Travelling spirits, localizing roots

Transnationalisms, home and generation among Portuguese-Canadians in British Columbia[i]

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to address the relation between transnationalism and intergenerational transformations of the notions of home and belonging. While doing an ethnographic research in Vancouver, British Columbia, it was possible to pinpoint the existence of two discourses about Portuguese-Canadian ethnicity. The first one, centered on the Holy Ghost Festas, (re)produces an idea of 'azoreanness', albeit fragmented along the Islands of origin, and is linked to specific social networks that go from Vancouver to the Azores. It is essentially fostered by the migrants that arrived in the region after the 1950s and to whom the *festas* are a constant reminder of the emotional, symbolic and social ties with these Atlantic Islands. The second discourse is fostered by the children of these migrants, which moved away from the Holy Ghost Festas and the Portuguese Catholic Parish, and is centered on a notion of portugueseness. This enactment of a national identity has to be interpreted in the context of Canadian multicultural politics and specific diasporic politics developed by the Portuguese authorities in the region. Simultaneously, this second discourse is also part and parcel of an intergenerational social mobility process.

Based on this ethnographic case study, this article has two main arguments: on one hand, I want to show how home and homeland are fields of struggle for hegemonic representation in the public domain and, secondly, how such debates have to be interpreted in relation to local and transnational political contexts and subjectivities.

Keywords

Transnationalism, home, multicultural and diaspora politics, generations, hegemonic representation, Portuguese-Canadians, Public domain, British Columbia

Introduction

While doing fieldwork about Holy Ghost festivals (HGF) in Vancouver, British Columbia[ii], one of the most striking aspects was the absence of young adults in these celebrations. These *festas* were mainly attended and organized by those that migrated in the 50s and 60s, from the Azores, and their grandchildren, but the in between generation, the 'children of immigrants' themselves, as they are often called in the existing literature, seemed to be if not totally absent – it was possible to find some helping their parents on the eve of these celebrations – their

numbers were very reduced. When I questioned my interlocutors about this, some argued that their children, now young adults, are surrounded by other things and thus they don't really pay attention to the HGF, while others, more critically, emphasized the fact that they, the generation of the parents, did nothing to foster their interest in these celebrations and thus they simply moved away. At some point, the conversation was interrupted and another of my interlocutor approached us and added "isto é só para quem vem com esta semente. Quem nasce aqui já não pega" ("this is only for those who already have a seed on them. For those born here, it doesn't hold). Independently of each other's opinion, everyone shared the same fear that because of this predicament the holy Ghost *festas* will soon disappear. After all, this is hard work and they are becoming too old and too sick to continue for much longer.

This ethnographic departure allows us to clarify the main objective of this article: to show how these absences "tell" us about generational differences and debates about home and belonging. A distracted reader could argue that this initial vignette revealed a process of assimilation of the children of migrants, that are abandoning the socio-cultural practices of their parents, but in fact, after a closer look at the ethnographic data presented below, I will argue that what is at stake is a debate between different and competing notions about home and belonging.

This argument engages directly the literature on migration that focuses on the relation between transnationalism, home and generation, themes that have been approached from several ethnographic contexts and theoretical positions (Rapport and Dawson 1998, Olwig 2007, *inter alia*). In the past decades, a growing number of authors have focused on the ways connections with homeland are maintained through *transnational ways of being*. This is a concept used to describe social practices and activities developed by migrants across borders (Portes 1999a, Schiller 2004), and it focuses, among others, on the economic (Kyle 1999, *inter alia*), political (Schiller, Blanc and Bach 1994, Schiller and Fouron 2001, Werbner 2002, Berg 2007), ritual (Grillo and Gardner 2002) and religious aspects of such transborder acts (Levitt

2001, 2009, Leal 2011, Werbner 2003). Through these practices, migrants performatively recreate their connections with homeland therefore sustaining social fields beyond the borders of the nation-state (Schiller, Blanc and Bach 1994 and creating what some authors (e.g. Vertovec 2010) called a transnational *habitus*. The next step in these approaches has been to reveal how such practices are far from homogeneous. They assume very diverse forms (from institutional to daily practices) and different intensities (Portes 1999a). Furthermore, not all migrants are by definition transnational; after all class, gender, generation and position in the migration project all have implications to the ways of being transnational (Friedman 2002, Gardner 2002, Mahler e Pessar 2001). Furthermore, it has been shown that such transnational practices/activities tend to change and reconfigure themselves in time. Thus for, one's position in the life cycle will have a significant influence on the type of transnational practices developed. But the changes in transnational practices in relation to a homeland become quite clear when authors compare the practices of migrants to those developed by their children, otherwise known as the second generation. One strand of literature on this 2nd generation has focused on its assimilation processes and thus has shown how the children of migrants tend to assimilate the mainstream values and thus abandon the transnational practices of their parents (Alba and Nee 2003). If the argument presented by Alba and Nee (2003) allows us to interpret certain cases, it surely is lacking in relation to many others. For instance, Portes (1996) and Portes and Rumbaut (2001), present an alternative and more complex scenario about the incorporation of the second generation. 'Dissonant', 'consonant' and 'selective acculturations' are three possible incorporation strategies developed by the children of migrants in the US. Furthermore, it is not uncommon to find children of migrants that develop, albeit in new forms, transnational practices in relation to the homeland of their parents (Fouron and Schiller 2002). The example of "roots" migration is a case at point, when the children of migrants look for a return to their parents' countries of origin as a longing for belonging (see Wessendorf 2010, Louie 2002, Mandel 2008, *inter alia*).

This article engages with these debates on the relations between transnationalism, home and generation but it departs from a theoretical position that argues that even if children of migrants do not actively develop transnational practices this does not mean that their perspectives and interpretations are not affected by the values and behaviors their parents associate with homeland, quite on the contrary (Levitt 2002). The center of my analysis is thus not so much (transnational) practices and acts but mainly on consciousness and imagination, that is, what Schiller (2004) has called *transnational ways of belonging*. Although practices continue to be essential for the material presented, my main focus will be on the '(…) cognitive and imagined elements of transnational livelihoods (…) (and) how social actors construct their identities and imagine themselves and the social groups they belong to when they live within transnational social fields and when they can use resources and discursive elements from multiple settings' (Levitt 2002, 9). The objective is thus to unearth cultural representation, ideologies, and identities that link people to far away places through memory, nostalgia, and imagination (see Schiller 2004). I'm following here the proposal of Le Espiritu and Tran (2002, 369) to whom transnationalism 'takes place not only at the literal but at the symbolic level – at the level of imagination, shared memory, and "inventions of tradition". Furthermore, these authors 'conceive of homeland not only as physical place that immigrants and their children return to for visits but also as a concept and a desire, a place to return through the imagination.' (Le Espiritu and Tran 2002, 369). In this paper, thus, home is not only 'a concrete locus of specific relations of social and economic rights and obligations (Olwig 2002, 216)', such as a domestic unit or a household, but also 'a more abstract entity of belonging expressed through various types of narratives and other forms of symbolic interchange' (Olwig 2002, 216).[iii]

Through this perspective, I will reveal the way migrants and their children performatively create ideas of home, through metaphors and tropes of "origins", "roots" and "seeds", among many other, and how such representations are contentious, debated and in transformation. What I want argue is, first, how home and homeland are, like society, not only processual but

also fields of struggle for hegemonic representation in the public domain, between different actors and segments (see Hall 1990, Klimt 2000) and, secondly, how such dynamics and debates have to be interpreted in relation to local and transnational political contexts and corresponding normative subjectivities.

The case of Portuguese Canadians in British Columbia presented in this article is quite striking. In this context it is possible to pinpoint the existence of two competing imaginaries of home and belonging that are mobilized by different segments of this population, in relation to different projects (and worldviews) and to different political locations, namely Canadian multicultural politics and a Portuguese diasporic public domain. The first one is centered on the Holy Ghost *Festas*, (re)produces an idea of long distance regionalism (Fitzgerald 2004, 2008), in this case *azoreanness* (açorianidade), and is linked to specific social networks that go from British Columbia to the Azores. As elsewhere in North America (Leal 2011, 2014a, 2014b, Leal, Mapril e Iria, 2015, *inter alia*), the *festas* are organized following different regional backgrounds/scripts and are related with the Azorean institutional scenario in the region. This discursive formation is essentially fostered by the migrants that arrived in British Columbia all throughout 1950s and 1960s, to whom the *festas* are a constant reminder of the emotional, symbolic and social ties with the Azores; as an 'origin'. Contrary to other cases in North America, these celebrations are partially invisible from the public space and are mainly associated with the making of Azorean sociabilities, both in British Columbia and in the Azores. To put it differently, it as if these discourses performed a removal of the Holy Ghost festas from their political context of performance – British Columbia – and connected them, imaginatively, with the Azores as a place of belonging and in the process, paradoxically, reinforce Azorean networks of social relations long established in British Columbia.

The second discursive formation was more related with young Portuguese-Canadians (from families of 'continentais' as well as Azoreans), some recently arrived migrants from mainland Portugal and, in the recent years, with the Portuguese consular representatives. The young

Portuguese-Canadians, namely of Azorean background, seemed to have moved away from the Holy Ghost *Festas* and the Portuguese Catholic Parish, and are now looking for the production of a notion of *portugueseness* (portugalidade), expressed in elements such as *fado* and football, to mention just two. Furthermore, this *portugueseness* is not only associated with Portugal itself but also with a Lusophone imagination, bringing together Brazilian, Macanese and Cape Verdean cultural heritages and references. Thus, being "Portuguese" in Vancouver is not only about *fado* but also about *samba* and *mornas*. Two institutions that clearly present this discursive formation were the celebrations of the *Portugal Heritage Month* and the publication of the monthly journal *Lusitânia*. This *portugalidade* has to be interpreted, it will be argued, in the contexts of Canadian multicultural politics[iv], with its specific model of civic participation and subjectivity, and, at the same time, a Portuguese diasporic public space.

Thus and to sum up, for the Azorean migrants, the HGFs are part and parcel of the emotional and nostalgic memory of the place they call home and an "origin". For their children, though, to build a discourse on Portugueseness is to make a new root, independently of the effective ties they have with Portugal, which is essential for their claims in Canadian multicultural politics. In order to become a 'good' Canadian citizens they need to locate their roots in "a place people know about" (I was told several times). The objective this paper is thus to ethnographically explore these two discourses and reveal the different, competing and frequently contradictory enactments of home and belonging in this social field.

Through this case study, I want to contribute to understanding the manifold routes and dynamics of Portuguese in North America. The literature on this long-term migration has focused on several themes, subjects and approaches (see Holton and Klimt 2009, Brettell 2003 and 2009, Feldman-Bianco 2009, *inter alia*) but one of the topics that has received some attention in the past years is precisely the futures of the 2nd generation. Contrary to neo assimilationist theories, several authors (Leal 2011, Holton 2009, Moniz 2009, and Klimt 2000 and 2009) have shown, that the *futures of ethnicity* among the 2nd generation, as Leal (2011)

put it, seem to show the emergence of new forms of belonging, frequently based on the reworkings of national and transnational imaginaries (such as portugueseness and lusophony). Holton (2009), for instance, reveals how the participation of the children of migrants in folkloric performances is seen as a way of making a positive Portuguese ethnic identity and political voice in Newark, New Jersey. This is also visible among Portuguese Americans in New England, where new enactments of Portugueseness are developed by the children of migrants, in the context of American racial politics, of hegemonic multicultural notions of citizenship and as part of processes of upward social mobility (Klimt 2000, Moniz 2009, Leal 2011). The case presented in this article reveals precisely a similar process of reinvention of notions of portugueseness, but it further argues that in order to understand such dynamics it is essential to look at the local and transnational political contexts, in this case Canadian multicultural policies and a Portuguese diasporic public sphere, and the ways these influence not only the formal political participation (Bloemraad 2009) but also the production of subjectivities and imaginaries of home (see also Klimt 2000 and 2009).

In order to explore this argument, the next section will contextualize Portuguese migration to British Columbia and thus place my interlocutors in the political economy of migration to Canada in the past seventy years. The next section reveals a discourse about Azoreanness, reproduced by the migrant generation, as a longing for a home with which links are increasingly weak. Next, I will show the emergence of other discourses, fostered by the children of these migrants and the Portuguese consular authorities, which have to be contextualized in relation to multicultural politics in contemporary British Columbia and the diasporic politics of the Portuguese state.

From the Commercial drive to Surrey: A history of the Portuguese in British Columbia

The beginnings of Portuguese emigration to North America dates back to the 19th century and throughout the 20th century it went through several changes and developments (Brettell 2003).

Today, it is possible to find a complex scenario marked by the presence of recent immigration but also several generations of descendents of earlier migrants (Klimt and Holton 2009).

The Portuguese emigration to Canada though, and in spite earlier contacts both in Newfoundland and in Vancouver Island (Doel 2009, Andrieux 2009, Teixeira 2009), only began in the 1950s, in the larger context of a recruitment program of workers for the agriculture and the construction of the railway developed by the Canadian authorities (Teixeira and da Rosa 2009). This migration grew steadily over the years and today it is possible to find Portuguese Canadians, of several generations and of distinct Portuguese regional backgrounds (although Azoreans continue to be one of the most significant population), in Ontario, Quebec. British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba (Oliveira 2009 Teixeira and Murdie 2009, Da Rosa and Teixeira 2009 and Teixeira 2009). Depending on the sources (Canadian statistics or community sources – such as consular authorities or journalists) Portuguese Canadian can go from 300 to 600 thousand (Teixeira and Da Rosa 2009).

The first Portuguese migrants in British Columbia arrived also in the 1950s and this migration route gained momentum until the early 1970s. After this, the profile of the Portuguese migration changed significantly due to the restrictive immigration policies that led to processes of family reunification (Teixeira 2009). Currently, there is an ongoing migration from Portugal to British Columbia but with a very distinct social profile and regional background.

According to the census, there are 18 thousand Portuguese in British Columbia, which represents the 3rd largest population in Canada, after Ontario and Quebec. Others sources, though, present different numbers, such as the 23 thousand registrations in the Portuguese consular office which, according to the consul, still do not translate the full reality in the region (the explanation is related with the fact that several Portuguese refuse to register). Informal testimonies, though, complexify this picture. For instance, in *Kitimat*, it is said 50% of the total population (between 9 to 10 thousand) is of Portuguese background, although they don't declare themselves as such. All these debates, over the numbers have to be interpreted in the

larger context of the implementation of the visible minorities' policies and the claims, among certain segments of Portuguese and Portuguese descendants in BC, for equal rights (see below). As elsewhere in Canada, the regional background of this population is overwhelmingly Azorean (70%), mainly from Pico, São Miguel and Terceira, and from mainland Portugal, also known as "continentais". There is also a recent migration from mainland Portugal to Vancouver but there seems to be few connections with the first Portuguese migrants that settled in the region.

¾ of the Portuguese in British Columbia settled in urban contexts but there were also those who decided to head to the Okanagan Valley (Teixeira 2009). This was intimately connected with several incentives made, in the 1950s, by the Canadian government to recruit migrant workers, Portuguese and other Southern Europeans, for the orchards in the Valley. The first 30 Portuguese arrived in 1955 and in 2009, according to official statistics, there were 800 Portuguese in the region - although these numbers are contested by community sources that suggest the existence of more than 1500 Portuguese and their descendants in the valley (Teixeira 2009). The Portuguese began working as labor but soon, through savings and loans, they became owners and later the dominant group in the orchard industry in Pentincton, Oliver and Osoys (Teixeira 2009).

Other Portuguese migrants, though, began working in construction (including railway lines), logging and landscaping. In the following years, several invested in their own businesses and companies, especially in the area of construction and landscaping, but also in the catering to a larger market with ethnicised references, namely Portuguese restaurants, bakeries and supermarkets, travel agencies (specialized in travels between Portugal and Canada), funerary homes and, more recently, in real-estate.

All this is quite visible in contemporary East Vancouver, especially in the Commercial Drive and surrounding areas - which at some point was partially an ethnic enclave (Portes and Manning 1999b) – and where it is still possible to find places such as the *Portuguese Club of Vancouver* (PCOV), *Joe's Café*, *Leiria Café*, *Portuguese Café*, *Casa Verde*, the *Union Food Market*,

the *Latin Food Market*, the *Universal Bakery* and the *Star Travel Holidays,* among many others. Besides these, other businesses, owned by Portuguese, are spread throughout the city of Vancouver, that are not necessarily catering portugueseness.

In spite of this, the commercial drive was for several decades, and continues to be seen by some, as a kind of an urban centrality for portugueseness in the city of Vancouver and in the whole region, which was further reinforced by the construction of Our Lady of Fátima Church, in the early 1970s, and the formation of Portuguese Parish.

Today, it is said that 10 thousand Portuguese and descendants still live in the area although there is a growing geographic mobility to other areas of greater Vancouver, such as Surrey and Burnaby, a move which is frequently perceived as part of an upward social mobility process. Simultaneously, this area of East Vancouver is undergoing an extensive gentrification process, after years of progressive social and cultural movements and the arrival of migrants with different national backgrounds. In some Vancouver Press, the Commercial drive is described not only as a multi-ethnic neighborhood - it is frequently called 'little Italy' - but also as a trendy place for upwardly mobile middle classes.

This presence of Portuguese migrants in British Columbia led to the emergence of several cultural associations and institutions. According to Teixeira (2009), in the Okanagan Valley alone, there are three cultural associations, namely the Portuguese Canadian Multicultural Society of Pentincton, the Okanagan Portuguese Club of Oliver and the Portuguese Canadian Cultural Society of Osoys. In Greater Vancouver, on the other hand, it was possible to find the *Associação do Amigos do Pico* (which also runs the Portuguese School), founded in 1993, by Azoreans migrants from Pico Island, which is also responsible for *Escola da Santissima Trindade* (the Portuguese School), the *Associação Tradição da Ilha Terceira*, created in 2000 by Azoreans from Terceira Island, the *Chamarrita do Pico*, and the *Portuguese Canadian Seniors Foundation,* founded in 1987 which is mainly controlled by mainland Portuguese of different regional backgrounds (although it also includes Azoreans, Madeirenses). Between, 2003 and 2011, it

was published the *Lusitânia – Canada's Monthly Celebrating the Portuguese World* and a Portuguese Library opened in downtown Vancouver. Both were part and parcel of the *Portuguese Community Centre of British Columbia* which in spite of cooperating closely with some of the Portuguese associations in the region targeted young Canadian Portuguese (see infra).

Holy ghost *festas* and azoreanness

So it was in this context that it was possible to find a first discursive formation about Portuguese-Canadian ethnicity that was centered on an idea of long distance regionalism (Fitzgerald 2004, 2008), at the center of which were the celebrations of the Holy Ghost *Festas* (HGF). This discursive formation is intimately linked to the social networks of those that first migrated from the Azores to Vancouver.

In British Columbia, there are seven Holy Ghost *festas* (HGF), organized by the Portuguese parish, the *Associação dos Amigos do Pico*, the *Associação Tradição Ilha Terceira*, the *Irmandade de Surrey*, *Irmandade do Espírito Santo*, Okanagan valley (Terceira), *Irmandade do Espírito Santo* of Our Lady of Fátima Parish, Victoria (São Miguel), and the *Irmandade do Espírito Santo* of Kitimat (São Miguel).

Some of the current organizers of these rituals would usually participate or, in some cases, organized the HGF back in the Azores and their journeys were carefully planned to include the organization/participation in these important yearly ritual events. Since 1963, though, the date of the first celebration of a HGF in British Columbia, by the Surrey Brotherhood (*irmandade do Espírito Santo* of Surrey), the scenario began to change and in the last decades many transferred this ritual from the Azores to the British Columbia, in a process very similar to the one described by João Leal to other areas of North America (2009). Today, these celebrations are part and parcel of the production of an Azorean ethnicity in B.C..

Every year, the ritual calendar begins on Pentecost Sunday and the last Holy Ghost celebration

occurs on the 1st of July, Canada Day. This calendar has been negotiated by all the brotherhoods and associations involved in the Holy Ghost festivals in order to decrease the competition and allow the circulation of potential publics and organizers. Thus, every year, in greater Vancouver, these celebrations occur consecutively: the first, on Pentecost Sunday, the second, on Trinity Sunday, the third, on the Saint John weekend and finally, the last one, on the 1st of July. In other areas of British Columbia, namely Victoria, Kitimat and the Okanagan Valley, the Holy Ghost *festas* usually occur on Pentecost Sunday which means that it is possible to find the organizers of these celebrations in the HGFs organized in greater Vancouver and the other way around. The Holy Ghost festivals thus represent a transit of sociabilities, a kind of tourism of festivals, that link up a specific segment of Azoreans in the region. This was the case, of several Portuguese-Canadians, of Azorean (S. Miguel) background, from Kitimat, that came to participate in the Holy Ghost *festa* of the *Associação dos Amigos do Pico*.

Furthermore, this calendar is also related with those that actively participate in the organization and thus it is common to find the same persons helping out in different HGF celebrations. These are frequently linked by kinship or friendship ties but even in cases of open conflicts it is possible to find several forms of cooperation. As some of my interlocutors would say: 'it is all for the Holy Ghost' and thus it really does not matter who organizes which celebration.

As elsewhere in North America (see Leal 2011), the HGFs are organized according to different regional backgrounds or scripts based on the different Islands of the Azores - Pico, Terceira, Flores and São Miguel islands - which means that within an apparently common ritual process – mass, procession, altar with the crowns, circulation of the crowns to collect funds, among others - it is possible to find particular elements that distinguish them. For instance, during the Holy Ghost *festa* organized by *Associação Amigos do Pico* there is a distribution of *rosquilhas*. Rosquilhas is a kind of sweet bread, in a donut shape, although wider, which is baked several weeks in advance and frozen. In the case of the *Associação dos Amigos do Pico*, part of the

organizing committee is responsible for the baking of *rosquilhas* (in the Universal bakery, mentioned earlier), even on behalf of others (each basin with dough is named after a person who made a *promessa,* a promise to the holy ghost). On the day of the *festa,* the *rosquilhas* are displayed in decorated baskets *(açafates)* that usually accompany the procession (these are part of *promessas* to the Holy Ghost and it is frequently the person who did the *promessa,* or someone on her behalf, that carries the *açafate*). The *rosquilhas* are then distributed among all those present in the hall in a moment which is frequently described as one of the main distinguishing elements in this festival. This, together with the specific recipe of *sopas* and the stewed octopus – 'it's cooked according to a Pico recipe', some would say (*'de acordo com a receita do pico'*) – are three elements that are considered by the organizers 'authentic' characteristics of HGF in Pico Island and thus, so it is said, aspects that clearly distinguish this celebration from the others.

This same logic of distinction also applies to other HGFs that affirm a regional belonging by following a script that is considered characteristic of a specific Island. The recipe for the *sopas* is frequently pinpointed as an essential element to distinguish the origin of a celebration. One of the arguments for the existence of these several Holy Ghost *festas* is precisely the need to do them according to the 'tradition' of one's own island. Other distinguishable elements are not only about gastronomy and its reference to a specific island but about the inclusion of certain ritual elements. For instance, the Holy Ghost *festa* of the *Irmandade do Espírito Santo* of Surrey, organized by Azoreans from Flores, is the only one in British Columbia with *queens* (Silvano, forthcoming). The introduction of queens is the result, according to the organizers, of the influence of a *florentino* that brought this model from certain HGFs organized in California.

All these HGF are organized either by independent brotherhoods or associations or by parishes. For instance, the Holy Ghost *festas* that take place on the Pentecost Sunday, in Vancouver, Kitimat and Victoria, are all connected with Portuguese parishes while all others are organized by independent associations or brotherhoods. The brotherhoods or the

associations either have their own halls or rent them and the religious part of the ceremonies – the blessing by the priest and the procession - are frequently performed in non-Portuguese Catholic Churches in greater Vancouver. For instance, the HGF organized by the *Associação dos Amigos do Pico* takes place every year in the Dom Bosco Youth Centre which is part of the parish Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish (mainly a Filipino and Polish parish) and in their hall in Surrey. This choice, according to some members of the association, is not only related with the close proximity of this church in relation to the head office of the association (where the *sopas* are prepared) but also with a more liberal attitude of the priest in this church in relation to the holy ghost celebrations (in comparison with others in the region). In the case of the *Associação da Tradição Ilha Terceira*, the HGF was celebrated in the church and hall of our Lady of Sorrows, in Surrey, a parish belonging to the Scalabrinian order and with close ties with Spanish speaking migrants in Vancouver.

These celebrations are mainly fostered by the first migrants, those that arrived in British Columbia all throughout 1950s and 1960s, to whom the *festas* are a constant reminder of the emotional, symbolic and social ties with the Azores. A good example is the following episode that took place in the hall of one of the associations during the preparations of a HG *festa:*

> 'While some were preparing the *arroz doce* (rice pudding), we were talking about the *mistérios* (miracles) of the Holy Ghost in Pico Island. There was some uncertainty about the exact whereabouts of each but everyone had a story to tell (one of the present drew their rough location in a paper napkin). The *mistérios* were, I was told, connected with several volcanic eruptions in Pico, in which lava "invaded" land coming from the sea and thus jeopardizing people, animals, houses, etc.. They were called *mistérios* not because it was mysterious to have 'fogo vindo do mar' (fire coming from the ocean) – after all these are volcanic islands, some would argue – but because facing eminent tragedy there was a sudden and inexplicable turn of events. When in danger, people would hold the *coroas do espírito santo* (the Holy Ghost crowns) to stop the fire

from advancing and spreading and the result was that the lava would invariable change its course. Another example was the story of an ox that was in a *prédio* (plot of land) which was promised for an *império*, and when the fire came, it bypassed the plot leaving the animal unharmed. At some point it became striking the absence of *mistérios* in other places and I asked why the Holy Ghost does not manifest itself in other places besides the Azores. After an initial hesitation, one of the present argued that there are no *mistérios* in say Vancouver because people doesn't believe, if they did, it would happen here.'

(Interview, 17th of June, Surrey)

In this example, the Azores are not only a place of natural hazards and other hardships (economic, for instance) but also a place of belief and piety and thus it is here that the Holy Ghosts manifests itself in the form of *mistérios*. Therefore, by reenacting the Holy Ghost *festas* in Vancouver, my interlocutors are reconnecting with a memory of the Azores, as a place of belonging.

It is precisely this point that allows us to interpret two other characteristics of these festivals: their invisibility and the effort carried out to protect the 'authenticity' of the ceremonial script.

One further aspect which is important to mention is precisely the relative invisibility of these practices. Contrary to other cases in North America, these celebrations are partially invisible from the public space and are mainly associated with the making of Azorean sociabilities, both in British Columbia and in the Azores. For instance, in Vancouver most of the processions usually take place around the hall and the churches where the HG *festa* is being celebrated, sometimes only in the parking lot or around the quarter of the church and the hall, and thus its visibility is limited. This is different from other areas in BC, namely in Kitimat, where the celebrations assume a much bigger public visibility with a procession that crosses half the town and includes the participation of local politicians and the fire department.

In any case, for the organizers, these Holy Ghost *Festas* are mainly seen as something intimately tied to the (re)production of certain notions of personhood and subjectivity – as some would say 'it is our *festas*' and 'our tradition' – and are a continuous way of producing a transnational consciousness in relation to the Azores. This transnational consciousness is, on one hand, about the present social networks and on the other about the past and how many grew up helping their parents in the organization of these ceremonies and hearing about the miracles of the Holy Ghost. For instance, the president of the *Associação dos Amigos do Pico* recalled that in 1993 (the year of their first celebration):

> 'The idea (to organize a Holy Ghost *Festa)* was to do it "à moda do Pico" (the Pico way) and our objective was to do a small celebration, with a few families in the province. (…) We knew exactly what to do. Don't forget, we grew up with all this and therefore knew exactly what to do and when to do it. Our grandparents had done it, our parents also and we had always been involved in these *festas*. It was really a simple thing to do.'
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> (Interview, 30th of May 2011)

This example is revealing of two dimensions associated with the organization of these ceremonies: sociabilities and memory. On one hand, it was a way of linking several families, originally from Pico that were living in Vancouver. On the other, it was a way of continuing something that the generations before them had always done and in which many had grown up in. So what all these examples reveal is precisely that this discursive formation ties the Holy Ghost *festas* to the maintenance of a continuous link with the islands with which many have lost all social relations and connections. For many, it is a continuation in time by (re)producing, in a new location, something that their ancestors had done before them.

Thus the organization of all these celebrations can be interpreted as a way of making a Canadian Azoreaness – an ethnicity mode production, as João Leal calls it (2011) – through the reproduction of sociabilities, practices and memories. In sum, they are performative.

Making place for a Portuguese heritage and a search for visibility

The second discourse about Portuguese-Canadian ethnicity is related with young Portuguese-Canadians, some recently arrived migrants from mainland Portugal and with the consular representatives.

The young Portuguese-Canadians, namely of Azorean background, seemed to have moved away from the Holy Ghost *festas* and the Portuguese Catholic Parish. One of the reasons was, and this is argued by the parents and their children (now adults), that several young Portuguese-Canadians tried to actively participate in organization of the HGFs. Their aim was not only to help out their parents but also introduce other elements that could be appealing to a younger generation/audience but we're soon discouraged to do so by the generation of their parents (to whom the festas should continue to be done according to the previously defined script, which was seen as the 'proper', the 'authentic' way of doing a HGF).

It was in this context that a new discourse emerged about Portuguese-Canadian ethnicity. This was mainly based on a notion of *portugueseness* (portugalidade), expressed in elements such as *fado* and football but also elements associated with a Lusophone imagination, bringing together Brazilian, Macanese and Cape Verdean cultural heritages and references. Two institutions that clearly present this discourse are the monthly journal *Lusitânia: The Portuguese English Newspaper of British Columbia* and the *Portugal Heritage Month*.

The *Lusitânia* was published for the first time in June/July 2003, the year celebrating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Portuguese immigration to Canada and its objectives were clearly stated in the first editorial note *(Lusitânia* 2003, pp. 4):

> 'Welcome to the inaugural edition of our new community newspaper on the occasion of the celebration of the 50 years of Portuguese immigration to Canada. We hope that this newspaper will unite and strengthen our community for the next 50 years. We promise to make it exciting and relevant to the young and the old, to the unilingual and

> the bilingual, to the news junkie and the sports enthusiast, to the bricklayer and the university professor, to the business person and the unemployed. We will foster unity not division, hope not despair, success not failure. Our community faces many challenges. Although assimilation policies of the 50s evolved to integration policies of a multicultural country, our community will wither if we do not water it. We desperately need a cultural center to service all of British Columbia and the western provinces. It must cater to seniors and to toddlers. It must provide education and cultural activities such as a library, bilingual pre-school, theatre, etc.'

It was part of the *Portuguese Benevolent Society* (later the name was changed to *Portuguese Center of British Columbia*), which was created in the same year, as a center for portugueseness in the region. It had a library and an association for young Portuguese-Canadians, located in Granville Avenue, right in downtown Vancouver that in its peak reached 300 members, and a LGBT group. Initially this editorial project was fully funded by Portuguese-Canadian entrepreneurs and subscriptions – at some point had 600 subscribers, from all over Canada – but progressively the main source of income – publicity – began to wither away. One of the reasons, according to some, was an increasing contestation with editorial alignments and positions. Thus the last issue was published in June 2011.

The *Portugal Heritage Month*, on the other hand, was organized for the first time in 2003 (following other initiatives such as the *Azorean Cultural Week*) but only in 2004 the celebration was institutionalized with the support of local authorities and some sponsors (at some point they received 35 thousand Canadian dollars just in posters and outdoor materials). It usually takes place during the month June and brings together the celebrations of the day of Portugal (10th of June), some of the Holy Ghost *Festas*, concerts, exhibitions, among others. In 2011, the main sponsors were Super Bock and the Union Food Market and the celebrations included Holy Ghost *festas* and a concert by Ana Moura, within the Coastal Jazz Festival (the Vancouver Jazz

festival). To launch the month of celebrations, on the 10th of June, a delegation of several Portuguese-Canadian cultural associations (*Associação dos Amigos de Pico* e a *Seniors Foundation*) and some important Portuguese-Canadian figures, for instance, Susan Silva, a pivot from the Canadian Broadcasting Company, all leaded by the Portuguese consul, were received by the Mayor of the City of Vancouver. At the end of the ceremony, the flag of Portugal was hoisted in the city hall for the duration of the Portuguese Heritage Month.

On that same day, late afternoon, the month was officially launched in *Jlounge*, a bar in downtown Vancouver, with the presence of the Portuguese consul, the Attorney general of British Columbia, the *Associação dos Amigos do Pico*, the *Seniors Foundation*, the Portuguese School, the Macanese Association and several young Portuguese-Canadians. The main organizer welcomed everyone with "there is a saying that God is everywhere but the Portuguese were there first" and to exemplify mentioned Portuguese Joe Silvey and how the Portuguese had been in this province even before the creation of Canada (see below). After the choral group of *Amigos do Pico* sang both the Canadian and the Portuguese national anthems, the program was presented followed by a short concert with Azorean songs, such as *ilhas de bruma*. The consul and the Attorney general addressed the audience and the presentation of the month's program was concluded with the projection of a video about Portugal and its place in the European Union.

According to its main organizer, which is also a councilman to the Portuguese Consul (there are two councilmen representing, to a certain extent, the Azores and the 'continentais' and, simultaneously, the older and the younger generation), the objective of the present month was to:

> '(...) present Portuguese identity and culture just like the other ethnic communities do. The Chinese, the Indians and the Italians all have similar initiatives and there should certainly be a similar one for Portugal. We, the Portuguese, have always been an invisible minority. The Asians, on the other hand, are always showing their identities and

cultures. So the objective of this initiative is precisely to show to Vancouver society what is Portugal and who are the Portuguese.'

(Interview, 26th of May 2011)

In an interview in the *Portuguese American Journal* ("Vancouver Celebrates Portuguese Heritage Month") my interlocutor further reiterated:

'The young get tired of seeing the older generation doing about the same thing (…) I saw a lack of something in our community that I could connect to. I wanted my Greek friends, my Asian friends to learn about my culture and I wanted to see my culture as part of Canada, something that could be recognized as Portugal of today. That was one of the reasons why we have the Portuguese Heritage Month.'

(*The Portuguese American Journal*, 24th of May, 2011)

This discursive formation about *portugalidade* that is present in the Portuguese Heritage Month is aligned with the official discourses produced by the Portuguese consular authorities, as well as other positions taken by different segments of the Portuguese population, to whom the Portuguese community in BC is too segmented along regional lines and this represents an obstacle to the creation of a Portuguese community center. In an interview, the Portuguese consul argued:

'There is a great segmentation in the Portuguese community and people have their backs turned on each other. They are only worried about their regional identities and this has been an obstacle to the creation of a community centre similar to the one created by the Italians. (...) In Toronto, a very successful Portuguese financed a Portuguese centre but he hardly knows any details. In here, though, it is very difficult go get anything organized because people do not want to participate in the public space. (...) They frequently close themselves in their particular references.'

(Interview 7th of June 2011)

Another interlocutor, a novelist, was very critical about the current predicament of Portuguese in BC and argued that:

> '(...) it is essential to create a Portuguese center to organize cultural events about Lusophony and Portuguese language, directed not only at the older generations but also at the Canadian society. At the moment, people just want to play cards and be president of associations while at the same time continue to reproduce a Portugal that no longer exists and is absolutely indifferent to the younger generation and the Canadians.'
>
> (Interview 2nd of June 2011)

The idea of giving some visibility to Portuguese and portugueseness (*portugalidade*) in the region is not only about a Portuguese center *per se* but it is related with claims to be made to the Canadian government. The invisibility of the parents, I was told, had consequences to their children mainly because it is increasingly difficult to make claims in the public space and many now argue that the Portuguese should belong to the 'Latino' category (instead of "White"), although this is mainly used for South Americans, within the 'visible' minorities policy[v]. Thus, it is an affirmation of difference according to dominant discourses about *multicultural citizenship* and its normative subjectivities. Their objective is to produce Canadianness through the affirmation of a heritage, as I was frequently told, "everyone comes from somewhere" (for a similar debate among Portuguese-Americans in New England see Moniz 2009). The reference to the story of pioneers, such as Portuguese Joe Silvey or Portuguese Pete, that "jumped ship" to join the gold rush after indescribable sacrifices in the walling industry, in the early 19th century and that later married with *First Nations* – Portuguese Joe married Kkaltinhat, the granddaughter of chief Kiapilano[vi] - should be interpreted within this larger context. Their stories are celebrated among Portuguese-Canadians, of all generations, as revealing examples

of the long lasting presence of the Portuguese in the region and they have been subject to several publications (Barman 2004). In the forward to Jean Barmans *Portuguese Joe, the Forgotten Pioneer*, Manuel de Azevedo, the editor of *Lusitânia*, wrote:

> 'There is a Portuguese saying that God is everywhere, but the Portuguese were there first. Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that Portuguese Joe Silvey was one of the earliest pioneers of what is now British Columbia. Joe Silvey was only one of many Portuguese who reached the east and west coasts of Canada long before 1867, the year of confederation (British Columbia joined in 1871). In fact, 2004, is the 300th anniversary of Canada´s first letter carrier, Pedro da Silva of New France, an occasion that has been honored with the issue of a commemorative stamp by Canada Post.'

Thus, the argument goes, the Portuguese not only reached the shores of British Columbia even before it became part of Canada, and thus of what it is today (which they helped build), but they also married with first nations and thus with the sons of the soil.

Based on history or on demographics – remember the debates over the numbers of Portuguese descendants and Portuguese-Canadians mentioned in section one of this chapter – many are producing a Portuguese genealogy/heritage to contemporary Canadian British Columbia while others are making claims for equal rights within the implementation of the visible minorities' policies.

To a certain extent, this second discursive formation seems to be appealing to the children of the immigrants themselves. For instance, on the eve of one of the holy ghost *festa*, and while the decorations were being set up in the hall, I was able to speak to the son of the one of the organizers – a graduate from University of British Columbia – to whom:

> '(...) the *festas* are something that I feel comfortable with because I grew up in them but I can hardly understand most of the things that are happening or are being said or sung. I really do not feel any affinity with all this (and he pointed to the hall) and

I just show up because of my parents. For me, it doesn't really matter if you're from Pico or Terceira or if you're a neighbor of this or that person.'

(Fieldnotes, 18th of June 2011)

Although he grew up in the *festas*, these ceremonies have lost most of the importance they had in the past and, furthermore, the regional belonging is not something that he cares for. Further along the conversation he added:

'(…) At some point I had some Portuguese friends but everyone went in different directions and today I hardly have friends with Portuguese roots. My friends have other backgrounds and this is not even something I'm worried about. There are some moments, such as football championships, in which I feel more Portuguese (he doesn't really like ice hockey, he admitted) and go to the club (PCOV) to meet other young Canadians of Portuguese background. In 2004 (the EuroCup in Portugal), I tattooed the symbol of Portugal in my arm. Another thing that makes me feel Portuguese is to speak the language. You know, here everyone comes from somewhere and even if this does not have any consequences for our daily experiences, I frequently feel the need to explain to others that "I'm Portuguese" because here everyone comes from somewhere.'

(Fieldnotes, 18th of June 2011)

For my interlocutor, the invisibility of the Portuguese in Vancouver does not necessarily imply a project of success; on the contrary, this invisibilization is partially related with the fact that being Portuguese in Vancouver is frequently associated with jobs in the lower ranks of the economy - this, he further argued, in spite the fact that several descendants of Portuguese have now finished university degrees and occupy important positions in the labor market. What remains visible, my interlocutor added, is the working class background of the Portuguese in British Columbia and for him, appealing to a notion of portugueseness which goes beyond azoreanness (although including it), is perceived as part and parcel of an upward social

mobility process.

Thus, this discursive formation on portugueseness has to be interpreted within the larger context where several actors are engaged in producing a place for Portugueseness in Canadian multicultural society (and these include the Portuguese authorities but also some segments of the Portuguese descendants) to whom this discursive formation, some would say more 'cosmopolitan' and 'modern' is more in tune with their expectations in relation to class and educational background. They are making local (multicultural) citizenship claims through a reframing of a transnational way of belonging[vii].

Seeds, spirits and roots: some concluding remarks

To conclude this chapter let me go back to the sentence - "isto é só para quem vem com esta semente. Quem nasce aqui já não pega" ("this is only for those who already have a seed on them. For those born here, it doesn't hold) - and the initial ethnographic vignette.

In a way it is possible to argue that the discussion we were having while the *sopas do espírito santo* were being prepared in the hall of an association summed up some of the debates, and associated tropes, that I tried to analyze in this article. On one hand, there was a (re)production of a long distance regionalism, namely *azoreanness* (açorianidade), that is not only associated with specific social networks but also with the establishment of a continuity with a personal and collective pasts. In this discourse, the metaphor of the "seed" is quite important because it precisely reveals the link between the Holy Ghost *festas*, memory and a continuity in time (although performed in a new location). This discursive formation is produced by the migrants that arrived in British Columbia all throughout 1950s and 1960s, to whom the *festas* are a constant reminder of the emotional, symbolic and social ties with the Azores, and for whom the relation with Canadian society is mainly centered on their economic success. They want to be 'good' Canadians but keeping and (re)producing an Azorean background, through the Holy Ghost festivals (it is their *festas*, as I was often told), with no need for public visibility or

recognition. In a way, it could be categorized as an invisible ethnicity.

The second discourse about this ethnicity is more related with young Portuguese-Canadians, some recently arrived migrants from mainland Portugal and with the Portuguese consular representatives, and is centered on an idea of portugueseness (portugalidade). This *portugalidade* has to be interpreted in the context of Canadian multiculturalism, with its specific model of civic participation, aesthetics and subjectivities, where to be a "good" Canadian is to be from somewhere. Again, here the metaphor of the "root" is central but shaped in a very distinct way in relation to their parents. This root is not only related with Portugal (not only the Azores) but also in relation to the place of Portuguese within British Columbia, and thus the example of Joe Silvey and other pioneers. The aim is to produce a Portuguese heritage that locates Portuguese-Canadians in a particular structural place in BC, that is, middle class, cosmopolitan and multicultural.

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[i] Different versions of this chapter were presented at international conferences such as *Neither Here Nor There, Yet Both*: *International Conference on the Luso-American Experience*, University of Lisbon, 11-13th of July and 1st conference of the *Lusophone Studies Association*, Toronto, University of York, October 29th – November 1st. I want to thank all the comments and suggestions, especially from João Leal, Miguel Moniz, Catarina Faria, Ilda Januário, Andrea Klimt and Maria Glória de Sá.

[ii] This chapter is part of my participation in the project *Ritual, ethnicity and transnationalism: the Holy Ghost festivals in North America* coordinated by João Leal (Reference: PTDC/CS-ANT/100037/2008). Fieldwork took place between May and June 2011 and included participant observation and twenty interviews (semi-directed and ethnographic).

[iii] About this concept of home, Karen Fog Olwig (2002, 216) further argues that "(…) these two understandings and practices of home mutually reinforce and implicate one another. A home will not become a nodal point in concrete relations involving socioeconomic rights and obligations unless it receives some sort of recognition and validation through narratives and other kinds of symbolic expression among interacting individuals. Similarly, social and economic practices of home will have an important bearing on the kinds of narratives of home, which will be related by the individuals involved." This paper corroborates this idea by showing how the notion of home fostered by the migrants themselves, in this case frequently associated with a specific household and domestic unit, is not only reinforced symbolically but it also has an impact on the reconfiguration of the conceptions of home among their children.

[iv] For a reflection on multicultural citizenship see Kimlicka (1995) and Modood (2007), *inter alia*

[v] The Canadian government defines a 'visible minority' as 'persons, other than aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race and non-white in colour'. It is used as a demographic category and is connected with the employment equity act, which addresses labour market disadvantages among certain groups. The concept has been extensively criticised for its racist overtones and continues to be used by the administration as a whole.

[vi] Chief Kapialano, also known as Joe Capilano, was the leader of the Squamish people (the category Squamish was a colonial creation for governing purposes and led to a political federation of neighbouring villages) and a notable figure that fought the rights of the first nations in British Columbia. As elsewhere in Canada (see Ontario), recognized first nations, otherwise known as aboriginal Canadians in government discourses, are nowadays part of the public sphere of British Columbia and in Vancouver revealing examples are the Stanley Park, and how its history has been produced in close connection to the Squamish, Musqueam and Burrard first nations, and the Capilano bridge (it is interesting to note the simultaneous silences about the colonial violence). Both have become major touristic attractions in the region marketing first nations in a multicultural city. According to the employment equity act, first nations together with women, visible minorities and people with disabilities are considered groups to be supported.

[vii] In spite of some of the examples explored in this article, it is also possible to find several young Portuguese-Canadians to whom this second discourse was quite appealing for a while but soon after many abandoned these associations and initiatives, especially after marriage.