TACTICS OF BORDER CROSSING MOVEMENT: EXPLORING THE MOBILITY OF BRAZILIANS THROUGH THE SCHENGEN AND UK AIRSPACE

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RESUMO

Desde os atentados terroristas na última década, a União Europeia tem transformado suas fronteiras aéreas em eficientes mecanismos de controle de fluxo humano. Inicialmente voltados para filtrar possíveis terroristas, controles de vigilância aeroportuários passaram a abranger também outros tipos de viajantes classificados como transgressivos. Dentre eles, imigrantes provenientes de países fora da UE, considerados uma ameaça à estabilidade interna. Sobretudo, após o início da crise econômica europeia, em 2008. Sob esse contexto político, este trabalho apresenta as táticas migratórias de brasileiros que migram do Alto Paranaíba–MG para Londres através dos espaços Schengen e britânico. Cientes de que não possuem uma documentação que os permitam exercer a atividade laboral no Reino Unido, negociar a sua mobilidade através de controle de passaportes em aeroportos europeus torna-se uma prática sujeita à deportação. O artigo foi elaborado através do trabalho de campo realizado, inicialmente, em Londres, entre os anos de 2009 e 2013, e na região do Alto Paranaíba durante 2013. Para tal estudo etnográfico foram utilizadas entrevistas semi-estruturadas, observação participante através do método bola de neve para poder acessar um maior número de participantes, nessas duas regiões exploradas. Pretendo, portanto, demonstrar através de dados empíricos e, ainda, de uma literatura focada em estudos migratórios e controles de fronteiras, como esses brasileiros desenvolvem rotas migratórias camufladas de passeios turísticos para entrar na capital britânica.

Palavras-chave: Mobilidade. Fronteiras Aéreas. Brasileiros. Espaço Shengen. Reino Unido.

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the relations between migrants, mobility, tactics, negotiation, and the contemporary definition of borders in the aftermath of 9/11.The empirical focus of this paper is how Brazilians from Alto Paranaiba journey through airports located in the Schengen area and in the British territory to London. As a main research orientation, I use the notion of journey as approached by mobility studies, where actions and skills remain an important link between the wayfarer and the social space in which s/he moves through, the embodied practice to how we grasp the world. Migrants deal and struggle against border regime, but they are not powerless social actors. They rather produce creative resistance to reinvent their journey through the surveillance apparatus, which manage and delimit places with targets and threats. In this process, I explore the notion of border crossing movement as a tactical mobility developed by migrants to overcome the border control imposed by governments in airports. The article was drawn through fieldwork conducted initially in London, between 2009 and 2013, and afterwards in Alto Paranaiba, during 2013. The ethnographic study consisted in semi-structured interviews, participant observation through snowball technique, which enabled me to access a considerable number of participants in these two regions explored. The argument that I develop is that migrants as social actors are part important in the dialogue produced between border crossing and border reinforcement.

Keysword: Mobility. Air Borders. Brazilians. Shengen Space. United Kingdom.

Introduction

In much academic work on borders, the main emphasis of scholars has been on European Union (EU) surveillance patterns on the entry of migrants who can unexpectedly appear at the shores or airports of Europe. Harsh policies applied in the EU space are presented in these studies as a strong process of security against any type of traveller who can put this economic and political union under risk. Moreover, great emphasis has also been dedicated to technological devices installed at airports and ports that mark the border of the EU with other continents. Known as *Smart Borders*, new border management systems are seen as efficient tools able to control the entry and exit of any non-European citizen, as well as store their biometric data (CURRY, 2004; CÔTÉ-BOUCHER, 2008; CODOUREY, 2008). In general, the approach offered by these studies eventually generates an exaggerated perspective on borders as efficient gates. Not surprisingly, this has seen the emergence of terms such as *Fortress Europe* (AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, 2014) and *Machine of Governmentality* (MEZZADRA and NEILSON, 2013) in the literature. Migrants, in this academic context, have lost their relevance as actors and become mere unpowered characters susceptible to migration policies (PAPADOPOULOS ET AL., 2008; PERERA, 2009; KHOSRAVI, 2010).

Studies dedicated to exploring migration mobility have, in turn, strongly concentrated on the beginning and end points of the migration journey, paying specific attention to the decision-making process before the departure or after the arrival in the destination countries. The journey itself and the dialogue established between border crossing movements and border crossing reinforcement as an analytical object has long remained understudied (VILA, 2000). Ethnographic studies have failed to identify the main features of such mobility as they are locked in hydraulic conceptual metaphors used to briefly describe these journeys (KNOWLES, 2011; MEZZADRA and NEILSON, 2013). From that perspective, migration mobility is mistakenly summarized as mere movement. The burden of meaning and experience lived and produced by migrants spatially while they are moving is disregarded (CRESSWELL, 2006; INGOLD, 2011).

This paper addresses the need for research on migration mobility to be more grounded, more attuned to the mobility features developed by

migrants' own experiences rather than focusing on surveillance patterns imposed by EU countries. It argues that migration mobility is a constant process of negotiation between border control and the migrants themselves. I explore, in particular, how Brazilian migrants have journeyed and negotiated their mobility from Alto Paranaiba[2] to London through airports located across the Schengen space[3] and the UK borders.

Taking this case study and following the debate on migration mobility, my research adds a distinctive focus on migrant skills. It does so by considering migration mobility as a practice that involves the knowledge and skills found in the process of outwitting the established powers, in the form of passport controls and checkpoints. I demonstrate therefore how the routes connecting Alto Paranaiba to London are designed, who the main actors are behind such mobility, and the role played by the countries comprising the Schengen Area. More than being mere flow, I argue that migrants have to carefully weave alternative paths and risk shortcuts to fruitfully enter 'Fortress Europe'.

This research was unfolded through investigations during 2009 and 2013. Along my research journey, I met Brazilians playing different roles in the international migration network that connects Alto Paranaiba to London. In total, I interviewed 25 Brazilians. My two initial key informants – Adriano and Claudio – enabled me to establish two methodological strategies: the first was to meet Brazilians from Alto Paranaiba who have been living in London for more than 5 years. They comprise a young adult generation of inhabitants, in their 20s and

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[2]Alto Paranaiba is located in Minas Gerais, a Brazilian state recognized for its international migration mobility. Since the 1990s a massive number of young adults from Alto Paranaiba have moved abroad in search of the "promises of Western ways of life" (BECK and BECK-GERNSHEIM, 2014, p.81). The United States, Spain and, recently, the United Kingdom have been the main destinations. However, there is a dearth of research examining the migration mobility features of this Brazilian region. While a large number of studies cover some key cities, in Minas Gerais – Governador Valadares and Uberlandia, for instance – and their international networks (MARGOLIS, 1994; PADILLA, 2006; SIQUEIRA, 2009), little is known about Alto Paranaiba.

[3]Area named after the Schengen Agreement which comprises 26 European countries that have abolished passport and any other type of border control at their common borders. This treaty allows the member states to operate like a single state with external border controls for mobile people travelling in and out of the area, but with no strict internal border controls. Thus, border checks are done only occasionally and custom controls are not required. Such agreement allows the airside zone for flights within Schengen countries to be classified as a Clean Zone (CODOUREY, 2008).

30s, who left Alto Paranaiba in search of social mobility[4]. In the second strategy, using the snowball technique, new informants put me in touch with returned migrants, relatives and friends – people specialized in border crossing movement[5] living in Alto Paranaiba. This enabled me to conduct fieldwork in the towns of Quintinos, Tiros, Patos de Minas and Rio Paranaiba for three weeks, in 2013. This constituted the second phase of this study.

The interview design followed a semi-structured format. Most of the time it worked "like a conversation" (ATKINSON, 1998, p.13), with an informal and loose approach. I tried to be a good listener. According to Back (2007), to be a good listener is the primary objective of a lived-experience interviewer. Listening to another person's life story means being a witness and showing you care about what the participant is saying (BACK, 2007). Each one of these people provided me with a rich glimpse of how the migratory journey from Alto Paranaiba to London happens.

However, I was aware that, as Pink (2009) accurately observes, partaking in other people's experience of place is not the same as accessing their experience in the world. She points out that the way people practise, understand, recall and represent their experience sensorially may differ according to class, gender, age, and occupation. Some would say that these narratives can therefore be biased and incomplete as "narratives are not transparent renditions of 'truth' but reflect a dynamic interplay between life, experience and story". In consequence, I treat these stories as "part of everyday life… [that] constitute means for actors to express and negotiate experience. For

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[4]It was important that my interviewees had been in London for a certain period of time. It allowed them to describe and reflect on their migratory journey and the challenge of living on the borders as an undocumented migrant (BALIBAR, 2002; KHOSRAVI, 2010).

[5]Abdelmaled Sayad's (1991) view of migration as a '*fait social total'* seems particularly relevant to this research. He says that migration affects not just the receiving society but also the sending society. Complementing Sayad's reflection, another important theoretical approach adopted by this study is that of James Clifford (1997), who invites us to think of migration as a practice performed not only by migrants, but also by the communities where they come from. So, my purpose is to understand how this international mobility is experienced by Alto Paranaiba's population in general. Therefore, interviewing and talking to returned migrants, relatives and friends could provide not only a different point-of-view from those who were experiencing migration in London, but a full perspective on the migratory phenomenon in that Brazilian area. In this context, the snowball technique that had started in London effectively guided me towards this sample, in Alto Paranaiba.

researchers, they provide a site to examine the meanings people, individually or collectively, ascribe to lived experience" (EASTMOND, 2007, p.248).

In the following section, I outline the theoretical framework of my research. My aim, though, is not to provide an exhaustive review of mobility or border studies (for reviews see URRY, 2000; CRESSWELL and MERRIMAN, 2011; SALAZAR, 2011). Instead I will provide a more focused account, establishing the potential importance of the journey within the mobility and migrant experience, and the proliferation of border control in the EU, after 9/11.

1. Framing mobility, borders and tactics of border crossing movement

Mobility has different purposes and consequently can present different features. Salazar and Smart (2011) demonstrate in their study how mobility is characterized by a plurality of border crossers which result in a range of distinct social interactions according to each journey. Tourists, as *trusted travellers*, for example, have been widely discussed in the literature focusing on mobility (URRY, 2000; SALAZAR, 2011). According to this field, tourists are treated as rentable mobile people, who travel as consumers and therefore bring economic benefits to the destination place. Côté-Boucher (2008) and Curry (2004) state that these features define them as desirable mobile people. They are legitimate travellers who represent low-risk mobility. A similar classification is granted to business people and international students who are treated as individuals whose mobility is most of the time an unquestionable part of their everyday lives in the global world.

On the other hand, migrants – the type of mobile people that this study examines –,refugees, asylum seekers and terrorists compose distinct types of mobile people who have in common the fact of being *treacherous traveller*s. As Cresswell (2006) reflects, unlike *trusted travellers* who are seen as unremittingly positive, the mobility of migrants is portrayed as a transgressive movement. As a result, mobility studies have shown that governments have assumed responsibility for controlling the movement of these threatening mobile people through the borders to ensure the integrity of their

territory (PAPADOPOULOS ET AL., 2008; PERERA, 2009; SALAZAR and SMART, 2011). This phenomenon has indeed gained strength in the post-9/11 period. Riosmena and Massey (2012), for instance, assert that the US government's security and military policy initially intended to control the entry of terrorists has now extended to entail a clear migration policy component. Similar to the US, the EU applied strict security policies which soon included migrants in the category of unwanted traveller (BALIBAR, 2002; CODOUREY, 2008).

Verstraete (2010) goes further and observes that these migration policies are actually presented as a process of harmonization and security against any sort of traveller. In other words, she stresses that "[...] from 2001 onward, the war on terrorism has become a war on tourism as well" (2010, p.109). Therefore, the instauration of stringent laws on border controls which, according to the US and EU governments, were originally designed to stop terrorists, ended up additionally being applied to various kinds of mobile people, including migrants (ADEY, 2004; CURRY, 2004).

As a result, borders are no longer confined to a geographical dimension, serving merely to block or obstruct the global passage of people. Equipped with military apparatus able to detect and filter treacherous people, borders have become elastic. Following the main argument presented by Mezzadra and Neilson (2013), this paper considers a border not as fixed spatial category, but as a dynamic process which shapes migrants' everyday lives – including those of the Brazilians explored in this paper. "This seems even more the case after the events of September 11, 2001, when borders became crucial sites of 'securitarian' investment within political rhetoric as much as the actual politics of control" (2013, p.7). Depending on the wayfarer and her/his political and economic status, those travelling through border controls experience different treatment. In that sense, I explore airports not simply as non-places or as places of circulation where people make connections (AUGÉ, 1995; URRY, 2000), but as *social spaces* (LEFEBVRE, 1991) that also produce a sense of exclusion and disconnectedness through their surveillance methods of control.

What is significant in Lefebvre's (1991) approach is that social space is achieved, rather than given. So Lefebvre coined the term *lived space*. Lived space emerges from two elements that interact and

intersect with one another to produce space, namely, spaces of representation and spatial practices (or perceived space). In Lefebvre's definition, spaces of representation are socially produced with symbolism and meaning, while spatial practices are the spaces where daily routines happen in the contemporary world (which he defines as neocapitalism). "It embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up places set aside work, 'private' life and leisure)" (1991, p.38). So, by considering spaces of representation and spatial practices, Lefebvre reflects on spaces beyond passive and fixed geographic milieu, which are 'lived spaces' made up of *connaissance* through formal and local forms of knowledge, and experience, which result in *skills* (DE CERTEAU, 1984; INGOLD, 2000, 2011a, 2011b; CRESSWELL, 2006; KNOWLES, 2011). It is a social space that both receives and produces social transformations.

I argue that, in order to overcome such border reinforcement, the migrants' journey through flexible routes or itineraries. The journey per se is a mobility that depends not just on migrants' skills, but also on the knowledge of people along the route. Thus it must be considered in the debates on migratory mobility. This paper, thus, considers insightful ideas from Papadopoulos et al. (2008) and Vila (2000) on how migrants design cunning tactics for border-crossing movement to escape the regimes of control imposed during the last decade by certain states. Despite the fact that, since the events of 9/11, there has been broader security discourse explicitly linking questions of migration control to the military complex in order to tidy the external borders, *escape routes* are attempted, to enable migrants to move through minor porosities of the borders to reach the destination place. As a result, migration is not always a direct path from the home society to the host society. Rather, migrants have to tactically move through routes connecting several places to circumvent border controls and arrive at the final destination.

The route journeyed by Brazilians from Alto Paranaiba, for example, is in constant interaction with borders. Here the literature focusing on *performance* can aid our understanding. I explore the concept of *performance* as coined by Erving Goffman (1969). He defines performance as "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (1969,

p.19). Framing the dramaturgical approach that applies to face-to-face interactions, Goffman argues that a given participant has to demonstrate that s/he knows how to behave at the determined stage, and interact correctly face-to-face with other given participants. In the local setting – where the performance is played out – the external persona considered to be the expressive equipment required for the performer. By external persona, Goffman includes clothing, age, racial characteristics, looks, posture, speech, facial expressions and bodily gestures, among other elements. The impression depends not just on the setting, but also on *appearance* and *manner*. Both are part of the *performance*, as delineated by migrants discussed in this paper, and appear as tactics of border-crossing movement. These are not played out individually, but are rather shared and produced by returned migrants and current migrants.

It is worth observing that while Goffman's (1969) contributions are of crucial importance in understanding the performance adopted by migrants to negotiate their mobility through borders, Michel de Certeau (1984) concepts of *tactics* and *strategies* provide this study with a model that reveals how this dialogue between border-crossing movement and reinforcement occurs in practice. By 'strategy', de Certeau means the calculation of power relationships that a subject with the right will and power can manage, delimiting places with targets and threats. Nevertheless, there exists an element of creative resistance – defined as tactics – to these structures enacted by ordinary people. The use of tactics, therefore, is the crafty art of the weak. The individual as a 'consumer' acting in the environment has to creatively design an alternative power to circumvent the established power that monitors the geographical space. De Certeau (1984) argues that tactics are calculations, and calculated actions, taken by those who exercise cunning to navigate through the spaces of others. A tactic "must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power (1984, p.37)." Hence, it becomes important to dedicate attention to the tactics of mobility through urban or, in the case of this paper, social spaces. As de Certeau, inspired by a Lefebvrian perspective on mobility, suggests:

> First, if it is true that a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities (e.g., by a place in which one can move) and interdictions (e.g., by a wall that prevents one from going further), then the walker actualizes some of these possibilities. In that way, he makes them exist as

well as emerge. But he also moves them about and invents others, since crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements (DE CERTEAU, 1984, p. 98).

This theoretical approach leads us to think of borders not as things, but as relationships produced from *border reinforcement* and *border-crossing movement* (VILA, 2000; MEZZADRA and NEILSON, 2013). On the one side, the state is aiming to protect its territory as well its economy against unwanted arrivals, while, on the other, the border-crossing movement experienced by economic migrants may result in struggles and, in some cases, deportation. Thus, borders work equally as "devices of inclusion that select and filter people and different forms of circulation in ways no less violent than those deployed in exclusionary measures" (MEZZADRA, NEILSON, 2013, p. 07)

Embedded in this theoretical approach, this article argues that the mobility of Brazilians from Alto Paranaiba to London is a *tactic of border-crossing movement* which starts at the very first airport where they put their feet.

2. Navigating through European airports

Air travel is the main feature of the Brazilians' journey towards London. Due to the huge distance between Brazil and the United Kingdom, and the geographical obstacles, their mobility is very much dependent on the spaces of airports. However, it is not simply a matter of buying tickets and getting on the plane, as Bloch et al. (2009), for instance, outline in discussing migration routes and 'strategies' adopted by Brazilians to enter the UK. The interviews conducted with travel agents in Alto Paranaiba and migrants living in London have demonstrated that migrants from this Brazilian area, in order to move unhindered to London, seek to organize their mobility through travel agencies. Aware of the high number of deportations Brazilians have faced, the travel agents know that tourists will be better received. Therefore, migrants have to act as tourists going across the border controls.

Taking this into account, I examine the journey from Alto Paranaiba to London through the two main strategies that I observed in my

fieldwork: *travelling as tourists* and *journeying through small airports.* They are not two distinct strategies and in fact are interwoven and complement each other.

2.1 Travelling as a tourist

The movement in search of economic gain has reached high proportions in the towns of Alto Paranaiba since the 1990s. However, there were not any travel agencies at the beginning. People who wanted to move abroad had to access travel agencies in cities where a migration industry was better established. Julia, for instance, mentions that her brother had to travel from their town to Uberlandia to organize his trip. "He [Marcelo] bought his flight tickets in Uberlandia. There were no travel agencies here during the first time he travelled."

Cities such as Uberlandia, Governador Valadares and Belo Horizonte with established migratory networks to European countries and North America were the main places accessed by the inhabitants of Alto Paranaiba. They are well known for having a wide migratory industry which provides mobility not just for their own population, but also for people from other Brazilian states (SOARES, 2002; FUSCO, 2002; FAZITO, RIOS-NETO, 2008). According to Fusco (2002), Governador Valadares, for instance, has become an important node in a vast connection of Brazilian cities from different states with people waiting to move abroad.

Soon the production of bogus documents, elaboration of clandestine routes, loaning money and designing fake tour packages became some of the border-crossing services consumed by the inhabitants of Alto Paranaiba. In the 2000s, it started producing its own migration industry, which employs people, and has established links with other Brazilian cities and countries. According to Clarice – a travel agent in Alto Paranaiba – there were seven travel agencies operating at the same time due to the high demand. "These travel agencies belonged to people who lived in the United States. After returning, they started these businesses. My husband was one of them. He knew how to travel abroad and how to pass through the passport control", she comments. Clarice says that obtaining a tourist visa was not a big issue as long as the migrant was well-oriented to show sensible behaviour at the

passport desk of any airport in US territory. "My husband had this kind of knowledge. So, he started selling tickets and tour packages for those who also wanted to go abroad."

In addition, Clarice says that she tries to prepare the migrant in the best way possible for him/her to succeed at passport control in any airport located in Europe. "Tell me, who would on their own leave Brazil, without speaking a single word of English, book a hotel or get a taxi? It is crazy!", she says. Therefore, her travel agency books hotels, or hostels, for two or three nights, and the travellers are advised not to give any information about who is waiting for them in the UK. If the customer wishes, they can also provide tickets for local attractions, as mentioned in this extract from an interview with Lucio, a 27-year-old migrant interviewed in London:

> He [travel agent] gave us some tips and also organized the journey... He advised me to not tell about my cousin who was waiting for me in London. He also gave some information about Rome...he said that in Italy we should not get the white taxi, because it is very expensive and we would waste our money. So, he prepared a schedule for us…

In addition, Clarice mentions that the luggage is also carefully prepared. "If you are going as a tourist, you have to carry enough clothes for those days described in your tour package. Nothing else", she reinforces. The tour package reveals a range of skills that the travel agent has to relay for a migrant to succeed in his/her crossing movement. In other words, these elements – flight tickets, reservation letter from the hotel, the luggage and so on – can assure the traveller the best conditions for him/her to perform well as a tourist at passport control in US territory.

However, migrants themselves also play an important role in this tactical mobility. Laerte, another travel agent, explains to me that acting as a tourist demands some skills from the traveller. "That is why we can help. We have an idea about the type of people the European and British border control wants. So we do our best to give what they want. But the person who is travelling has to follow the script. Otherwise s/he returns and has lost his/her money." In that sense, both the travel agent and the migrant have to work together to hide the economic reasons behind the migrant's displacement and produce a

tourist character who purports to be travelling to Europe "in search of culture and some rest".

According to my informants, it produces a considerable market in Alto Paranaiba. Paula, for example, says that rather than buying a package tour from a travel agency in her home town, she decided to deal with a travel agency in the neighbouring town, Tiros. According to her, the travel agency that she dealt with had package tours cheaper than the ones in her hometown. In fact, interviewing people from different towns of Alto Paranaiba, it appears that the tour packages and the prices may vary according to the travel agencies; and this information is passed on by word of mouth among those who are interested in buying this kind of service. This is an important element for them, as money is a sensitive issue.

Paula says that the travel agency where she bought her tour package also had a key difference: it provided all the facilities to safely move her into London. By facilities, Paula meant *absolutely everything*, including appropriate clothing for the journey and an appointment at a hairdresser. "They take their clients to do their hair and their nails, everything." She believes that the travel agency provides this sort of service because it helps the migrant to look more like a tourist. "I think when you live in Brazil, coming to Europe or to the United States...when you go to any travel agency, they sell an image of how you have to arrive at an airport in Europe... so, they want to dress up the men with a suit, tie and shirt, while the women have to come also well dressed, with high heels, wearing makeup and having neat hair." Paula's interview evidences the elaboration of this *stereotypical traveller* as a tactic used by the travel agencies and their customers in Alto Paranaiba.

Besides, travelling to London is never a lone mobility. Moving with a *dummy classmate* or a *dummy girl/boyfriend* is a tactical manoeuvre used by travel agents to reinvent this mobility to Europe as a pair. The European tour therefore tends to be arranged for two people and it can be two males/ females or a couple. According to those who have experienced this sort of trip, this tactic is a good idea, to reinforce the idea of two friends or a couple travelling as tourists. Moreover, they say that moving in twos also enables them to get support from each other in case they are interviewed at the border control.

So, the tactic of presenting themselves as tourists is carefully prepared by the travel agency. They have to enact this temporary role wisely in order to move smoothly through the airports and re-use their strategies to manipulate and tabulate the spaces where their journey leads them. As de Certeau (1984) argues, the "way of operating" adopted by those who have to circumvent the institutionalized rules and ways of control is a cunning form of re-using the rationalized space that does not favour them. "[…T]hey introduce into it a way of turning it to their advantage that obeys other rules and constitutes something like a second level interwoven into the first (for instance, *la perruque*)" (1984, p.30).

Following this argument, *appearance* and *manner* are two important components in this way of operating – looking and behaving, that is, performing as, a Brazilian traveller at the airport. As *la perruque*, they create a character who will operate as a "legitimate" one. Goffman (1969) stresses that the term 'performance' refers to the activity of an individual "which occurs during a period marked by his [or her] continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (1969, p. 19). In the same vein, I argue that the migrants from Alto Paranaiba have to intentionally behave at passport control as a tourist who is ready to travel to Europe on holiday. The airport setting involves air company desks, electronic airport schedule boards indicating flight departures and arrivals, waiting chairs, baggage trolleys; and the shopping and eating areas supply the "scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it" (1969, p.19). Amid this scenery are the other travellers, their relatives, and airport staff who are also interacting and circulating in the whole picture. The tourist performance must give the impression that s/he, the migrant, incorporates the values of the social group, the tourists, within which s/he moves. The face-to-face interaction, the speech, the clothes and the luggage all have to show that s/he correctly incorporates the values of that social group.

The other travellers and airport staff also have to believe that s/he is part of the play that is going on there. Curry's (2004) definition of a *stereotype traveller* suggests that if it is accepted that there is a connection between a person's appearance and his or her status, it is also accepted that there is "a connection between the status and the proper place in airports and airliners of passengers, airline and airport

personnel, and the general public" (2004, p. 479). In other words, the travel agencies and the migrant aim to produce an image of a Brazilian tourist travelling to Europe on holiday: middle class, wearing expensive clothes and good-looking (MARGOLIS, 1994; PADILLA, 2006). Those stereotypes of a Brazilian tourist are interpreted as the set of symbols that the traveller has to have in order to prove that they belong to the space of the airport and the aeroplane.

2.2 Small airports

Being aware of the large number of Brazilian migrants who are deported every year at Heathrow airport[6], migrants and travel agents emphasize that crossing the borders as a tourist involves movement through other European countries before landing in the United Kingdom. As mentioned before, the travel agents in Alto Paranaiba carefully bear in mind that since 9/11 "world airports and airline passengers, which represent the mobility of modern society, are being intensely scrutinized using a range of surveillance techniques" (BENNETT, REGAN, 2004, p.450). The use of technologies to discover treacherous travellers has been widely used by the British government as well as other European governments under the banner of protection and national security. In that sense, airports and their passport controls participate as borders which are in charge of filtering out trusted travellers from unwanted travellers.

Adriano explained to me that a piece of advice given by the travel agent who organized his package tour was to avoid Heathrow airport. He, in fact, confirmed that his travel agent recommended him to arrive in Britain through any airport located outside of London, where the queues are smaller. Like Adriano, other informants were also advised to arrive in the UK using the same tactic: to avoid Heathrow airport and land in the UK through a domestic flight from a European airport hub located in the Schengen space. This would enable them to land at airports such as Luton, Gatwick, Stansted or London City, for instance. They define these as *small airports*, where the border controls are less restricted as there are no flights coming in from Brazil.

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[6]They say that such information can be obtained from fellow countrymen who were refused entry at the airport, and also from the news presented on the main Brazilian television channels.

According to my informants, the majority of European domestic flights – coming from countries located in the Schengen space – carry EU citizens. As a result, the 'All other passports' queue for non-EU travellers is shorter, and there are not many overseas migrants trying to cross. This tactical mobility adopted by migrants from Alto Paranaiba takes advantage of the borderless zone created by the Schengen Agreement between member states of the European Union. By taking advantage of such porosity, journeying to London does not involve a direct flight. The travel agents provide a range of optional trajectories connecting to other European Union countries before landing in British territory. According to Claudio and Adriano, the customer can decide if they want a package tour which includes two or three countries and then the rest (buying coach and flight tickets, booking hotels, and preparing the speech which that will be used at passport control) is organized by the agents. Claudio says, "they give the options, but it is up to you. You can choose the countries that you want to travel through. Then they [travel agents] make the schedule, including hotel bookings and flight tickets, and give you the price." Looking carefully at the itineraries journeyed by my informants evidenced how airports based in the Schengen Area are seen as tactical hubs which provide safe mobility towards the British border.

The travel agents recommend that the 'dummy pair' do not go straight from Brazil to the United Kingdom, and never have London as the last stop in their journey. Instead, they are given the choice of making flight connections to European airport hubs where the travellers will receive stamps on their passport, reinforcing their image as Brazilian tourists. In that context, airports in Spain, Portugal, Holland and Italy, for instance, will be used for the flight connections. London, then, is represented as just a tourist city where the travellers will spend a few days in their tour around Europe. The aim of this mobility is to show to the passport control at any British airport that the dummy pair is actually in transit, and they will continue their travel to other countries in the EU. "We would have passports like tourists have. They (border officers) would check we had a visa from Portugal and after London we would go to Spain...they would think we were tourists. It would make it easier to get into London," Claudio explains.

In the following section, I will demonstrate how these Brazilian migrants re-use the way of operating as a tourist. The tactic of border-crossing movement begins either at the Brazilian international airports

of Rio de Janeiro city or São Paulo city and is concluded at any UK 'small airport'. Between these airports there is a mesh of European airports which are all connected by the Schengen Agreement. Accessing some of these airports as desirable travellers, the Brazilian migrants transform and shape not only their movement, but also these flexible and linked spaces. As I will show, it is a collective interaction between migrants and airports – tactical navigation through monitored spaces able to connect and disconnect in self-selected rhythms with distinct localities in a non-linear spatial logic.

3. Journeying through the porosities of 'Fortress Europe'

Since 2006, the Brazilian passport has been machine-readable in order to comply with the ICAO Document 9303 standard. Such documents contain the current International Civil Aviation Organization's specifications for machine-readable passports, visas and ID cards (travel documents) used in crossing the borders. This means that the holder's personal identification – fingerprints, signature and photograph – are digitally stored in the passport database, and can be accessed at check-in points through a two-dimensional bar code. As a consequence of 9/11, the Brazilian government had to include such security technologies in this federal document in order to meet the standards imposed by the US government and, more recently, by the EU government.

Reflecting again on the tactic of border-crossing movements which try to build a picture of a stereotypical traveller based on the image of a Brazilian tourist travelling to Europe on holiday, the operation of the biometric technology attempts to eliminate this identification of the passenger according to his/her appearance and status. Curry (2004) says that the *era of stereotyping* in airports has been rapidly replaced by the *age of profiling*, and this policy is directly connected to 9/11. The airline staff and the security agents engaged in the process of profile-reading attempt to gauge whether the identity stored in the database matches perfectly with the traveller. "The move from symbolic to interactive profiling involves what one could describe as a process of 'fleshing out' the identity that the symbolic profile has attempted to discern" (CURRY, 2004, p. 485). This new biometric system of authentication ties access codes to the bodies of travellers.

Travellers are no longer identified as a whole; the algorithmic logic of a database and the information stored in it have replaced the features of the individual in a biometric system of control. Mobile individuals are increasingly integrated into a collective electronic database – a collection of data arranged for easy and speedy search and retrieval. "Transnational spaces of airports continue to face different patterns of mobility that are also concerned with the biometric pattern match" (COUDOREY, 2008, p.2000).

In fact, in order to map mobility, *Smart Borders* are spread out along the circuits "constructing an apparatus that may follow individuals over multiple lines of displacement, and verify their identities at various locations on those lines" (CÔTÉ-BOUCHER, 2008, p.146). So, in the *age of profiling* where e-passports carry and transmit electronic information about their holders, the process of border reinforcement at the airports is not fixed anymore. It moves with the traveller. Attempting to identify passengers and thus prevent unpredictable risks, governmental security agencies create networks in which the exchange of information becomes circular, involving data sharing in bulk.

In other words, the high technological strategies developed by national governments to monitor travellers at airports, through e-passports, shows an attempt to tabulate traveller bodies through their own biometric data. The replacement of the *era of stereotyping* by the *age of profiling* aims to eliminate any doubt in airports. Increasing the security and border control at airports enables governments to strategically delimit these spaces of circulation. The power of knowledge gives national governments the opportunity to manage, through a *Cartesian attitude,* any possible threat or target at their airports. According to de Certeau,

> It would be legitimate to define the power of knowledge by this ability to transform the uncertainties of history into readable spaces. But it would be more correct to recognize in these 'strategies' a specific type of knowledge, one sustained and determined by the power to provide oneself with one's own place (1984, p.36).

In the case of the Brazilian migrants explored in this article, their migratory mobility starts being mapped at the check-in desk at one of the two Brazilian airports, when the biometric database stored in their

passports is read on the computer system, and they are registered as having left Brazilian territory. The data indicating the check-in, the flight destination and the biometric profile is safely stored on the e-passport holder. At this point, the journey is traced by each passport control that the traveller eventually has to pass through. This procedure enables authorities across international airports to identify people with certainty and to trace their movement and itineraries. Therefore, border controls at airports can access the historical itineraries of mobile people through passport analysis, and can try to eliminate possible uncertainties to provide security for their national territories.

However, rather than seeing structures of power as "producers", while individuals are "consumers" (DE CERTEAU, 1984), I argue that power does not come before the struggle. Taking the argument of Papadopoulos et al. (2008), who consider that the subversion of imperceptible subjectivities triggers social transformation, and complementing Curry's (2004) observations, discussed above, this paper sees the dialogue established between border-crossing movements and border-crossing reinforcement as a continuous process. "Strategies of subversion emerge in these spaces and push the state to transform itself beyond the coordinates of the existing social compromise" (PAPADOPOULOS ET AL., 2008, p.13). In other words, like the migrants who have to reinvent their mobility, border controls must also readapt their own power to new ways of operating. "New social subjectivities and new social actors now emerge as a productive force, an imminent force which the modern nation state can no longer negate; national sovereignty is challenged. But this challenge, in turn, triggers its own response" (2008, p.18). The new biometric system of authentication can efficiently read the bodies of travellers; however, it cannot yet rationalize their movements.

3.1 It's time to go!

The aeroplane crosses the Atlantic Ocean and takes approximately 10 hours to reach the European continent. Inside, the migrants share space with tourists, business people and students. Therefore, it carries different mobile people with distinct goals whose passports have already been checked and registered at one of the two international Brazilian airports. According to Auge (1995), these travellers have all

been playing their momentary carefree role as passengers since the process of departing; however it does not mean that they do not move under constant surveillance. The aeroplane that departs from Brazilian soil has its movement monitored by radar, and the border agencies are aware of the expected travel to the Schengen Area of all persons. Unlike small boats loaded with migrants who challenge the waters of the Mediterranean Sea and sail anonymously to the shores of Lampedusa or the Aegean islands (PAPADOPOULOS ET AL., 2008; GARELLI, 2012), the aeroplane carrying migrants from Alto Paranaiba reaches the European boundary in an area inside the actual territory. The European airport hub is a transit area where internal, national and European regulations are applied to foreign travellers. As Codourey reflects,

> […] increasingly the border condition turns into a space itself: the airport's so-called transit area or air side is in fact a jurisdictional enclave inside the territorial boundaries of a nation. Various laws, rules and agreements that apply to passengers, depending on nationality or travel status, regulate this zone (2008, p.193).

Hence, at this stage, travellers are again all split up and classified by their passports or identity cards at the border control in order to identify their type of mobility. Aware of the fact that "the single biggest entry route from migrants into the EU is via international airports" (FRONTEX, 2012), the European Union has increased the surveillance at its airports in order to monitor and filter the circulation or 'flow' of people in its territory. Since 9/11, Europe has clearly aimed to guard its territory at its airports with the help of sophisticated information technology employed by agencies such as Frontex, which is responsible for coordinating the activities of the national border guards in ensuring the security of the EU's borders with non-member states. These *Smart Borders* focus on implementing "efficient and effective border checks at their external borders, which are of a comparable level, thus guaranteeing that no weak spots in the borders can readily be identified" (FRONTEX, 2012).

Surveillance technology is promoted as a crucial barrier to fortify permeable borders and monitor border-crossing movements throughout the EU territory. Therefore, at the airports based in the Schengen Area, every traveller is submitted to a process of filtering through a *Smart*

Border which is diffused along its corridors. Checking passports is the first stage. Long narrow passages distinguish citizens of the European Union from citizens of other regions in two queues according to their passports: the 'EU passport' queue for those who hold a burgundy-coloured passport issued by the 27 member states of the European Union and the 'All other passports' queue for travellers holding foreign passports.

A *SmartGate* system for passengers with e-passports, where a scanner and a camera check the biometric passports, speeds up the European queue, while the 'All other passports' group are submitted one by one to an unpredictable interview conducted by a border officer. Meanwhile 3D baggage scanners, metal detectors, and a team of detector dogs, carefully check the arrival luggage. According to Curry (2004) and Wilson and Weber (2008) this wide technological system of security attempts to filter out treacherous/high-risk travellers from trusted travellers and then lead them to a further search by border agents. The purpose is to uncover the real purpose behind the traveller's journey and define if he/she might be a potential treacherous/high-risk traveller.

As Curry (2004) and Adey (2004) stress, airports and their border controls as spaces of surveillance act as filters whereby all sorts of mobile people have to negotiate their mobility through the gates. "Henceforth, it is at the borders, at airports – where movement and distinct spatial boundaries coexist – where undesirable mobilities may be distinguished from the desirable. This is increasingly achieved by surveillance" (ADEY, 2004, p.502). The literature that focuses on smart borders and systems of security in airports covers several types of mobile people. But those studies pay very little attention to migrants, who also have to negotiate their mobility with border agents and smart controls along the airport's space.

Presenting reservation letters from hostels or hotels and their tourist itinerary proving they are guests on a short-term basis, explaining why they are passing through that specific country, are all reinventions made by migrants from Alto Paranaiba to secure their border-crossing movement. However, according to my informants, the passport controls located at the airports of Schengen space are normally quick, and once the officers know that they are heading to other countries there are only a few routine security questions. "It is nothing very

serious. They just ask what we are doing here, how long we are going to stay, what is the next country" Gisele recalls.

Another informant, Pedro, similarly says that the border control at Malpensa airport, in Milan, presented few questions with reference to their travel journey. He travelled with a friend and, according to their itinerary, they were to spend three days in Milan then go to London where they would spend four days and finally arrive in Paris. That would be the last European capital before flying back to Brazil. "We were lucky because my friend had lived in Spain before and because of that he could speak Spanish. The officer asked questions regarding the motives we were in Europe, how much cash we had. So, he said that as both of us have got a place at university our parents decided to pay a trip to Europe. It was a sort of gift". In fact, Pedro and his friend "stayed in Milan as a proper tourist", after crossing the passport control at Malpensa airport. He says that they "had time to sightsee the city, there is a beautiful cathedral there. So, we went there. We had a good time".

The few days they have as a tourist is time that should be well spent. This is the chance to visit the European continent before heading to the United Kingdom, where they will probably spend years living without migratory status. "You have to understand. In my case, I barely had gone out of Alto Paranaiba. That was a dream for me. To be honest, I was not scared at all. I faced that as a game. After all, we were in Amsterdam" says Gisele, describing her feelings during the time spent in the Schengen Area. Lucio and his 'dummy girlfriend' stayed for three nights in Rome, with all the time spent between the hotel room and walking in the city. During his interview, he showed me pictures that he had taken while wandering around Rome.

"My 'girlfriend' [gesturing air quotes] did not want to sightsee. She spent most of the time in the hotel, watching TV. I met a Brazilian there. He was also a tourist, but a truly one. We decided to walk and take pictures." Nonetheless, he said, "we tried not spending much money in Italy, because we knew that we should show a good amount [of money] in the UK [at border control]." Eventually, Lucio said, the tension took hold of him on the last day. According to him, those four days in Rome before heading to London became unbearable. Waiting for the peak moment of the journey and the negotiation of their crossing the UK border control was the main stress point. Thus he

woke up at 7 a.m. and desperately started packing his luggage while calling out to his dummy girlfriend to get ready and head for the airport.

> [...] I started organizing my luggage and told her (his dummy girlfriend) that it was time to go... we left the hotel at 9 a.m. for the airport in Rome, it was the Fiumicino airport...we got there around 10.30 a.m. to head for London at 11 p.m [...]. So we spent the whole day sleeping on the benches... the boredom was horrible. The flight was delayed and we left at midnight and arrived in London at 1.30 a.m.

Reflecting on the migratory mobility performed by these Brazilians, the first leg of their journey finishes after crossing the first passport control in the Schengen Area. Therefore, I argue that reaching a European member state of this treaty indicates the likelihood that these Brazilians will succeed in their journey, as they have reached the continent. From this stage of their journey, the last European country they pass through will be the return point if they are refused permission to enter the UK. In the following section, I explore the process of negotiation at UK passport control. While migrants such as Adriano and Claudio successfully crossed this border, another migrant, Mauro, and his dummy traveller mate were initially refused permission to enter the UK and had to fly back to Spain, the country in the Schengen space where they had come from. Before going on to discuss cases of success and failure, I want to clarify that my intention is to show how the tactic of travelling through the Schengen space before arriving in the UK provides good support for these travellers.

3.2 Answering the riddles at the border control

The idea of arriving in the UK through small airports does not eliminate the risk of passing through a border control. The negotiation, therefore, happens again on this last leg of their journey: the key distinction is between mobile people in the queues for 'UK/EU passports' and 'All other passports', filling in the landing card for the UK border control and an interview at passport control. However, this is the right time to show their passport stamps that were comprehensively collected in the Schengen space. These stamps, along with the flight ticket to the next country, are evidence to the UK border

control that these tourists are in Britain just for a few days. That is time enough to visit the National Gallery and the British Museum, perhaps take some pictures of tourist spots along the River Thames, such as Big Ben, and then leave the country.

Adriano comments that, after copying what other travellers were filling in on their respective landing border cards, he and his dummy girlfriend managed to find the right queue to be in to be interviewed. "Well...after waiting for 40 minutes in the 'not European citizenship' queue, the officer only asked me how many nights we were planning to stay. I said 5 nights...then he asked something else...I did not get. He made a sign with his hand showing that there was no problem... he stamped my passport and I got in...." Adriano said that his travel agent had taught him a few answers in English. The airport as a border can be seen as a setting which moves along with the performers. The traveller's passport registers all his/her itinerary. The questions enable the immigration officer to match the traveller's discourse with their mobility.

 "It is only in exceptional circumstances that the setting follows along with the performers" (GOFFMAN, 1969, p.19). Thus, performing as a tourist demands from these young Brazilians from Alto Paranaiba an attentive mental and corporal exercise to be capable of maintaining their role throughout the entire journey. They have to bear in mind the possible questions and correct answers which they were taught by the travel agents in their towns, as the British authorities also use the interview as a strategy to identify and ascribe legitimate and illegitimate identities to those moving across borders. Interviews, actually, present a confessionary aspect of the inspection upon arrival at a port of entry, "border apparatuses deploy spaces of examining and interrogating travellers, emphasizing gaze and inciting speech as means of surveillance" (CÔTÉ-BOUCHER, 2008, p.145). As happens with the mythological merciless and treacherous meeting with the Sphinx, the interviewees explain in detail how they manage to answer the riddles and thus escape suffering the tragic fate for those migrants who cannot answer: deportation.

Claudio recalls that the queue for 'All other passports' was relatively calm, while the 'European' queue was full. "So, we waited shortly and then a man [immigration officer] called us. He saw our passports; I think he saw the stamps too. Then he asked in English. I said we could

not talk. After a while somebody speaking Portuguese came to help. Well, we said what we wanted to do in the UK." Claudio told them that they would spend only three days in London and then return to Madrid, where they would stay for four more days, before returning to Brazil – one week's holiday. "I think the plan worked. They allowed us to pass through", Claudio concludes.

It is clear that the border controls in the UK can also refuse permission to enter British territory. As Claudio tells me, "I know people whose entry was refused. It is not easy. I think luck is very important at this stage. I mean if you get a tough staff, you can be fucked. All money and time invested just gone." During my fieldwork in London and in Alto Paranaiba, I interviewed four migrants who had been refused entry into the UK. Curiously, the tactic of travelling first to European cities in the Schengen Area works as a migratory platform for some of these young migrants. In the case of being deported from the UK it is the place where they will return. Thus, it gives them the opportunity to reorganize their journey from that European city to London.

For instance, Mauro failed in one of his journeys to London. At his home, in Alto Paranaiba, he tells me that he had travelled three times to the UK. For all his journeys, he travelled with a tour package bought from Laerte's travel agency. On his second journey, Mauro mentions, after spending three days with friends in Móstoles with some fellow countrymen, he and his dummy classmate travelled to Bristol. However, the tactic of performing as a tourist did not work as planned. "The man [passport control officer] asked us a few weird questions. It was hard to understand him. Then he split us to different rooms. He gave me a phone. Somebody was translating our conversation into Portuguese. The translator asked me how much money I had, and if I was employed in Brazil." In fact, Mauro says, the UK border control was aware that it was his second time in the UK.

> They [the officers] guided me to a small room where they took photos and my fingerprint. I was treated like a thief. The same happened to my friend. After that we were left in a room to wait for the first flight out of the UK...The first plane that came, they put us on it. I had no clue where we were going. Then I asked one of them, and he replied Malaga, but I did not get it. Perhaps his accent... To be honest, I do not really know. Actually, I did not know where Malaga was. I thought we would fly back to Madrid.

After landing in Málaga–Costa del Sol Airport, Mauro and his dummy classmate headed to the passport control again. There they finally understood where they were. "Then the officer asked me what we were doing in Spain again. I said that we were not allowed to enter the UK, and he asked me if we were really going on holiday." Unsure about the migration officer's intentions and afraid of being sent back to Brazil, they kept performing as tourists. "He [the officer] asked if we had money and I said we had enough money for our holidays. Actually it was not that much. He saw it and said that was the reason why we did not enter the UK." However, to their surprise, the officer gave back their passports and said "You can come to Spain. Spain does not have problems with Brazil. So, we did." The money left was enough to buy coach tickets to Móstoles, where their friends could host them again. However, two months later without a job they decided to return to Brazil. In 2007, two years after being deported from Bristol airport, Mauro would try to get into the UK again, but this time through its shoreline.

So far, the interviews explored in this paper have shown how worried these young Brazilians were about keeping their migration mobility hidden. Rather than seeing it as a space without *anthropological meaning* – as Augé (1995) suggests – airports, for migrants, gain shape and name and are filled with feelings. Thus, it is a movement characterized less by 'freedom' and flows, than by loss, fear and deprivation through borders, which play different symbolic roles among mobile people.

> For a poor person from a poor country, however, the border tends to be something quite different: not only is it an obstacle which is very difficult to surmount, but it is a place he runs up against repeatedly, passing and repassing through it as and when he is expelled or allowed to rejoin his family, so that it becomes, in the end, a place where he resides (BALIBAR, 2002, p.83).

In the extracts presented above, the migrants expressed concern about the money they were carrying, as they could not spend more money than was necessary on their journey. This decision is related to the fact that they need to show a decent amount of money at British passport control in order to reinforce their image as tourists. Besides, through both Adriano and Mauro's interviews, my intention was to show that they had feelings of tension and uncertainty which accompanied them

on their journeys. They are aware that the route which provides connectedness from Alto Paranaiba to London is fragile and can fail if they do not present themselves as acceptable mobile people – tourists – at the right moment. Côté-Boucher (2008) emphasizes that it is not just unpredictable mistakes made by mobile bodies that can be seen as reasons for failing the border-crossing movement. The smart border control apparatus should be taken as relational rather than an efficient mechanism. Along various points of border control at airports, some mobilities may be interrupted, while "others may be simply surveyed through the analysis of the travelling records of airline passengers" (2008, p.146). Thus, the strategy for filtering mobile people through border controls works with probabilities.

In that context, connecting places, removing failed options, contacting people throughout the journey, and defining and redefining routes according to personal circumstances, were some of the tactics that the interviewees explained to me to clarify how they journeyed towards London. In a sense, there is more than one single route and the elaboration of it can take different shapes. Each one arrived in London through a different airport, but adopted the same tactic: coming as a tourist and avoiding Heathrow airport by accessing small airports which also enabled them to travel through countries located in the Schengen space.

Conclusion

This paper has explored how migration mobility is a skilled movement involving choices and negotiation with people and places – mainly represented by airports – along their journeys in order to overcome the multiple border controls.

The result is a mesh of personal journeys which carefully jump from place to place before producing the final movement: to cross the English Channel and land in the outskirts of London. It apparently does produce an illogical movement that prompts us to question the meaning and the costs behind this. Nonetheless, I believe that such questioning only happens with the mindset of the strategic logic behind air companies and desirable travellers who factor time, money and comfort into their trip. A tactical navigation, rather, improvises the

connection between distinct localities, provokes border controls, puts in question the so-called national sovereignties and, finally, creates new geographies through a non-linear spatial logic based on knowledge of a network. As I have explored in this paper, more than about saving time and assuring comfort, this tactic of border-crossing movement involving people, places and performances across Brazil, the Schengen Area and the United Kingdom essentially aims to guarantee a connection between Alto Paranaiba and London.

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