

**“Brasiguaios” identity in the making: how spatial, institutional and social interactions impact on the transnational communities across the borders of Brazil and Paraguay**

Denise Helena França Marques  
Dimitri Fazito de Almeida Rezende  
Roberto do Nascimento Rodrigues  
Weber Soares

**ABSTRACT**

Since 1980, from continuous human displacements across the borders of Brazil and Paraguay, a supposed transnational community has taken place under the “controversial” label of “Brasiguaios” (Brazilian born immigrants in Paraguay and their children, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations returned to Brazil). Is there any transnational identity among the complex communities of international migrants in the region? In this study, based on qualitative and quantitative research of the Brazilian international migration, we investigate how spatial, institutional and social interactions influence the organization of the transnational community and the self-identification process of “circular” migrants. Spatial structures can prevent or improve social networks (residents in the “dry” border towns have more preferential international ties than residents in “wet” border towns or more distant ones), such as public institutions (availability of public hospitals, schools and jobs) and specific social interactions (kinship, friendship and co-workers), which will shape the identity and the transnational community.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this article is to investigate how the social interactions, both spacial and institutional, influence the organization of the transnational “brasiguaios” community and how the trans-border circulation of these “brasiguaios” extend and deepen these interactions. However, before this, it is important to know and understand the historical context of the immigration of Brazilians to Paraguay and of the return of thousands of them to Brazil. Moreover, the information, based on the Brazilian Demographic Censuses of 1991 and 2000, will give us a general panorama of the international return of Brazilians from that country, as well as the indirect effects of this return. The following is a presentation of the characteristics of the “brasiguaios” transnationalism and the varied motivations for their circulation between the national borders of Paraguay and Brazil.

**2. HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS**

The massive emigration of Brazilians to Paraguay began at the end of the 1950’s and intensified in the two following decades. The immigration of Brazilians in Paraguay is closely related to the

convergence of politics of economic and military order of the two countries. Palau & Heikel (1987) emphasize that to take into account only the economic factors of attraction (in Paraguay) and of expulsion (in Brazil) to understand the large flows of Brazilians to that country is a mistake. It is essential to enhance the intention of the Paraguayan Government to accept a more developed capitalized man power in agriculture, such as the Brazilian.

On one hand, Brazil with its politics of expansion of the agricultural border, substitution of importation and increment of exportations. On the other hand, the Paraguayan government of general Stroessner, pledged in undertaking the settling of virgin, border lands of Brazil, carrying out the regional integration of capitalism in expansion and by forcing out the peasants from the proximity of the capital Asunción to more distant areas, preventing social tensions (Palau & Heikel, 1987, P. 17).

The first Brazilians that were attracted to Paraguay were from the North and Northeast regions of Brazil. Without ownership of land, the new immigrants (black and mullatos) worked in the destroyed wooded areas amongst fallen trees. They dedicated themselves to survival by agriculture and to the commercial planting of mint. In 1960, Stroessner changed its politics to the department of High Paraná (Paraguay) and commanded the Paraguayan State to prioritize the man power of the descendants of Germans and to convince them to teach “the lazy Paraguayans and the black Brazilians” how to work (Wagner, 1992, p. 17). The massive flow of colonists from the south of Brazil to Paraguay “pushed” the colonists to the north and northeast to other regions of that country, such as La Paloma and Salto del Guairá. Many others decided to return to Brazil.

According to Zaar (2001), the settling of the extreme west of the state of the Paraná had begun in the decade of 1940. The objective of the Brazilian State was to nationalize the region that, during century XIX and beginning of century XX, was occupied by foreign companies and to expand the agricultural borders to develop or increase the volume of exportations. Many colonizing companies in the South Rio Grande had been stimulated by the Paraná’s government to carrying out the process of settling its territory (Zaar, 2001, P. 4). Although these companies had propagandas throughout Brazil, and also in the abroad, to divulge the fertility of the soil and low costs of land, the main public of the campaign was the agricultural producers from the South Rio Grande (Sprandel, 1992; Zaar, 2001). The reduction of the fertility of the soil in that state and the allotment of the land for inheritance were factors that, allies to the advertising campaign, had also contributed to the emigration of colonists from South Rio Grande to the west and southwest of the state of the Paraná (Zaar, 2001, p. 4).

In the decade of 1960, the Brazilian government began politics that objectified development of productions of soy and wheat in the country. For such, it created innumerable incentives for the consolidation of the modernization of Brazilian agricultural. Amongst those, access to credit for all phases of agricultural productive process, from the preparation of the land and the purchase of materials (raw material, equipment, capital, etc) and implements, to the industrialization, commercialization and the conservation in deposits. Banking institutions also took part in this process providing agricultural financing to purchase equipment, pesticides, and seeds (Zaar, 2001, p. 4). For the thousands of agriculturists who did not obtain legalized ownership and deeds for the lands and guarantees of financial and technical aid to compete with the cultivation of soy, their option was to emigrate. The new technologies did away with the manual work of the families.

Beyond the agro-industrial companies, the Brazilian military government favored the entrance of foreign capital for the installation of multinational companies (Cortéz, 1993, p. 20).

At the beginning of the decade of 1970, the process of capitalist transformation of Brazilian agriculture in the extreme west and southwest of Paraná were already sufficiently advanced. The vacant lands that were occupied by colonists had been annexed to the colonizing companies to be commercialized or incorporated into new investments. For the segments of population affected by this process of land concentration in Brazil, the only escape was to emigrate to Paraguay, where the cost of land was affordable.

In this environment of transformations, the government of general Stroessner placed in practical, with the support of the Rural Welfare Institute (Instituto del Ben Estar Rural), a great plan of agricultural settling, facilitating the entrance of companies and foreign colonists to the departments on the border. The real estate companies bought great extensions of land, contracted laborers for the deforestation and later sold the lots. Many agriculturists in the south of Brazil sold their lands and bought larger extensions of land on the Paraguayan side of the border.

Together with the agricultural modernization and the economic integration, Brazil and Paraguay also searched for the integration energy, consolidated with the construction of the Hydroelectric plant in Itaipu. An area of 1,460 squared kilometers of the margins of the Paraná river were flooded. Of this total, 835 squared kilometers belonged to Brazil and 625 squared kilometers to Paraguay. For the formation of the lake of Itaipu, 42,000 people had been expropriated and indemnified. Of those 42,000, more than 90% inhabited the agricultural zone. For the displaced families the options that remained were to migrate to the urban zone, to other cities in the state of the Paraná, to the regions of the center-west and north of Brazil or to the neighboring country, Paraguay (Zaar, 2001, p. 5-6).

Between 1980 and 1984, the process of agricultural modernization that had happened in Brazil, began to occur in Paraguay. The great agro-industrial companies started to take part in real estate speculation, removing in violent ways the agriculturists from their lands. The foreign banks and the agricultural machining companies settled on the Paraguayan agricultural border and the producers started to buy tractors and modern machines, in detriment of the work of the laborers that were dispensed. Moreover, many leasing contracts expired in the beginning of the 1980's and they were not renewed. There was also a reduction of the agricultural credits from the National Bank of Advancement do Paraguay (a national Paraguayan bank), making small production impracticable. Thus, many Brazilian immigrants had to move to other regions of Paraguay or return to Brazil.

Another problem that restricted them was general Alfredo Stroessner leaving power, in 1989, and the possibility of a re-democratization in Paraguay, a moment where the social claims, that until then were restrained, began to arise. In Brazil, in 1985, the Military dictatorship came to an end and the new government announced the possibility of the success of an agrarian reform with the National Plan of the Agrarian Reformation. In which such events like the Cruzado's Plan were created, in 1986. Its objective was to stabilize the Brazilian economy and constitute one more way to attract return immigration (Salim, 1995).

### 3. THE RETURN IMMIGRATION AND THE FORMATION OF “BRASIGUAIA” A TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIGURE

As with the uncertainties that involve the number of Brazilians who went to Paraguay, beginning in the decade of 1950, few know about anything regarding the magnitude of the return. The return immigration happened, mostly in the direction of the states of the Paraná, through Foz do Iguacu (border of the department of Alto Paraná) and South Mato Grosso. On the basis of the information of fixed-data of the Brazilian Demographic Censuses of 1991 and 2000, we can see that the state of Paraná received almost 40.0% of the total of immigrants coming from Paraguay, in the 1986/1991, followed closely by the state of South Mato Grosso (TAB. 1).

**Table 1 – Brazilian Federation Units that were destinations of the international immigrants and those returning from Paraguay, in 1986/1991 and 1995/2000**

Selected Units of the Federation	1986/1991			1995/2000		
	Immigrants (a)	Returned (b)	% (a)/(b)	Immigrants (a)	Returned (b)	% (a)/(b)
São Paulo	922	615	66,7	1.639	1.032	63,0
Paraná	4.276	3.625	84,8	20.815	17.077	82,0
Santa Catarina	281	212	75,4	2.253	1.791	79,5
Rio Grande do Sul	505	457	90,5	1.029	739	71,8
Mato Grosso do Sul	4.063	3.203	78,8	6.401	5.065	79,1
Mato Grosso	154	129	83,8	2.092	1.875	89,6
Other states	530	416	78,5	1.214	839	69,1
Total of Returned	10.731	8.657	80,7	35.443	28.418	80,2

Source of the basic data: IBGE. Demographic censuses of 1991 and 2000.

From the total number of immigrants who entered Brazil in the 1986/1991, deriving from Paraguay, 80.7% were returned. Between 1986/1991 and 1995/2000 there was an increment of 230.0% in the total number of immigrants coming from Paraguay. Of the 35,443 immigrants, more than 80.2% were Brazilian born. Paraná, by far, was the state that received more immigrants from Paraguay in the period of 1995/2000, followed by South Mato Grosso. However, also take notice of the increase of the relative participation of Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso and São Paulo as destination of the deriving migratory flows of Paraguay. According to Souchaud (2007), the young adults, who were of working age, emigrated from their Brazilian colonies, in Paraguay, in the direction of the states of South Mato Grosso (especially to Campo Grande), Paraná (mostly Foz do Iguacu) and São Paulo (capital). These young immigrants left in search of jobs in the tertiary sector, in positions that demand little qualification, such as in civil construction, house work, mechanics and sales.

As shown in the data in TAB.1, even with the increase of volume of international immigrants coming from Paraguay, between 1986/1991 and 1995/2000, the percentage of these people that made the move to return to Brazil and stayed was 80%, two period. This contributed to the

formation of the transnational community “brasiguiaia”, intensified by the indirect effects of the return<sup>1</sup>.

Although Faist (2000b) didn't mention such effects as one of the main elements of a transnational social space, he could have thought of the indirect effects of return as ingredients that ass up to make such a space. The entrance of foreigners into the country, associated with the international return, increase and intensify the social and material ties between the regions of origin and destination. These international immigrants (indirect effect) give continuance to the pre-existing ties to the origin, establish new ties to the destination and create new forms of exchange, such as a combination of cultures and a proficiency in the native languages of both countries.

In TAB. 2 we find the Federation Units as the destination of international return from Paraguay in the decades of 1981/1991 and 1990/2000. With the basic information from the Census of 1991, it is noted that the states of Paraná and South Mato Grosso were the ones that received the majority of the returning from Paraguay, followed far behind by São Paulo e Rondônia. In the next decade, this chart remained the same in a certain way, with few alterations. The participation of Paraná as the preferred destination of the returning increased greatly. South Mato Grosso maintained its position in second place, but its participation decreased by more than 10 percentage points changing to 26.7% in 1991 to 16,3% in 2000. Despite that, what stood out most was the increase in volume of the returning from Paraguay during the period analyzed, that jumped from 16.8 thousand to 55.0 thousand confirming a relevance to the phenomenon. Wagner (1992) speaks of 60 thousand peasants ready to return to Brazil in just the first semester of 1986. Nonetheless, the author acknowledges the uncertainty of the numbers.

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<sup>1</sup> They are people associated with the old emigrants. In this case, the return migration from Paraguay, the old emigrants are Brazilian and the people who came to Brazil with them that possess other nationalities. Moreover, the population of destination should be held accountable for the births of children of those returners. These children never left Brazil and are less than 10 years old. In his work, Ribero (1997) called these two components the indirect effects of return migration.

**Table 2- Brazil and selected Federation Units: direct effect of the international migration of return from Paraguay, 1981/1991 and 1990/2000**

Selected Units of the Federacy	1991		2000	
	Absolute Numbers	%	Absolute Numbers	%
Rondônia	932	5,5	653	1,2
São Paulo	1.051	6,2	2.368	4,3
Paraná	8.306	49,3	33.087	60,1
Santa Catarina	399	2,4	3.234	5,9
Rio Grande do Sul	760	4,5	1.977	3,6
Mato Grosso do Sul	4.502	26,7	8.940	16,3
Mato Grosso do Sul	518	3,1	3.091	5,6
Other states	391	2,3	1.661	3,0
Total	16.859	100,0	55.011	100,0

Source of the basic data: IBGE. Demographic censuses of 1991 and 2000.

As the data presented in TAB. 2 points out, this movement of return is intensified still more in the second half of the decade of 1990. The data in TAB. 3 illustrates the age distribution by sex of the returned from Paraguay in the two analyzed decades. It observes that in the Demographic Census of 1991 the ratio of children between 0 and 4 years of age, in relation to the total of returned from Paraguay, was of 3,2%. In 2000, this percentage suffered an increase, moving to represent 4.7% of the total. The age of such children induces one to still think that they had returned in as the second part of the decade 1990 and that their parents had migrated for a short period to Paraguay or had registered their children in Brazil, while still living in Paraguay. The relative participation of the children between 5 and 9 years of age was raised to 11.0% in 1991 and to 14.9% in 2000. Noteworthy it is the ratio of women returned in reproductive age, in relation to the total of returned women, just as many in 1991 (30.9%) as in 2000 (28.8%). It is worth remembering that this ratio is important because, amongst other aspects, these are the women who will be the responsible ones, in part, for the indirect effect 1 (IND1) and indirect effect 2 (IND2) since they can have returned from Paraguay with children and a partner, of Paraguayan or other nationalities, who is non-Brazilian.

**Table 3- Brazil: direct effects of the international migration of the return of Brazilians from Paraguay, by sex and groups of age, 1991 and 2000**

Age Group	1991					2000				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
	Absolute Numbers	%	Absolute Numbers	%		Absolute Numbers	%	Absolute Numbers	%	
0-4	224	1,3	315	1,9	539	1.424	2,6	1.180	2,1	2.604
5-9	895	5,3	964	5,7	1.859	4.006	7,3	4.186	7,6	8.192
10-14	901	5,3	1.237	7,3	2.138	3.402	6,2	3.108	5,6	6.510
15-19	1.050	6,2	1.111	6,6	2.161	3.175	5,8	3.207	5,8	6.382
20-24	1.073	6,4	1.142	6,8	2.215	2.635	4,8	2.525	4,6	5.160
25-29	939	5,6	1.000	5,9	1.939	2.885	5,2	3.095	5,6	5.980
30-34	847	5,0	705	4,2	1.552	2.831	5,1	2.615	4,8	5.446
35-39	526	3,1	489	2,9	1.015	2.275	4,1	2.211	4,0	4.486
40-44	559	3,3	457	2,7	1.016	1.628	3,0	1.260	2,3	2.888
45-49	405	2,4	300	1,8	705	1.302	2,4	925	1,7	2.227
50-54	282	1,7	212	1,3	494	883	1,6	658	1,2	1.541
55-59	180	1,1	141	0,8	321	720	1,3	520	0,9	1.240
60-64	229	1,4	229	1,4	458	436	0,8	544	1,0	980
65 and older	284	1,7	165	1,0	449	890	1,6	488	0,9	1.378
Total	8.394	49,8	8.467	50,2	16.861	28.492	51,8	26.522	48,2	55.014

Source of the basic data: IBGE. Demographic censuses of 1991 and 2000.

It is very true that the IND1 also can be generated by the men if after the return from Paraguay, they can have had children, in Brazil, with non-migrant women. However, to facilitate the analysis, the children of the returned women are entered in only effect, which causes an error for lack in estimation. Such error is accentuated still by the fact that the women between 50 and 54 years of age at the time of the census were not included in the calculation of the indirect effect 1 (IND1). The children of these women (that were between 40 and 44 years of age during periods in analysis), less of 10 years of age and were born in Brazil after their mothers' return, did not enter in the estimation of the IND1.

In the years of the 1980's, it was estimated that Brazilian women had, in Brazil, after the return migration from Paraguay, a total of 5,109 children, which constitutes the IND1 (TAB. 4). Remember that those children were less than 10 years old at the time of the re-censuring (09/01/1991) and they had never left the country since. In the decade of 1990 the indirect effect 1 (IND1) experimented an expressive increase (11,654 children). This growth coincided with an elevation in the volume of women returning at the reproductive age, from 5,204 women, during the period of 1981/1991, to 15.836 women in the next decade 1990/2000 (TAB. 3).

**Tabela 4- Brazil: children of Brazilian women returned from Paraguay (indirect effect 1), by sex, 1981/1991 and 1990/2000**

Indirect effect 1	1981/1991			1990/2000		
	Sex		Total	Sex		Total
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
Children of the responsible ones Returned from Paraguay	1.338	1.310	2.648	3.192	3.084	6.276
Children of the non-responsible ones Returned from Paraguay	1.248	1.213	2.461	2.822	2.556	5.378
Total	2.586	2.523	5.109	6.014	5.640	11.654

Source of the basic data: IBGE. Demographic censuses of 1991 and 2000.

There is, in TAB. 5, the indirect effects type 2 (IND2) of the international return migration from Paraguay, relative to the decade of 1980, following the condition of the immigrant family. They had arrived in Brazil, in the decade of 1981/1991, following some Brazilian family member. More than 80.0% of these 1.2 thousand immigrants were children of the responsible one for the family. The spouses of the responsible ones had represented 6.9% of the international immigrants, followed for the heads of the family, with relative participation of 5.9%. It observes that the majority of the spouses were female and that large parts of the responsible ones for the family were men.

In the decade 1990/2000 the total number of immigrants that constituted the indirect effect 2 (IND2) increased by almost 400.0% in relation to the period of 1981/1991, reaching a platform of 5.5 thousand people (TAB. 6). As well as in the direct effect (DIR), the data also confirms the increasing relevance of the IND2 of the international migration return from Paraguay. One more time, the category child /step-child outnumbered the other members of the family, participating with 78.8% of the total number of immigrants. The percentages of spouses and responsible ones for the family increased in the decade in question, if compared with the ones of the previous decade, and rose to represent 8.7% and 7.6%, respectively. The relative weight of the women in the total of spouses was more than 90.0% and of the men, in relation to the total of responsible for the family, was of 89.5%. A curious fact is that, of the Census of 1991, whose indirect effect 2 (IND2) consisted primordially of a nuclear familiar migration, in 2000 had been registered differently in this effect as the categories of brother/sister, another relative, pensioner and domestic servant of the responsible one for the family.

**Table 5- Brazil: international immigrants coming from Paraguay, who entered the country accompanied by a Brazilian family member (indirect effect 2), following the relation of the one responsible for the family or other familiar person, by sex, 1981/1991**

<b>Responsible for the family is Brazilian</b>			
<b>Relation to the one responsible for the family</b>	<b>Sex</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
Spouse	0	75	75
Child	439	585	1.024
Step-child	0	9	9
Grandchild or Great-grandchild	0	5	5
Additional/adopted	8	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>1.121</b>
<b>Responsible for the family is not Brazilian</b>			
<b>Relation to the one responsible for the family</b>	<b>Sex</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
Responsible one	66	6	72
Spouse	0	9	9
Child	23	0	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>104</b>

Source of the basic data: IBGE, Demographic Census of 1991.



**Table 6- Brazil: international immigrants coming from Paraguay, who entered into the country accompanied by a Brazilian family member or other familiar person (indirect effect 2), following the relation of the one responsible for the family, by sex 1990/2000**

<b>Responsible for the family is Brazilian</b>			
<b>Relation to the one responsible for the family</b>	<b>Sex</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
Spouse, partner	35	446	481
Child, step-child	2.060	2.040	4.100
Grandchild, great-grandchild	47	80	127
Brother, sister	46	13	59
Other relative	27	35	62
Additional/adopted	8	0	8
Pensioner	6	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.229</b>	<b>2.614</b>	<b>4.843</b>
<b>Responsible for the family is not Brazilian</b>			
<b>Relation to the one responsible for the family</b>	<b>Sex</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
Responsible one	376	44	420
Spouse, partner	0	4	4
Child, step-child	169	113	282
Domestic servant	0	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>717</b>

Source of the basic data: IBGE, Demographic Census of 2000.

This complexity of the family arrangements that constitute the migration return of Brazilians coming from Paraguay can be pointed out as one more element that contributes to the formation of “brasiguaias” a transnational community. This formation, in turn, is determinative of the circulation that characterizes population mobility on the border between Brazil and Paraguay.

### **3.1 The transnational community “brasiguaias”**

The strategically geopolitical approach between Brazil and Paraguay and its unfolding, the transformations in the productive structure of both countries, the development of a commerce in the border region, the international return of Brazilians from Paraguay and the indirect effect of this return, as well as the trans-border displacements between Brazil and Paraguay are some of the factors that have concurred to form the transnational community “brasiguaias”.

The dynamic exchange of ideas, beliefs, solidarity, goods, capital and the intense transit of people on the national borders of these two countries brighten up the border concept politics in this region. The social relations of the “brasiguaios” creates a space that is delimited not by the formal borders of Brazil and Paraguay, but by the networks that unite the elements that constitute and that Faist (2000) calls transnational social space. Albuquerque (2005) does not mention a transnational social space on the border of Brazil and Paraguay, as defined by Faist (2000), but he

recognizes that the social relations between the “brasiguaios” are not restricted to the physical space of the bordering cities. Albuquerque makes allusions to the “widening of the band of border between the two countries”, characterized by the cultural mixture that happens in the bordering cities and the Paraguayan cities situated “in a ray of up to 100 kilometers or the international limit, such as Saint Rita, Naranjal, Saint Rosa, San Alberto, Mbaracayu, etc” (Albuquerque, 2005, p. 99). This author adds that despite such “widening” does not happen in the same way in the territories Paraguayan and Brazilian. Although the increase of Paraguayan immigration in Brazil, manifest, over all, as indirect effect of the return immigration, when compared with Brazilian immigration in that country, it is still reduced greatly.

The words “transnational” and “transmigrant” have appeared frequently in contemporary literature concerning the international migrations and have a direct relation with the migration systems. A transnational space denotes the idea of dynamism, as well as a migratory system. Cultural processes, economics and politics in a transnational space involve accumulation, use and effect of varied types of capital, volume and convertibility: economic capital, human capital (educational level and knowledge) and social capital (Faist, 2000, P. 200).

In the United States and the Europe an ever-increasing number of international immigrants is being called transmigrant, because they maintain multiple and constant ties with institutions and entities in the native country. The transnational migrants or individuals participate in the economic institutions and politics in the destination country and the same share styles of life of the residents in the received country. At the same time, they also conserve bonds, they construct institutions, they lead transactions and they influence regional and national events in the native country (Schiller, *et al*, 1995).

However, Portes (2003), on the basis of a large qualitative and quantitative research that took place in the United States, calls attention to the fact that not all immigrants can be considered transnational, that is, that the transnationalism is not a common phenomenon to all the contemporary immigrant communities. Only a minority of the immigrants are involved regularly in transnational activities and the sending of remittances or visiting their native country, even though there are these activities considered transnational, it does not justify the creation of a new term (Portes, 2003, p. 77). This comment fortifies the peculiarity of the transnationalism of the “brasiguaios” investigated here, though their contact with Brazil is frequent and it is not restricted to the economic and political fields, as in the case of many other transnational groups.

The transnational communities are a type of transnational social space and characterize themselves by the social and symbolic connections between migrants and non-migrants. These social and symbolic connections (religion, nationality, ethnicity) are based on solidarity and they develop over long periods of time. In such communities there are forms of relationship included that exceed the familiar ties and they are characterized by privacy, emotion, moral commitment and social cohesion (Nisbet, 1966).

Faist (2000) mentions the groups with collective identities, in the regions of national borders, as a distinct form of transnational community. The author cites the borders of Mexico with the United States, of the Iberian Peninsula, France and Italy with the countries of the north of Africa (Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria) as examples of transnational communities in border regions.

However, he admits his lack of knowledge regarding a particular identity specific only to the identity of transnationals in these regions.

The “brasiguaios”, as well as some Puerto Ricans (Duany, 2000) and Pilipinos (Schiller *et al*, 1995) in the United States, are transnational individuals because they possess social, economic, political, and cultural ties in the native countries and in destination countries. Moreover, they have relatives in both nationalities, such as father or mother, knowing the Portuguese and Spanish language, some Guarani, and mixing the culture of the two countries. Some “brasiguaios” were only born in Brazil and have live in Paraguay since then, others were born in Paraguay, but because they have Brazilian relatives they know the Brazilian culture and the Brazilian language well. These individuals cross the national borders of Paraguay and Brazil freely because of the close geographical proximity,

They launch strategies of cheaper and safer adaptation and survival, if compared with other transnationals, as, for example, the Puerto Ricans and Phillipino in the United States and the Haitians in the Bahamas (Marshall, 1985). In this scene of intense circulation of people, cultural practices and ideas, the “brasiguaia” identity gains new a meaning, different than the one in the context where it was considered created.

The term “brasiguaiio” was created in 1985, when thousands of Brazilian immigrants in Paraguay had organized themselves for the return to Brazil. The political identity “brasiguaia” was a way to recuperate Brazilian citizenship and, mainly, differentiating from other groups in Brazil that also demanded the ownership of land. This attribution, at the moment of its conception, possessed a strong organizational connotation and did not have relation to cultural traces that distinguished Paraguayans and/or Brazilians from other ethnic groups (Sprandel, 1992, p. 103). However, Albuquerque (2005, p. 222), in elapsing his field research, perceived the imprecision and changeability of the “brasiguaia” identity (since its conception) and that the feelings about this identity were variable depending on who was speaking about it. For example, the Brazilian immigrants who belong to the poor class in Paraguay accept and valued the “brasiguaia” identity because it is an easy means to have access the social benefits in Brazil (Albuquerque, 2005, p. 227).

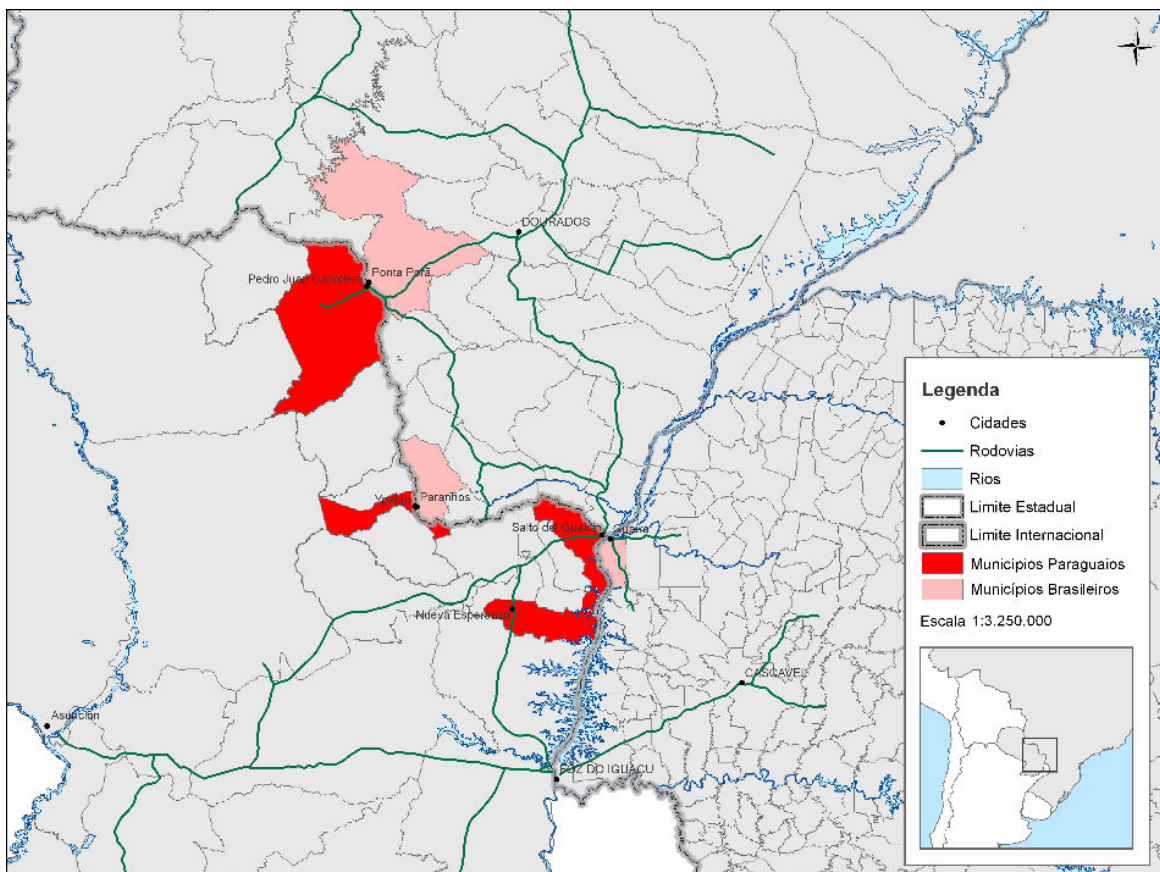
On the other hand, the immigrants belonging to the ruling classes of Paraguay and possess some political power do not look at the “brasiguaia” identity in a good way. For them, this expression fits to describe those illegal immigrants with no legal documents, poor immigrants and those kept out of society. In this same perspective, is the representatives of the Migrant Pastoral who see such identity as a stigma, loaded with negative connotations (Santa Bárbara, 2001). The ruling classes of Brazilian origin, residents in the cities of La Paloma and San Alberto, view the “brasiguaia” identity with reserves. To them, “brasiguaiio” are people without-land, villains, deportees, and without document. On the other hand, for the majority of the resident Brazilians, living in Colony Jamaica, a slums neighborhood in the Paraguayan city of La Paloma, to be “brasiguaiio” is to live in Paraguay.

### **3.2 The identity “brasiguaia” according to the perception of the population involved**

On the basis of field work carried out in 3 Paraguayan cities (Ypehjú, Salta del Guairá and Pedro Juan Caballero), frontiersmen in Brazil, was evidenced that the “brasiguaiia” identity is more accepted and is cited, spontaneously, by the Brazilian individuals that inhabit in cities of dry borders. However, it can be inferred that the socioeconomic situation has a bigger influence in the acceptance of this identity in the nature of the border that separates the two countries than the distance space.

A FIG. 1 presents the border of Brazil with Paraguay. The visited bordering cities had been highlighted to give an idea of its localization.

**Figure 1- Brazil and Paraguay: border cities visited**



The press, in a general way, considers “brasiguaios” all Brazilian immigrants who inhabit in Paraguay.

“With shots and invasions, Paraguayans without land want to expulse half a million ‘brasiguaios’. If the exodus occurs, it will be the biggest human tragedy in Brazilian history.” (Veja, 10/12/2008).

“The president of the Paraguayan government, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, is carrying through, with the Brazilian government, an ample research about the

situation of Brazilians who live and are land owners in Paraguay, called 'brasiguaios'. No one knows how many there are. According to the Brazilian Embassy in Asunción, there are 150,000 'brasiguaios'. Other sources say it is more than 500,000." (O Globo Online, 20/05/2008).

The meaning seems to be attributed to the term by Paraguayan peasants, interviewed by Albuquerque (2005, p. 226).

Yet for the young Fernando, interviewed in the scope of the elaboration of the thesis, the term "brasiguaião" refers to Paraguayans that are in constant contact with Brazilians and, for this, they know the Portuguese language.

"Look here. Like I am studying something completely different than what I work with, so I have a teacher who did a work on top of this, right, it is still a master's work, right!? So the 'brasiguaião' here, for us is this: that person or that Paraguayan that adapts, because he was born here, the whole time he is in contact with Brazilians, he has Brazilian friends... So he goes and learns Portuguese, speaks well, and that is it! The people call these people 'brasiguaios'. The term 'brasiguaião' is more applied to the Paraguayan who goes to Brazil, who learns and speaks Portuguese, not necessarily... but live there, work there, so it ends up being applied more to Paraguayans who go to Brazil and not Brazilians who come to Paraguay. It is more difficult!"

(Fernando, 29 year old, incomplete college, family income of 3.5 minimums wages<sup>2</sup>).

According to other "brasiguaios" interviewed in the field and that identify with being "brasiguaião" it is to be a Brazilian immigrant and/or descendent of these immigrants and to know the cultural practices of both countries.

"I consider 'brasiguaião' to be the people that live in the border region. Live in the border region and know the customs of both Brazil and Paraguay. Why? I, in my opinion, ah... they are two brothering countries, neighboring countries, that were raise as brothers. So me, because I am from Paraguay, but I lived in Brazil for more than 30 years and my wife is Brazilian, I know the customs of Brazil, but this... so many Paraguayan customs, so we know both side, yes, both sides of the coin, we say it that way, I consider myself a "brasiguaião" person with a lot of pride!"

(Pedro, 42 years old, high school complete, family income of 3.0 minimums wages).

"Yes I consider myself 'brasiguaião'. Even though I was born here in Paraguay and studied here, I don't speak either language right. I also lived in Brazil for a while and I love the country, the people, everything really... I began speaking Portuguese and identify with both cultures... Ah, of course, it is because my dad is Brazilian and my mom is Paraguayan."

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<sup>2</sup> One Brazilian minimums wage was U\$ 230.00.

(Amanda, 20 years old, incomplete college, family income of 6.0 minimums wages).

After the concept of transnationalism and the different ways the term “brasiguaião” is imputed, it becomes imperative to present at great lengths the elements that justify considering the “brasiguaios” as transnational individuals (terminology used here) and that they become singulars in relation to other transmigrants.

A diffusion of the Portuguese language is one of the most marking characteristics of the transnational “brasiguaião” community and maybe the most important for its consolidation. In the Paraguayan cities whose Brazilian presence is more predominate, beyond the daily communication, interpersonal, the presence of the Portuguese language is the form of information and in the Brazilian media transmitted via satellite to Paraguay. The information propagated by the radio programs and Brazilian television, all by the Globe network, SBT and Bandeirantes Network, also modify the values and behaviors in Paraguay (Santa Bárbara, 2001, p. 92). The language Guarani appears then as a criterion delimiter of the Paraguayan nationality. Its roots are very different from those of Portuguese and of Spanish and the new generations find difficulties in learning it.

Albuquerque (2005, p. 15) recognizes that along the border regions of Paraguay with Brazil there exists “various forms of hybrid languages”, with a mixture, for example, the languages, the music, and the food, but he also mentions the daily tensions, related to the predominance of the Portuguese language over Spanish and, especially in relation to Guarani, in these bordering areas. According to the author, the teachers complain about “portunhol” (mixture of Spanish and Portuguese) in the writing of the “brasiguaios” pupils in the schools. The teachers are faced the mission of preserving the national identity by means of the prohibition of the use of the Portuguese language while in a school environment.

Although Santa Bárbara (2001) didn’t carry out its research in the cities bordering Brazil, it calls the Paraguayan cities of Santa Rita, San Alberto, Katueté and La Paloma trans-border Brazilian territories. This fact is justified by the author on the basis of the dominant presence of the Portuguese language and the circulation of the Real, Brazilian currency, in the region. His conclusion agrees with that of what Albuquerque (2005) called a “widening of the band of border between the two countries.”

The Brazilian influence in religion, dances, traditions and Paraguayan foods are also notable. In sound cars and bars Brazilian music is predominant, as well as with the contracted bands that play at parties in Paraguay, in the border region. Albuquerque (2005) mentions the Expositoja parties and the Gaúchas Tradition Centers (CTG) in these departments, where the culture, the language and the Brazilian cuisine dominate those of Paraguay. Even more, the Evangelic church services and the Catholic masses held by Brazilian pastors and priests, in churches financed by the immigrants.

The participation in the political life of Paraguayan cities, on the part of the Brazilian immigrants and its descendants is also a characteristic of “brasiguaião” the transnational community in that country.

Examples don't lack, as in the case of Mbaracayu, governed by a Brazilian mayor, and the Paraguayan cities of Naranjal, Santa Rosa del Monday and San Alberto, all in Alto Paraná, managed by Paraguayan mayors, children of Brazilian immigrants. Moreover, some Brazilian councilmen have been elected in cities pertaining to the departments of Alto Paraná and Canindeyú (Albuquerque, 2005, p. 90).

These candidates were chosen, mainly, with votes of Brazilian immigrants, of their descendants and some native Paraguayans. However, Santa Bárbara (2001, p. 113) stands out because former mayor of San Alberto, Romildo Maia (Brazilian, naturalized Paraguayan), was elected with votes from outside of the city, since a large part of the resident Brazilians in the city do not have immigrant cards and cannot vote in Paraguay. Many Brazilian voters were recruited in the cities of Katueté, Troncal 4 and Puerto Índio to cast their votes in Romildo.

Levitt & Jaworsky (2007) call attention to this and other transnational political practices that the immigrants are doing. The authors also classify the participation of the immigrants in politics as voters, the affiliation with political parties, the accomplishment of parties and campaigns in the two involved countries and lobbies of authorities of the country to influence the politics of the other country, as the practice of transnational.

#### Square 1 – Aspects of transnationalism of the “brasiguaios”

<b>1- Physical and social space</b>	Hybrid territory
<b>2- Language and communication</b>	Presence of the Portuguese language in the daily interpersonal relations and mass media, such as television and radios
<b>3- Cultural practices</b>	Music, culinary, and standards of behavior
<b>4- Social organization</b>	Public events, organization of civil and social classes, such as the Pastoral do Migrante, Expositoja festival and the Gaúchas Tradition Centers
<b>5- Economy and politics</b>	Economic activity in the two countries, ( agricultural properties in Paraguay for the production of soy and cattle and offices in Brazil), illegal contraband networks and the use of Brazilian and Paraguayan currency; political practices including electoral participation (voters or candidates) in both countries, participation in political associations and electoral campaigns in Brazil and Paraguay

Another important factor that contributes to the peculiarity of this community is the intense transit of the “brasiguaios” in the border region between these two countries. As it will be seen, the motivations for the displacements are varied and some of them are part of the survival strategies of these individuals, mainly of the poor.

### 3.3 The motives of circulation of the “brasiguaios” on the border

The circulation of the “brasiguaios” between the national borders of Paraguay and Brazil is motivated by the demand of public services in the areas of health and education, social assistance benefits, for purchases, visits, religion and work. The search for the services of public health was the main motivation cited for the “brasiguaios” being led to Brazil, independently of the type of border involved. This search is carried out by both children and adults as well as the elderly. A regularity for such acts does not exist, as with the act of receiving of social assistance benefits. The search for a medical doctor's office, a hospital or a health clinic for diagnosis or treatment occurs when necessary. The main explanations of the interviewees for the demand of healthcare in Brazil blame the precariousness of the Paraguayan public health system, in the gratuitousness of the Brazilian medical attendance and the ownership of Brazilian documents. Moreover, some “brasiguaios” have declared to feel better in Brazil and are treated better. Others believe that the Brazilian doctors are better than the Paraguayan doctors.

The neediest “brasiguaios” always use the services of health in the Brazilian cities nearest to their residences, without distinction of the type of border. When they make it to more distant cities, if they were not directed to the proper health system, as a result of the seriousness of the problem, they count on the good will of family and friends who house them and lend their addresses for declaration in the health clinic or hospital. Many “brasiguaios”, mainly the residents in Ypehjú and Salto del Guairá, possess double residence, one in Paraguay and another one in Brazil, and they do not need to count on the aid of relatives and friends as what they refer to as the loaning of an address. The “brasiguaios” that can pay for the Paraguayan health services use them for routine consultations and simple interventions. But, when they consider a “serious” health problem they prefer to go to a Brazilian city that offers good professionals and complete medical infrastructure. In this case that, as the service is private, they do not need to declare addresses of relatives and friends in Brazil to be taken care of. These “brasiguaios” mentioned still not using private medical services in the residence cities, giving preference to the available services in Ciudad del Este, an important economic center of Paraguay.

Different from the circulation motivated by the demand for healthcare, the circulation on the border to use education services, offered by Brazilian public schools, is carried out only by children and young “brasiguaios”.

The majority of these children and youth, the children of the interviewed “brasiguaios” that reside in Ypehjú and Pedro Juan Caballero, study in Brazil. There is no doubt that, in this case, the type of border interferes with the choice of the country and the city to study, for the proper daily nature of the activity, which doesn't occur with the demand for healthcare, which is, most of the time, infrequent. A great part of the children and young resident “brasiguaios” in Salto del Guairá, in turn, study in Paraguay. To attend schools in Guairá, they need to cross on a ferry 1.5 kilometer to arrive at the nearest public school. They can also opt to study in Mundo Novo (South Mato Grosso), but they would need transport to take them. In this case, the distance seems to be more relevant than the socioeconomic level of the families. The type of transport used by the students to go to the school is more related to the income of its respective domiciles than the distance between the residence and the school or to the nature of the international border.



Amongst the justifications to study in Brazil is the Brazilian nationality, the superior quality of the education given in the country in front of Paraguay, the aid offered by the schools by means of feeding and pertaining to school material and the proficiency of the Portuguese language. As well as in the attendance of healthcare needs, a declaration of a local address of a friend or family member is one strategy to obtain access to public schooling in Brazil, and, consequently, the overall benefits offered by the schools to low income families.

The circulation on the borders also happens because of work. However a large number of “brasiguaios” residing in Salto del Guairá e Pedro Juan Caballero claim to work in their own city, in the commercial sector. Different from Ypehjú, these two cities are characterized by vigorous importation commerce which attracts populations from all over Brazil throughout the year. In Ypehjú, most people interviewed work in door-to-door sales, with no ties to a work place. The nature of their activity allows them to choose the better country to work in, like what occurs with workers from primary sectors, they work where work exists, independently of the country or proximity to the city.

The search for Brazilian social assistance benefits was also found to be a motivation for the circulation of “brasiguaios” on the border. However, few interviewed declared that they receive some type of benefit. These, when received, are taken in the Brazilian city closest to their residences. As far as time to wait, the frequency to receive the benefits is once a month and all the ones who receive, without exception, and even the ones that do not receive any benefit, agreed to the claim of a residence in Brazil (or of the ownership of a Brazilian address, very common) to get the money. Among these assistance benefits are retirements, Bolsa Família and PETI (Program of Eradication of the Infantile Work). In agreement with the hypotheses raised by Alvarez (2006), the retirement benefits related to the “brasiguaios” are Benefício de Prestação Continuada (BPC) or the rural agricultural retirement (with non-contribution benefits), since they have never contributed to the Brazilian Social welfare and some had used the aid of politicians to have access to the benefits.

The trans-border circulation of “brasiguaios” residents in Paraguay is motivated even more by visits to family and friends residing in Brazil, by religion, and shopping. The visits to family and friends in Brazil seem to be more frequent amongst “brasiguaios” from the first generation than the second and third generations. When necessary, the last ones count on the social capital of their parents and their grandparents to access certain resources, for example, health and education services. These visits aren’t limited to only border cities and when they occur in cities located far from the residence of the “brasiguaião”, usually they are accompanied by another motive, like some demand for health services that is considered to be more complex.

The “brasiguaios” that frequent Brazilian churches circulate on the border of Brazil and Paraguay with certain frequency, related to the days and times of mass and evangelic church services. Contrary to the activities related to shopping, visits to Brazil to frequent churches were observed mostly in cities separated by a dry border. Yet the shopping occurs daily and is a survival strategy independent of the border that separates the countries. The physical proximity between Paraguay and Brazil allows the “brasiguaios” to choose the establishments which have lower prices. In addition to this, some Brazilian products have superior quality to those commercialized in Paraguay, not to mention the different merchandise on each side of the border.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

As Faist had pointed out “various forms of cumulative causation in international migration start with migration as a set of self-feeding processes” (Faist, 2000, p. 239), and, like showing in this paper, the formation of transnational community is one of that. The Brazilian migration to Paraguay, and the return of thousands of them, extended and intensified social and material ties between migrants and no-migrants. These networks, together with the geographic proximity between Brazil and Paraguay, (specifically in Paraguayan cities on the border of Brazil), allow migrants and no-migrants to engage in frequent border-crossing activities and live in both contexts.

The residents in Paraguay who are more exposed to information about the Brazilian public institutions (like public hospitals, the public health and assistance system, poverty alleviation policies, education system and labor recruitment) tend more to commuting, have more diversified social networks and have a stronger sense of belonging to the transnational community. The migrant families with a heterogeneous social network (as many Brazilians as Paraguayans) are regular commuters, use very frequently the public institutions in the Brazilian side of the border, and actively spread the information about Brazilian everyday life among the communities. In addition, those with more active and heterogeneous social networks seem to support strongly the label of “brasiguaios” and speak preferentially the Portuguese.

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