

Recurrent Mobility Across Individual and Family Life Courses. Internal and Transatlantic Movements in Fafe, Northern Portugal, 1830–1920

By Milene dos Anjos Fernandes

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Recurrent Mobility Across Individual and Family Life Courses. Internal and Transatlantic Movements in Fafe, Northern Portugal, 1830–1920

Milene dos Anjos Fernandes

University of Porto, Portugal

ABSTRACT

This article examines recurrent mobility across individual life courses and departure sequences within families of origin in the municipality of Fafe, northern Portugal, between 1830 and 1920. By linking parish reconstitutions, external passports, internal travel permits, departure lists, and Brazilian arrival records, the study identifies 7,142 individuals and 9,993 movements. The analysis measures recurrent mobility, age at first departure, intervals between successive movements, transitions between internal and external mobility, and the timing of departures among individuals linked to the same parental couple. Recurrent mobility involved 23.5% of individuals and was strongly male-dominated. Among men with complete information, writing ability and lower-skilled non-manual occupations were positively associated with recurrent movement. The intervals reveal both closely spaced departures and trajectories resumed after many years. Combined trajectories included transitions in both directions between internal and external mobility, while family sequences unfolded across different temporal and geographical scales. The findings show that mobility cannot be adequately represented by a single departure: it accumulated unevenly across individual life courses and family-linked sequences, although the sources do not establish the mechanisms underlying each movement.

Keywords: Recurrent mobility, Life course, Historical demography, Internal mobility, Transatlantic migration, Family of origin

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1 INTRODUCTION

Population mobility was a structural feature of European societies over the long term, challenging interpretations that associated it almost exclusively with industrial modernisation. Long before the 19th century, the circulation of people formed part of labour markets, family cycles, household formation, and processes of economic and social reproduction. Seasonal movements, rural-urban mobility, occupational itinerancy, and longer-distance migration formed territorially connected systems shaped by employment opportunities, demographic regimes, and institutional conditions. Expanding transport networks and increasingly integrated markets enlarged the scale and intensity of 19th-century mobility while reconfiguring earlier practices at regional, national, and transatlantic levels (Bade, 2003; Lucassen & Lucassen, 2009; Moch, 2003).

This perspective also shifted the principal unit of analysis in migration history. The study of aggregate flows was increasingly combined with the reconstruction of individual trajectories over time. Age at first departure, socio-occupational position, the number of recorded movements, intervals between them, and the sequence of geographical scales reveal different dimensions of migration careers. Movements could form sequences separated by variable intervals and directed towards similar or different destinations according to opportunities and constraints accumulated across the life course. Within this framework, recurrence is central. Distinguishing a single movement from repeated departures and transitions between territorial circuits makes it possible to examine the duration, timing, and direction of mobility experiences (Andrade, 2011; Courgeau, 1984; Dribe, 2003; Hionidou, 2002; Keeling, 2010; Kok, 2007; Oris, 2003).

Internal mobility in Portugal had deep historical roots and connected regions characterised by different supplies of labour, resources, and opportunities. Fairs, domestic service, artisanal work, construction, fishing, and agricultural campaigns mobilised workers over local and medium distances. During the 18th and 19th centuries, internal passports and, later, travel permits made this circulation more visible administratively. After the Liberal Wars, improvements in communications, railway expansion, and the gradual liberalisation of movement broadened practices that nevertheless retained continuities with earlier forms of circulation. Seasonal migration to the South was especially important. Harvesting, olive picking, rice cultivation, and other activities concentrated within the agricultural calendar attracted workers from central and northern Portugal. The Alentejo was one of the principal destinations. Repeated departures, temporary residence during agricultural campaigns, and return to communities of origin integrated mobility into family economies by supplementing agricultural income and responding to limited local employment (Fonseca, 1990; Martins, 2007b; Monteiro, 2007; Monteiro & Maia, 2023; Oliveira, 1995; Silva, 2009).

The life-course perspective provides an appropriate framework for this analysis because it treats individual lives as temporally ordered sequences of events. Here, the approach is operationalised through dimensions directly observable in the sources: age at first movement, number of documented movements, intervals between successive departures, and the sequence of transitions between territorial scales. Linking individuals to their families of origin adds a relational dimension by showing how the first departures of people associated with the same parental couple were distributed over time. This approach does not assume co-residence, direct support, or coordinated family decision-making. Rather, it situates individual mobility within a documented structure of genealogical relationships.

Portuguese historiography initially placed greater emphasis on emigration abroad. General interpretations related departure to population growth, the weakness of the domestic market, regional inequalities, and the peripheral position of the Portuguese economy, treating emigration as a mechanism of demographic and economic regulation. Studies of legislation and public policy highlighted tensions among freedom of movement, military recruitment, administrative surveillance, and the economic value of remittances. The systematic use of nominative sources subsequently enabled scholars to move from national series to individuals and the specific circumstances of departure. Passport registers linked movement to sex, age, marital status, occupation, birthplace, destination, and accompanying relatives. Critiques of official statistics also demonstrated that aggregate figures depended on administrative recording practices and could combine first and subsequent departures by the same individuals. Nominative linkage across distinct series therefore became essential for reconstructing trajectories and distinguishing individuals, documents, and actual movements (Alves, 1993; Arroteia, 1983; Baganha, 1994; Godinho, 1975, 1978; Pereira, 1981, 2008; Serrão, 1977).

Emigration to Brazil occupied a central place in 19th-century Portuguese migration. Enduring economic, linguistic, and social ties, the concentration of destinations, and the presence of relatives and people from the same locality sustained these flows throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. In northern Portugal, proximity to Porto connected communities of origin to the administrative, maritime, and commercial mechanisms of departure. Studies based on district passport records identify a predominantly male flow composed largely of young and adult men, with a significant presence of migrants possessing documented writing skills, particularly among younger age groups. Research on the Alto Minho further shows that first departures coexisted with re-embarkation and repeated crossings, reinforcing the need to distinguish individuals from the number of recorded journeys (Alves, 1993, 1999; Ferrara & Amorim, 2007; Rodrigues, 2017).

In the Minho, transatlantic emigration was connected to an agrarian structure based on smallholdings, fragmented landownership, multiple economic activities, and unequal access to family resources. Rowland distinguishes between an earlier migratory pattern, centred largely on young unmarried men whose departure could contribute to preserving the family economic unit and limiting the fragmentation of property, and a later pattern in which family migration became more prominent when the household economy was no longer sufficient to sustain all its members. In the former case, migration could be associated with temporary exclusion from the family holding and the prospect of later return and independent establishment; in the latter, migration increasingly involved the relocation of the family itself and a more permanent reorganisation of its economic base (Rowland, 1998). Departure could diversify household income, facilitate the economic placement of children, or contribute to the continuity of the family holding. Male predominance also affected divisions of labour, domestic responsibilities, and the marriage trajectories of those who remained at origin. The family was therefore an important unit through which resources, burdens, and the consequences of mobility were distributed, even when only one member moved.

Regional historiography has paid particular attention to return migrants known as *brasileiros de torna-viagem*, a Portuguese expression referring to emigrants who returned from Brazil, often associated in contemporary and later representations with accumulated capital and enhanced social visibility. Yet this image coexisted with precarious trajectories, prolonged stays, and renewed departures. Microhistorical research has shown that mobility could unfold in stages, involve different members of the same family, and connect departure, return, and re-emigration at different points in the life course (Braga, 1986; Durães, 1995; Fernandes & Paiva, 2009; Fonseca, 2016; Monteiro, 2000; Scott, 1999).

The relationship between internal mobility and international emigration has received less systematic attention. Treating the two separately obscures trajectories in which the same individual combined movement within Portugal with transatlantic migration, in sequences that could proceed in either direction. Departures to the agricultural South and to Brazil involved different geographical scales, administrative requirements, and temporal horizons, yet they could form part of the same biography and also occur in mobility sequences among members of the same family of origin.

Fafe offers a particularly useful setting for examining this relationship. Its economy combined family agriculture, small-scale landholding, artisanal activity, and gradual commercial and industrial diversification. Population growth, land fragmentation, and unequal opportunities encouraged the search for work outside the community. Between 1848 and 1862, most surviving internal travel permits were directed towards the Alentejo and Ribatejo, revealing a consistent circuit towards the agricultural South. External mobility was directed almost entirely towards Brazil and connected Fafe to one of the principal transatlantic circuits of north-western Portugal. Returnees influenced the municipal economy, welfare provision, sociability, and urban landscape (Fernandes, 2024; Fernandes & Pereira, in press; Monteiro, 1991).

The coexistence of these movements permits comparison between forms of mobility operating at different scales and rhythms and, above all, the identification of individuals who participated in both, as well as families of origin whose members undertook internal and external movements. The temporal organisation of these trajectories remains insufficiently understood. Portuguese studies have characterised flows, migrant profiles, networks, and the effects of return, but have devoted less quantitative attention to the frequency of successive departures, the duration of intervals, the relationship between destinations and scales, and transitions between internal and external mobility. This gap partly reflects the fragmented nature of the documentation: each record captures a particular moment, whereas reconstructing a trajectory requires identifying the same person across different series, consolidating records referring to the same movement, and ordering movements chronologically.

This study addresses that gap by linking the Concelho de Fafe Database (CFDB; Fafe Municipality Database), which contains biographical, demographic, and genealogical information on the municipal population, with the Mobilidade do Concelho de Fafe Database (MCFDB; Fafe Municipality Mobility Database), constructed from Portuguese and Brazilian nominative sources. Parish reconstitutions, passports, travel permits, departure lists, and Brazilian arrival registers make it possible to follow the same individuals over time, relate successive movements to socio-demographic and occupational characteristics, and situate individual trajectories within their respective families.

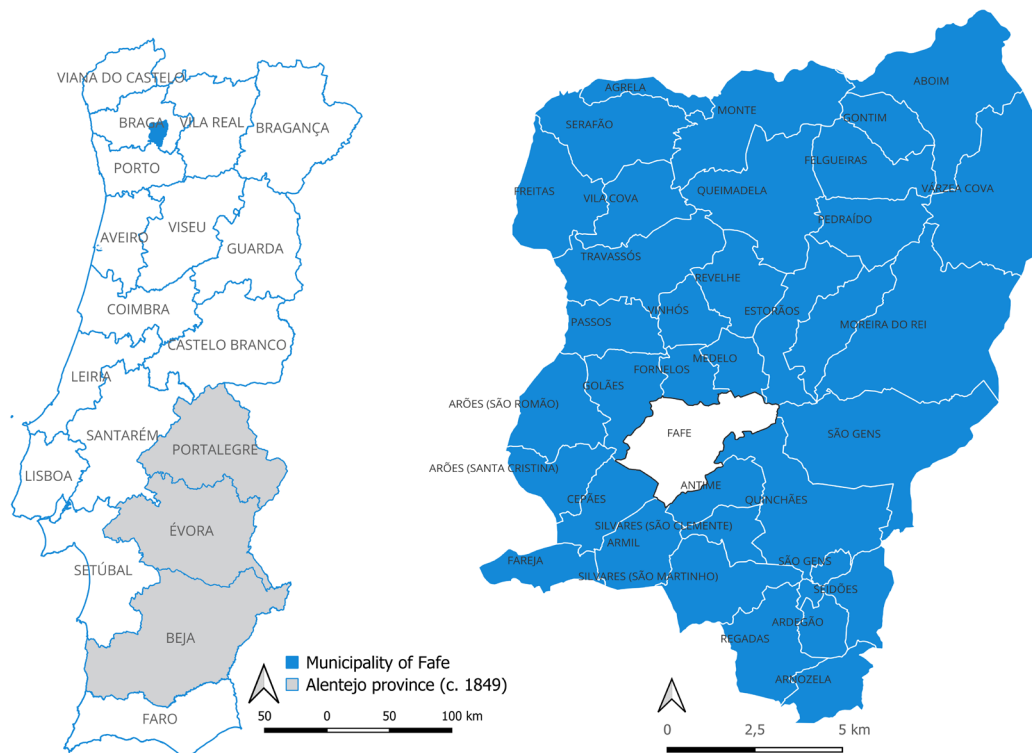
The chronological framework from 1830 to 1920 is determined primarily by the availability of nominative sources that make it possible to reconstruct the mobility of Fafe's population longitudinally. The earliest series incorporated into the database date from the 1830s, while 1920 marks the end of the principal external passport series used in the study. This documentary framework nevertheless coincides with a particularly significant phase in the history of Portuguese migration. The decades following Brazilian independence and the establishment of liberalism were marked by major institutional, economic, and administrative transformations, in a context of intensifying internal and transatlantic mobility. In north-western Portugal, internal movements towards the South coexisted with a growing migratory flow to Brazil, within the broader context of 19th-century European mass migration. The final date also makes it possible to follow these dynamics up to the disruption caused by the First World War, which marked a clear break in the previous expansion of Portuguese emigration (Alves, 1993; Pereira, 1981).

The article asks how recurrent mobility trajectories among the population of Fafe were structured between 1830 and 1920, considering the frequency and timing of departures, individual profiles, destination areas, and the relationship between internal and external circuits. It measures recurrence, compares exclusively internal, exclusively external, and combined trajectories, characterises the individuals involved, calculates intervals between successive movements, and examines departure sequences within families of origin. To complement the aggregate analysis, selected individual trajectories are used to illustrate how recurrent mobility could unfold across different stages of the life course and between internal and transatlantic scales. The central argument is that recurrent mobility was a temporally differentiated component of the life course rather than a uniform practice. Internal and transatlantic movements could form part of the same trajectory, but their sequence and spacing varied. At family level, the timing of departures among individuals linked by parentage provides evidence of clustered mobility within genealogical units, without in itself demonstrating co-residence, direct assistance, or coordinated decision-making.

2 STUDY AREA, SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Fafe lies in the district of Braga in north-western Portugal, in a transitional area between the Minho coast and the interior (Figure 1). Mountainous granite zones coexist with lower, more fertile areas crossed by rivers and streams. This physical diversity historically shaped agricultural settlement and land use. During the 19th century, Fafe remained predominantly rural, with an economy based on family farming and small plots. Municipal land surveys demonstrate the importance of houses, kitchen gardens, enclosed fields, uplands, and common land in peasant economies, as well as the intensification of long-term leasing and the appropriation of common land after the establishment of liberalism. These local conditions formed part of a wider north-western agrarian structure characterised by smallholdings, fragmented ownership, and the importance of subsistence production (Freire & Faísca, 2021; Justino, 1986; Lains & Silveira e Sousa, 1998; Machado, 2012).

Population growth accompanied economic and social change. Fafe had 19,114 inhabitants in 1801, 22,676 in 1864, 27,348 in 1900, and 30,102 in 1911. Growth was especially marked in the municipal centre and nearby parishes, where administration, commerce, and industry became increasingly concentrated. Internal mobility was directed mainly towards the agricultural labour markets of the Alentejo and Ribatejo, while emigration abroad was overwhelmingly directed towards Brazil. Returnees visibly transformed the town through investment in housing, welfare institutions, public spaces, and industrial enterprises, including the *Hospital de São José* (São José Hospital), the *Fábrica do Bugio* (Bugio Textile Factory), and the *Companhia de Fiação e Tecidos de Fafe* (Fafe Spinning and Weaving Company) (Monteiro, 1991, 2000; Palma et al., 2020; Rodrigues, 2021; Silveira, 2001).

Figure 1 *Location of the municipality of Fafe in northern Portugal*

Source: Official Administrative Map of Portugal (CAOP). Author's own elaboration using QGIS. The geographical representation of the Alentejo follows the provincial classification used in the 1849 population census, which included the districts of Beja, Évora, and Portalegre within the Alentejo province (Silveira et al., 2001).

The study adopts a nominative, longitudinal approach to reconstruct mobility trajectories between 1830 and 1920. The CFDB contains biographical, demographic, and genealogical information derived from parish reconstitution. Baptism, marriage, and death registers were organised into linked individual and family files. The individual file includes name, sex, parentage, birth or baptism, occupation, residence, marital status, marriage, and death. The family file records marital and parent-child relationships. The database contains 226,804 individual records, 62,934 family records, 148,444 baptisms, 27,131 marriages, and 84,695 deaths. Parish reconstitution followed the method developed by Amorim (1991).

A family of origin is defined through parentage and comprises individuals associated with the same parental couple. Married individuals remain linked to this family of origin even when they also belong to a newly formed family. The family analysis is therefore based on documented genealogical relationships rather than on reconstructed household membership or co-residence, since the available sources do not provide continuous information on household composition across the municipality.¹

The MCFDB combines external passports, internal travel permits, nominative departure lists, and Brazilian arrival records held in several archives. The Fafe Municipal Archive preserves internal travel permits for 1848–1862, external passports, and a departure list for 1834–1846. The Porto District Archive holds passports issued between 1834 and 1870 to individuals born in Fafe, while the principal series for 1868–1920 is held by the Braga District Archive. The National Archive in Rio de Janeiro provides additional records of Portuguese arrivals during the first half of the 19th century.

Whenever available, each record provided the archival reference, date, name, sex, age, marital status, occupation, birthplace, residence, destination, and type of movement. Physical descriptions and

¹ No continuous and accessible series of parish household listings comparable to *libri status animarum* has been identified for the municipality as a whole. Such documentation is known to have been used for the parish of Quinchães, but comparable coverage has not been located for the remaining parishes included in the database. Household composition can therefore not be reconstructed systematically or used across the municipality as supplementary evidence of absences potentially associated with unrecorded or clandestine departures.

information on writing ability were also retained. The MCFDB contains 9,993 distinct movements associated with 7,142 individuals. Cases in which identification remained uncertain were excluded.

The distinction between an administrative record and a documented mobility episode is fundamental. In the case of passports and travel permits, issuance does not in itself prove that the intended journey was completed; these sources are therefore treated as evidence of documented departure episodes rather than as confirmation of travel in every case. A record is an item of information produced by an authority, whereas a mobility episode is a distinct departure attributed to an individual. Records from different series were consolidated when biographical correspondence, chronological proximity, and compatible information on origin and destination indicated that they referred to the same episode. They were retained as separate movements when their dates and documentary sequence indicated distinct departures. This procedure reduces the risk of interpreting administrative duplication as recurrent mobility.

The main unit of observation is the individual linked to at least one validated and dated mobility episode. Of the 7,142 individuals, 5,461 had one documented movement and 1,681 had two or more. Recurrence is defined as at least two distinct documented movements attributed to the same person. It therefore measures recurrence visible in the consulted sources rather than every movement undertaken over the life course.

Individuals were assigned to five profiles: one internal movement; recurrent internal mobility; one external movement; recurrent external mobility; and trajectories combining internal and external movements. Internal mobility refers to movement within Portugal, recorded mainly in travel permits. External mobility includes departures outside the kingdom and Brazilian arrival records linked to individuals born or resident in Fafe. Destination names were standardised orthographically and aggregated into a common territorial unit whenever the sources permitted. Internal localities were assigned to their districts, while broader regional references were retained when greater precision was unavailable. External designations referring to the same Brazilian territorial unit were combined, while records naming only the country were retained as a separate category.

Movements were ordered chronologically. Intervals were calculated in complete months between consecutive movements by the same individual. For trajectories with three or more movements, the calculation was repeated for each successive pair. Zero values indicate movements recorded in the same month. The intervals measure the time between documented departures, not the duration of residence at destination or the actual period between return and renewed departure. Selected individual trajectories are used as illustrative cases to contextualise patterns identified in the aggregate analysis; they are not intended to be statistically representative of the wider mobile population.

The analysis of scale distinguishes exclusively internal, exclusively external, and combined sequences. In combined trajectories, chronological ordering identifies transitions from internal to external mobility and vice versa. The family analysis orders the movements of individuals connected to the same family of origin and calculates the interval between the first documented movement and subsequent movements by other members.

Age at first departure was calculated from the birth or baptism date in the CFDB and the date of the first movement and is available for 7,124 individuals. Writing ability was coded exclusively from the categories explicitly recorded in the sources: *sabe escrever* (able to write) and *não sabe escrever* (unable to write). Individuals were assigned to either category only when this information was explicitly stated in the document; when no information on writing ability was provided, the case was treated as missing. The variable therefore reflects documented writing ability and should not be interpreted as a broader measure of literacy, which would require additional evidence on reading, schooling, or degree of proficiency. Occupational designations in passport records were based on the occupation declared by the applicant and recorded by the issuing authority. Occupational information was treated according to the number and consistency of observations available for each individual. When only one occupational designation was recorded, that occupation was retained. Where two or more occupational designations appeared over the documented life course, classification was carried out case by case, taking into account their continuity and recurrence across successive records. Greater weight was given to the occupation documented over the longest period or recorded most consistently, while isolated designations were not automatically interpreted as evidence of occupational change. The selected occupations were then standardised in HISCO and grouped using Hisclass 5. HIS 1 comprises higher-skilled non-manual occupations; HIS 2, lower-skilled non-manual occupations; HIS 3, skilled and unskilled manual occupations; HIS 4, farmers and peasants with land; and HIS 5, landless and unskilled agricultural workers (van Leeuwen et al., 2002; Zijedman & Lambert, 2010).

The study combines descriptive, comparative, and multivariate statistical methods. Absolute and relative frequencies measure recurrence and characterise the five mobility profiles. A 95% confidence interval is reported for the overall proportion of recurrent movers. Associations between categorical variables were examined using Pearson's chi-squared test. Intervals are described using the mean, median, standard deviation, and quartiles. Chi-squared tests were interpreted as tests of association rather than as evidence of causal effects (Agresti, 2019).

The relationship between writing ability, socio-occupational position, and recurrence was examined using binary logistic regression restricted to men with complete information. The dependent variable distinguishes individuals with one movement from those with two or more. The model includes writing ability and Hisclass category, controlling for age at first departure and potential observation time between that departure and 1920. HIS 4 is the reference category, and standard errors are clustered by family of origin. The sample contains 1,938 men belonging to 1,664 families, representing 29.8% of the 6,500 identified men. Recurrence reaches 37.0% in this sample, compared with 24.8% in the total male population.

The regression therefore refers to a specific subset of men rather than to the entire mobile population. The final specification includes quadratic terms for age and potential observation time. The quadratic age term was not statistically significant, whereas the quadratic term for observation time was. The positive associations between writing ability and classification in HIS 2, on the one hand, and recurrent movement, on the other, remained in both the linear and non-linear specifications. The model identifies associations rather than causal relationships.

Interpretation must also account for unequal source coverage. Internal mobility is documented mainly between 1848 and 1862, whereas the external series covers a much longer period. This asymmetry increases the probability of identifying successive external departures and limits direct comparison between the two scales. Movements that left no trace in the consulted records, including clandestine departures and documents issued in other districts, remain outside the corpus. Controlling for potential observation time partly addresses unequal trajectory length but cannot recover missing information on death, return, permanent settlement, or unrecorded movement.

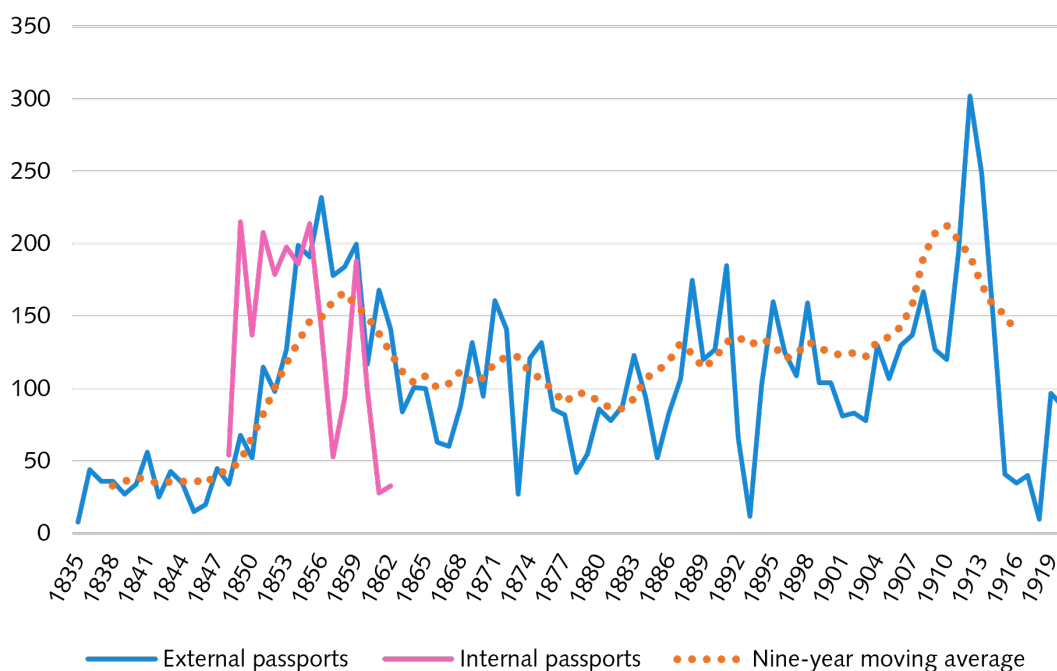
3 EXTENT AND PROFILES OF RECURRENT MOBILITY

The annual series places the reconstructed trajectories in chronological context and shows the coexistence of internal and external mobility with different rhythms. External passports remained relatively few until the late 1840s, after which both forms expanded from 1849 onwards. Internal passports reached their highest levels during the 1850s and then declined at the beginning of the following decade, coinciding with the end of the surviving travel-permit series. This reduction should therefore be interpreted primarily as a documentary discontinuity rather than as evidence of an actual contraction in circulation. The external series is more continuous: its moving average rises until the mid-1850s, declines and remains relatively stable from the 1860s to the 1880s, and rises again in the early 20th century before falling during the First World War (Figure 2).

Longitudinal linkage distinguishes 9,993 documented movements from the 7,142 individuals who made them and identifies 1,681 people with at least two movements. Recurrence affected 23.5% of the mobile population, with a 95% confidence interval of 22.6–24.5%, and accounted for 2,851 movements after the first departure, equivalent to 28.5% of all documented movements. A minority of individuals therefore accounted for a substantial share of recorded mobility. Most recurrent individuals made only a second movement, and the number of individuals declined as the total number of movements increased. The maximum of 19 movements was exceptional (Figure 3).

The pattern resembles that found in Porto passports for Brazil between 1836 and 1879, where second, third, and later journeys represented progressively smaller proportions of the records. The comparison requires caution because the units of analysis differ: the earlier study classified journeys in passport records, whereas the present analysis follows individuals and combines internal and external mobility (Alves, 1993, pp. 305–306).

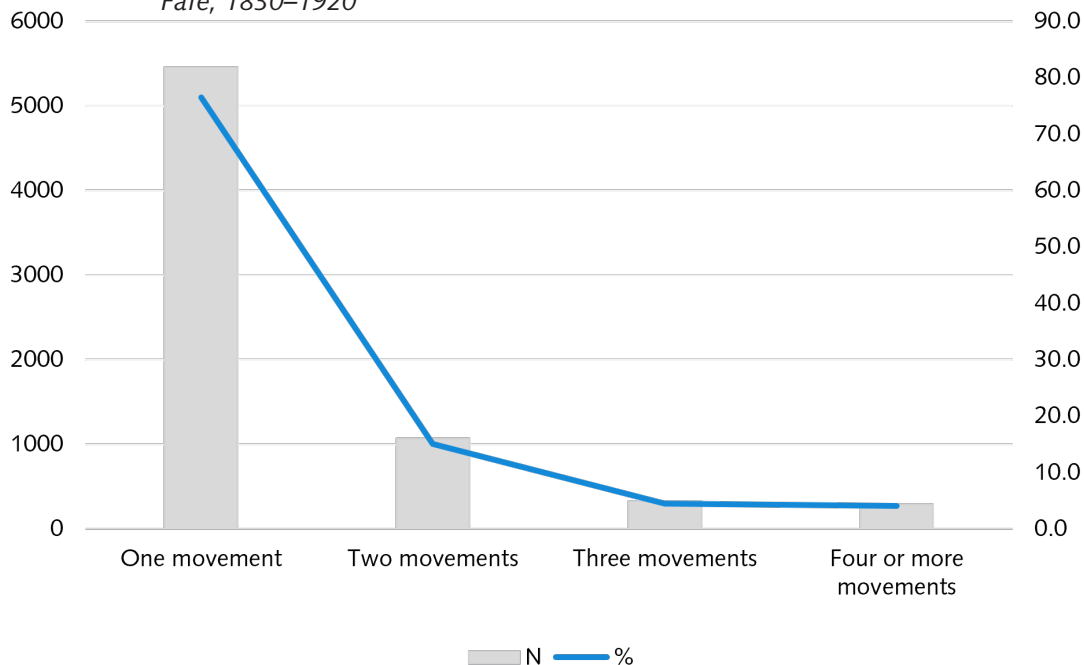
Figure 2 *Annual evolution of internal and external passports and nine-year moving average, municipality of Fafe, 1835–1920*



Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Note: The nine-year moving average was calculated for the external passport series.

Figure 3 *Distribution of individuals by number of documented movements, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*



Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

By scale, 6,186 individuals made only external movements, 736 only internal movements, and 220 combined both. The predominance of external mobility partly reflects the longer chronological coverage of the relevant sources. Combined trajectories represented only 3.1% of the mobile population, but they are analytically important because they reveal transitions between distinct territorial circuits within the same life course.

The mobile population was strongly male-dominated. Men represented 6,500 of the 7,142 individuals and accounted for 1,611 of the 1,681 recurrent trajectories. Recurrence reached 24.8% among men and 10.9% among women, a statistically significant difference, $(1) = 62.56$, $p < .001$. This inequality reflects both the labour circuits under study and administrative practices that made male mobility more visible. Re-emigration from the Porto district to Pará was likewise dominated by men connected to commerce and trades, while women appeared more frequently as accompanying spouses or relatives (Cancela, 2019, pp. 12–15).

Age at first movement is available for 7,124 individuals. Recurrent movers began at a mean age of 23.4 years, compared with 22.7 years among those with a single movement. Medians of 22.9 and 21 years, together with overlapping interquartile ranges, show that both groups began mobility at similar stages of the life course. Recurrence was therefore not associated with a clearly different age at first movement, but rather with the subsequent continuation of mobility. Potential observation time nevertheless affected the probability of identifying later departures and was therefore controlled for in the multivariate model.

Occupation was identified for 2,934 individuals, of whom 32.2% were recurrent movers. This exceeds the 23.5% observed in the full population and indicates that the occupational subset had a different composition. Table 1 shows statistically significant differences between socio-occupational categories, $(4) = 26.85$, $p < .001$. The highest proportion occurred among lower-skilled non-manual occupations, where 44.2% were recurrent movers. Agricultural categories recorded lower values, although recurrence remained substantial among both landless workers and farmers or peasants with land.

The higher proportion in HIS 2 may be related to commercial and professional activities requiring movement between markets and workplaces. Writing skills could have been especially useful for correspondence, transactions, and travel preparation. Such skills often formed part of preparation for commercial work and may have been embedded in family strategies for placing emigrants in employment. This interpretation must remain limited to aggregate tendencies because HIS 2 includes varied occupations and the data do not identify the resources mobilised in each trajectory. Recurrence in the agricultural categories confirms that successive movement was not confined to commercial or non-manual work. Among wage-dependent workers and individuals attached to family holdings, mobility could supplement income and respond to employment opportunities elsewhere (Alves, 1999, pp. 294–300).

Writing ability is documented for 4,326 individuals, of whom 2,762 were recorded as able to write. In the bivariate comparison, recurrence reached 28.7% among those recorded as able to write and 28.5% among those recorded as unable to write, with no statistically significant difference, $(1) = 0.03$, $p = .857$. Considered in isolation, writing ability was therefore not associated with recurrence. This comparison does not, however, account for differences in age, occupation, and chronology.

Table 1 *Single and recurrent mobility by Hisclass 5 category, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*

Hisclass 5 category		One movement N	One movement %	Recurrent mobility N	Recurrent mobility %	Total N
HIS 1	Higher-skilled non-manual occupations	31	73.8	11	26.2	42
HIS 2	Lower-skilled non-manual occupations	173	55.8	137	44.2	310
HIS 3	Skilled and unskilled manual occupations	608	71.0	249	29.1	857
HIS 4	Farmers and peasants with land	800	69.3	355	30.7	1,155
HIS 5	Landless and unskilled agricultural workers	377	66.1	193	33.9	570
Total		1,989	67.8	945	32.2	2,934

Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Table 2 *Binary logistic regression of recurrent mobility among men, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*

Variables	Odds ratio	95% CI	p
Age at first departure	0.93	0.88–0.97	.002
Age at first departure squared	1.001	1.000–1.001	.102
Potential observation time	1.12	1.10–1.15	< .001
Potential observation time squared	0.999	0.999–0.999	< .001
Able to write	1.39	1.10–1.75	.006
HIS 1 Higher-skilled non-manual occupations	0.53	0.17–1.70	.285
HIS 2 Lower-skilled non-manual occupations	1.49	1.06–2.11	.023
HIS 3 Skilled and unskilled manual occupations	0.85	0.66–1.11	.234
HIS 4 Farmers and peasants with land	Reference category		
HIS 5 Landless and unskilled agricultural workers	1.17	0.88–1.54	.283

Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Note: $N = 1,938$ men in 1,664 families of origin. Robust standard errors are clustered by family of origin. Reference categories are unable to write and HIS 4. Wald $\chi^2(9) = 316.24$, $p < .001$.

As presented in Table 2, after adjustment for the other variables, writing ability was positively associated with recurrent mobility in the observed data (OR = 1.39; 95% CI: 1.10–1.75; $p = .006$). The relationship, which was absent in the bivariate comparison, became statistically significant after controlling for age at first departure, observation time, and socio-occupational position. Writing ability may have facilitated access to information, correspondence with relatives, compatriots, or intermediaries, and compliance with administrative procedures. These mechanisms are historically plausible, but the data cannot identify them in individual trajectories or establish causality.

The association observed in Fafe can be situated within a broader regional pattern identified in 19th-century emigration from north-western Portugal. Migrants from the Porto district were substantially more literate than the population of mainland Portugal as a whole and, particularly, than the rural population of their region of origin. However, documented literacy could sometimes reflect only a limited ability to sign one's name rather than broader competencies in reading, writing, and numeracy. Similar evidence emerges from the neighbouring Alto Minho, where a substantial proportion of migrants had documented literacy skills, especially among younger men. The indicators are not directly equivalent to those used here, since these studies draw on signatures and other documentary evidence, whereas the present analysis relies exclusively on the explicit source categories *sabe escrever* (able to write) and *não sabe escrever* (unable to write). Despite this methodological difference, the regional evidence is consistent with the Fafe results in showing that writing-related skills were unevenly distributed within migrant populations and may have facilitated access to information, correspondence, administrative procedures, and occupational opportunities associated with repeated mobility (Alves, 1993; Rodrigues, 2017).

Socio-occupational position also showed a specific association. Men in HIS 2 were more likely to make successive movements than farmers and peasants with land, the reference category (OR = 1.49; 95% CI: 1.06–2.11; $p = .023$). This may reflect the importance of commercial and professional activities involving circulation between markets, sustained contacts, and the use of writing and numeracy. The result should not be generalised to all non-agricultural occupations. Differences for higher-skilled non-manual work, manual occupations, and landless agricultural labour did not reach statistical significance.

The association between age at first departure and recurrence must be interpreted by considering the linear and quadratic terms jointly. The linear term was negative and statistically significant, whereas the quadratic term was not ($p = .102$), providing no clear evidence of curvature. After adjustment for the other variables, recurrence generally declined as age at first departure increased. Potential observation time had a positive, non-linear association: a longer observable period increased the opportunity for later movements to be recorded, although the incremental effect diminished. Observation time did not, however, account for the associations between writing ability and lower-skilled non-manual occupations, on the one hand, and recurrent movement among men with complete information, on the other.

4 INTERVALS BETWEEN SUCCESSIVE DEPARTURES

Intervals reveal the temporal organisation of recurrent mobility and distinguish trajectories concentrated within relatively short periods from those resumed after many years. The interval between the first and second departures was calculated for all 1,681 individuals with at least two movements. Among the 613 individuals with three or more movements, 612 second-to-third intervals could be calculated because one case lacked sufficient chronological precision. The third-to-fourth interval was calculated for all 283 individuals with at least four movements.

The median declines from 60 months between the first and second departures to 48 months between the second and third and 36 months between the third and fourth. The quartiles show the same pattern, indicating that movements were more closely spaced among individuals with longer trajectories. These three sets of intervals do not refer to the same population: the first includes every recurrent mover, whereas the others include only individuals with at least three or four movements. The declining medians therefore do not demonstrate a general acceleration after each departure. Rather, they show that individuals with more extensive trajectories had more closely spaced documented movements (Table 3).

Means exceed medians in all three sequences, indicating skewed distributions and the influence of long intervals. The difference is especially marked between the first and second departures, for which the mean was 88.4 months and the median 60 months. Around 10% of second departures occurred more than 17 years after the first, and 5% more than 23 years later. Recurrent mobility could therefore be concentrated within a relatively limited phase of the life course or resume at a much later stage.

The range of intervals cautions against treating successive movement as necessarily regular. Some individuals accumulated movements over a short period, whereas others resumed mobility many years later. The data do not establish whether these differences resulted from occupational, family, economic, or other circumstances. Intervals measure the chronological distance between documented departures, not the length of stay at destination. Return, intermediate movement, or unrecorded residence may have occurred between two records. A long interval therefore does not imply continuous residence in one place, and a short interval does not in itself demonstrate regular labour circulation.

These temporal contrasts are also visible in individual trajectories. António de Castro, baptised in Antime on 16 September 1837 and later recorded as a carpenter, had 11 documented movements between 1850 and 1883. His first recorded departure was to Rio de Janeiro in February 1850. Between 1856 and 1859, four successive internal movements were documented to Chamusca, Mora, Chamusca again, and Coruche. He married Florinda Rosa de Castro da Silva in September 1860, and the couple had seven children identified through parish reconstitution, baptised between 1861 and 1875. Mobility continued after marriage and family formation, with further departures to Brazil documented in 1862, 1868, 1870, 1872, 1881, and 1883, several of them directed to Pará. His trajectory therefore extended over more than three decades, with recurrent mobility continuing alongside marriage, childbearing, and family formation.

Table 3 *Intervals between successive departures, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*

Intervals	N	Mean (months)	Median (months)	Standard deviation	P25	P75
First to second departure	1,681	88.4	60	87.6	24	132
Second to third departure	612	68.2	48	73.9	12	96
Third to fourth departure	283	60.9	36	65.9	12	84

Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Note: P25 and P75 are the first and third quartiles. Intervals are measured in months between consecutive documented movements.

At a broader level, steam navigation, especially from the 1870s onwards, reduced crossing times and increased the regularity of maritime connections, potentially facilitating return and renewed travel. This explanation has limited applicability because the corpus combines internal and external mobility and covers periods both before and after steam became dominant. Changes in transport may have contributed to closer spacing, but occupational, family, and individual differences may also have played a role that interval analysis alone cannot distinguish. Overall, the evidence reveals heterogeneous timing: most intervals were concentrated within several years, while some trajectories resumed after much longer periods (El-Kareh, 2003; Leite, 1991).

5 SCALES, DESTINATIONS, AND FAMILY SEQUENCES

Of the 9,993 movements in the analytical population, 1,635 were internal and 8,358 external, corresponding to 16.4 and 83.6%, respectively. At the individual level, 736 people made only internal movements, 6,186 only external movements, and 220 combined both scales. The predominance of external mobility must be interpreted in light of the longer source coverage, whereas internal travel permits are concentrated between 1848 and 1862.

Combined trajectories represented 3.1% of the mobile population. Of these 220 individuals, 132 began with an internal movement and 88 with an external movement. Among the 132 who began internally, 120 ended their documented trajectory with an external movement. Among the 88 who began externally, 64 ended with an internal movement. The first and last scales coincided in only 36 trajectories; in the remaining 184, or 83.6%, they differed. Internal movement could precede emigration abroad, follow it, or occupy an intermediate position. The relationship between the two scales was therefore not linear.

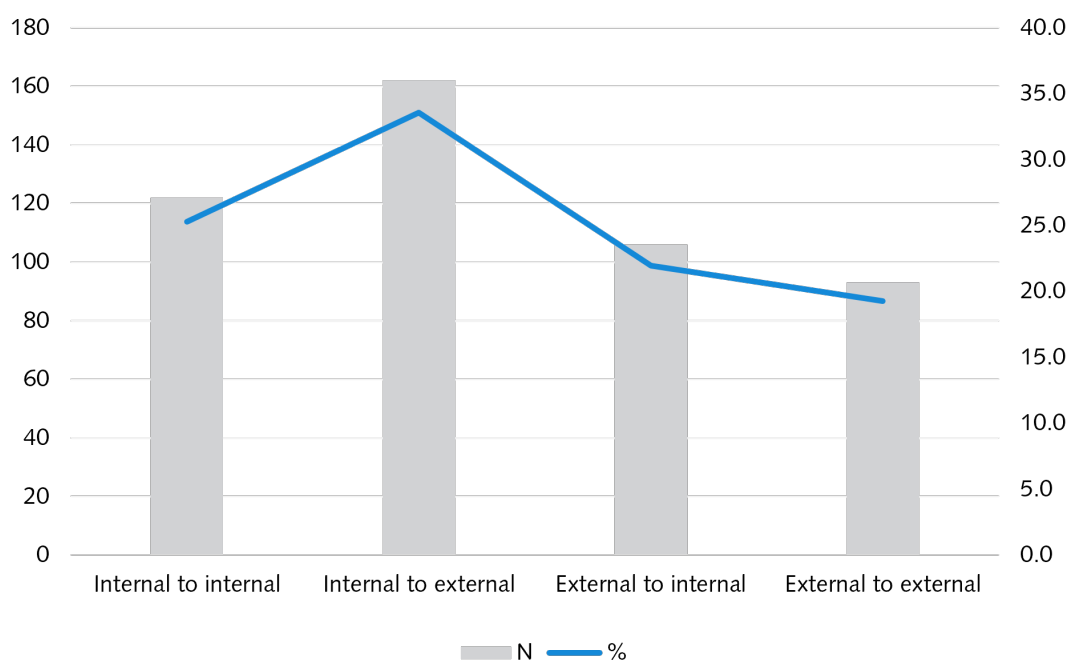
The analysis identified 483 consecutive transitions in combined trajectories. Movement from the internal to the external scale was most frequent, with 162 cases, or 33.5%. Repetition of the internal scale followed with 122 transitions, external-to-internal movement with 106, and repetition of the external scale with 93. Although transition towards the external scale was more frequent, the 106 movements in the opposite direction show that internal mobility cannot be reduced to a preparatory stage before emigration (Figure 4). The trajectories combined continuity within one scale with changes in both directions, supporting a systemic interpretation in which circuits at different scales coexisted, overlapped, and adapted to economic and social conditions. This bidirectional pattern is consistent with a systems perspective in which circuits at different scales could coexist and overlap rather than form a fixed ladder of migration (Borges, 2000).

Alternation was generally concentrated in a single change of scale. Of the 220 individuals with combined trajectories, 179, or 81.4%, changed scale once; 36 did so twice; four did so three times; and one individual accumulated five changes. The unusual life-course trajectory involving five changes of scale belonged to José Joaquim da Cunha, born in the parish of Moreira do Rei on 30 April 1822. His first documented movement was an external departure to Rio de Janeiro in July 1843. He was subsequently recorded in an internal movement to the Alentejo in October 1851, followed by a departure to Pará in February 1853, an internal movement to Mora in November of the same year, another departure to Pará in July 1854, and a further internal movement to Mora in October 1855. Between 1851 and 1855, his documented trajectory therefore alternated repeatedly between internal and transatlantic mobility. This individual sequence shows that movement between the two scales could occur in both directions, without following a fixed progression from internal circulation to transatlantic emigration. Despite this exceptional case, internal and external mobility were usually connected through one principal reorientation rather than through repeated alternation.

Internal mobility was concentrated in southern Portugal. Table 4 shows that 37.4% of movements named only the Alentejo without identifying a district (Table 4). Among more precisely recorded destinations, the district of Santarém accounted for 26.4% and Évora for 22.6%. Lisbon and Porto were much less prominent. The distribution confirms the importance of the Alentejo and Ribatejo circuits, although generic references to the Alentejo limit complete reconstruction at district level.

External mobility was even more concentrated. Rio de Janeiro accounted for 67.7% of documented movements and Pará for 15.5%, whereas São Paulo represented only 0.5%. In 10.7% of cases, the sources named only Brazil. Rio de Janeiro and Pará therefore concentrated more than four-fifths of external movements for which a regional destination was recorded (Table 5).

Figure 4 *Transitions between consecutive movements in combined internal and external trajectories, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*



Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Table 4 *Main destination areas of internal movements, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*

Internal destinations	N	%
Alentejo, district unspecified	612	37.4
District of Santarém	432	26.4
District of Évora	369	22.6
District of Lisbon	83	5.1
District of Porto	53	3.2
Other internal destinations	86	5.3
Total	1,635	100.0

Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Note: Mora and Montemor-o-Novo were assigned to the district of Évora; Chamusca and Coruche to the district of Santarém. Records naming only the Alentejo remain a separate category.

This distribution becomes particularly significant when set against the changing geography of immigration to Brazil in the late 19th century. The expansion of coffee cultivation shifted the main areas of labour demand towards São Paulo, where international immigration became closely connected to the development of the western coffee-growing regions, the railway network, the port of Santos, and the settlement of immigrant families. Santos became the principal port of entry for international immigrants into the state, while the expanding coffee districts of western São Paulo received large numbers of newcomers and the state capital itself underwent rapid demographic and economic growth (Scott & Bassanezi, 2022). Yet this major reorientation of Brazilian immigration is scarcely reflected in the Fafe data: only 0.5% of documented external movements were directed to São Paulo.

The predominance of Rio de Janeiro points to a different and much older Portuguese migration circuit. Portuguese migrants constituted between approximately 61 and 76% of the foreign population of the city in the censuses of 1872, 1890, 1906, and 1920, maintaining a clear numerical predominance even during the period of mass immigration. Their presence was strongly embedded in the urban economy, particularly in commerce, services, transport, artisanal work, and other forms of urban employment. Young male migrants were notably present in commercial houses, where employment could provide both work and accommodation, while relatives already established in commerce could also facilitate entry into the city's labour market (Lobo & Stotz, 1985; Menezes, 2007).

Table 5 *Main destination areas of external movements, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*

External destinations	N	%
Rio de Janeiro	5,658	67.7
Pará	1,299	15.5
Brazil, region unspecified	898	10.7
Bahia	164	2.0
Amazonas	92	1.1
São Paulo	43	0.5
Maranhão	35	0.4
Other external destinations	169	2.0
Total	8,358	100.0

Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Note: Designations referring to the same destination area were combined. "Brazil, region unspecified" includes records naming only the country or entry into Brazilian territory.

Pará's position as the second most frequent destination, accounting for 15.5% of external movements, further indicates that the geography of migration from Fafe did not simply follow the principal centres of attraction operating in Brazil as a whole. Previous research has identified a substantial migration circuit between northern Portugal and Pará, particularly associated with male migration, commerce, trades, and re-emigration (Cancela, 2019). The combined prominence of Rio de Janeiro and Pará therefore suggests considerable persistence in destination-specific circuits: even as São Paulo emerged as a major centre of mass immigration, movements from Fafe remained overwhelmingly concentrated in Brazilian destinations with longer-established connections to northern Portuguese migration.

This interpretation nevertheless requires caution. Passenger and administrative records do not always distinguish clearly between port of arrival, declared destination, and eventual place of settlement, and the recorded destination should therefore not automatically be treated as the migrant's definitive place of residence (Martins, 2007b). An individual trajectory helps illustrate how this continuity of destination could intersect with recurrent mobility across the life course. The case of João Baptista António de Freitas, baptised in the parish of Freitas on 23 March 1832 and recorded as a day labourer, comprises eight documented movements between 1851 and 1883. His first recorded departure was to Rio de Janeiro in 1851. In the following years, internal movements were documented to Mora in 1855 and 1856 and to the Alentejo in 1859. He married Maria Josefa da Silva Tinoco in September 1856, and the couple had six children identified through parish reconstitution, baptised between 1857 and 1874. From 1866 onwards, his documented movements were again directed to Rio de Janeiro, with further departures recorded in 1871, 1877, and 1883. Extending over more than three decades, this trajectory reveals a combination of internal and transatlantic mobility across different stages of married and family life, while also maintaining a marked continuity in the external destination.

Linking trajectories to families of origin identifies 6,869 individuals distributed across 4,657 families with at least one mobile member. A further 273 individuals lacked an identified family of origin and were excluded. In 3,217 families, or 69.1%, only one mobile individual was documented; 1,440 contained two or more. Of these, 933 had two mobile members, 336 had three, and 171 had four or more. Thus, 30.9% of families of origin included more than one person documented in mobility. This measures mobility among individuals connected by parentage without assuming co-residence or membership of a common household.

In 4,411 families, only one person moved in the first documented year of family mobility, whereas in 246 families two or more people first moved in the same year. Because some sources provide only annual precision, analysis of the inaugural scale was limited to families with a single mobile person at that initial point. This allows departure order to be established without artificially prioritising movements recorded in the same year.

Internal and external mobility occurred within the same family in 198 cases, or 4.3% of the family universe. In 103 families, the first external departure preceded the first internal movement; in 92, internal movement came first; and in three, both appeared in the same year. The similarity between

the two principal counts indicates that neither order clearly dominated among members of the same family of origin. Chronological priority alone does not demonstrate direct family support. Documentary examples nevertheless show that travel finance, reception, correspondence, and care responsibilities could involve several relatives, providing historically plausible mechanisms without establishing that they operated in every sequence (Alves, 1999).

Among families with only one mobile person in the first documented year, 1,816 later-moving members were identified. Restricting this analysis to families without simultaneous inaugural departures made it possible to classify the initial scale unambiguously. When the earliest departure was external, 93% of later members also began their mobility externally. When it was internal, 38% of later members maintained that scale and 62% began with external mobility. Continuity of the initial scale was therefore considerably stronger in sequences beginning externally, whereas a shift towards the external scale predominated in sequences beginning internally (Table 6).

Evidence from Vila do Conde shows that migration to Brazil could be supported through concrete relationships linking places of origin and destination. Relatives frequently participated in financing transatlantic travel, providing guarantees, and receiving or recommending migrants in Brazil. Fathers, mothers, uncles, brothers, and other kin appear in these roles, sometimes combining several forms of assistance for the same migrant. Such practices demonstrate how kinship and other social ties could provide material and relational resources for departure and reception at destination. The Fafe data do not identify these mechanisms directly, but the strong continuity of external mobility among later-moving members of families whose inaugural movement was external is consistent with the persistence of established migratory connections within kin groups. This interpretation must nevertheless take into account the predominance of external mobility in the documentary corpus (Piloto, 2010).

The temporal spacing of mobility within families provides a complementary perspective. The interval between the earliest documented departure in a family of origin and the first movement of each later-moving member was calculated for 2,212 individuals. Unlike the scale analysis in Table 6, this calculation also includes families in which two or more people first moved in the same year, because no ordering among those simultaneous inaugural departures was required. The overall median was seven years, with half of later departures occurring between two and 14 years after the beginning of the family sequence. The median was five years for later internal movements and seven years for later external movements (Table 7). This difference indicates a greater temporal distance for external departures without establishing the mechanisms that produced it.

Mobility among members of the same family of origin was therefore distributed across different temporal rhythms and geographical scales. External predominance and continuity must be interpreted in light of the transatlantic emphasis of the documentary corpus. Even so, these sequences formed part of a broader family context. Another study of emigration from Fafe identified at least one emigrant sibling in 53% of cases and other kinship connections in similarly substantial proportions. These findings reinforce the relational dimension of mobility without, in themselves, demonstrating co-residence, direct support, or coordinated family decisions. The present analysis adds a temporal and sequential dimension by showing that individuals linked to the same parental couple could move at different moments and through internal and external circuits without following a fixed order (Fernandes & Pereira, *in press*).

Table 6 *First mobility scale of later-moving family members according to the family's inaugural scale, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*

Family's initial mobility scale	Subsequent internal departure N	Subsequent internal departure %	Subsequent external departure N	Subsequent external departure %	Total N
Internal	81	38.0	132	62.0	213
External	112	7.0	1,491	93.0	1,603
Total	193	10.6	1,623	89.4	1,816

Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Note: The table includes families with one mobile individual in the first documented year and considers each later member's first departure.

Table 7 *Interval between the first family departure and later members' first movements, municipality of Fafe, 1830–1920*

Scale of subsequent departure	N	Mean (years)	Median (years)	P25	P75
Internal	215	6.2	5	2	10
External	1,997	9.9	7	3	15
Total	2,212	9.6	7	2	14

Source: CFDB and MCFDB. Author's own elaboration.

Note: P25 and P75 are the first and third quartiles. The calculation includes each later member's first movement and also covers families with simultaneous inaugural departures.

6 CONCLUSION

Nominative linkage of parish reconstitutions, external passports, internal travel permits, departure lists, and Brazilian arrival records identified 9,993 movements associated with 7,142 individuals from Fafe between 1830 and 1920. Consolidating records referring to the same journey made it possible to identify successive movements and order individual trajectories. At least two movements were documented for 1,681 individuals, or 23.5% of the mobile population. Most recorded only a second departure, while a smaller group accumulated longer trajectories. Recurrence was therefore a substantial dimension of documented mobility.

Recurrent trajectories were strongly male-dominated. Recurrence reached 24.8% among men and 10.9% among women, a difference that must be interpreted in relation to both the forms of mobility covered by the sources and administrative recording practices. Repeated movement occurred in every socio-occupational category but was most frequent among lower-skilled non-manual occupations. Among men with complete information, writing ability and membership of this occupational category remained positively associated with recurrence after adjustment for age at first departure and potential observation time.

Intervals reveal different temporal rhythms. The median declined from 60 months between the first and second movements to 48 months between the second and third and 36 months between the third and fourth. This pattern characterises individuals with longer trajectories rather than demonstrating a general acceleration of mobility. The difference between means and medians also indicates the importance of long intervals. Closely spaced departures coexisted with trajectories resumed many years later.

External mobility accounted for 83.6% of movements and internal mobility for 16.4%, a difference affected by unequal source coverage. Nevertheless, 220 individuals combined the two scales. Of these, 132 began with an internal movement and 88 with an external movement. Transitions occurred in both directions, although internal-to-external movement was more frequent. Internal circulation and emigration abroad therefore did not form a single linear sequence: each could precede, follow, or interrupt the other.

Internal destinations were concentrated in the Alentejo and the districts of Santarém and Évora. External mobility was directed almost entirely towards Brazil, especially Rio de Janeiro and Pará. The marginal position of São Paulo, despite its growing importance as a major destination of international immigration from the late 19th century onwards, indicates that movements from Fafe remained strongly concentrated in longer-established Brazilian circuits. Standardising geographical designations made it possible to identify the principal destinations without assigning greater territorial precision than the records support.

Linkage to families of origin made it possible to examine departure sequences among individuals associated with the same parental couple. Of 4,657 families with at least one mobile member, 1,440 contained two or more people documented in mobility. When a family sequence began externally, 93% of later members also began externally; when it began internally, 62% of later members began with external mobility. Mobility could therefore involve several members of the same family of origin, although the sources do not systematically reveal the resources and relationships underlying each movement.

The principal contribution of the article lies in reconstructing internal and external mobility jointly at the level of individuals and genealogical relationships. Linking nominative series created for different administrative purposes makes it possible to measure recurrence, order departures, calculate intervals, identify changes of scale, and relate the movements of different family members. The results extend life-course research in two respects. First, they show that repeated mobility included both compressed sequences and departures resumed after long intervals; the number of movements alone therefore does not capture the temporal organisation of a trajectory. Second, they demonstrate that internal circulation and transatlantic migration could occur in either order within individual life courses and family-linked sequences. The evidence supports an interpretation of mobility as cumulative and relational, although the uneven chronological coverage of the sources requires caution when comparing internal and external movements. The study cannot identify every return, period of residence, or mechanism of family assistance, but it demonstrates the analytical value of longitudinally integrating fragmented administrative records.

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