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Resumo

Este artigo propõe analisar a reprodução geracional do estatuto legal entre mães e filhos. A análise baseia-se no trabalho de campo realizado em Portugal com mulheres migrantes dos Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa, onde alguns entrevistados, especialmente mulheres, revelaram um interesse particular com a repercussão que o seu estatuto legal tem na vida dos seus filhos. O principal objetivo deste artigo é explorar a forma como as políticas e as leis configuram as experiências das mães, nomeadamente no acesso aos direitos de cidadania, destacando os efeitos do seu estatuto legal nos seus filhos. Fundamentada na literatura vamos também tentar perceber o impacto que a reprodução geracional de estatuto legal pode ter nas diferentes fases de deenvolvimento dos jovens, nomeadamente nas transições para a vida adulta.

Abstract

This article sets out to examine the generational reproduction of legal status between mothers and their children. The analysis is based on fieldwork carried out in Portugal with migrant women from Portuguese speaking African countries. Some of the interviewees, especially women, revealed a particular concern about the repercussions of their legal status in their children's lives. The overall objective is to explore how policies and laws shape the mother's experiences and to provide a glimpse on the complex picture of citizenship rights, focusing on the effects of mother's legal status on their children. As it is stated in the literature we will also explore how generational reproduction of legal status can unbalance different stages of the migrant's children development, namely the transitions to adulthood.

Palavras-chave

Cidadania; Estatuto legal; Parentalidade; Filhos de migrantes; Jovens; Transição para a vida adult

Keywords

Citizenship; Legal status; Motherhood; Migrant children; Youth; Transition to adulthood

1. Introduction

Globalization and migration poses new challenges for understanding citizenship from a transnational perspective, making us question the classic framing of citizenship (Walzer, 1983, 1989; Miller, 1995, 2000). Nowadays there is a gap between the lived experience of citizens and migrant families and nation-state policies that differentiate rights and entitlements on the basis of citizenship status. In the Portuguese case-study of a recent project¹, some of the interviewees, especially migrant women from Portuguese speaking African countries, revealed a particular concern about the repercussions of their legal status in their children's lives. The overall objective of this paper is to explore how policies and laws shape mother's experiences and give a glimpse on the complex picture of citizenship rights, focusing on the effects of mother's legal status on their children. The analysis starts from the debates around the concept of citizenship, followed by a discussion about constraints that migrant mothers face to fulfill their socially prescribed expectations of motherhood and how their legal status marginalizes them. We should take into account that they are already subjected to other obstacles regarding gender equality. Next, we give a picture of the complex pathways to citizenship, presenting the stories of several mothers and their mixed status families, their experiences and restrictions on access to citizenship rights. Finally, the data highlighted some interesting research pathways that are being developed in a PhD project², namely the discussion about how generational reproduction of legal status can affect migrant's children in the different forms of their development, namely in the transitions to adulthood.

2. Citizenship and the multiple dimensions of legal status

The concept of citizenship is in continuous recreation and reinterpretation over time, regardless the complex legal, political and social practices (Attias-Donfut et al, 2012).

We must recognize that the notion of citizenship can be defined in several dimensions. The concept of citizenship here is related to rights-based citizenship, thus considering citizenship as a legal status and not studying it as belonging or as socio-political practice, which is not our goal in this article.

Also considering the classic conceptualization of citizenship, developed by Marshall (1950) which involves three different elements – civil, political and social, in this paper we will take into account the social citizenship, which comprises on social benefits, such as health care, access to school and housing.

Concerning migrants we must consider that citizenship rights and obligations are a set of multiple roles and conditions that concerns work, residence and conditions of entry. In many states migrants are placed in specific categories in terms of civic domain that has consequences in their rights and access to citizenship (Kofman, 2002; Morris, 2002).

Citizenship policies entraps them in insecure and uncertain status. In the case of Portugal, not all migrants achieve full Portuguese citizenship – naturalization. Many of them because they do not fulfil all the legal requirements, others because they do not want to undergo the lengthy and expensive Portuguese citizenship process. Besides being slow and complex in different ways, migrants also have to pay taxes that vary in value accordingly to the legal process (if it is a

¹ Project "migratory trajectories of Africa, Illegality and Gender", coordinated by Marzia Grassi at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, in which I participated as a team member.

² PhD project named "Gender and generations: processes of transition to adulthood of young descendants from Portuguese speaking African countries", that benefits from a grant from the Portuguese Foundation for Science - FCT, grant (SFRH/BD/61130/2009). The project also benefits from the integration in the network "Transnational Lives, Mobility and Gender network" (www.tlnetwork.ics.ul.pt) and the participation in the GENDERCIT project (FP7-PEOPLE-2012-IRSES/318960) part of Marie Curie Actions (7th Framework Programme of the European Commission).

residence permit or nationality requirement) and documents required. This issue is especially sensitive when we are dealing in many cases with families in precarious and adverse conditions (Grassi, 2012; Grassi & Giuffrè, 2013).

Many scholars attempted to develop some citizenship concepts to analyse the complex definition of a migrant owns and family members citizenship. In particular, children's citizenship is largely invisible in research making it difficult to relate the existing conceptions of citizenship and what are the main aspects of adult citizenship that can be considered and applied to children regarding the different national legal contexts.

Marshall considered that children and young people are "*citizens in the making*" (as cited in Marshall, 1950, p.25) the idea is that young people are *not yet* citizens, but citizens in construction.

Bulmer and Rees (1996) stated that migrant's children have a partial citizenship because of their legal and social dependence upon adults.

Some scholars also argue that it is necessary to go further the nation-state-based approach to the concept of citizenship. The concept of transnational citizenship³ could help to go behind the national boundaries. A concept that takes into account the dual or even multiple citizenship pathways of migrants (Fox, 2005). Bauböck (1994) also argues that the liberal democratic notion of citizenship must be reinterpreted in order to give response to the international migration phenomenon. The nation-states with their defined frontiers must go further the notion that their responsibility is only to protect the rights and interests of their own citizens.

This transnational approach to citizenship allows recognizing the different forms and practices that go behind the national frontiers. This concept is particular interesting in this case, as the majority of children of PALOP migrants on the mixed status families that we are going to present below, have today between 15 and 30 years, and besides have been born in Portugal, have the parent's nationality at birth. Many of them have never been in the parents' country of origin possessing a nationality of a country that they do not know at all. The notion of a transnational citizenship or nationality takes full extent in this case.

We also must consider that in minors' children the legal status does not result from their own condition but from their parents or other adults. Even in the case of adults there are many grey areas, many of them being in a status of "*liminal legality*" (Menjívar, 2006), as they have ambiguous documentation (Anderson, 2009, 2010) while they undergo the regularization process (Bacci Tamburlini 2013).

3. Migrant Mothers and generational reproduction of legal status

In the Portuguese case-study of the project "*Migratory Trajectories from Africa, Illegality and Gender*", from the 50 in-depth interviews made to PALOP migrants in Portugal⁴ (Grassi, Giuffrè & Ferreira 2012, Ferreira & Grassi 2012), there was a high percentage of migrants with children who lived with them and these invites us to question how illegality and access to citizenship are reproduced generationally. First, we must observe that it is above all women who show concern about the legal status of their children and with the repercussions of their own legal status in their children's lives. We cannot be gender blind in this issue. Some authors have already shown that, according to their social positions and their expected roles, fathers and mothers have specific concerns about the legal status implications on family members lives (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011). Regardless the participation of migrant women in the paid labor market, they remain burden with gendered responsibilities, as domestic work and the bulk of child-rearing

³ For a more in depth discussion about the transnational citizenship concept see Fox (2005) and Bauböck (1994).

⁴ For further information about the context of PALOP migrants in Portugal and other project results, see Grassi (2013), Grassi, Giuffrè & Ferreira (2012), Ferreira & Grassi (2012)

tasks (Foner, 1998; Lan, 2003; Goldring, 1996) and they are responsible for the reproduction of the household (Grassi & Évora, 2007).

Regardless citizenship, women have always been in disadvantage. Citizenship has always been gendered (Walby, 1994, Lister, 1997, 2003), women and men have stood in different positions to it. Women have limited access to the full and equal citizenship status, mainly due to the dichotomy between private and public sphere.

The inequality regarding citizenship and the gendered responsibilities can explain the particular interest of women on their children's lives. Besides their central role on taking care of family needs and problems, their concern may also be explained by the fact that, as some authors stress (Moon, 2003) some specific migration patterns and experiences may reinforce gender inequalities embedded in women's mothering. Gendered responsibilities and power relations in families left women in a disadvantaged position (Boyd & Grieco, 2003) which makes them more thoughtful of their children problems, especially the ones that are consequence of their own legal status that are generationally reproduce.

We must take into account that law restrictions creates vulnerability to migrant mothers, regardless their legal status, as not only undocumented mothers are affected but also the ones that are documented or in in-between statuses. The mothers concern with the repercussions of their own status on their children highlights their vulnerability, and the constraints they face to fulfill their socially prescribed expectations of motherhood (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011).

Like some authors refer is a *legal violence* that brings suffer and anxiety to women who are unable to fulfil their parental responsibilities. Their mother's experiences are shaped and impaired by the power of nation-state laws, regardless of the kind of legal status they have. "*The laws and their implementation as economic, psychological, physical and emotional consequences on their lives and on the members of their families*" (as cited in Abrego & Menjívar 2011, p. 11)

Moreover we should take into account that the women interviewed in the referred project, and their children live in a mixed-status families. The concept of mixed status families has been developed by several authors, namely in the United States where the number of families that contain a mix of both citizens and noncitizens is surprisingly large (Fix and Zimmerman, 2001; Passel 2006).

Based on the experiences of Latina migrant mothers in the United States, Abrego and Manejivar (2011) highlight the complex and fluid character of family's legal composition, where in the same family we can have one undocumented member and another one with long term residence permit or nationality. The increasingly restrictive migration laws in the United States, endangers the access to resources and opportunities of all the members and also affects mothering practices.

Furthermore we must take into account, that in the process of accessing citizenship we cannot only consider the legislative procedures in its formal ways. First of all there are always many contradictions in the rules and practices. In the case of Portugal, we have to express that although the changes in the Nationality Law of 2006, from *ius sanguinis*, based on blood ties, to *ius solis*, based on birth within the national territory, individuals born in the country do not have automatic access to Portuguese citizenship, and they must possess some legal requirements (Ferreira, 2013; Bacci Tamburlini, 2013; Bacci Tamburlini, Giuffrè & Grassi, 2012; Healy 2011).

In that sense, we cannot consider the *ius solis* principle in its full dimension. The previous law made the migrant families and their children a vulnerable population, facing unique circumstances. With the new law, although the main changes, migrants and their children continue to face difficulties in legalization processes. Most important, we should take notice that the law is recent and a large number of young adults, especially from PALOP migrant children, have lived their childhood and adolescence in the previous law and the implications in their lives cannot be ignored.

In what concerns practices, we also have to consider that we are facing complex procedures and requirements and migrants do not always have access to good quality free legal representation. In the other hand, the local authorities and services providers are not always prepared to put into practice the laws.

Hereafter we will give a picture of the complex pathways to citizenship, presenting the stories of several mothers and their mixed-status families, their experiences and restrictions on access to citizenship rights.

Although the women interviewed in the referred project are originated from different countries, have arrived in different periods at Portugal and have different legal statuses, all of them share key experiences within the Portuguese legal context and all of them experience vulnerable situations.

Their life stories, briefly presented below, show us how the Portuguese policy of providing “*pathways to citizenship*” shapes migratory experience of migrant families that live together, whether or not all members are undocumented citizenship and place them many times excluded from formal citizenship rights. In our interviews we have found different complex situations that are demonstrative about what we have been stated and, in the case of children, the complex and length pathway to full citizenship has implications for their development.

4. Pathways to citizenship - one undocumented member in the family

The following story is a prime example of a mixed-status family as defined by Fix and Zimmermann (2001), where M. has the Portuguese nationality, her partner is undocumented and her children have faced several constraints in obtaining the legal status. This examples also shows the lengthy and expensive process of regularization, implying many documents and costs.

M. is an Angolan woman living in Portugal for 19 years with her five sons, a stepdaughter, and her undocumented partner.

She entered in Portugal with a tourist visa, remained without documents for several periods until obtaining the residence permit, followed by the permanent permit, and finally being granted citizenship.

She experienced difficulties in registering her eldest daughter, who was born when she had already lived in Portugal for three years. The daughter spent long periods without papers.

Already, all of them already have (nationality)... I had difficulties for...for the first one...to obtain her documents. I really had. It was at the last minute I managed. (The others) had straight away, straight away. She, since I only had been here for three years...

For long, long (period without documents). Because it only was... when did I obtain the residency permit? She already was in 10th or 12th grade when I obtained the residency. Because even in school when she did the exam for 4th grade they had to give her an internal register number from the school...

In cases like this, many migrants have difficulties in the delivery of some documents that are required to obtain the residence permit or citizenship. In many cases, documents such as the criminal record in the country of origin are required to children or young adults that have grown up or were born in Portugal.

I had to obtain the criminal record from Angola, I said: “How can I get it if she never lived there? I can’t. And with what documents may I state that she was...she was there. At that time the registration that was done was from...from

the first to the fourth year she spent here. She had to go...in the schools where she studied, asking everything, until the year...she was in... everything was written. That's how it was. After I had to pay one hundred and twenty euros (120,00€) for her to obtain nationality.

5. Pathways to citizenship - mother undocumented for several years

The following example shows, one more time, the long process that migrants face to obtain legal status and how parent's legal status can determine the children status.

T. is a Guinean woman living with her three children who has been in Portugal for 11 years. She migrated to Portugal because of the war.

She was undocumented until 2006 (for 7 years), thereupon obtained a residence permit, and finally about two years ago obtained citizenship.

She had difficulties in obtaining the residence permit for her eldest daughter because she also had no documents. After her partner obtained the residence permit she could register her children, but she remained undocumented.

At the time for school...she had a document they gave her, after it expired, and after that she didn't have it. But after two or three years, when she already was in 4th grade, they gave her a residency authorization. But mine never appeared, was never again ready, I never saw it. I only received the residency authorization, if I'm not mistaken, in two thousand and six.

Residency authorization (the older one). They were registered because their father already...already had had residency authorization for some time, they were registered, they managed to get registered. And...and they already had the birth certificate. (...) Only after they did their Identification Card... the ninety nine one did...his ID when he already was two years old.

6. Pathways to citizenship - undocumented children

Sometimes women migrate and have to leave their children behind (Parreñas, 2005). Below is an example of a transnational family, whose mother does not live with all her children. One of them has stayed in Guinea.

G. is a Guinean woman who came to Portugal in 2007. She has four children; three of them live with her in Portugal (20, 15, and 2 years old) and one in Guinea (8 years old).

She arrived in Portugal with a health visa and obtained her resident permit after six months. She has a daughter that arrived recently in Portugal who has no documents.

Yes. For me it was like this: a person that has no document and comes to Portugal he's a zero! He's really zero! Because for me, I am also in the same situation! I have, I have a son that arrived from Guinea a short time ago he still doesn't have papers! She, she started school last week, I go to the school to obtain the missing papers. That lady says to go to the Social Security, I have, I have to... she gave a declaration from the school to be handed over to the social security in order to receive the subsidy. I went to the social security, the social security said "no". He, they understood nothing because the child is illegal, he doesn't have residency. To process the subsidy you have to have the residency...authorization. A person that...that has illegal in Portugal is zero. He doesn't have anything. He has right to nothing! Really nothing! Registration in school was fine, they registered. They registered, they even did a declaration to

hand over to the...thing...the Ministry of Education. She says we have to wait now until there is a vacancy. After, one day a lady called saying the child could go there to the school. Ministry of Education already answered there was a vacancy for her. Now, to process her other papers we have nothing! We don't. A person without papers here is zero.

7. Pathways to citizenship - single mother, father living in São Tomé

The complex process of regularization can lead to a wide range of legal status in the family, as the times and procedures that each member has to face can be very different. The following case also shows that although being born in Portugal many children have to present documents from their parent's country of origin. The process of obtaining nationality becomes very slow and complex.

J. is a Woman from São Tomé who has two daughters, one living in São Tomé (26 years old) and another who lives with her in Portugal. She arrived in Portugal in 1992 with a student's visa and later she decided to stay because she was pregnant. She obtained several work visas, then obtained the residence permit, and later, about four years ago, she was granted Portuguese citizenship.

She had trouble in getting her daughter's residence permit, because some documentation from São Tomé was required and also because her daughter's father lived in São Tomé.

Although her daughter was born in Portugal, she only recently obtained the Portuguese nationality although her mother already had Portuguese nationality for about four years.

But this situation of children that were born here and the person has to pay to acquire nationality. One has to pay one hundred and twenty Euros for the child...to acquire nationality and that... to acquire it it's if the father or mother have it. That's what's a bit...my child has been very complicated! Really a lot! Because my child, her father is not here, her father is in São Tomé. So, ah...I had to request...I requested... she did not obtain nationality. I had to request...when she was...when she was around 12 years old...she just had a receipt, at first only receipt. When she was around 12 years old they required to me that...she got residency. And I...how could I get her residency if she wasn't even...wasn't even born here? So I had to go to the embassy, to register her in my embassy. Afterwards, I paid there some money. After I acquired the passport for her. So I had to acquire the consulate card, passport, and register her at the embassy.

Although I already obtained nationality 4 years ago, she obtained nationality around three, four months ago. Because it was the same thing: the father had to send an entrustment. I could do nothing without the entrustment. He only sent it last year. And after it was me who requested her nationality. I paid one hundred and twenty Euros...one hundred and twenty five. Because afterwards it was the entrustment fee... I paid one hundred and twenty five. And afterwards from there she managed to obtain nationality in the month of...I think it was April.

As we can see through these examples, the illegal resident's condition (one's own status, one's parent's status, or another member of the family's status) has several consequences in families and on children's, adolescents and young adults lives. The legal status of the family imprisons these individuals in a complex situation that unbalances the different stages of their development. As a consequence, they face several constraints in the process of transition to adult life and in the access to education and health. Below we will give some examples given by our interviewees.

8. Citizenship as the access to fundamental rights

The migrant legal categories determine the rights that they can access, the way they are treated by authorities and employers as well as their levels of suffering, as some authors have stressed (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Menjívar, 2006; Menjívar & Abrego, 2009). Women with precarious legal status have to negotiate social rights for themselves and their children.

There are several fundamental rights, as the access to health care, education, housing and living conditions that mothers and their children, depending on their legal status, face challenges to access. Although the fundamental rights of children, despite their legal status, are protected in several legally national laws, as occurs in Portugal, their lives are with no doubt affected by the family migration status.

Findings revealed that there is a significant gap between legislation and experiences of migrant children. Some recent comparative research in EU member states has found that, in the case of irregular migrants, right to education is more aspirational than reality (PICUM, 2008; Carrera & Merlino, 2009; Signona & Hughes, 2012). In the United States, some reports on families with undocumented members (Human Impact Partners, 2013) also shown that families have a “*poor health status*”, especially due to their fear and stress of being reported to the authorities. Debry (2012) demonstrates how migration enforcement shapes mixed-status families in the United States, and how deportation measures heightens fears about family separation.

Concerning education, several documents are often required for registration or, at least, to give some identification documents and/or proof of residence. Many of these documents, depending on the legal status of the family can be difficult to obtain as many of times it must be requested in the country of origin.

We present here some interviews quotations where several women gave examples of how status has repercussions in everyday life and in the access to several resources, such as access to school. In this case, legal status places children in a developmental limbo, as they cannot participate in many adults activities in consequence of the legal restrictions.

The case of Angolan woman, Portuguese nationality, undocumented partner, five children. Her daughter was undocumented for a long period of time, she talks about her problems in registering her in the formal school and also the restrictions in the participation in some activities, in consequence of not having Portuguese nationality.

She trained futsal and she couldn't play, she couldn't enter competitions because she wasn't...she wasn't...she did not have nationality. (...) They always denied and even the club where she trained they said that no... they did not take responsibility if something happened to her, because she was the same as if she wasn't enrolled.

When the time came to do the enrollment my husband had to provide a declaration saying that she was in this situation, I don't know what, that was to do the enrollment. Because I...I said like that: “Since she is processing the nationa...the residency, if Natália was born here she will then have to change everything”, I don't know what. But at last I had to really do it because there already were schools that didn't accept, they would actually ask for a document.

Another example of the difficulties in the access to extra-curricular activities and preschool, from a Guinean woman with Portuguese nationality, has three children and has been undocumented for several years.

(...) in registering my children, for example ah...at first I gave the embassy card and they said it wouldn't do, afterwards I had to go and look for passport... I felt difficulties in...in...regarding...in...inserting my children in some...some activities(...) My children, the...the middle one was born in ninety-nine, he only

entered to...he was the only one that managed to get in pre-school because to get enrolled in the crèche I didn't manage. The...the youngest one also never went to the crèche until he got into pre-school. I think all of this affected...affected them in...in getting to pre-school, because I didn't have papers, I had no receipts to show and they couldn't get into the...the crèche.

Another case of a Cape Verdean woman who lives with her daughter, and after entering in Portugal and remaining undocumented for several months, obtained a residence permit for several years, until she acquired citizenship about eight years ago. During the period in which she had a residence permit she was unable to buy a house because she lacked Portuguese nationality, which had indirect consequences on her daughter's life.

There were some competition for...for a house in the Oeiras municipality...I went...I participated...and I won a house. But at the time I didn't...I had residency, and so the president didn't give me the house (...) It was only for..the nationals (...) I remained a bit, a bit annoyed. I was very upset, yes. Because there we are, in the situation in which I was, I don't know, with a daughter, I wanted to have my own place, no?

The access to pre-school and nursery is sometimes more difficult and sometimes the access is denied. For some young adults, that have completed their education until 18 years, can go further to university because the admission process requires a legal residential status. (PICUM 2008)

For example, the lack of legal status enables children to entitle benefits such as school meals or other financial support. The lack of documents or the precarious legal status places migrants with no hypothesis to recourse to public funds.

One of the main difficult that recent research revealed (PICUM 2008; Grassi, 2012) is that, although the majority of children attend mainstream schools, they face more difficulty when regarding the pre-compulsory education. It is hard for parents to have access to nurseries and pre-school childcare, and any of them remain dependent of the family and friends networks or decide to stay at home in order to avoid the expensive private childcare services. The same difficulties are felt in the access to higher education, especially in cases where young adults are still undocumented.

9. Turbulent life transitions

The theoretical discussion around migration and access to citizenship is mainly focused on the study of adult individuals, not taking into account the existence of children in mixed status families. Therefore we seek, in this analysis, to draw attention to some research avenues to develop in the future.

PALOP migrants from the 90's flows have entered in Portugal irregularly or have overstayed resident permits or visas, becoming irregular. Their children, many of them born or grown up in Portugal were also undocumented in consequence of their parents' legal status. In consequence of the complex legal situations in their families many of them have moved for a legal status to another several times in their life courses. On the other hand, even when they have a legal status, or even Portuguese citizenship, many childrens' whose parents or caregivers are undocumented migrants are still affected by the irregular migration status of others. The impact of legal status across generations and how the complex nature of citizenship and the access to formal rights and to the informal systems of support is managed within the family. And, even in the cases where formal citizenship is attained in the migration country, migrants still experience exclusion from social rights, as labour market inequalities and lack of information about their rights and entitlements (Barbalet, 1988; Yuval-Davis, 1997).

The complex pathways to citizenship of these mixed status families, above presented in the voice of migrant women's experiences highlight some interesting research paths and allowed to question what are the main repercussions that legal status, whether of himself or of the parents, has in the process of transition to adulthood. Regardless all the migratory and legal context where this young adults have been grown, there are few relevant researches about the legal status impact on their development.

In this context, as some scholars argue (Suárez-Orozco, Teranishi, Yoshikawa & Suárez-Orozco, 2011) the children of migrants live in the *shadow*, as they are members of illegal families or with precarious legal status in the eyes of the law. Their experience, resulting from their family's legal status, has multiple consequences in their lives and this has been understudied in the context of the studies on illegal migration.

The theoretical discussion around illegal migration is mainly focused on the study of adult individuals, not taking into account the existence of children in undocumented families. Therefore we seek, in this analysis, to draw attention to some research avenues to develop in the future.

Migrant children legal status is a constraint that makes their transitions to adulthood a complex process. Gonzales (2011) has examined the transitions to adulthood among undocumented young latino adults in the United States stressing that, when they enter in the early adulthood, they begin a process of learning to be illegal. These process gets even trickier when they move from protected to unprotected status, placing them in a limbo position from inclusion to exclusion. The author stresses that these turbulent transition to adulthood has several and deep implications in their identity formation, aspirations and expectations as they face some limitations in their social and economic mobility.

Living in an undocumented family or with precarious legal status implies reshaping the daily routines, develop survival routines and redesign future aspirations and expectations. To study the transitions to adulthood of the migrants descendants we must take into account the specific and complex ways in which legal status has impact in their coming of age. (Gonzales, 2011).

In the analysis of the transitions to adolescence and adulthood, the life-course scholars have traditionally defined five milestones or markers that characterize the transition to adulthood: complete school, move out of parental home, access the labour market, get married and become a parent. As Erikson's (1950) has drawn transition to adulthood is composed by adolescence, between ages 12 to 17 years and adulthood between ages 18 and 35 years. The transitions to adulthood are shaped by key differences like social class, country of origin and migrant generation (Mollenkopf et al., 2005; Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010; Ferreira, 2011). When the subject concerns legal status we can state that undocumented youngsters deals with a transition to adulthood that sets them apart of their peers. Research with Latino children and young adults in the United States have showed that they are trapped in a legal paradox (Abrego, 2006, 2008; Gonzales, 2007) and they share a confusing and contradictory status in what concerns their legal rights and the opportunities available for them.

Gonzales (2007, 2011) argues that unauthorized residency status has little direct impact on most aspects of childhood, as they have the right to go to school, for example. Although, later in the late adolescence and in adulthood, legal status can be a defining feature and an obstacle in following the normative pathways to adulthood and they will face a restricted social and economic mobility. Other authors (Yoshikawa, 2011; Yoshikawa & Kalil, 2011), have a different perspective and argue that the unauthorized status of the parents shapes the children of migrants' developmental contexts in the early years in the United States. Not only at home, in childcare or preschool, but, also indirectly, in work, social networks and policy contexts their parents experience.

Many of them live in less-advantaged migrant households, consequence of their parent's legal status and the precarious work conditions that places them in financial and social weakness. These social and financial family condition in addition to their legal status constraints places

these youngsters in a developmental limbo. In one hand they can, for example, they can delay the entry into the labour market in favour to additional education as their parents cannot give them financial support and, by contrary, they must assume some financial responsibilities and enter in the labour market earlier (Gonzales, 2011). On the other hand, the legal restrictions sets them apart of their peers and they are barred to complete important transitions.

As some authors refer undocumented status depresses aspirations (Abrego, 2006, 2008) and barriers the opportunity to legally, educationally and economically integrate in the migration society.

The legal status has profound implications in friendship patterns, identity formation, social and economic mobility, as well as aspirations and expectations, making their transitions to adulthood more turbulent than their peers as they are more vulnerable (Gonzales, 2011).

Only when they move through late adolescence and young adulthood that they begin to notice the impact of their legal status in their lives. For example, when they need proof of their legal residency for the 1st time. In the transition to adulthood there are many differences in terms of social class, country of origin, and migrant generation (Mollenkoff et al., 2005), Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010). They share a confusing and contradictory status in terms of their legal rights and opportunities available for them (Abrego, 2008; Gonzales, 2007) and they see their aspirations depressed (Abrego, 2006) and have concerns about their future (Gonzales, 2009) in what concerns, for example, access to education and work.

For example, the impact of the legal status in the educational trajectory, and, in consequence, the relation between the educational attainment and social and economic mobility. Many times, the extension of school requires some specific documentation that sets them apart of that life opportunity. Due to their legal status, sometimes they have limited and limiting employment options as their parents.

If most of the Portuguese young adults today face some difficulties in managing adolescence and adult transitions, we must realize that the children of migrants, in consequence of their legal status, face added challenges. The constant movement between documented and undocumented status puts them into a developmental limbo that as subsequent consequences in important adult transitions. The normative stages of their development can be influenced in multiple ways, as some authors (Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Terramishi & Suárez-Orozco, 2011) have stressed in their research in the United States. Highlighting the various dimensions of documentation status, they go far beyond the binary conception of “*authorized and unauthorized*” and stress that family’s legal status entraps youth in a labyrinth of liminality.

In what concerns life course, from birth to death, where individuals pass from several religious, social and institutional ritual practices that mark the entry into different domains of life (Van Gennep, 1960) the named rites of passage, like marriage or retirement. In each of these rites the individuals have a new role, rights and obligations. The legal status can hamper the passage into the new stages and individuals passed to reside in a space of temporary liminality. In this temporary liminality social actors no longer belong to the group they are leaving behind but don’t also are part of the new group.

In Europe, some recent comparative research in EU member states has found that, in the case of irregular migrants, the right to education is more aspirational than reality (PICUM, 2008; Carrera & Merlino, 2009). Findings revealed that there is a significant gap between legislation and experiences of migrant children.

9.1 Research pathways

In this article we have discuss how mixed-status families experience the restricted citizenship laws in Portugal. Migrant mothers experience the enforcement of current migration laws and the various and complex consequences that can be named as legal violence (Abrego & Menjívar 2011). We have discussed how the frontier between private and public sphere can constraint

the access of full citizenship, turning women more vulnerable. Their migratory trajectories and experiences around legal status processes, has turn them more accurate with the repercussion of their legal status on their children. Based on life stories of migrant women we provided examples of the impact of laws in their daily life's and the repercussions on their children's' development.

The life stories of women who we refer in this paper highlight some interesting research pathways, namely the powerful role played by migration policies in shaping the trajectories of children of mixed-status families into adulthood. The continuous mobility between them and their families protected and unprotected status, leads children to a state of developmental limbo and can have serious consequences on their educational and professional trajectories. Due to their legal status, they face a confusing and contradictory status concerning their legal rights and the opportunities available for them (Abrego 2008; Gonzales 2007).

One of the most given examples by our interviewees, the difficulties in the access to school, has serious consequences in their processes of transition to adulthood. The implications in their childhood and adolescence cannot thus be ignored. And despite the changes in the recent law, not all the migrants have the same access to information. Furthermore the law is very recent, and a large number of young adults, children of PALOP migrants, lived all their childhood and adolescence in the shadow of the previous law (Ferreira 2013; Bacci Tamburlini 2013).

Transnational children and young adults most of time take the risk to leave a (sub) emerging rather than emerging adulthood (Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Terramishi & Suárez-Orozco, 2011). In fact, this sets them apart from the other youth Portuguese peers, as their transition to adulthood is more difficult, which causes long-lasting effects in their lives.

10. References

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