzú Cuatiá; Libros de matrimonios, 1934–50, ANSCT; Libros de matrimonio, 1939–80, ASLGV; Libros de matrimonios, Villa Elisa, Partido de La Plata, 1910–80, ARPPBA.

Portuguese musicians who visited Villa Elisa such as accordionists Eugénia de Lima and Felipe de Brito.<sup>122</sup> This neighborhood association also sponsored other activities that were central to the interests of Portuguese immigrants, particularly in their role of flower gardeners. In effect, it was the Curuzú Cuatiá that spearheaded the organization of an exhibit to showcase Villa Elisa's (and the Portuguese community's) most distinctive activity. This event was coorganized with the flower gardeners' Transportation Cooperative—another organization that was largely Portuguese.<sup>123</sup> The flower exhibit provided an opportunity for gardeners to show their production, for the community to cultivate its image as a flourishing gardening center, and for Portuguese immigrants to assert their role as pioneers in the economic activity that had transformed Villa Elisa.

It is telling that the Portuguese immigrants of Villa Elisa opted for social organizations that developed around community and economic interests over more outward manifestations of ethnicity. It was not only the spirit of the times when associations like the Curuzú Cuatiá were created, but also the result of a deliberate strategy of adaptation. Portuguese gardeners fashioned a self-presentation of their immigrant experience that was intrinsically connected to their experience as flower gardeners and community builders. For the Portuguese of Villa Elisa, ethnicity and occupational identity became inseparable, and this image mirrored the prevailing view of the Portuguese community in the local society.

The public consolidation of this image occurred during the 1960s with the organization of the Villa Elisa's flower exposition. The press coverage of this event consistently credited Portuguese migrants with the transformation of Villa Elisa into a "thriving" and "progressive" locality by likening their role in the community's history to that of pioneers in a new land. "In those days, settling around here was practically an adventure," read one of the newspaper profiles. "True colonizers, the first settlers of Villa Elisa had to 'survive' in an unfamiliar space, completely devoid of the most basic amenities to make the experience more

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<sup>122</sup> Popular Portuguese musicians such as Eugénia de Lima, Maria da Luz, and Tristão da Silva also visited Comodoro Rivadavia in the 1950s and 1960s to perform at the Portuguese Association's Portuguese Hall.

<sup>123</sup> Interviews; "Las rosas que se cultivan en Villa Elisa expondrán en el Club Curuzú Cuatiá," *El Día*, Dec. 13, 1973; Manuel Carrusca, "Cuarenta y seis años después" and "Así nació la ExpoFlor: Reportaje a Alberto Ferreira, secretario del Club Curuzú Cuatiá," both in *Revista Expo Flor La Plata '92* (1992): 5, 9.

‘palatable’ for subsistence.”<sup>124</sup> With the title “The Portuguese Contribution,” a 1965 article credited Portuguese immigrants with transforming Villa Elisa into a prosperous place through flower gardening, stating: “These conditions that constitute the very essence of Villa Elisa today [flower gardening] did not come about by chance, but are the result of the constant labor of a group of men that have given the best they have to contribute to its positive development.”<sup>125</sup> In a similar tone, a 1967 article celebrated the work of Portuguese immigrants as the unseen force of Villa Elisa’s development:

Travelers on their way to the city of Buenos Aires often admire the signs of Villa Elisa’s progress, for example, the buildings along the roads or the railroad line. Deeper inside, however, where the shimmering silhouettes of the greenhouses can be seen, it is where lies one of the most expressive reasons to understand its progress and not few of its virtues as a community. Dispersed amid lush vegetation and applied to its gardening skills, the Portuguese community works vigorously since the beginning of the century, creating a rich well of resources and employment for the region. . . . With faith and effort, the arduous labor of Portuguese migrants has transformed terrains that were practically uncultivated in 1900 into the parceled, fragrant, and colorful checkerboard that today is Villa Elisa.<sup>126</sup>

The local press presented Portuguese flower gardeners as the epitome of successful integration. As the writer of the article quoted above put it—evocatively making use of the possessive form—in the fields of Villa Elisa one can find “our Portuguese: hard-working flower gardeners and enterprising citizens.”<sup>127</sup> Their collective achievement was celebrated both as proof of the welcoming nature of the host country (“a generous soil,” as an article called it) and the Portuguese immigrants’ capacity to transplant their qualities as industrious individuals and concerned neighbors (“the Portuguese spirit”) into new soil.<sup>128</sup> The active participation of Portuguese flower gardeners in civil associations like Curuzú Cuatiá further reinforced their image as community builders.

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<sup>124</sup> *La Gaceta*, Dec. 6, 1969, 11. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>125</sup> *El Día*, Dec. 10, 1965, 8.

<sup>126</sup> *El Día*, Dec. 8, 1967, 10.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> References to the “generous soil” of Argentina as a land of immigration and to the “Portuguese spirit” in “Curuzú Cuatiá ¿Latitud lusitana?,” *El Día*, Dec. 9, 1961, 12. See also the profiles of the Portuguese community of Villa Elisa and their contribution to local development in *El Día*, Nov. 19, 1962; *El Día*, Dec. 10, 1965; Sept. 28, 1980; and *La Gaceta*, Dec. 8, 1967; Dec. 6, 1969.

The closest it came to a public ethnic manifestation during this time was the construction of a chapel in honor of the Virgin of Fátima, Portugal's own Marian devotion and a powerful symbol of Portuguese popular culture. The chapel was dedicated in mid-May 1967, to coincide with Fatima's festivity in the Catholic calendar, and the occasion was marked with a popular procession from Villa Elisa's parish church attended by a large crowd. The guest list included prominent Argentine and Portuguese figures, such as the mayor of La Plata, the mayor of Lisbon, and the civil governors of Lisbon and Funchal (Madeira).<sup>129</sup> The significance of the occasion for local Portuguese families was evident. Far from ethnically exclusive, however, the initiative was embraced by the community at large, as Marian devotion was a practice that easily crossed national lines. Funding for the temple came from donations from neighbors, the proceeds of flower shows, and the support of the Curuzú Cuatiá Club, whose authorities presented the project as another example of their commitment to community improvement.<sup>130</sup>

Only in the early 1980s did the Portuguese of Villa Elisa fully embrace the development of an ethnic institution when the Portuguese House of La Plata built a social and recreation center and, with it, ethnic social life shifted to Villa Elisa.<sup>131</sup> This center has become the site of multi-generational socialization for Portuguese families in Villa Elisa and environs. As in the case of the Portuguese Association of Comodoro Rivadavia, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a resurgence of ethnic activity. By then, it was mainly post-World War II Portuguese migrants (who had arrived in Argentina as children or young adults), and second- and third-generation Portuguese-Argentines who engaged in commemoration of Portuguese heritage through social gatherings, festivals, and performance, sponsoring dancing and musical groups that celebrate Portuguese culture.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> *El Día*, Dec. 26, 1964; May 16, 1967. In Comodoro Rivadavia, a statue of the Virgin of Fátima—imported from Portugal—was donated by a local Portuguese resident for a chapel situated in the company town of Km 8.

<sup>130</sup> *El Día*, Aug. 3, 1966; Jan. 2, 1971.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with Adelino Mendes Amaro; Helena Carreiras et al., "Portuguese Gauchos: Associations, Social Integration and Collective Identity in Twenty-First Century Argentina, Uruguay and Southern Brazil," *Portuguese Studies Review* 15, 2, forthcoming.

<sup>132</sup> The revival among Portuguese associations in Argentina at the turn of the twenty-first century is the result of a national trend as well as of a concerted effort by the Portuguese government to refashion its relationship with the Portuguese communities abroad for cultural and political purposes. For an introduction to relevant

## CONCLUSION

There were important contrasts between the petroleum company towns of Comodoro Rivadavia and the gardens of Villa Elisa as places of settlement and work. Unlike the mining and industrial environment of the former, the intensive rural activities and family labor of the latter offered the Portuguese immigrants the possibility of continuing with patterns of work closer to those of the homeland. The possibilities of the places of settlement and their socioeconomic strategies also influenced the economic adaptation of female migrants and of immigrants' children. Continuities across generations were also greater in Villa Elisa than in Comodoro Rivadavia. The typical Portuguese male immigrant in Comodoro Rivadavia was a wage worker; in Villa Elisa, he was an independent producer and small landowner. This contrasting socioeconomic profile influenced immigrants' strategies such as length of stay and transition to family migration as well as their approach to labor-capital relations. In Comodoro Rivadavia, the first decades of the twentieth century were characterized by labor mobilization, and Portuguese workers participated in it actively. Once oil companies shifted their approach from confrontation to gaining the support of their workers (and securing a stable labor force) by cultivating an image of mutual collaboration among the members of a larger 'petroleum family,' Portuguese migrants became model workers/citizens of the oil company towns. This coincided with a transition from temporary migration to long-term settlement among Portuguese migrant workers. Thus, their goals became job stability and better opportunities for the second generation. Among the Portuguese of Villa Elisa, the incentive of economic independence through land ownership contributed to their early transition to family migration and long-term or permanent settlement. It also situated them in a different place in the capital-labor equation. Wage and dependent work were seen by migrants as transient

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issues regarding the changing relationship of the Portuguese state and Portuguese emigration, and its cultural manifestations among immigrant associations, see Bela Feldman-Bianco, "Multiple Layers of Time and Space: The Construction of Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Among Portuguese Immigrants," in *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered*, ed., Nina Glick Schiller et al. (New York: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1992), 145–74; Brettell, "The Emigrant, the Nation, and the State"; Paulo, *Aqui também é Portugal*; Kimberly Dacosta Holton, *Performing Folklore: Ranchos Folclóricos from Lisbon to Newark* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

conditions, and sacrifices were accepted as obstacles to be overcome in their ascent in the agricultural ladder. A community of proprietors, Portuguese gardeners saw family labor and ethnic ties as a reassurance in times of labor volatility.

There were also similarities among Portuguese migrants in both immigrant communities, most importantly the central role played by ties between kin and *paisanos* in their settlement and subsequent socioeconomic adaptation. Networks proved resilient and adaptable to changing circumstances. The analysis of marriage practices showed continuity as well as changes and adaptation. Social ties were recreated and new ones emerged as a result of the migration experience itself as well as from the interaction in the places of work and settlement. If premigratory networks were clearly influential in patterns of marriage selection, equally important were migrants' occupations and labor experience, as they gave immigrant men and women and their children access to alternative social spaces. In this respect, the differences in patterns of marriage selection between farming and commercial/clerical activities are very telling. Cultural practices and social mores were also significant. Thus, the spaces of Portuguese women revolved more around the home and the familiar world of other Portuguese families, resulting in more marriages within the immigrant group. Variations were greater in the industrial world of Comodoro Rivadavia and continuities more visible in Villa Elisa, where Portuguese immigrants developed a tightly knit gardening community. Despite the influence of the nature of receiving societies on socioeconomic adaptation, social ties proved resilient and adaptable to the immigrant experience in both communities.

Judging from the socioeconomic profiles of immigrants and their children, the overall success of the strategies of adaptation of migrants who decided to stay in Argentina was clear, resulting in occupational mobility and a trajectory to independent gardening and landownership among the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa, respectively. Here too kin and *paisano* ties were instrumental; they facilitated both processes, and, in the case of Villa Elisa, provided the foundations of an ethnic economic niche. These were not rigidly segmented labor markets. When Portuguese migrants arrived, both communities were experiencing crucial economic transformations. Portuguese migrants both benefited and contributed to that change. In these veritable societies-in-the-making, possibilities of sociooccupational mobility were

enhanced by migrants' access to ties of family and *paisano* sponsorship. Subsequent migrants were able to tap into these ethnic resources.

Evaluating the success of those who returned is more difficult. It needs to be remembered, however, that returning was the earlier objective of almost all migrants from whom toiling the soil in the pampas or drilling for oil in Patagonia was considered a way to economic independence at home in Portugal. Rates of return migration and countless family stories attest to the relative success of this strategy of temporary migration. Far from the dazzling success stories of *brasileiros*, *argentinos*, and *americanos* that made it rich, migrants' achievements were measured in more modest yet tangible ways: another plot of land for sejourners; a stable job or a position as an independent gardener for those who chose permanent settlement and family migration; better opportunities for their children for all of them. In an experience like migration that is largely evaluated by before-and-after comparisons, stories of disappointment and failure also exist. In most migrants' narratives, these stories serve to highlight the values that made a positive experience possible—perseverance, hard work, thriftiness. Migrants developed strategies to minimize adverse circumstances, namely long-lasting, adaptable social networks that gave them access to information, assistance, and a familiar social world. Stories of those who tried but did not make it—either as returnees or settlers—served also as reminders of all that escaped migrants' control—shifting economic tides, government policies, personal health.

In their Argentine communities, Portuguese immigrants and their families participated in forms of civil society that served their needs and represented their multifaceted experiences as migrants, oil workers, and flower gardeners; and that accommodated to generational shifts and changing sociopolitical and cultural circumstances. Associations acted as bridges with the local community while providing spaces for socialization, recreation of ethnic and social ties, and cultural celebration. For the Portuguese of Villa Elisa, this was another manifestation of their identity as flower gardeners and community members. The social life of the Portuguese of Comodoro Rivadavia adjusted both to the reality of the company towns, where they embraced their role as workers and members of the larger 'petroleum family,' and to the multicultural world of the town of Comodoro Rivadavia. They were immigrant workers and settlers in a community that emphasized its



pioneer nature and that celebrated the contributions of both. In both communities, immigrants combined celebrations of cultural heritage with clear manifestations of commitment to the host country. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Portuguese associations of Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa experienced increased social activity and an ethno-cultural revival. Firmly established in Argentina over three generations, many Portuguese-Argentine families found in expressions of cultural ethnicity a way of celebrating their contribution to the making of modern Argentina while asserting their connection to Portugal's historical legacy as a 'nation of emigrants.'

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- Arquivo da Diocese de Faro
  - Nota dos livros de registo parochial dos roes de confessados
- Arquivo Distrital de Faro
  - Fundo Governo Civil
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    - Correspondência
    - Livros de registo de passaportes
    - Livros de recenseamento eleitoral
    - Processos de passaporte
  - Fundo Registo Paroquial
    - Livros de baptismos, casamentos, mistos, óbitos
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  - Livros de recenseamentos militares
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## INDEX

- adaptation  
  social and economic 6–8, 22–23, 155–156, 190–191, 210, 295–298, 299–300, 301–303  
  as seen through marriage  
    patterns 265–267, 268, 274–277, 283  
  *See also* marriage patterns;  
    occupational mobility
- Aeroposta Argentina 142
- age  
  and migration 9, 58–59, 92, 92n60, 174, 213n4, 232n35  
  and occupational mobility 222, 223–224, 246–250  
  marriages by 213n4, 230, 232n35, 249
- agriculture. *See* farming
- agricultural calendar 26–27
- agricultural ladder 241–246, 249, 253, 281, 302  
  *See also* occupational mobility
- Aguiar, Armando de 201, 209, 275
- Albufeira (Portugal) 30, 39, 41, 63, 101, 158, 159, 159n34, 185
- Alcoutim (Portugal) 89
- Aldeia Galega (Portugal) 97
- Alentejo (Portugal) 27, 29, 32, 49, 50, 107  
  Algarvian migration to 27, 44, 56, 57, 59, 60, 71, 72, 76, 77, 88–89, 91–93, 95–96, 96–98, 102, 105, 106, 110n117, 172, 210, 254  
  migrants from 97, 90n51
- Algarve  
  administrative organization 29, 29n10, 29n11  
  geography and physical  
    description 29–30  
  comparison with Africa 30–32  
  comparison with Minho region 32, 35–36, 49  
  comparison with southern Spain 32, 88  
  comparison with the Alentejo region 32, 32n17, 49, 88  
  internal migration within 57, 59, 60
- Algarvian migrants  
  in Argentina 11–14, 18, 22  
  in Buenos Aires 11, 18–20  
  in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa 139–140, 157–159, 169–173, 183–186, 263–264  
  *See also* by particular destinations and  
    by specific topics
- Algarve, O 93, 101, 103, 108n112, 121, 123
- Algarve e Alentejo 104
- Algeciras (Spain) 71
- Alhos Vedros (Portugal) 97
- Aljubarrota, Battle of 294
- Aljustrel Mines (Portugal) 57, 95, 172
- Almancil (Portugal) 96, 102, 102n92, 102n93, 103, 159n38, 163, 173n55, 180n75, 181
- Almeida (Portugal) 12
- Alte (Portugal) 41, 158, 159, 159n38
- Alvear (Argentina) 132
- Alves, Jorge Fernandes 81n21
- Ancião (Portugal) 165n42, 262
- Andalusia (Spain) 45  
  migration to 27, 28, 56, 57, 58, 71, 72, 75–77, 78–79, 84–91, 93–96, 102, 105, 125, 254
- Andes Mountains 142, 172
- Anglo-Boer War 147
- Angola  
  migration to 75, 116, 118, 118n136, 119, 120, 135, 136
- Anthony of Lisbon, Saint 199
- António, Manuel 132
- apprenticeship  
  in the oil industry 216, 221, 222–225, 264
- Argentina  
  Algarvian migration to 2–4, 38, 57–58, 60–61, 71, 72, 77, 110, 111, 112, 113–115, 121–123, 124–125, 125–127, 133–136, 136–138  
  immigration in 5, 6–7  
  migration policy in 5, 72, 129–130, 131–132, 205, 207  
  nationalism in 129–130, 289, 293  
  phases of Portuguese immigration to 5–20

- territorial consolidation of 16  
*See also* under other topics
- Argentinization policy 148n14, 263, 293
- Arroja, Manuel 220
- Arturo Seguí (Argentina) 190, 191
- associations 20, 179, 182, 188, 199, 201, 202, 202–203, 290–294, 294–300, 303, 304
- Astra Companhia Argentina de  
 Petróleo 145, 146, 147, 148, 174, 222, 223–224, 262–264, 283, 288  
*See also* Km 20 company town
- Avellaneda (Argentina) 240n47
- Australia  
 migration to 77n9, 117
- Aves de Rapina* (Passos) 114
- Ayamonte (Spain) 85, 86, 87n42, 94
- Azores (Portugal)  
 emigration from 115n130, 127  
 immigrants in Argentina from 8
- Baganha, Maria 113, 128n149, 168n45
- Bahia dos Tigres (Angola) 119
- Baily, Samuel 21n34, 265n84
- Bandeirinha family 57
- baptisms  
 and vital records in the  
 Algarve 65n92, 157n34  
 by parents' nationality in Villa  
 Elisa 153, 154
- Barracosa, José 171–172, 172n53
- Barcelos (Portugal) 14
- Barreiro (Portugal) 97, 98n80, 107
- Barriga, José 121, 135
- Barroca, José Gago 184n86
- Bastos, Cristiana 50, 53n76
- Batalha*. *See* Aljubarrota
- Beiras (Portugal) 50  
 internal migration from 97  
 migration to 27, 44, 97  
 immigrants in Argentina from  
 11–12, 14, 18, 164n42, 164–165,  
 165n43, 262–264
- Beja (Portugal) 33, 92, 95, 107
- Berot, Pierre 32
- Benguela (Angola) 135
- birth rates  
 in Boliqueime and São Brás de  
 Alportel 63–65, 65n92
- boarding. *See* female work
- Boer immigrants in Argentina 147
- Boletim de Emigração* 130–131
- Boliqueime (Portugal) 28, 38–39,  
 42–43, 161, 163, 209
- emigration from 21, 54–59, 66–67,  
 69, 90–91, 92n60, 102, 111
- immigrants in Argentina from 157,  
 157n34, 158–163, 159n38, 165,  
 184n86, 185–186, 191–192,  
 195–196, 206, 209, 251  
 population and demography 39–40,  
 62–63, 66–67  
*See also* by specific topics
- Bolivia  
 migration to 72, 130, 131, 132
- Bolivian immigrants in Argentina 245
- Bonacich, Edna 258
- Bonnet, Charles 30
- Borrvalho, Catarina Charneca 177
- Bosques (Argentina) 199
- Braga (Portugal) 33  
 immigrants in Argentina from 8,  
 18
- Bragança (Portugal) 164
- Braganza monarchy 85, 295  
*brasileiros*. *See* return migrants
- Brazil  
 migration policy in 127, 128–129  
 migration to 2, 3, 56, 77, 112,  
 115–117, 122–123, 123–125,  
 125–127, 132–133, 133–136,  
 136–138, 195, 196n110, 295n116  
 nationalism in 128–129  
*See also* under other topics
- Brettell, Caroline 61n87, 84n28, 112,  
 196n110
- Brites, Geraldino 27, 93, 94
- British immigrants in Gibraltar 79
- Brito, Amelia de 171
- Brito, Felipe de 298
- Brito, Joaquim de 170–171
- Brunelli, Feliciano 297
- Buenos Aires, city of (Argentina) 6,  
 141, 142, 143, 205, 216, 240, 240n47,  
 250, 265, 272  
 Portuguese immigrants in 6–9,  
 16–20, 103, 112, 121, 135, 136, 172,  
 182, 195, 200
- Buenos Aires, province of  
 (Argentina) 16, 17–18, 183, 205,  
 236, 272  
 Portuguese immigrants in 71, 172,  
 182–183, 188, 273, 273n91
- Bulgarian immigrants in  
 Argentina 141n5, 148, 224
- business  
 migration as 107–108, 197–205,  
 206  
*See also* migration agents

- Cabreira, Thomaz 32  
 Cacela (Portugal) 112  
 Cachopo (Portugal) 41  
 Cádiz (Spain) 89–90, 91, 105n102  
 Caldeirão Mountains (Portugal) 29  
 California (USA)  
   migration to 72, 135, 136  
 Camões, Luís de 199, 292, 294,  
   295n116  
 Campana (Argentina) 141  
 Canada  
   migration to 117  
 Cañadón Lagarto (Argentina) 170–171  
 Caparica (Portugal) 98  
 Carlos, Mateus 195–196  
 Carneirinho family 150  
 Carrascalão, António Viegas 171,  
   172n53  
 Carrascalão Junior, António  
   Viegas 139  
 cart manufacturers. *See* transportation  
 Casablanca (Morocco) 99  
 Casbas (Argentina) 18  
 Castelo Branco (Portugal)  
   migration to 97  
   immigrants in Argentina from 14,  
   164, 164n42, 165n43  
 Castile (Spain) 75, 84  
 Catalonia (Spain) 75, 87n38  
 Cavaco, Carminda 47  
 Cavaco, José 190–191  
 celebrations 284–286, 288–289,  
   291–294, 295, 297–298, 300, 303–304  
 chain migration 139–140, 254  
   and ethnic middlemen 197–205  
   and family migration 179–182,  
   189–191, 206, 207–208, 275–276  
   and labor migration 170–179,  
   185–189  
   and social space 157–165  
   and re-migration 182–183, 192  
   broken links of 193–196  
   definitions of 155–157, 165–169  
   pioneers of 168, 169–170, 183–186,  
   206, 208  
   secondary regional flows of  
   164–165, 164n42, 165n43, 262–264,  
   263n78  
   strong and weak links of 256–257,  
   262n75  
   *See also* occupational chains; social  
   networks  
 children 51n70  
   and migration 81, 82, 95, 174, 180,  
   180n75, 181, 182, 213–216  
   and work 27, 228, 229, 251  
 Chilean immigrants in Argentina 147,  
   148, 148n14, 269, 277  
 Chubut, province of (Argentina) 16,  
   17, 18, 22, 200, 268n87, 294  
 Chubut Valley 143  
 Cinco Reis, José Coelho 90  
 Civil Code of 1867 (Portugal) 35–36  
 clandestine migration 11n21, 71–72,  
   86, 88, 99, 104–105, 105n102,  
   130–133, 132n163  
 Clara, David Luz 293–294  
 Coelho, Francisco 49  
 Coelho, Manuel 121, 135  
 Coimbra (Portugal) 164, 164n42, 262,  
   294  
 colonial migration 5–7, 84–85  
   *See also* Portuguese Africa  
 Comissariado Geral dos Serviços  
   de Emigração. *See* Portuguese  
   Emigration Agency  
 commerce and migration  
   in Brazil 119, 125  
   in Gibraltar and southern Spain 79,  
   79n12, 81, 83–86  
   in Portuguese Africa 119  
 Comodoro Rivadavia (Argentina)  
   description and landscape 141–142,  
   143–146  
   historical background 143, 145  
   population and immigration  
   147–149  
   Portuguese immigrants in 16, 17,  
   18, 22–23, 135, 139–140, 148–149,  
   158, 159–160, 164, 164n42, 165,  
   169–183, 192  
   *See also* by specific topics  
 Companhia União Fabril 97  
 company towns 143–149, 174, 181,  
   209, 225, 259, 283  
   housing in 181, 200, 200n120, 229,  
   231, 287–288  
   in California 72  
   leisure and social life in 283,  
   288–289, 290  
   social control in 263, 288  
   social space in 283, 287, 288–289,  
   289–290  
   *See also* by specific company town  
 Compañía Ferrocarrilera de  
   Petróleo 145, 145n11, 147, 148, 173,

- 220–221, 222–223, 230, 260–261, 264, 283, 288  
*See also* Km 8 company town  
 comparative approach 22  
 Conceição, Faro (Portugal) 26, 37  
 confessional rolls 47–48, 51n70, 53, 54, 55n77, 58, 59, 59n84, 60, 66  
 Constitution of 1853 (Argentina) 129  
 consular reports 9, 11, 17, 80–81, 83–84, 99, 105, 105n102, 123, 131  
 Cooperative of Flower Gardeners of Villa Elisa 188, 188n94, 240, 258, 258n73, 298  
 Córdoba (Argentina) 16, 17, 18  
 Córdoba (Spain) 85  
 cork industry 44–45, 47, 97, 98n80, 101  
   and temporary migration 44, 96–98, 98n80  
 Costa, Afonso 118n134  
 Costa Rica  
   migration to 130  
 Counts of Azambuja 44  
 county  
   Portuguese immigrants in Argentina by 12–15  
 Cova da Piedade (Portugal) 97  
 Covilhã (Portugal) 165n42  
 Crawford, Oswald 30  
 Cruz, Francisco 181  
 Cuba  
   migration to 130–131  
 Curaçao  
   migration to 130  
 Curuzú Cuatiá Club of Villa Elisa 295–298, 297n120, 299, 300  
   *See also* ethnic life; leisure and social life  
 Danish immigrants in Argentina 17n27, 198n112  
 D'Arienzo, Juan 297  
*Daughter of Time, The* (Tey) 23  
 Deán Funes School, Comodoro Rivadavia 223–224  
   *See also* education  
 demography. *See* population  
 Descamps, Paul 25, 26, 27, 32, 36n30, 37, 38, 45n59, 47, 98, 98n80  
 destination selection 121–138  
 Diadema Argentina 145, 174, 283  
   *See also* Km 27 company town  
 district  
   Portuguese immigrants in Argentina by 8, 11–12, 14  
 Dias, José 201–203, 202n126, 205  
*Dia dos prodígios, O* (Jorge) 209  
*Distrito de Faro, O* 3–4, 104n101  
 Diniz, Dom, King of Portugal 44  
 domestic group. *See* households  
 domestic service  
   and female migration 59, 79n13, 82  
   limits among Portuguese immigrant families for 227, 231  
 Dominican Republic  
   migration to 130  
 Dourado, Manuel 49  
 Douro region (Portugal) 76  
 Durtain, Luc. *See* Nepveu, André  
 Eastern European immigrants in Argentina 148, 273  
   *See also* by national group  
*Ecos de Portugal* 131, 179, 195–196, 203–204  
*Ecos do Sul* 4n10, 102, 106, 110  
 Edreira, Vicente 297n120  
 education  
   among women 232–233  
   and occupational mobility among men 216, 221–224, 233  
   and occupational chains 264  
 electoral rolls 49, 49n65  
 El Peligro (Argentina) 190, 191  
 emigration. *See* migration  
 Emigration Law of 1896 (Portugal) 88  
*engajadores* [migrant recruiters] 108, 108n112  
   *See also* clandestine migration; migration agents; transportation and communication  
 epidemics 61n87, 63, 64, 66, 101, 101n89  
 Esposende (Portugal) 14  
*esquecidos, os* [the forgetful] 193–196, 193n102, 226  
 Estancia Chica (Argentina) 190  
*Estado Novo* 295n116  
 Estoi (Portugal) 41, 159  
   migration from 82–83, 103, 108, 112, 121, 159, 159n38, 180, 184n86, 231  
 Estremadura (Portugal) 27, 44  
 ethnic economic niche 18, 191, 253, 258, 258n73, 302  
 ethnic entrepreneurs. *See* ethnic middlemen  
 ethnic life 283, 284–286, 290–292, 292n109, 294–298, 300, 300n132, 303–304

- ethnic middlemen 197–208, 198n112  
 ethnic resources 258, 302–303  
   *See also* occupational mobility  
 Évora (Portugal) 33  
 exogamy 265, 267  
   *See also* marriage patterns  
 Extremadura (Spain) 84
- Factory School of Km 8 222–223, 223n13, 224, 264  
 failure 196, 196n110, 226, 246, 303  
   *See also* *esquecidos, os*  
 Família Pires, A (Passos) 113  
 family chain  
   examples of 254–256, 260–262  
   *See also* chain migration; occupational chains  
 family farming  
   in Portugal 25–27, 43–44, 237  
   in Argentina 190–191, 242, 244, 246–251, 250n63, 252–253  
 family migration 9, 11, 16, 18, 59n84, 81–83, 87, 95, 117, 168–169, 173, 176–177, 179, 180–182, 188–191, 193, 196, 205, 206, 207–208, 213, 216, 220, 221, 225, 226, 242, 249, 269, 270–271, 301  
   *See also* chain migration  
 family reunification. *See* family migration  
 family systems in Portugal 50–53  
 Faria, Manuel Severim de 84  
 farming  
   among Portuguese immigrants in  
     Argentina 6, 7, 8, 18, 22, 23, 186–191, 210, 211, 213n3, 233, 237–253, 250n63, 281, 299, 301–303  
   *See also* occupational chains  
   and types of agricultural units in the Algarve 37–38  
   calendar in the Algarve 26–27  
   practices in the Algarve 26, 33–35, 36–37, 42–44, 161, 237  
 Faro (Portugal) 26, 29, 37, 39, 40n46, 44, 97, 101, 102, 107, 108, 163, 194  
   migration from 12, 44, 83, 104, 158, 184n86  
   migration to 60  
 Fátima, our Lady of 199, 199n116, 300, 300n129  
 Feio, Mariano 2, 92  
 female work  
   among Portuguese immigrants  
     and family farming 250–252, 253  
     and home-based paid work 227–232, 251–252  
   and household work 226–227, 251, 252, 253  
   and marital status 230–231, 232, 250–251, 252  
   contribution to household income of 228–229  
   generational differences in 230, 232–233, 252–253  
   in the Algarve  
     and domestic paid work 45  
     and the rural economy 27, 92–93, 102, 251–252  
   *See also* gender; women  
 Fernandes, José 83  
 Ferragudo (Portugal) 121, 135  
 Ferreira, Juan 247  
 Ferrocarril del Sud. *See* General Rocal Railroad  
 festivals. *See* celebrations  
 Fez (Morocco) 71  
 Figueró dos Vinhos (Portugal) 164n42, 262  
 fishing migration 69, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85–87, 86n36, 86n37, 86n38, 87n41, 98, 99, 104  
   in Portuguese Africa 119, 120, 120n139, 136  
   in the Americas 124, 125, 128–129, 135–136  
 Florencio Varela (Argentina) 183, 186  
 flower exhibits 298, 300  
 flower gardening 22–23, 71, 151, 153, 186–192, 209, 233, 299, 301–302  
   and commercialization of  
     production 239–240, 240n47, 240n49, 250  
   and family labor 190–191, 237, 241, 242, 244, 246–253, 258  
   Argentines in 239, 244  
   forms of labor in 240–246  
   forms of production in 233–238  
   knowledge of 237, 244  
   labor-capital relations in 243–244, 244n56  
   land preparation for 238–239  
   techniques and technology in 238–239, 239n46, 244, 245n58  
 food  
   as a metaphor for immigrant integration 289–290  
 France  
   migration to 28, 77, 100, 112, 117, 192



- francês*. See return migrants
- Francisco, José 175–176
- French immigrants in Argentina 147, 153
- Freitas, Pedro de 163, 164n41
- frugality  
among migrant workers 216, 226, 246  
See also remittances; savings
- Fundão (Portugal) 165n43
- Fuseta (Portugal) 98, 108, 135, 135–136
- Galego family 57
- gender  
Portuguese migration by 9, 58, 59, 59n85, 60, 81–83, 81n21, 92n60, 95, 125–126, 173–174, 189  
See also family migration; female work; women
- General Roca Railroad 186
- Genoese immigrants in Gibraltar 79
- German immigrants in Argentina 2, 148, 188, 290
- Germany  
migration to 77
- Gibraltar  
as an emigration port 107  
clandestine migration from 11n21, 103–105, 104n101, 105n102  
migration to 76, 78–84, 79n13, 80n18, 86n35, 126, 180
- Gil Varón, Luis 94, 94n68
- Girão, Paulo 101n89
- Gloucester (USA) 135, 136
- Godinho, Vitorino Magalhães 84n28
- gossip 110, 164, 194, 195, 231
- Gould, J.D. 109
- Gouveia (Portugal) 165n42
- Greater Buenos Aires (Argentina) 18, 183, 250n63, 267
- Grieco, Margaret 264
- Guadalquivir River (Spain) 85
- Guadiana River (Portugal and Spain) 29, 85, 86, 94
- Guarda (Portugal) 11–12, 14, 18, 164, 164n42, 165, 165n43, 165n44
- Guerreiro, Joaquim 92
- Guerreiro, Joaquim Dias 224
- Guerreiro, José 200–201, 202, 202n126
- Guia (Portugal) 158
- Gulf of San Jorge (Argentina) 143
- Gutiérrez [Juan María Gutiérrez] (Argentina) 187
- Guyana  
migration to 115n130
- harvest migration 27, 74  
in Argentina 16, 18, 110, 121–122, 172, 183, 185–186  
in Spain 88–91, 93, 95, 96  
in the Alentejo 91–92, 93  
teams of laborers for 90–92, 92n60
- Heraldo*, O 3, 102, 103, 105–106
- Higuerita. See Isla Cristina
- Hoerder, Dirk 74
- homogamy 265, 265n84, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273n91, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281  
See also marriage patterns
- Hora da Saudade* [The Nostalgia Hour] 195, 196n108
- households  
and migration in the Algarve 54–61  
in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel 39–42  
systems in Portugal 50–53, 51n69, 51n71
- Huelva (Spain) 71, 85, 89, 90, 94
- Ignacio, Manuel 181
- immigration. See migration
- Immigration Law of 1876 (Argentina) 129
- Independence Day anniversary (Argentina) 289
- indigenous population in Patagonia 143
- industry  
in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel 44–45, 47, 62n88, 97
- influenza epidemic of 1918 63, 64, 66, 101, 101n89
- information  
and migration 4, 110, 121–123, 157–158, 163, 164, 173, 185–186, 188, 191, 205, 208, 253, 256–257, 258, 264  
See also chain migration; occupational mobility; ethnic resources; social networks
- inheritance practices  
Algarve compared to other regions 35–36, 51–52, 68–69  
and land tenure in Portugal 35–37, 40
- internal migrants in Argentina 147, 148n14, 244, 263

- International Cooperation Agency  
(Japan) 245
- Ireland 2
- Isla Cristina (Spain) 86, 87, 87n38
- Italy 2, 52n73
- Italian immigrants  
in Argentina 2, 121, 143, 147,  
148, 153, 154n26, 168, 179, 188,  
198n112, 239, 242, 245, 272, 273  
in Gibraltar 79
- Itaquí (Brazil) 132
- Japanese immigrants in Argentina 154,  
154n28, 187, 190, 239, 145, 250n61,  
258n73
- jardines* [gardens]. *See* flower gardening
- Jerez (Spain) 85, 89, 90
- Jackson, Sir William 80n18
- Jesús, Francisca de 111
- Jesús, Maria Francisca Viegas de 229,  
230, 276–277, 289
- Jewish immigrants in Gibraltar 79
- Jorge, Lída 209
- Junta de Emigração (Portugal) 179
- Kenitra (Morocco) 99
- kin networks 254–258, 259–264  
*See also* chain migration; social  
networks
- Km 3 company town 144–146, 283  
*See also* YPF
- Km 8 company town 145–146, 216,  
220, 224, 228, 229, 230, 260, 283,  
289–290, 300n129  
*See also* Compañía Ferrocarrilera de  
Petróleo
- Km 20 company town 145–146, 283  
*See also* Astra Compañía Argentina  
de Petróleo
- Km 27 company town 145, 283  
*See also* Diadema Argentina
- labor turnover 148, 175, 217, 218
- labor activism and unrest  
in Portugal 101  
in the oil fields 216, 217, 219, 225,  
263, 264–265, 301  
in the Río Tinto Mines 95n71  
in Villa Elisa 244, 244n56
- Lagoa (Portugal) 133–134
- Lagos (Portugal) 107
- La Línea de la Concepción (Spain) 80,  
83–84
- land fragmentation  
in the Algarve in general 25, 32, 33,  
36–37, 52, 56, 88  
in Boliqueime and São Brás de  
Alportel 40, 43, 44
- land ownership  
among Portuguese immigrants in  
Villa Elisa 23, 151–153, 188, 189,  
190–191, 190n97, 236, 241, 242,  
244–245, 250, 251, 254, 281, 301,  
302, 303  
and household structure in  
Boliqueime and São Brás de  
Alportel 50–52  
and migration 9, 38, 56, 110, 176,  
177, 216, 226  
historical evolution in the  
Algarve 33–37, 33n21, 34n22  
in Boliqueime and São Brás de  
Alportel 48–49  
in Portugal 32–33
- land use  
in the Algarve 33–38  
*See also* farming; land fragmentation
- La Pampa, province of (Argentina) 16
- La Plata (Argentina) 22, 71, 141, 142,  
143, 149, 151, 154n28, 190, 192,  
196, 227, 236, 237, 239, 240n47,  
245, 245n58, 250, 267, 272,  
300  
Portuguese immigrants in 16, 17,  
18, 153–154, 154n25, 182, 183–186,  
184n86, 188, 194, 198–200,  
244–245, 254, 268n87, 294–295,  
300
- Latin American immigrants in  
Argentina 154  
*See also* by national group
- laundering. *See* female work
- Law of Nationalization of Fishing  
(Brazil) 128–129
- Leal, Manuel 82
- Leiria (Portugal) 14, 18, 164, 164n42,  
165n43, 238, 262
- leisure and social life 283, 284–286,  
288–289, 290–292, 294–298, 300,  
303–304
- Le Play, Frédéric 25
- Liberalism in Portugal  
and political turmoil 62–63  
and property 33
- life-course and migration 55–56,  
57–58, 69, 183
- Light, Ivan 258
- Lima, Eugénia de 298, 298n122

- Link, Heinrich 86, 86n38, 87, 87n42
- Lisbon (Portugal) 80n18, 104, 107, 292, 300  
 as a port of emigration 107  
 immigrants in Argentina from 8  
 internal migration to 59, 60, 76, 77, 97, 98
- literacy in Portugal 122–123
- local origins  
 of Portuguese immigrants in Argentina 12–15  
*See also* chain migration; social networks
- Lopes, Angélica 251
- Lopes, João Baptista da Silva 34, 82n23
- Los Porteños (Argentina) 190, 191
- Loulé (Portugal) 26, 27, 37, 39, 40n46, 41, 44, 45, 53n76, 57, 61n87, 63, 66, 71, 101, 161, 163–164, 185n89, 252  
 immigrants in Argentina from 12, 21, 131–132, 135, 136, 158, 159, 159n38, 163, 175–176, 280n75, 187, 191, 192, 195, 254  
 migration from 27, 44, 56, 72, 89–90, 92, 92n60, 93, 93n64, 94, 96, 102, 108, 111, 135, 136, 195
- Louro, Manuel Estanco 27–28, 28n9, 33n21, 36, 39, 39n40, 43–44, 47, 48, 61n87, 67–68, 95n73, 110, 110n117
- Lousal mines (Portugal) 95–96
- Lucassen, Jan 73
- Lusiadas, Os* (Camões) 292, 294
- Luz, Maria da 298n122
- MacDonald, John 155, 165, 168
- MacDonald, Leatrice 155, 165, 168
- Mackintosh, Elizabeth (pseud. Elizabeth Tey) 23
- Madeira (Portugal) 115n130, 300
- Madeira, João 66
- Magalhães, Joaquim Romero 78, 85n32
- Málaga (Spain) 85, 105n102
- Manaus (Brazil) 135
- Mangualde (Portugal) 165n43
- Manuel II, King of Portugal 25
- Mar del Plata (Argentina) 182
- marital status  
 among safe-conduct holders 92n60  
 and migration in the Algarve 55–56, 58–59  
 and transatlantic migration from the Algarve 126–127
- Portuguese immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia by 174–175
- markets and fairs  
 for flowers in Argentina 188, 239–240, 240n47, 252, 253  
 in Portugal 26, 41, 45, 71, 111, 161, 162, 163, 252
- marriage patterns  
 among Portuguese immigrants in the province of Buenos Aires 273n91  
 and household in the Algarve 35–36  
 and property in Portugal 48, 50–53  
 in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel 41–42, 48, 159  
 in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa  
 and ethno-cultural preference 268, 276–277  
 and ‘hidden homogamy’ 269, 272, 279  
 and pre-migratory social space 274  
 and rhythm of arrivals 263n78, 267, 269  
 by age 213n4, 230, 232n35, 249  
 by indexes of marital selection 265–267, 268, 270, 271  
 by nationality 154, 154n26, 269–270, 272  
 by occupation 221–222, 231–232, 233, 246, 249, 251, 252–253, 277–281, 282–283  
 by proxy 188, 254, 262, 274–276, 275n93  
 by residency 182n81, 267n85, 283, 287, 287n99  
 evolution of 267–273  
 in comparison 270–273, 279, 281, 282, 283, 302  
 in the second generation 281–283  
 of Portuguese immigrants (general) 154n26, 157n34, 180, 182, 184–185, 189
- Martins, João 186
- Martins, Joaquim Pedro de Oliveira 118n134
- Matias, Manuel Guerreiro 203
- May Revolution anniversary (Argentina) 289
- Mendes, Francisco 71, 187, 188–189
- Mendoza, province of (Argentina) 16, 172

- Meqnès (Morocco) 99
- Mercantile Bank of La Plata 149
- meso-level analysis 20, 74, 156  
*See also* chain migration; social networks
- Mexico  
 migration to 130, 131
- micro-level analysis 12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 21n34, 22, 23, 74, 135–136, 137  
*See also* chain migration; social networks
- migration  
 and destination selection 2–4, 115–136  
 and industrialization in Portugal 97  
 and social networks 4, 12, 14, 21, 22, 23, 73, 110, 130, 133–136, 137, 139–140, 155–156, 183, 204, 206–208  
 as a labor and family strategy 3–4, 20, 26, 27, 38, 51–52, 54–61, 68–69, 71–72, 88–89, 92–93, 137, 173–174, 176–178, 194  
 by gender in the Algarve 57, 58–59, 60  
 culture of 2, 114–115, 192  
*See also* return migrants  
 in the Algarve and Portugal (general) 1–4
- migration agents 105n102, 107–108, 108n111, 197–199, 201–202, 203–205, 206  
*See also* ethnic middlemen; transportation and communication
- migration circuits 4, 18, 20, 21, 22, 57–58, 69, 72–73, 75, 76, 84, 86, 88, 96–99, 105, 106, 136–137, 172  
*See also* fishing migration; harvest migration; migration systems; mining migration
- migration policy 109  
 in Argentina 5, 72, 129–130, 131–132, 205, 207  
 during colonial times 6–7  
 in Brazil 127, 128–129  
 in Gibraltar 80  
 in Portugal 79, 87–88, 89, 104, 120  
 in the United States 117, 127, 133
- migration systems 4, 21  
 definitions of 73–75  
 and Algarvian migration 73, 75–138
- Miguel of Portugal, Dom 62
- Miguelista guerrillas 62–63
- Minho (Portugal) 32, 50, 94n68, 196n110  
 immigrants in Argentina from 8, 12, 14
- military censuses 59–61, 59n86
- mining migration 72, 84, 88, 93–96, 172, 210
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Argentina) 178
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Portugal) 105
- Ministry of Interior (Portugal) 108n112, 123, 203
- Minorcan immigrants in Gibraltar 79
- Mintz, Jerome 91
- Moçamedes [Namibe] (Angola) 119, 135, 136
- Moch, Leslie Page 73, 74, 105
- Monchique Mountains (Portugal) 29
- Moncarapacho (Portugal) 51n69, 108, 159n38
- Monteiro, Amadeo 186–187, 188–189, 242
- Montevideo (Uruguay) 11n21, 132n163, 193
- Morocco  
 migration to 28, 71, 72, 76, 77, 78–79, 83, 98–99, 100, 105, 136
- mortality rates  
 in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel 61n87, 62, 63–65, 65n92, 66, 68
- Mosconi, Enrique 148n14, 293
- Moya, José 2n3, 158n37, 204
- Mozambique  
 migration to 118, 118n136
- Mundo Argentino* 275, 275n95
- Muñoz, Alberto 223n13
- Muslim legacy in the Algarve 29, 30, 39, 40
- National Direction of Migration (Argentina) 178
- nationalism  
 in Argentina 129–130, 289, 293  
 in Brazil 128–129
- navigation companies. *See* migration agents; transportation and communication
- neighborhood associations 295–296
- Nelas (Portugal) 165, 165n43, 186, 188
- Nepveu, André (pseud. Luc Durtain) 142, 143
- Neto, Custódio 220

- Neto, João Ferreira 104, 104n101
- Neves, António Bento das 198–200, 205, 294
- Neves, Joaquim 220
- New Christians  
 Portuguese migrants seen as 6
- newspapers  
 coverage of crises in the Algarve 101
- images of Argentina in the Algarve 121–123, 183–184, 185
- images of migration and migrants in the Algarve 1–4, 1n3, 92, 93, 96, 101–104, 105–106, 110, 111, 112, 121–123, 129, 185
- images of Portuguese in Villa Elisa 298–299
- New York (USA) 121, 135, 192
- North Africa 78, 85
- North African immigrants in Gibraltar 79
- Nunes, João de Mendonça 179
- Nunes, José 49
- occupational chains 253, 256–257, 258, 264  
 among oil workers 217, 224–225, 259–265  
 among flower gardeners 191, 242, 253–258
- occupational inheritance 246–250, 250n61, 252, 258  
*See also* occupational chains
- occupational mobility  
 among Portuguese in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa 188–189, 190–191, 219–221, 224–226, 236, 241–246, 302–303  
 by age and generation (men) 221, 224, 246, 249–250  
 by generation (women) 232, 252–253  
 influence of training and education in 219, 220, 221–224, 233  
 individual trajectories of 220  
 limits to 226  
*See also* agricultural ladder
- occupational profile  
 in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel 45–49  
 of foreign and Argentine workers in Comodoro Rivadavia and Villa Elisa 210–211  
 of immigrants in Comodoro Rivadavia 22–23, 209, 210–213, 219, 220–221, 227, 232, 301  
 of immigrants in Villa Elisa 22–23, 189, 209, 210–211, 233, 240–241, 246, 249, 251, 252–253, 301  
 of Portuguese immigrants in Buenos Aires 6, 7, 8, 9
- occupations  
 of Algarvian migrants  
 to the Americas 123–125  
 to Gibraltar 81, 81n20  
 to Morocco 98–99  
 to Portuguese Africa 119  
 to Spain 85–86, 87n41, 92n60
- oil industry  
 and Portuguese migration 171–177, 182–183, 209, 301, 302  
 Argentine labor in 147, 148n14, 263  
 history in Comodoro Rivadavia 145, 171–172  
 immigrant labor in 147–148  
 labor recruitment and strategies in the 216, 216–217, 222–225, 259, 262–265, 301  
 organization of work in the 218–219  
*See also* company towns; occupational chains
- Olavarria (Argentina) 18
- Olhão (Portugal) 51n69, 79, 101  
 migration from 12, 72, 79, 81, 83, 98, 103, 104, 108, 108n110, 108n111, 119, 121, 133, 135, 158, 159n38, 169  
 migration to 60
- pampas (Argentina) 16, 140, 172, 183, 185, 198n112, 238, 303
- Paderne (Portugal) 41, 159, 159n38
- Panama  
 migration to 131
- Paraná River Delta (Argentina) 189
- Parliamentary Commission on Portuguese Emigration 83
- Parreira, Maria João Bordeira de 176, 216, 227–228, 230
- Passos, Boaventura de 113–114, 164n41, 177
- Patagonia (Argentina) 140, 141, 142, 143, 169, 182, 218, 259  
 Portuguese migration to 16, 18, 22, 72, 114, 148, 169–171, 172, 174, 178, 181, 192, 202, 210, 216, 260, 303
- patriotism  
 among Portuguese immigrants 198, 283, 291, 292, 295, 295n116

- in Argentina 288–289, 292, 293–294  
*See also* celebrations; ethnic life  
 peasants-workers 25–26, 38, 47–48, 50,  
 68–69, 88, 92n60, 94  
 Pechão (Portugal) 169  
 Penela (Portugal) 164n42, 262  
 Peral, Sebastián 169–170, 170n48,  
 172n54, 200  
 Pereira, José 185–186  
 Perón, Juan 178, 225  
 Peronist government 178, 289,  
 296n119  
   and labor 225  
   and technical education 223  
 petroleum. *See* oil industry  
 Petroleum Day Celebration 289  
 Petroquímica Comodoro Rivadavia  
   Company. *See* Compañía  
   Ferrocarrilera de Petróleo  
 Philip II, King of Spain 84n29  
 Pietrobelli, Francisco 143  
 Piety, our Lady of 164, 164n41  
 Pires, António 71–72  
 Pires, José 171  
 Poinard, Léon 25, 26, 30, 32, 37, 38,  
 47, 56  
 Police for the Repression of Clandestine  
   Emigration (Portugal) 103  
 Polish immigrants in Argentina 148,  
 290  
 Pombal (Portugal) 165n42, 165n43  
 Ponte, Francisco da 90  
 population  
   decline and emigration in Boliqueime  
   and São Brás de Alportel 63–68  
   growth in Portugal 62  
   growth and migration in Boliqueime  
   and São Brás de Alportel 61–63  
   *See also* birth rates; migration;  
   mortality rates  
 Portalegre (Portugal) 33  
 Portimão (Portugal) 40n46, 101, 252  
 Porto (Portugal)  
   migration from 8, 81n21, 104  
   migration to 76  
 Porto Alexandre [Tombua]  
   (Angola) 119  
 Portuguese Africa  
   migration to 56, 77, 112, 116,  
   117n131, 118–120, 133, 135, 136,  
   137  
 Portuguese Center of Buenos  
   Aires 203  
 Portuguese Club of Buenos Aires 203  
 Portuguese Club of La Plata 286, 294,  
 295  
 Portuguese House of La Plata and Villa  
   Elisa 199, 199n116, 294, 300  
 Portuguese Emigration Agency 108,  
 130  
 Portuguese immigrants in Argentina  
   according to census data 16–18  
   historical evolution of 5–11  
   geographic distribution of 16–20  
   regional origins of 8, 11–15  
   rural preference among 17, 17n27  
   sex ratio of 268n87  
 Portuguese Mutual Aid Association of  
   Comodoro Rivadavia 179, 182, 201,  
   202n126, 263n68, 284, 285, 290–292,  
   293, 294, 298n122, 300  
 Portuguese Mutual Aid Society of La  
   Plata 199, 294–295  
 Portuguese Republic anniversary 284,  
 291–292, 295  
 Portuguese Republican Center of  
   Buenos Aires 203  
 Portuguese Social and Cultural  
   Committee of La Plata. *See*  
   Portuguese House of La Plata and  
   Villa Elisa  
 Portuguese-Spanish Treaty of 1894 87  
 pounds sterling  
   as migrants' remittances 110, 111,  
   139, 177, 181, 192  
*Progresso do Sul, O* 118  
 Póvoa de Varzim (Portugal) 129  
 Price, Charles 168  
 Provincetown (USA) 135  
 Provincial Railroad La  
   Plata–Meridiano V 185, 186  
 Puskás, Julianna 196n110  
  
*Quadros de Loulé antigo* (Freitas) 163,  
 164n41  
 Quarteira (Portugal) 41, 42, 44, 71,  
 158, 161, 163  
 Queens, New York (USA) 192  
 Querença (Portugal) 41, 53n76, 92,  
 158, 163  
 Quilmes (Argentina) 186  
 Quintas, José Santos 202n126  
  
 Rabat (Morocco) 71, 99  
 railroad development  
   and migration 104, 107  
   in Argentina 16, 141, 149, 186  
 Ramos, José 82–83

- Ramos, Manuel Alferes dos 238–239, 242
- ranches and ranch labor 16, 17, 18, 142, 143, 147, 149, 151, 153, 188, 190, 195, 245, 251, 254, 277
- Rauch (Argentina) 169
- Ravestein, E.G. 59n85, 82n21
- reciprocity 257
- religious celebrations 164, 164n41, 199, 300, 300n129
- remittances
  - Argentine government restrictions to 178–179, 196, 207, 208, 225
  - as part of Portuguese local and national economy 28, 28n9, 110–111, 110n117, 118n134, 194
  - from Portuguese in Argentina 110–112, 176, 177–179, 189, 193, 204, 254
- reputation 264–265
- retirement 182, 192, 221
- Retirement Law of 1924 (Argentina) 217
- return migrants 1n3, 57, 112–115, 118n135, 139, 148, 171, 172, 175, 176–177, 178, 181, 186, 191–192, 193, 196, 209, 226, 274, 303
- Ribeiro, Orlando 37
- Richard III, King of England 23
- Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) 72, 121, 129n155, 135, 136
- Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) 132
- Río Tinto mines (Spain) 94–95, 95n71
- regional origins of Portuguese migrants to 94n68
- Rodrigues, Francisco 49
- Rodrigues, Henrique 80n18
- Rodrigues, Rufina 190–191, 251–252
- Rosario (Argentina) 17, 111, 227
- rotating work shifts 218, 226–227
- Royal Dutch Shell. *See* Diadema Argentina
- Russian immigrants in Argentina 148
- Sabugal (Portugal) 12
- Sado River (Portugal) 96
- safe-conducts 79, 89–90, 90n49, 90–91, 92, 92n60, 93, 94n64, 104
- Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de 142
- Saint Francis of Assisi School, Villa Elisa 199
- Salazar, António de Oliveira 25
- Salesian Order of Don Bosco 170, 223
- Salir (Portugal) 41, 93, 136, 159, 159n38, 163
- Salliqueló (Argentina) 18
- San Antonio Oeste (Argentina) 141
- San Francisco (USA) 135, 136
- Sanlúcar de Barrameda (Spain) 86
- San Luis Gonzaga Church, Villa Elisa 154n24
- San Martín, José de 293–294, 295
- Santa Bárbara de Nexe (Portugal) 41, 96, 102, 108, 159, 159n38, 176, 193, 200
- Santa Fe, province of (Argentina) 16, 17, 18
- Santa Maria de Faro Church 39
- Santa Catarina da Fonte do Bispo (Portugal) 41, 159, 159n38
- Santarém (Portugal) 97
- Santos (Brazil) 135, 136
- São Bartolomeu de Messines (Portugal) 158, 159n38
- São Brás de Alportel (Portugal) 34n21, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43–44, 44–45, 47, 48–49, 50, 53, 97, 101, 110, 159, 163, 164, 164n41, 292
- emigration from 28, 54, 55–56, 58, 59–61, 65, 67–68, 69, 71, 95n73, 96, 97, 102, 104, 108, 108n110, 110, 110n117, 114–115, 115n129, 135, 136, 139, 178
- immigrants in Argentina from 12, 21, 71, 112, 157, 158, 159, 171, 172, 172n53, 174, 176, 177–178, 180, 180n75, 181, 201, 206, 220, 226, 230, 260–262, 274, 287, 288, 292
- migration to 44, 62n88, 66
- population and demography 39–41, 61–62, 63–66, 65n92
- São Clemente, Loulé (Portugal) 41, 42, 136, 159, 159n38
- São Domingos mines (Portugal) 95
- São José, Frei João de 82n23, 85
- São Paulo (Brazil) 72, 132, 136
- São Sebastião, Loulé (Portugal) 41, 42, 71, 157, 157n34, 158, 159, 159n38, 161, 187, 191
- São Tomé and Príncipe
  - migration to 118, 118n136
- savings 9, 27, 38, 54, 55, 56, 69, 71, 82, 113, 172, 175–176, 177, 178, 187, 188–189, 190, 193, 196, 216, 217, 225, 226, 244, 246, 252, 254, 288
- See also* remittances
- Savorgnan, Franco 265
- Sayer, Sir Frederick 79, 79n13
- Schoen, Robert 267
- Science Sociale, La* 25

- Scotland 2
- seasonal migration. *See* temporary migration
- Sebastian, Saint 157n34, 164, 164n41
- Seia (Portugal) 12, 165n42, 165n43
- Serões, António 180
- Serra da Estrela (Portugal) 165n42
- Serrão, Henrique 39–40
- Serrão, Joel 100
- Setúbal (Portugal) 45, 98, 98n80
- Seville (Spain) 71, 85, 90
- sewing and dress-making. *See* female work
- sharecropping
- in flower gardening 188, 190–191, 193, 241–244, 249, 253, 256, 257
  - in the Algarve 43
- Silva, Joaquim da 172n54
- Silva, Manuel da 172n54
- Silva, Mariana 171n52, 276
- Silva, Tristão da 298n122
- Silves (Portugal) 44, 97, 101, 108
- Simões, Nuno 120
- social class
- in Boliqueime and São Brás de Alportel 47–50
  - among Portuguese immigrants in Argentina 6, 7, 197–198, 301–302
  - See also* occupational mobility; occupational profile
- Social and Cultural Portuguese Committee of La Plata 199, 294, 295
- social life. *See* leisure and social life
- social networks 4, 21, 22, 23, 41–42, 53, 72, 73, 74, 110, 121, 130, 133–136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 155, 156, 157, 159, 164, 165, 182–183, 192, 202, 204, 205, 206, 210, 217, 225, 253, 254, 256–258, 259, 264, 265, 267, 268–269, 270, 274–276, 279, 287, 302–303
- See also* chain migration; marriage patterns; occupational chains
- social space
- and chain migration 157–165, 158n37, 274, 274n92
  - as seen in marriage patterns 41–42, 159, 267, 274, 302
  - in company towns 225, 287, 288, 290
  - in rural Algarve 41–42
- Sociedad Anónima Importadora y Exportadora de la Patagonia 141
- Sousa, Francisco Estevão de 185–186, 198, 200
- Sousa, José 195, 204n133
- Sousa, Manuel 176–177
- Sousa, Silvina de 276
- South Africa
- migration to 115n130
  - immigrants in Argentina from 147
- Southern Railroad Line (Portugal) 107
- Southern Spain. *See* Andalusia
- Spain 29, 95, 79n12, 112, 295
- migration to 27, 79, 83, 84
  - See also* Andalusia
- Spanish immigrants 105, 105n102, 109n115
- in Argentina 6, 7, 147, 148, 153, 158n37, 168, 179, 188, 198n112, 239, 245, 269, 270, 290–291
  - in Gibraltar 79, 80
  - in Portugal 76
- speculative towns 149
- Stanislawski, Dan 35
- Sturino, Franc 157–158, 158n35
- Sul*, O 3, 102, 111, 111–112
- Tagus River (Portugal) 33, 45, 60, 77, 97, 107
- Tangier (Morocco) 71
- Tavira (Portugal) 34n22, 40n46, 79, 104
- immigrants in Argentina from 12, 158, 159n38
  - migration from 72, 79, 81, 83, 85, 94, 104, 106, 108, 108n110
- taxes 62n87, 86, 100–101, 101, 104
- and social stratification in the Algarve 33, 43, 49, 49n65
- temporary migration
- as a labor and family strategy 3, 4, 9, 20, 26, 27, 28, 54–61, 68–69, 71, 72, 82, 83, 93, 106, 109, 125, 137, 168–169, 179, 193n104, 194, 216, 217, 301
  - in Argentina 9, 11, 16, 121–122, 126, 169, 172–179, 180, 183, 185–186, 188, 196, 206, 207, 216–218, 219, 220, 225–228, 241, 287n99, 301, 303
  - in Portugal 27, 57–59, 60, 69, 71, 72, 76–77, 78, 91–92, 93, 95–98, 172, 219
  - in Spain 27, 57, 58, 59, 71, 76–77, 84–91, 86n38, 86n41, 93, 94–95



- in Gibraltar 76–77, 78, 79–84,  
 80n18, 86n35  
 transatlantic 77, 102, 104, 106, 119,  
 125, 136, 137  
 Tey, Josephine. *See* Mackintosh,  
 Elizabeth  
 Tilly, Charles 155, 155–156  
 Tolosa, La Plata (Argentina) 153n24  
 Tomé, José 222  
 Torres, Susana 217  
 transportation and communication 9,  
 16, 22, 45, 85, 97, 98, 141, 147, 161,  
 163, 170  
 and migration 1, 2, 85, 99, 101, 102,  
 103–104, 106–107, 109, 131, 136,  
 137  
 in Comodoro Rivadavia 141–142,  
 169, 170–171, 221  
 in Villa Elisa 142, 149, 151, 185,  
 186, 188, 211, 240, 249, 250, 252,  
 258  
 Trás-os-Montes (Portugal) 50, 94  
 Tucumán, province of (Argentina) 16  
 tuna fishing 39, 82n23, 86, 86n36  
 Two-Thirds Act (Brazil) 129  
  
 undocumented migration. *See*  
 clandestine migration  
 Union of Portuguese Flower Gardeners.  
*See* Cooperative of Flower Gardeners  
 of Villa Elisa  
 United Portuguese Center of Buenos  
 Aires 203  
 United States  
 migration policy in 127–128  
 migration to 5, 28, 71, 72, 77, 104,  
 115n130, 116, 117, 122, 124–125,  
 126, 127, 128n49, 130–131, 133,  
 134, 135, 136, 168n45, 192,  
 197n110, 262n75  
 urban growth and suburbanization 16,  
 17, 75, 77, 140–141, 149, 151, 184,  
 233, 245, 246n58, 250, 267, 296  
 Uruguayan immigrants in  
 Argentina 153  
  
 Vale Judeu (Portugal) 158, 191  
 Valencia (Spain) 87n38  
 Venezuela  
 migration to 77, 115n130, 116, 117,  
 195, 204n133, 262n75  
 Viana do Castelo (Portugal) 8, 14, 18,  
 33, 80n18  
 Viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata 6  
  
 Victorino, António 180  
*vidrieras. See* flower gardening  
 Viegas, Alexandrina 228–229  
 Viegas, António 121, 135  
 Viegas, José (Comodoro  
 Rivadavia) 172–173  
 Viegas, José (Villa Elisa) 191–192,  
 242–243, 244, 257  
 Viegas, Maria José 230–231  
 Viegas de Madeira, Alexandrina 66  
 Vila Real de Santo António  
 (Portugal) 36, 36n30, 62, 87, 87n42,  
 101, 104, 107, 112  
 Villa Elisa (Argentina)  
 description and landscape 142–143,  
 149–153  
 historical background 149, 151,  
 153  
 population and immigration  
 153–154  
 Portuguese immigrants in 22–23,  
 139–140, 153–154, 157–162,  
 164–165, 165n43, 183, 186–192,  
 193, 209, 298–299  
*See also* by specific topics  
 village-outward approach 21, 21n34  
 Viseu (Portugal) 33, 164, 165, 165n43,  
 238  
  
 wages  
 and Portuguese migration to  
 Argentina 110, 121–122  
 and temporary migration 86, 90, 91,  
 92, 93, 97, 106  
 in Gibraltar 79n13  
 in the Algarve 26, 27  
 in the oil fields 172, 216, 217, 222,  
 227, 228–229, 230, 231  
 Weinholtz, Francisco 34n21, 56, 89  
 widows 175  
 employment in the oil company  
 towns of 230–231  
*See also* female work  
*viúvas dos vivos* [widows of the  
 living] 192, 194  
*See also esquecidos, os* [the forgetful]  
 women  
 and migration in the Algarve 58–59,  
 87, 95, 99, 126  
 and social conventions among  
 immigrants 229, 229n27, 231,  
 268–269, 302  
 migration to Comodoro  
 Rivadavia 173–174, 179, 180–182

- migration to Gibraltar 81–83,  
81n21, 82n23
- migration to Villa Elisa 189
- occupations among, in Comodoro  
Rivadavia 226–233, 282–283
- occupations among, in Villa  
Elisa 250–253, 282–283
- See also* chain migration; family  
migration; female work; gender
- YPF (Yacimientos Petrolíferos  
Fiscales) 145, 147n13, 148, 148n14,  
173, 174, 175, 175n62, 176, 177, 183,  
217, 218, 218n10, 219, 220, 222, 223,  
224, 227, 231, 260, 262, 263, 283, 287,  
287n99, 288, 289, 293  
*See also* company towns; oil industry
- Yugoslavian immigrants in  
Argentina 148