

# Foreword

Issues related to transnational migration have come to the fore in the current conjuncture of global capitalism. Since the 1990s, with the repositioning of nation-states in the wider political economy and the redirection of the movements of people across the world, an increasing anthropological interest in the study of international migration has emerged in Brazil. This dossier on migration and exile offers an overview of current themes and debates.

Historically, Brazil's population is made up of Portuguese, Africans (brought by force until the middle of the 19th century) and other Europeans who were part of the 'great migrations' that occurred between 1880 and 1930. To a lesser extent the country also received immigrants from Asia and the Middle East. On different occasions, Brazil attracted political activists who escaped from repressive regimes in European and Latin American countries such as Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. During the Brazilian dictatorship (1964-1985). On the other hand, thousands of activists were forced into exile. From the 1980s on Brazilians began to emigrate for economic reasons and the country began to attract immigrants from other Latin American countries, as well as from Asia and Africa, many of whom were seeking political asylum. In the last decade the number of emigrants has fallen and a significant number of Brazilians have begun to return.

All this has led to a renewed interest on international migration focussing both on Brazilian emigration and on the study of specific groups of immigrants to the country. With the internationalization of the discipline Brazilians are now studying international migration issues that are not necessarily related to Brazil

This dossier shows some of the directions these studies are taking. It is divided into four sections:

- 1) Studies on nationhood, colonization and immigration policies, as well as the local historical processes leading either to the reconstitution of ethnicity or assimilation;

- 2) The relation between immigration, labour and nationality in a time of neoliberal policies, flexible labour and capital and the marketing of cultural heritage;
- 3) Anthropological studies of exile in Brazil and the comparison between Brazilian exiles and exiles in Brazil during the period of the Latin American dictatorships at the end of the Cold War, including the importance of studying how the category of 'exile' is construed in specific situations; and
- 4) The connections between migration, gender and notions of trafficking of human beings in the construction of current immigration policy, within a context of securitization and the criminalization of transnational migrations.

Taken together, these texts reveal the intrinsic connections between international migration, nationhood and nationality and the ongoing concern of nation states in implementing policies to distinguish between desirable immigrants from undesirable ones. It is no coincidence that issues of nationalism and nationality pervade this dossier.

Due to the differentiation, both past and present, between natives and foreigners, and the debate as to the place of outsiders in any country, international migrations tend to be seen as a 'social problem'. In the case of those who leave their country due to persecution, the very act of migration is viewed with suspicion, including by the host countries, who separate them from 'immigrants' using categories such as 'exiles', 'refugees' or 'asylum seekers', categories that victimize these migrants, implying a transitory status. In the context of contemporary globalization, with the ever greater circulation of people, products and capital, the differentiation between *desirable* and *undesirable* immigrants tends to be defined by dual categories such as 'legal' or 'illegal', "regular" or "irregular". Those without documents are most susceptible to punishment. In Europe, the distinction between 'communitarian citizens' and 'extra communitarian citizens' leads to the decision over who has access to the fortress of the European Union, and has led to a dramatic increase in policing and the construction of border barriers.

Whereas in Europe and the United States immigration falls into the field of criminal law, in Brazil, at least since the dictatorship, is a question of national security concerns and the mistrust of ‘foreigners’. Moreover, the National Congress has not given the necessary priority to the reformulation of the legislation, which has been constantly postponed. Despite the emphasis on human rights in the discussion of new immigration policies, the diffusion of the categories of ‘human trafficking’ and ‘smuggling of immigrants’ has the potential of criminalizing immigrants’ strategies and restricting their rights.

In contemporary global capitalism, characterized by flexible capital and labour and the commercialization of culture, the European and American immigration policies of incorporation and exclusion are increasingly linked to the selective and precarious criteria of the requirement for temporary labour, covering a wide range of segments of the population. Considering, even if indirectly, distinctions of class, race and gender, these immigration policies, designed to serve the needs of companies that use foreign labour, strengthen existing hierarchies and reproduce existing social inequalities. At the same time, the consumption of ‘exotic’ historical heritages has engendered distinct processes of the incorporation of immigrants coming from countries that were previously colonies

Thus immigration policies tend to select migrants, favour specific flows, control displacements and outlaw those considered a threat to national security. In the past, dictatorships subjected certain groups to a terror regime of violence and persecution, labelling them as subversives and criminals and forcing them into exile. More recently, there has been an increasing process of securitization and criminalization of immigrants through the adoption of a restrictive notion of “trafficking of human beings.” The current criminalization of immigrants without documents is indicative of a broader policy to exclude economically vulnerable groups who live outside the major ‘hubs’ of the capitalist system.

Lastly, this dossier has been organized according to the practice of visual anthropology, relating images to text. In addition to the lithograph and the two nankeen kindly lent by the artist and Portuguese exile Fernando Lemos, we also use photographs from Paulo Guérios’ research files, and from the generous photographers Marcello Casal Junior from the Agência Brasil and Jim Kuhn, whose material is kindly made available through

Creative Commons. This edition has been made possible by a grant for the Federal University of Viçosa, by Celia Harumi Seki, doctor in media studies, and the team at Vibrant. Our thanks go to them all, as well as to the authors, translators, anonymous reviewers, and above all to Peter Fry for his ceaseless dedication to the preparation of this dossier and meticulous revision of the texts in English.

Bela Feldman-Bianco

Liliana Sanjurjo

Desirée Azevedo

Douglas Mansur da Silva

Guilherme Mansur Dias