Death on the Move

Death on the Move:

Managing Narratives, Silences and Constraints in a Trans-National Perspective

Edited by

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FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

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FOREWORD

The present volume is a collective effort to address one of the great themes of all times: death and the reactions it evokes in humans. Precisely because it is such a perennial theme, it requires regular updates. The editors and authors, therefore, should be praised for the impressive way in which they achieved that purpose.

At the outset of *The Golden Bough*—the book that constituted the launching pad of modernist anthropology—Sir James Frazer tells a largely fictional tale about a king in Antiquity who, in the woods close to Lake Nemi, not far from the present location of Rome, has to come to terms with the strange fate of knowing that whoever kills him will become his rightful heir. For that reason, the king spends his nights in vigil, walking anxiously around the sacred oak that symbolizes the centre of his power. He waits for a death that may come at any moment, delivered by the hand he least suspects. To us, today, the challenge presented by Frazer's tale does not lie primarily in its substance, but in what he was trying to convey. He was less concerned with exemplifying the nature of anguish or the fear of death, than in showing that by posing a threat to life as a social phenomenon, death promotes life. The potential for life that exists in death is the very mechanism of sacrifice, a ritual device that has fascinated anthropology from its inception.

When living beings die, they do not die completely, because their shape lives on in other beings of the same species, and also because their existence remains forever inscribed in the history of that species. A butterfly dies but other butterflies continue to live. Because the butterfly's shape reflects the history of the species, each specimen continues the existence of previous specimen – which was, after all, the great discovery that Darwin made. The death of a living being is a kind of syncopation; an interrupted continuity in social life; it is not an end, only a detour in the social symmetry of life. In that sense, death is a rhythm of sociality. Life has a rhythm because it is undeniably social. Even as each one of us dies, life continues.

It so happens that, in the case of humans, the complexity of this process is greater than with other species. The death of a person is even less of a finality than that of a butterfly, because the person transcends – as Maurice Bloch proposes in his essay in this collection. In other words, when human infants become persons capable of reflective thought and

speech, they start existing for themselves, out of themselves. This means that we can even claim that people both 'die more' and 'die less' than butterflies or tigers, because they are 'richer' in their being, as Heidegger put it.

Thus, the reason why Frazer's tale does not describe an individual condition (the horror at the contemplation of death by a singular person) is that the death of the king by the oak tree is both an ending and a new beginning: *le roi est mort, vive le roi!*, as the French used to say. Among the Shilluk of East Africa, about which another great anthropologist has written (Evans-Pritchard), the king could never die, and so he was buried alive when a new king, younger and stronger, was enthroned to replace him. Further south, in the Great Lakes region, among the Nyakyusa studied by Godfrey Wilson, the moment that the king became weak or ill, he was discreetly choked to death by his counsellors, who were his friends for life, those that had constantly been around him since early childhood, and whom he implicitly trusted most. They killed him in order to preserve the life of the kingdom. It was an act of love, not of hatred or despair.

All things considered, the question we have to address is: when someone dies, what exactly is dying? It may seem silly to put the matter in this way but, if we carefully consider it, we can see that the object that death rituals are concerned with is deeply ambiguous: death rituals do not celebrate an organism belonging to the human species; they do not celebrate a mind; nor do they celebrate an institution. In relation to life, the human person is intrinsically composed by these three aspects. The death of a person is not the end of each one of these aspects (the organism, the mind, or the social role), but a break in the harmony that life had ensured between them. In fact, there have been authors who insisted that the break in that harmony between the three aspects of personhood is a gradual thing that can start whilst we are still technically alive: when we are seriously ill, profoundly depressed, or deeply humiliated. If death is the anthropological theme par excellence, it is because it confronts us with the ambiguity of what it is to be a person. A person is a composite entity, hard to pin down, whose organic survival is only part of the matter. In spite of being eminently social, the person is capable of overcoming that inherence. The transcendence of the person is both a product of sociality and a partial freedom from it. That is perhaps the biggest aporia that fuels anthropology as a discipline.

A series of uncertainties come together in the death of a person. At death, a whole series of relations that continue, do so in a different way. Through the relative differences that they summon, upon the death of a person, these relations start to make more sense. The companions of the

Nyakyusa king who smothered him, did it out of love for the king as a person, and for the king as the epitome of his people—the two aspects were conjoined in the actual person of their life companion. Thus, by killing him, they aimed at avoiding the death of the king and, by implication, that of the people that were a part of the living entity that was the king. Relations transcend, they go beyond those that created them. Those relations that survive the death of the person that held them are like those that survive so many other things—such as, for instance, the separation of two friends when one of them leaves on a journey. Saint Anselm complained that when he was forced to leave the monks with whom he lived in his monastery in Canterbury Cathedral, he suffered a painful 'wound to the soul'. The death of people is a more extreme case of that.

Space and time are always intertwined. That is why death is not only a question of temporal discontinuity, it always relates to the land. Our life as persons (what anthropologists have been calling 'personal ontogeny' since the days of Raymond Firth) never occurs in a void, and could never occur in a void: the body is an aspect of the person as much as the mind and the social relations. Thus, our duration always occurs in relation to particular spaces. Since life is social, that space is always a shared environment. That is why the theme of death in motion that several authors explore in this book is rather well chosen. We are led to ask: if death is motion, to what extent does it reflect the movement of the person dying? Throughout the twentieth century, the sociocentric tendency led us to value structure, stability, order, in our analyses of sociocultural phenomena. We wanted motion to be ordered movement, to be progress – the catch phrase of Auguste Comte. Whole nations were built on the basis of that idle hope.

Today, however, we can clearly see that the sociocentric tendency clouded our anthropological vision, preventing us from seeing that the frontiers that humans construct between them are unavoidably in motion. People move around and, by doing so, move the frontiers of the world in which they circulate. There are Portuguese people buried all over the world; there are Jewish or Armenian graveyards in the most varied spots (places where often today there are no Jews or Armenians); there are dead people that undertake long journeys to end up buried in the land from which they departed many years before. (Could there still be among our readers some who read, during their childhood, the brilliant book *Les Tribulations d'un Chinois en Chine*, by Jules Verne, where the author plays around with this aporia?)

That is why not all death movements are the same. The Armenian or Jewish diasporas are death movements that produced dead people whose

land no longer exists; this was however not the case with the Portuguese. After all, Fernão Mendes Pinto returned to his father's farm in Pragal to write his unforgettable book before dying! This alerts us to the fact that there is a relation that is impossible to erase between people and the world; a relation between acts of sociality and the land in which they are inscribed. Many that migrate keep their land, while others lose it. And then there are those who lose their land because they lose the feeling that it is theirs. It was not by chance that Mário de Sá-Carneiro – a poet who wrote so masterfully about the ambiguity of personhood – chose a hotel in Paris to commit his famous suicide. As he became global, a citizen of the world, he found he had lost his land; he had lost a land that was no longer his. That other famous suicide, Stefan Zweig, was also literally dislocated. He found that, however warmly he had been received in Brazil, he could not continue being who he was in a strange land. When we lose our land, our being as a person suffers radical alteration. But, as it occurred in these cases, does it always change in a manner that promotes the unviability of the person? I do not think so, since there have been many human movements (both singular persons and collectivities) that ended up reinventing new lands. Movement, however, is always a challenge to social insertion and, thus, a challenge to the person who, changing lands, runs the risk of not being able to reconstruct him or herself. This is the challenge that the anthropology of settler societies (the United States, Australia, Brazil) has had to address for over a century by now. It is the challenge that, in Brazilian *candomblé* is so powerfully symbolised by the "Caboclo", a black Plains Indian, or by the reconstructed autochthony of *quilombos* that the present government of Brazil wants to erase.

In 1985, a colleague of mine at the University of Southampton was called in as an interpreter by a hospital where a Portuguese man lay dying of cancer; he could not speak English, and it was necessary to record his final wishes. The man told my colleague that he had been a cook for a rich Jersey family for thirty years. He had no friends on the island, and he had no living relatives in Portugal. He had no specific wishes to convey. The next day, my colleague went back to the hospital to visit him, but he was already dead. Was his body used for medical purposes? Who knows? Nobody knows what happened to this man without ties. What was his story, such as he recounted it to himself during those last hours of his lonely, rootless life? No memory survived, even of his name. Contrary to Mário de Sá-Carneiro or Stefan Zweig, or to the Jews who passed through Lisbon during World War II and are now buried in the cemetery of Alto de São João, this man died twice. What might the percentage be of people in the history of mankind that, at death, disappeared so completely from the

life of the living, such as he did? The death of a person, just like the person itself, is a complex phenomenon. This reminds me of the famous rhyme by Carlos Tê, that master of being Portuguese: "I staged my burial / to find out who'd turn up / when I saw you weren't there / I thought I'd die". These are the forgotten ones—but they are not the majority.

Yet, there are people to whom death is refused, or that have others trying to 'steal' away their death. So, in the sense that the death of the person is more than just the death of the body, it becomes possible to commit thanocide—that is, to kill death, if you allow the neologism. That is the case of albinos in Eastern Africa, about whom their compatriots say that they "do not die". I have often wondered about the real meaning of this sentence. What kind of information can be secretly contained in such an unlikely statement? And for that reason (because they do not die), pieces of the body of an albino have huge value for black magic—once again a relation to the land emerges—given that these relics are supposed to help in the discovery of gold! That is the reason behind a series of attacks on albino children in the last decade, in which their limbs are brutally cut off for that purpose. Recently, a group of albinos decided to alert the media to this tragic situation in Tanzania, Malawi, South Africa and Mozambique. Let us hope that they manage to make their voice heard amid such an abject tragedy.

Albinos are white while being black and as such they are neither, and so they have no place in a land that, for Africans, is a 'black land'. The great poet of Africanity, Léopold Sedar Senghor, called a naked black woman his "Promised Land". Death is symbolically stolen from the albinos. You may say: it is all a game of symbols, nothing more. It is, but it is also a game where life and death are mixed in such a profound fashion that some, because of greed, steal life and death from these poor oppressed beings. In the case of the albinos of East Africa, this thanocide is not collective, since it happens to singular persons. However, there are many more examples of thanocide in history, in which the targets were collectivities. Generally (and luckily) this type of thanocide is almost always frustrated. Let us find examples: the Yazidis, that were recently subject to mass killings by warring parties in Syria (and it is rather too simplistic to assign the full responsibility for that to a more or less ghostly entity, that does not even possess a recognized name); the Jews, that Hitler and his partners murdered; the more than one million Armenians, that the Turks tortured and killed in 1915—in a sense, all of these people still live, no matter how many excuses are uttered by the Germans of today, or that the Turks refuse to admit the unavoidable historical data, or that the

governments that support the war in Syria cast the blame upon that ghostly caliphate.

It is not precisely known who organized the destruction, a few years ago, of the imposing Memorial Church to the Armenian Martyrs, erected by the survivors of the genocide in Dayr as-Zawr, in Syria. It was undoubtedly another attempt at collective thanocide that, however evil it seemed, was eventually foiled. Dayr as-Zawr is the place where the worst atrocities against Armenian women and children were committed in 1915; it was the stage for the final moments of that tragic and grotesque movement, the expulsion of the Armenians from their ancestral lands. Recently for example, a lot of exposure has been given in the media regarding the destruction of Palmyra (because of the greed for gold brought by tourists), but this other act of thanocide was deemed by the European media as unworthy of much attention. And yet, from a human point of view, it is something rather more disturbing that shows that, one century after the Armenian genocide, the hate that provoked the first genocide of modernity survives and is still capable of killing.

Ironically, however, if there are people capable of such barbaric acts, it is only because the Armenian martyrs are still alive – their land is still crying for them in spite of Turkish silence. They are martyrs, since what is relived at the death of each one of them as a singular creature, is larger than them. The warlords of today tried to kill their death, but their death re-imposed itself. Thus, they die but remain alive, because collective memory will not allow them to die. This is the mystery that life sets in negotiating between the individual and the collective. The companions of the Nyakyusa king were able to sustain the life that the king represented by killing the body of the king. In the same fashion, and contrary to their wishes, the warlike Sunnis forever call back to life those they seek to destroy. The barbaric acts of thanocide that are being committed all over the world are intended to destroy memory. But it is easier to destroy buildings and kill people than to erase post-traumatic memory. Those tragic victims, having personally died, end up finding life in the collective to which, as martyrs, they give life. That is, in the end, the logic of sacrifice—death that brings life.

Thus, are we alerted to the contemporary quality of the other major theme in this book: the invisibility of death. When I began to ponder the question of death forty years ago, the theme of invisibility was unavoidable, because the civilizational values associated to European modernity had thrown a kind of veil over physical death. They did it because, for the 'moderns', death had become shameful. When I arrived in Alto Minho (North-West Portugal), I was a young man coming from

Southern Africa. I was immediately struck by the way in which death was used by the rural people of northern Portugal as a central means to achieve life. In those days, the rural *minhotos* did not hide death, as the modern people in towns among whom I had been raised were prone to do. Rather, people who were ambivalently dead (uncorrupted corpses) were being used as means to achieve the continuation of life, prosperity, fertility. They were instruments for 'Life', as Hocart had insisted many years before. Although this turned out to be the last chapter of my book *Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve*, it was the first one I wrote; it was this chapter that launched my exploration of what it was like to live in the Alto Minho then. It was written to be presented at a seminar in All Souls College, Oxford, where Rodney Needham and his associates were exploring the implications for anthropology of the great epistemological changes brought about by Wittgenstein at the time of the Second World War. It was a poststructuralist essay, I can now see, in that it was directly moulded on a notion of structuralist causation.[1]

Later, together with the historian Rui Graça Feijó, we started exploring the matter of cemeteries: why had there been such a strong resistance to the building of cemeteries that lasted for over a century in this region and was still not completely done with when we arrived there? I saw that the resistance to the control of death by the modern state was of a piece with the cultivation of rural autarky that led to so many conflicts in the region and it had to do with who had a right to the land. Children that died at birth were buried inside the house, much like those that died had to be buried next to their spiritual home, the parish church, not in faraway cemeteries. This sense of wholeness in social living, this way in which the collective overcame and denied the individual death, was a theme that pursued me for a long time, as I explored the meaning of myths concerning enchanted mooresses (*mouras encantadas*) or the resistance to the building of roads by the modern state. In the end, together with Hermínio Martins we edited a collection of papers entitled *Death in Portugal*, that proposed it was time to cast a new look upon death and its social implications. We were seeking to reconstruct some form of

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[1] J. Pina-Cabral. 1986. *Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve: The Peasant Worldview of the Alto Minho (NW Portugal)*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Hermínio Martins, Rui G. Feijó and J. Pina-Cabral (ed.s). 1983. *Death in Portugal*. Oxford, JASO (see also:
https://www.anthro.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/anthro/documents/media/jaso14_1_1983_note.pdf); J. Pina-Cabral. 1987. "Paved Roads and Enchanted Mooresses: the perception of the past among the peasant population of the Alto Minho (NW Portugal)." *Man* n.s. 22: 715-735.

universalism, when faced with the individualist and particularist tsunami that was overtaking anthropological theory at the time, with the emergence of postmodernism as a global ideology.

Nevertheless, after all these years, we can raise a legitimate question here: what has our post-modernity done to death? The answer must surely be that our death is still shameful, but, contrary to modernist death, it has again become visible. Death became the great means for the theatrical makeup of our civilizational hunger: a more continuous and more intense show than even football. Thousands of people die violently every day in the streets and squares of our world but, most importantly, the images of their deaths are distributed afterwards by the media into our rooms and our screens, into our most private spaces. And, judging by what the powerful of the world say, in the years to come those spectacular deaths will probably continue in large numbers. The dead of Nice, Paris, London, New York, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan… they die so they can be seen by us. I do not believe that there are more assassins in the world today than there were before: the spectacle of death has always been a fascinating entertainment. What else could we call the *autos-da-fé* that were staged by the Portuguese Inquisition in the Terreiro do Paço in Lisbon, or the public hangings so characteristic of Anglo-American towns until not so long ago? Today, however, the spectacle of those deaths and of the destroyed spaces that mark them is universal. Who can ignore the state of a city such as Aleppo after it is bombed by Americans, English, Russians, Turks and French?

Death as political currency is now more visible than it ever was. Note: it is not only when dead bodies or ruins where human bodies are buried are shown on TV that death becomes a spectacle. It is also in the summoning of the images by those who have already seen a thousand and one scenes of that type. We all have seen pictures of the remains of Hiroshima, we all know what happened to the people there. Listening to some media-crazy political leaders nowadays who rule over nuclear powers, some, like me, contemplate the possibility of being among the incinerated. Others probably think that they might be spared by the skin of their teeth. That is why there is a whole discourse on privilege hidden in these post-modern spectacles of death.

In conclusion, at a time when as many die by drowning in the Mediterranean in a year as in the oil wars in the Middle East—some looking for a job, others attempting to defend their homes from oil interests—the invisibility of death that modernity sought seems to have come to an end. Although the individual death of each one of us is likely to become more and more decorous and invisible, the fact is that the

postmodern show of death grows every day more spectacular and occurs with greater frequency. Look at the mobilisation of right-wing dreams of power that is being fostered by the media exposure of the private deaths provoked by the death penalty in the United States! We live in a world of hyper-visible death, where the logic of sacrifice (personal death being mobilised to produce collective life) is increasingly the mediatic currency of this world of ours, a world in permanent disarray.

João de Pina-Cabral
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October 2017

EDITORS' NOTE

The present book is an output of the research project PTDC/CS-ANT/102862/2008 'The invisibility of death among immigrant populations in Portugal: vulnerabilities and transnational managements' funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) in Portugal (2008-2012). The papers resulting from the project were published in Portuguese as *Movimentos, Espíritos e Rituais: gestões da morte em cenários transnacionais,* edited by Clara Saraiva, Simone Frangella and Irene Rodrigues, by Imprensa de Ciências Sociais in Lisbon in 2016. The foreword by João Pina Cabral, the chapters by Maurice Bloch; Eric Gable; Anastasios Panagiotopoulos; Irene Rodrigues; José Mapril; Sol Tarrés and Jordi Moreras; Violeta Alarcão, Filipe Leão Miranda, Elisa Lopes and Rui Simões; António Medeiros; Ottavia Salvador and Rui Graça Feijó and Susana Matos Viegas and the afterword by Cristiana Bastos, included in the aforesaid publication, were revised and translated for the present volume. In some cases, i.e. the chapters by Violeta Alarcão et al. and by Sol Tarrés et al., these were co-signed for this publication by other authors not involved in the Portuguese version. The Introduction, and the chapters in Part III by Sónia Dias, Ana Gama, Ana Tavares and Violeta Alarcão; Philip J. Havik and Part IV by Max Ruben Ramos were specially written for the present volume.

The translation of the preface, as well as the preparation of the index and the final formatting of the manuscript was funded by Portuguese national funds provided by the FCT—Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., in the scope of the project UID/ELT/0509/2013 and administered by the Center for Comparative Studies, Faculty of Letters, University of Lisbon.

Extensive fieldwork was carried out by project researchers in the Greater Lisbon area with regard to a number of immigrant groups included in the study, namely Caboverdeans, Guinea-Bissauans, Bangla-Deshi, Chinese and Brazilians. A sample of Portuguese respondents were included as a control group. Protocols, and manuals for conducting interviews and processing data were specially developed for project research. Each researcher was responsible for a particular group, with whom they often had previous field experience, carrying out participant observation on funerary rituals and ceremonies associated with their burial

and mourning rituals. Open interviews with members of these groups and immigrant associations were completed with a transnational death survey with representative samples of each group. In addition, bibliographical and archival research was carried out in Portugal on the legislation and procedures involved in the repatriation of remains between Portugal and Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Bangladesh, China and Brazil. Also, research was undertaken on the causes of death of persons with Portuguese nationality and foreign nationals pertaining the countries of origin of immigrants.

In the course of the project, members of the research team presented papers at national and international meetings, publishing articles and chapters in Portuguese and foreign academic outlets. A final project conference was held in March 2014, convened by project coordinator Clara Saraiva, in collaboration with Irene Rodrigues, Simone Frangella and Max Ruben Ramos, bringing together authors also included in this volume as well as other specialist scholars, invited for the occasion. Project consultants Maurice Bloch, Françoise Lestage and Cristiana Bastos also participated in the meeting. A number of discussants contributed to reviewing a number of conference papers which are included in a revised form in this volume, namely João Vasconcelos, Eugenia Roussou, Javier Alejandro Lifschitz, Nuno Dias, Cristiana Bastos, Beatriz Padilla, Diana Espirito Santo and Frederico Rosa.

INTRODUCTION

PHILIP J. HAVIK, JOSÉ MAPRIL
AND CLARA SARAIVA

In the chapters of this book the authors analyse the different symbolic and practical aspects of migrants' perceptions of death and mortality. By involving the circulation of bodies, people, commodities and ideas, death is a phenomenon that demands a transnational approach. While the question of migration is associated with the questions of movement, of change, adaptation and resettlement, the question of death is no less dynamic. Despite being a fundamental issue, above all in 'Western' societies in which death has become a taboo and is considered as something that happens to 'others', the distancing from the last rite of passage has led to its becoming part of the realm of myths and preconceptions. Given that death and dying is related to the (increasing) mobility of persons and populations and the (re)creation of sites of belonging and association with people's roots and spaces of origin, it had a particular bearing upon the debate regarding migration and location. In a globalised world, it raises questions regarding the distancing towards and the invisibility of death and dying among immigrant populations, permanently on the move between their countries of origin and their new destinations. How do immigrants look upon death and how are notions associated with it incorporated and transformed in the diaspora? How do the different groups of immigrants conceive the notion of suffering and view death among other groups? How do the nationals of their countries of residence feel about death and dying among immigrant groups, an issue which is largely ignored but generates a variety of preconceptions and mystifications? How do these communities deal with the repatriation of the deceased from the country residence to their home countries? How do migrants in their host countries and those of origin deal with the highly sensitive issues of burial and the transferral of mortal remains of their relatives? How are sites of belonging recreated within this world on the move? And how indeed does one die in perpetual motion?

The present book reconsiders these issues by deconstructing existing idiosyncratic beliefs and persistent myths and taking a closer look at how death is 'managed' among immigrant groups in Europe. It concerns itself primarily with Southern Europe, focusing on Portugal, Spain and Italy, while also extending its analysis to migrants' home countries. It focuses upon migrant communities from diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds, originating from Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Brazil, Bangladesh and China. Representing the principal groups of immigrants residing in Portugal, chapters engage with the particular dynamics of social and cultural heterogeneity. However, the question of death in other geographical and social spaces is also discussed here, for example with respect to Madagascar, Guinea Bissau, China, Bangladesh, East-Timor, Brazil and Cuba. It therefore builds upon a multiplicity of perceptions of death, dying and bereavement, historically specific that are subject to constant change owing to exogenous and endogenous factors. While natural disasters, epidemics, economic cycles, conflict, frontiers, bureaucracy, legislative and policy reforms all have an impact on migratory fluxes, the pathways of migrant communities are also affected by their particular internal dynamics. The cultural identity and sense of belonging of a given migrant community, its institutions and outlook, strongly shaped by its experiences in host countries, is constantly challenged by the need to cope with the death of its members. For migrants, such unexpected deaths form a reality that tends to exacerbate and reinforce expectations of a temporary or permanent return home, turning it into a matter of urgency. Death is thus seen not as a moment in time, but rather as a dynamic process, which involves particular emotional states and (re)activates rites and customs to cope with the inevitable anguish that takes on acute dimensions in contexts of displacement far from home.

Furthermore, death and associated ritual practices in migratory contexts are frequently performative of specific imaginaries of home and belonging. To put it differently, the transnational management of death in these contexts not only reveals notions of home but it is in fact a way in which people make and remake what they call home, be it a household or a space of belonging (Olwig, 2009). Thus, routes and roots are somehow mutually constituted through the management of death and dying in transnational contexts. This nexus between home and death/dying takes us to another set of themes, namely how such moments in migrants' life courses reveal and, simultaneously, make kinship, *relatedness* (Carsten 2000), and gender (Gardner, 2002). It has been extensively analysed in within anthropology and the social sciences and becomes tangible in transnational contexts of

displacement far from home. The management of death is frequently a way of producing *relatedness* at a distance and hegemonic representations of belonging in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, class, cosmology and nation. Simultaneously, the transnational experience of migration is also conducive to the negotiation of subjectivities which produce counter hegemonic perspectives, views and practices.

From a methodological and epistemological point of view, the study of the narratives and practices regarding death and dying have greatly benefited from multidisciplinary and trans-national approaches. The present book wishes to contribute to the ongoing debate in the scientific community and the social sciences in particular by proposing theoretical perspectives and methodologies that take their cues above all from cultural anthropology and sociology. Providing novel insights into the human conceptualisation of death and changing rites of passage associated with it, the authors in this volume approach death and dying among migrant populations by exploring anthropological and sociological perspective on death, migration and transnationalism. In order to arrive at a better understanding of the different concepts of death, they also provide comparative perspectives on their meanings and practices, in transnational social fields (home and host countries and regions, within the latter and in third spaces, such as the locations of migrant relatives and friends). By confronting them with each other, the social, economic, cultural and religious diversities and the complexities of immigrants' lives come to the fore. The following chapters attempt to unravel silences and reveal constraints by rendering these vulnerable but nevertheless resilient populations living in liminal and transient worlds, visible by recording their own voices, narratives and practices on an issue which merits the attention of the social sciences, the scientific community at large as well as policy makers.

In recent years, the issue of death and dying among migrant populations has begun to gain the attention of academia, government and non-governmental institutions, as studies and proposals are put forward on how to deal with diverse issues such as processes of integration and adaptation of migrant groups and communities in their host countries, to the facilitating of the transfer of mortal remains to migrants' countries of origin. Simultaneously, some public debates and representations about these issues and topics reproduce a series of often widely held prejudices about immigrant populations. One of the most striking cases discussed in this volume (see chapter four) is surely the 'mystery' surrounding the purported non-death of Chinese migrants in Portugal (see Irene Rodrigues this volume). This case reveals a vast array of popular myths, anxieties and performative notions on the "bad" and the "good" immigrant.

While some recent publications have addressed inter-disciplinary perspectives on the changing perceptions of death and its invisibility in 'Western' and 'non-Western' societies (e.g. Lestage and Raulin, 2012; Blanco and Vidal, 2015), scholars have also focused on the trajectories of death among migrants in the Mediterranean region in the context of the EU and the closing of national boundaries (Kobelinsky and LeCourant, 2017). In Western societies affected by ageing populations and low birth rates, death as a social phenomenon gains a measure of ambiguity beset by contradictions as the focus of attention shifts from institutions to communities. Recent studies have thus attempted to capture the experiences, narratives and memories anchored in the past and present against the background of the spatial and social aspects of death, bereavement and mourning (Madrell and Sidaway, 2011; Kellehear, 2007, 2009). Nevertheless, the distinctions between different historical and context specific perceptions about death, dying, bereavement, funerary practices, widowhood, and inter alia that become destabilized, are reconfigured in contexts of transnational mobility. These reconfigurations are of particular significance for shifting notions of death and what amounts to a 'good death' in a transient universe in which migrants operate, while engaging with ancestral and modern traditions. Over the last five decades, the question of the cultural diversity of concepts and practices in a wide variety of societies regarding death has been the focus of academic debate (e.g. Bloch, 1971; Ariès, 1975; Bloch and Parry, 1982; Thomas, 1982; Palgi and Abramovitch, 1984). Recent anthropological research on the places, spaces and representations of death has been particularly fertile in uncovering changes in the case of Africa, affected by high mortality rates and low life expectancy (Jindra and Noret, 2013; Kalusa and Vaughan, 2013; Lee and Vaughan, 2012; Droz and Maupeu, 2003). One of the aspects gaining increasing attention are the implications that the dislocation of migrants often living at considerable distances from their country of origin has for the management of 'death out of place' (e.g. Mazzucato, Kabki and Smith, 2006; Nunez and Wheeler, 2012). The question of borders, migration and death are also deeply entangled with legal, political and economic issues that determine the management of displacement, disruption and (non-) burial of (missing) bodies (e.g. Kovras and Robbins, 2016; Rygiel, 2016). The present volume aims to bridge spatial and social boundaries by applying a transnational perspective to migrants and their culturally diverse communities with respect to their ways of coping with death and dying set in the context of daily life in their (European) host countries.

The book is divided into four parts, i.e. 'Death: theories in motion', 'Transnational circulation of bodies, spirits and rituals', 'Migration,

mortality and public health' and 'Placing the dead and the locations of death'. The thirteen chapters authored by scholars from Portugal, Spain, France, The Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Cape Verde and the United States cover a wide range of subjects concerning the socio-culturally diverse notions and practices concerning the places and spaces of death among highly diverse immigrant communities in a transnational perspective. Based upon fieldwork among these communities, both in Europe and beyond, including interview and survey data, these papers contribute to refocusing and innovating the academic debate on migration with a view to exploring the multifaceted dimensions of death and mortality. By doing so, the authors engage with Europe's and Portugal's newly acquired condition of country and continent of immigration and thereby with recent research on the subject, which has so far largely ignored and neglected key issues related to death and suffering of immigrant populations. While Part I offers insights into epistemological perspectives on death, burial and migration, Part II looks at the transnational dimensions of attitudes and practices among migrant communities in Portugal, with Chinese, Spanish and Bangla-Deshi roots. Public health related aspects of migrants' attitudes towards death and burial, and their use of health services for somatic, mental health and end of life care in Portugal and the Greater Lisbon area are discussed in Part III. Finally, Part IV uncovers changing narratives of place and space of death across national frontiers with regard to migrant and autochthonous populations in Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Cape Verde Islands and East Timor.

Part I starts off with Bloch's pioneering work on burial sites and rituals in Madagascar which he extends here to the migrant status of *malagasy* in Europe. In the first chapter 'Death and what comes after: immobilising the dead and migration' he considers the relations between the organic, inorganic and the places of death. Based on the idea that death is a moment that establishes a link between these constituent parts, and that migration involves the connection between the organic (people) with the inorganic (the land they move across), the author takes us on a journey based upon an ethnographic sketch of Madagascar to follow the transitions experienced by *malagasy*, who emigrate and die in Europe far from their homeland. In the second chapter, Eric Gable discusses the governability and notions of the past and future with regard to certain funerary customs among the Manjaco of Guinea-Bissau, by considering the relations between death, belonging and place of death. This chapter is built around a well-known anthropological approach towards death that holds that funerary rituals and the processing of dead bodies reflects upon and orders ethnic identity and social authority. In the process, the author provides

examples that transport the reader back in time to the establishment of Portuguese colonial rule in the late nineteenth century to the present situation of Guinea-Bissauan migrants in Portugal. In chapter three, Anastasios Panagiotopoulos reproduces part of a manifesto written by Johannes Fabian in 1973 on the tendency of anthropology to 'parochialise' and 'exotise'' death in order to propose a different understanding of it as a mediating force in its more dynamic dimensions. Taking cues from his fieldwork on the "dynamic interplay between life and death" in Havana (Cuba), he also addresses the 'symbolic universes' associated with persons and objects circulating among African immigrants in Lisbon. The author explores the idiosyncrasies and the theoretical challenges that death poses in 'transnational contexts', in order to maintain a productive dialogue with contexts of transnationalism and migration.

In part II, 'Transnational circulation of bodies, spirits and rituals', the reader becomes immersed in the topic of invisibility of the death of immigrants as Irene Rodrigues undertakes an ethnography among the Chinese community in Greater Lisbon in chapter four "The fallen leaves return to their roots": the invisibility of death and the idea of 'home' in the burial politics of Chinese migration'. The urban myth regarding the supposed 'non-death' of Chinese migrants in Portugal, and in other European countries, accounts for an idea of invisibility associated with death events among Chinese migrants in Portugal. This ethnography of death in a context of high mobility common to Chinese migration, seeks to unveil some of the mystery behind the small numbers of deaths among Chinese in Portugal, while also discussing ways in which Chinese immigrants cope with death and the contradictions between the ideal of the bodily return to China, and the burial in a foreign country. In chapter five 'Diversities within cemeteries: the 'otherness' in the expressions of the funerary heritage in Spain', Sol Tarrés, Jordi Moreras e Ariadna Solé Arraràs explore how this diversity has found its place within Spanish cemeteries. Despite the fact that religious diversity has long constituted a challenge to Spanish funerary customs, most of the different funerary traditions present in Spain today have their origins in other countries. By exploring the transnational relations that these migrants maintain with their countries of origin, they look at the important role they play in their funerary practices and where the 'other dead' are placed, especially those that have to do with the repatriation of the deceased. The authors find that increasingly migrants live and die through borders while maintaining significant links with their countries of origin, even if these are distant from where they live. In chapter six, 'Person, death and gender between Lisbon and Dhaka', José Mapril provides ethnographic insights into death