Chapter 2
Between Marginalisation and Urbanisation: Mobilities and Social Change in Southern Portugal

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2.1 Introduction

This chapter draws upon mobility practices in two rural areas in the south of Portugal. One of the main purposes is to deconstruct the idea that mobility is an intrinsically urban phenomenon that basically occurs in areas with a high population density. As we will see, there may not be a linear relationship between higher urban densification and the increase in mobility. Indeed, the analytical definition that presupposes this linearity is not one that has only appeared recently: it has marked the way in which sociology itself has been interpreting the social phenomena associated with rural areas (Bell & Osti, 2010).

   In empirical terms, the different intensities and directions of mobility are measured in two municipalities of the inland Algarve region that have undergone very different sociodemographic processes. São Brás de Alportel, despite its inland location, is relatively close to Faro, the region's largest city. In the last 20 years, this municipality has not only grown in terms of population but has also shown important urbanisation dynamics. The other municipality is Alcoutim, which is on its way to accentuated marginalisation, reflected in the ongoing exodus and aging of the population. We will use these two different territories to try to ascertain how mobilities occur and to what extent they interfere in forms of social relationships by integrating internal mobility patterns, such as migration and daily travelling, shopping or commuting for work.

   We will start by introducing the theoretical perspectives on mobilities in rural areas that we find most pertinent and then will present the two municipalities that are our case studies. The results of the survey applied will be analysed in terms of

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the geography and the social composition of the mobilities,[1] relating it afterwards to the levels of trust and mutual knowledge. These readings are informed by theoretical considerations regarding what these data tell us about the dynamics and diversity of rural spaces.

A questionnaire was used to identify the mobility dynamics in these two municipalities: 410 questionnaires were given in São Brás de Alportel and 268 in Alcoutim in July and September 2009, respectively. The questionnaires were analysed taking into account age, gender and geographical criteria. One main concern was to get to several different geographical contexts and not only the villages centres, giving specific representation to the most rural and hilly areas, specially on S. Brás de Alportel municipality.

2.2 Mobilities in Rural Areas: A Theoretical Approach

The intensification of spatial mobility is one of the most expressive effects of the globalisation processes and of the emergence of networks as fundamental platforms for the contemporary societies' organisation. Speed has increased not only in electronic and information circuits, but also in people's travels in various forms. There are a number of relatively stereotyped images of the modern individual who commutes every day between different places in the metropolitan area or who travels abroad regularly for work or leisure purposes and wanders around the most dynamic cities in the world. In addition to these typical characters, there is another, the migrant, who has to live and work in a foreign country due a number of constraints.

These are some of the figures of our time and their common characteristic is their (more or less forced, more or less free) ability to move regularly between different places. However, at the same time as they move around more or less intensely, they and many other players also populate, inhabit and work in concrete places, to which they constantly return. For example, commuters go back home in the evening and migrants or tourists return at the end of a period of work (or a holiday) abroad. There is thus an overlapping relationship between mobility and immobility practices, however permanent they may be, in a given physical area.

Places are made up of certain morphological and physical textures and their own dynamics and functionalities, which interfere in relationships and social processes (Park & Burgess, 1984 [1925]). Space does not correspond to a merely neutral dimension; it should be analysed as an intrinsic part of the process that structures and triggers the *production of mobilities* (Carmo, 2009b; Cresswell, 2006). Mobility is not immune to space itself. On the contrary, it is partly determined by its own physical and social configuration: "Mobility is always located and materialised, and occurs through mobilisations of locality and rearrangements of the materiality of places" (Scheller & Urry, 2006, p. 209). Because it is not neutral, space should be

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[1] The survey was applied in the context of a CIES-IUL research project funded by FCT which was intitled "Voluntary associations and local development: public policies, social capital and citizenship". From this project was written a broader report in portuguese language (see Carmo, 2011).

analysed as an active (not just passive) component that results in intense mobility processes.

Going back again to stereotyped images, these and other characters are usually represented in urban, mainly metropolitan environments. Mobility is often associated with the dynamic and effervescent setting of metropolises, as if all the other territories, such as rural areas, were still mainly occupied by immobile populations in the restricted perimeter of local towns and villages.

In an article entitled "The sociological construction of rural areas" (2009a), Carmo identified the essential traits of this sociological perspective, which was developed throughout the 20th century and conceived in opposition to the viewpoints interpreting the urban phenomenon. A symptom of this is the fact that the categories used by one of the most renowned rural sociologists of the first half of the century, Redfield (1989 [1960]), are much the same as those that Wirth (1938) used to characterise the urban way of life, only in opposite ways. While Wirth considered that cities were essentially extensive, dense, heterogeneous places, Redfield felt that rural societies were characterised above all by their relative homogeneity and the fact that they were located in small, sparsely populated areas (Carmo, 2009a, p. 258).

Carmo's arguments (2009a) show how the sociological interpretation of rural and urban phenomena, at least until the mid-20th century, shared the same analysis paradigm, which has its roots in the works of one of the founders of sociology, Durkheim (1987 [1895]). The French author considered that a given internal milieu, which could be a community or a specific settlement, was characterised by interdependence between two types of density: *material* and *dynamic*. In short, we can say that the former is defined mainly by physical volume (e.g. the existence of infrastructures) and population size, while the latter identifies the degree of concentration and interconnection of social relationships and movements. From this point of view, a close relationship is established between the morphological component of a given area (material density) and its degree of spatial and social dynamism, especially mobility. On the basis of this definition, it is easy to see the consequences of the reasoning in question: areas with low population density tend to be areas with less dynamic density.

Although this assumption is valid for certain socio-spatial settings, it does not apply to many other contemporary realities in which we identify diverse social and territorial dynamics that may develop in sparsely populated areas with rural characteristics. Indeed, one of the most interesting impacts of today's globalisation is the increasing complexity of relationships between different territories. Just like economies and populations, places have also become more interdependent. This applies equally to large cities, towns or villages. In fact, the mobility of residents in some of these communities, many of which continue to suffer from demographic regression (e.g. aging and depopulation), has increased substantially in recent years.

In a study of a village in a rural region called Alentejo, in southern Portugal, Carmo (2010) identified the coexistence of these two dynamics. The village that is continually losing its population is the same one where its residents are commuting more and more to other locations, usually cities. In this case, the reduction in material density has not caused a corresponding decrease in dynamic density; in fact, the opposite has occurred.

This difference between densities makes us look at rural areas from another perspective, in which the mobility phenomenon is increasingly important and necessarily interferes with other social dimensions. It is interesting to address the impact of more intense mobility on the way in which social relationships are structured. It is common knowledge that rural communities have always been characterised by very close and intense forms of relationship that are expressed in regular forms of social control. In many cases, individual identity has fused with the village's own collective identity, especially in communities in remote, inaccessible areas. One of the most marked expressions of this relational intensity was the generalisation of *mutual knowledge*: not only everybody knows everybody else, but there are also regular, systematic forms of reciprocal help and trust (Mendras, 1976; Pinto, 1985; Rémy & Voyé, 1994).

Considering these traditional aspects, a lot was written in the 20th century about the relationship between material and dynamic composition and the dominant type of solidarity in these communities. As Durkheim (1989 [1893]) and other classic authors stated, these communities are characterised by the fact that they develop their own forms of *mechanical solidarity,* which in turn are different from those that predominate in more densely populated, more urbanised areas, which Durkheim calls *organic solidarity*. This type of solidarity is basically the result of the impact of the economic modernisation and the corresponding increase in the division of labour. Its essential traits can be found, for example, in the separation of individual from collective identity, in the lower importance of traditional relationships of mutual help and knowledge and in the consequent generalisation of anonymity.

In this line of reasoning, a more or less linear relationship was soon established in sociological analysis between material and relational densification in different population settlements and the generalisation of a given type of solidarity. In other words, according to this concept, an increase in dynamic density gradually results in the erosion of traditional forms of solidarity in terms of mutual knowledge and interpersonal trust.

Taking account of the recent trends mentioned above, which also affect rural areas, such as the intensification of certain forms of spatial mobility, it is reasonable to question whether this analytic assumption still makes sense. Does the impact of mobility result in a reduction of mutual knowledge relationships?

This question is the theme of the second part of the chapter. In addition to wanting to deconstruct the idea that mobility is a phenomenon specific to urban areas, efforts are made to understand whether it has had a decisive impact on more traditional forms of solidarity.

2.3 Diversity in the Inland Algarve: Alcoutim and São Brás de Alportel

The Algarve illustrates on a regional scale the national settlement trends: concentration on the coast, bipolarisation and depopulation of the interior. Facing the urbanisation along the coast, the continuing depopulation of the inland areas accentuates the contrast in the region's sociodemographic composition. The cities of Faro
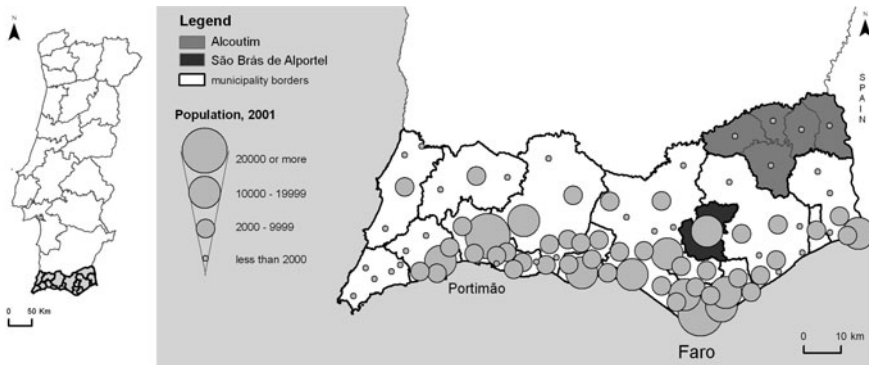
Fig. 2.1 Resident population in the Algarve by parish in 2001 (INE) and Alcoutim and São Brás de Alportel

(on the central Algarve coast) and Portimão (west coast) bipolarise the urban system. Faro is expanding to neighbouring municipalities such as Loulé, Olhão and also São Brás de Alportel. Although the Portimão urban area has less intense articulation between centralities, it tends to expand to the municipalities of Lagoa and Lagos. In turn, Albufeira, a major holiday resort, is located between these two centres, thereby completing the most populated part of the region (Fig. 2.1).

The municipalities of São Brás de Alportel and Alcoutim, both in the inland Algarve, occupy different positions in relation to this context (Fig. 2.1). São Brás has been included in the region's central urbanisation and it is connected directly to the region's capital and largest city, Faro. Alcoutim, on the other hand, has become increasingly marginalised and connected to cities of lesser importance, such as Vila Real de Santo António (a municipality at the eastern end of the Algarve). This articulation is particularly complicated because of the municipality's peripheral nature, which is accentuated by difficult geographical access conditions.

The 1990s were a period of considerable growth for the Algarve and a number of municipalities had population variation rates of over 15%, while the national figure was 5%. Four municipalities exceeded 20% growth (Table 2.1). São Brás de Alportel was one of the few that continued to grow considerably compared to surrounding municipalities such as Loulé and Faro, or even municipalities that had experienced similar dynamics in 1991–2001 but slowed down from 2001 to 2008, such as Vila Real de Santo António. Alcoutim, like Monchique, has continued to lose large numbers of its population.

Alcoutim and São Brás de Alportel have therefore experienced very different sociodemographic dynamics, between marginalisation and suburbanisation (see Table 2.2). On the one hand, Alcoutim is a more rural and marginalised municipality where the trend towards marginalisation has increased with a continuing and accentuated loss of population in the last 20 years. Its population is considerably older, with lower school attainment compared to the regional and national levels. Indeed, between 2001 and 2007, it was the under-25 age groups that had the most negative variation rates (Table 2.3). On the other hand, its habitability conditions show some

Table 2.1 Variation ratios of population (%) in the Algarve by municipality, 1981–2008

Geographical context	1981–1991	1991–2001	2001–2008
Portugal	0.3	5.0	2.6
Algarve region	5.5	15.8	8.8
Albufeira	21.7	50.6	23.5
Alcoutim	–13.1	–17.5	–17.7
Aljezur	–1.0	5.6	0.7
Castro Marim	–6.8	–3.1	–1.8
Faro	12.5	14.4	1.1
Lagoa	7.3	23.1	20.5
Lagos	9.3	18.0	13.7
Loulé	5.8	27.0	10.6
Monchique	–23.9	–4.6	–13.6
Olhão	6.5	10.9	8.6
Portimão	12.7	15.4	11.3
S. Brás de Alportel	0.3	33.3	25.3
Silves	4.9	2.8	6.9
Tavira	1.0	0.6	1.6
Vila do Bispo	1.1	–7.2	1.3
V. Real de Sto António (VRSA)	–11.9	24.7	3.2

Source: INE – RGPH (1981, 1991, 2001) and INE – Anuário Estatístico da Região do Algarve (AERA) (2009)

Table 2.2 Sociodemographic data of Alcoutim and São Brás de Alportel

Variables	Year	Portugal	Algarve	Alcoutim	S. Brás Alportel
Resident population (no.)	2008	10,627,250	430,084	3104	12,569
Pop. density (no./km^2)	2008	115.4	86.1	5.4	82.0
Aging rate (%)	2008	115.5	123.5	532.8	161.3
Illiteracy rate (%)	2001	9.0	10.4	29.4	9.3
Resident population with university degree (%)	2001	8.6	7.3	2.3	7.5
Family homes without at least one basic infrastructure (%)	2001	9.1	9.1	34.4	12.0
Resident pop. working or studying in another municipality (%)	2001	28.5	19.2	13.6	35.8
Pop. employed in primary sector (%)	2001	5.0	6.1	18.9	2.9
Foreign resident population (%)	2001	2.2	6.1	1.7	7.1

Source: INE – RGPH (2001) and INE – AERA (2009)

disturbing figures, with a high percentage of dwellings without at least one basic infrastructure (Table 2.2).

In spite of its inland location, São Brás de Alportel is relatively integrated into the urban system around the district capital and has a highly accentuated growth dynamic. It was actually the Algarve municipality that grew most from 2001 to 2008 (Table 2.2). Its population is younger, more educated and even shows some

Table 2.3 Variation ratio of population (%) 2001–2008 by age and municipality

Geographical context	0–14	15–24	25–64	65 and over
Portugal	–1.2	–18.8	14.2	11.6
Algarve region	16.2	–9.6	24.5	12.5
Albufeira	12.4	13.6	47.4	27.2
Alcoutim	–31.8	–42.5	2.5	–15.1
Aljezur	0.3	–4.9	22.3	–0.7
Castro Marim	–3.9	–22.3	15.7	–1.2
Faro	14.3	–23.0	12.4	12.0
Lagoa	16.1	3.6	40.6	24.0
Lagos	13.4	2.5	32.7	15.6
Loulé	24.0	–3.9	26.7	12.2
Monchique	–31.0	–26.8	3.4	–1.5
Olhão	30.8	–13.2	15.5	20.8
Portimão	42.8	–11.9	22.1	19.9
S. Brás de Alportel	15.8	13.5	53.3	32.4
Silves	6.4	–12.0	27.0	2.7
Tavira	0.3	–20.2	21.2	1.4
Vila do Bispo	–9.3	–10.2	21.1	2.2
V. Real de Sto António	–3.6	–16.5	19.8	15.6

Source: INE – AERA (2009)

signs of suburbanisation, with a relevant percentage of the population working or studying outside the municipality (Table 2.2). Although São Brás de Alportel had a high percentage of people working or going to school outside the municipality (35.9%) in 2001 (Table 2.2), there is confirmation of its attractiveness to the resident population of working age (the 25-to-64 age group was the one that grew most – see Table 1.3) and even to foreign population (Table 2.2), which highlights the municipality's demographic dynamism.

In Alcoutim, in addition to its large elderly population, the other important characteristic is the proportion of people of working age employed in the municipality itself. In spite of improvements in travel conditions to neighbouring municipalities (Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António), Alcoutim is still highly isolated and peripheral, and accessibility and transport conditions are important factors to be considered. In a municipality with poor economic dynamism, a little over 10% of the employed population leaves the municipality to work or study (Table 2.2).

In terms of the employed population by sector, the primary sector in Alcoutim is much more important (18.9% of the employed population in 2001) than in São Brás de Alportel (2.9%) or even in the region as a whole (6.1%). This difference can also be found in the inhabitants' occupational profile. São Brás de Alportel has a higher percentage of managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals (23% in São Brás de Alportel against 12% in Alcoutim) and industrial workers, craftsmen and similar workers (23%). In Alcoutim, the importance of people working in agriculture is confirmed (18%).[2]

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[2] INE – RGPH (2001).

2.4 The Geography of Mobilities

By looking at one of the parents' place of birth, we assessed not only the municipality's openness to the exterior but also its ability to attract and hold on to its population. The respondent's migratory experience may also suggest different degrees of contact with the outside. Together, these dynamics draw paths that to a certain extent provide information about the local and regional spheres of influence. In immediate terms, peripheral places may suffer from highly deficient accessibility, either due to their physical conditions or because of the population's capacity for mobility. Nonetheless, it is necessary to take account of the population's migratory path, especially considering the probable contingent of the population returning "home" on retirement.

When interpreting mobilities, it is important to look beyond the classic work-home commute. The urban transport system is responsible for carrying people mainly to and from work and is therefore commonly studied.[3] In fact, mobilities are much more complex and present much more diversified anchor points in the organisation of people's lives, going way beyond the work-home factor. There are schools, day centres, hospitals, supermarkets, etc.

Beyond spatial connections over longer timeframes and back-and-forth movements for shopping purposes, we also look into urban family networks that result in trips of variable frequency but that are still important. We tried to explore what reasons other than work lead people to travel regularly outside the municipality: visiting family and friends, shopping and leisure (such as trips to the supermarket, shopping centres, restaurants and cafés) or other types of service that require important trips, such as health services.

Table 2.4 shows the mother's place of birth and the respondent's migratory path. They demonstrate that the municipality of São Brás de Alportel is a more open and integrated area with a greater power of attraction, as the mothers of 44% of the respondents were born outside the municipality. Many of them came from central Algarve municipalities and also from Almodôvar, a municipality in the Alentejo region. In Alcoutim, the parent's place of birth cannot be similarly analysed, as most of them were born in the municipality (almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents, although the second most frequent origin was Mértola, in Alentejo).

More than half of the respondents from both municipalities had already lived somewhere else at least once. There were a considerable percentage of emigrants who had returned home, particularly in São Brás de Alportel. The questionnaire confirmed the greater integration of the population from São Brás in municipalities in the central Algarve, especially Faro. As for Alcoutim, Faro takes a secondary place.

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[3] Marques da Costa and Marques da Costa (2003) and Marques da Costa (2007) clearly illustrates the relationship between employment basins, mobilities and the urban system in Portugal. Even so, gender studies in this regard have highlighted the persistence of a reductive and potentially discriminatory perspective of this approach to mobilities that focuses mainly on commuting, in the drafting of public policies, especially on transports (Greed, 2006). This question is now starting to be recognised institutionally at national and international level (CIG, 2009).

Table 2.4   Migratory experience and mother's place of birth (% of total journeys)

Municipality	Alcoutim		S. Brás Alportel	
	Mother's place of birth	Living elsewhere	Mother's place of birth	Living elsewhere
Faro	3.0	21.3	18.2	26.7
Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA)	4.5	27.7	5.3	13.3
Vila Real de Santo António (VRSA)	0.0	5.0	0.6	1.8
Loulé	4.5	5.0	12.4	14.5
Tavira	10.4	3.5	12.9	10.3
Mértola	26.9	5.0	2.4	1.8
Olhão	0.0	1.4	5.9	7.9
Castro Marim	10.4	5.0	0.0	0.0
Almodôvar (Alentejo)	3.0	0.7	7.6	2.4
Alentejo region (others)	20.9	9.2	10.1	6.1
Others	16.4	16.2	24.6	15.2
Total – outside the municipality, in Portugal	100.0 (67)	100.0 (140)	100.0 (192)	100.0 (165)
Abroad	2.2	17.1	4.7	25.1
Outside municipality – total	26.0	63.4	44.0	53.4

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

There, the Lisbon metropolitan area was the most representative national destination (27.7%) amongst the population that migrated. There was also a high proportion of migration to other countries (17%).

Generally speaking, in these mobilities, São Brás de Alportel reproduces greater integration in the region and particularly in the urban system centralised in Faro, with important connections to Loulé, Olhão and Tavira. All together, these five municipalities form the central Algarve urban network around Faro's central position. The polarisation of Faro reaches Alcoutim, though it competes with the influence of the Lisbon metropolitan area at the national level and with Vila Real de Santo António at the regional level.

To continue our interpretation of the geography of mobility routes, let us look at "spatial networks" which are set up through family ties, and also at the actual trips that the respondents make to visit relatives and friends (see Fig. 2.2 and Table 2.5). We must stress that though this type of trip is generally less frequent than others, such as shopping for basic necessities, it still spurs important travel. Half of the respondents in São Brás de Alportel said that they left the municipality to visit friends and relatives and almost half of these did so at least once a month (16% of those at least once a week). Around 65% of the respondents in Alcoutim visited relatives and friends outside the municipality and 37.2% of those did so at least once a month (while the others said they only did so several times a year).

Generally, the respondents' answers follow the map showing relatives' geographical location. The Alcoutim residents in general are more mobile. They go out of the
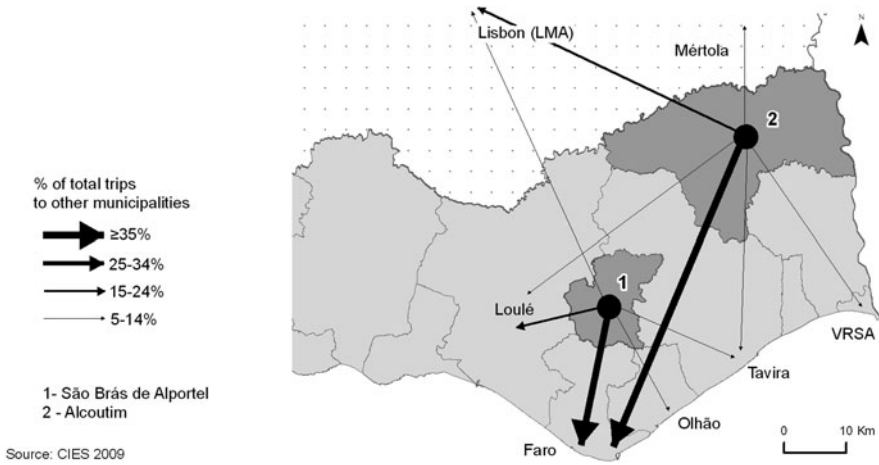
Fig. 2.2 Trips to visit family and friends

Table 2.5 Trips: visiting to family or friends (% of total trips)

Destination	Alcoutim	S. Brás Alportel
Faro	38.6	38.9
Lisboa (LMA)	18.8	8.4
VRSA	9.1	0.0
Loulé	4.5	20.7
Tavira	5.1	8.9
Mértola	4.0	0.5
Olhão	2.3	8.4
Other destinations	17.6	14.2
Total of people moving (no.)	176	203
% of total respondents	65.7	49.5

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

municipality more and their trips require more effort, due to the distances and more difficult access to their destinations. Once again, the most important regional destination is Faro for both municipalities (followed by Loulé for São Brás and the Lisbon metropolitan area for Alcoutim).

When we look at the maps showing travel for shopping purposes (Figs. 2.3 and 2.4) at stores, supermarkets or shopping centres, the diversity of flows is not so accentuated and stronger relationships appear (Table 2.6). The dynamics of mobility from Alcoutim is confirmed: 82.1% of the respondents said that they left the municipality to go to the grocery stores or to the supermarket and most of them went to Vila Real de Santo António, while 14% went to Faro. These trips are more frequent to Faro when they want to go to shopping centres, though the influence of Faro over São Brás de Alportel is unequivocal for trips to shopping centres and supermarkets.
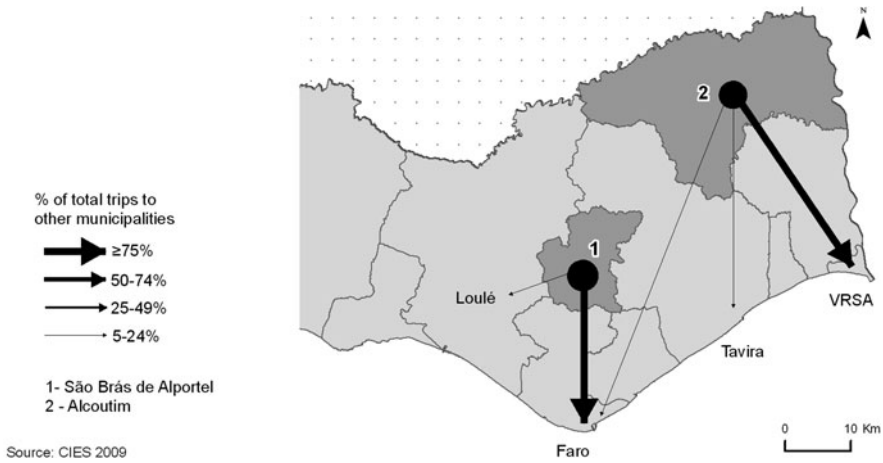
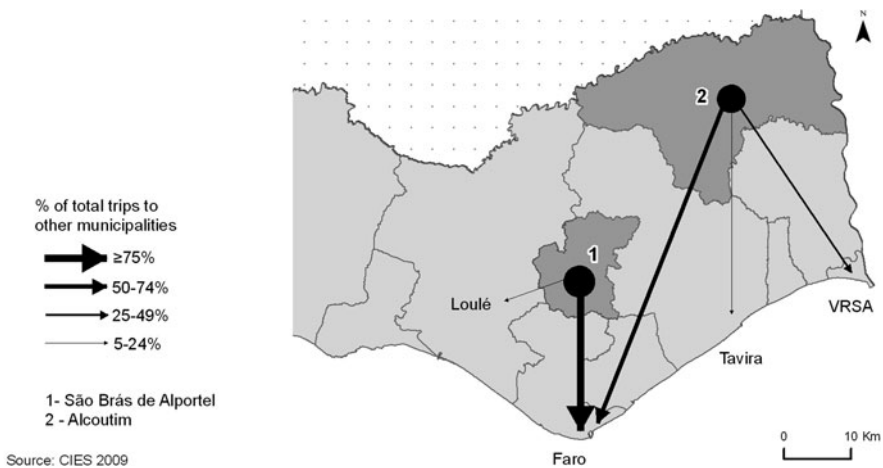**Fig. 2.3** Trips to go to grocery stores or/and to the supermarket

Fig. 2.4 Trips to shops and shopping centres

If we now cross-reference the destination of travel and its frequency for all the respondents, almost 30% of the residents in Alcoutim travel to Vila Real de Santo António at least once a week to go shopping. The figure is almost double for those who go at least once a month. In São Brás de Alportel, 10% of the respondents go to Faro once a week and 25% at least once a month.

Generally, a substantial part of this mobility relates to generalised consumer habits and practices but also with the development and strong acceptance of certain modern urban morphologies (shopping centres). On the other hand, this intense travel would not be possible without the use of private transport, which has also

Table 2.6 Trips for groceries and to shops and shopping centres (% of total trips)

Destination	Alcoutim		S. Brás Alportel	
	Groceries/ supermarket	Shops and shopping centres	Groceries/ supermarket	Shops and shopping centres
Faro	13.6	50.0	77.1	90.0
VRSA	78.2	36.1	0.0	0.0
Loulé	0.5	0.5	17.4	7.3
Tavira	5.0	8.8	0.5	0.8
Other destinations	2.7	4.6	5.0	1.9
Total of people moving (no.)	220	194	201	260
% of total respondents	82.1	72.4	49	63.4

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

Table 2.7 Means of transport to work and for other purposes (%)

Means of transport	Alcoutim		S. Brás Alportel	
	Work	Other purposes	Work	Other purposes
Own car	49.4	73.1	55.8	67.3
Public transport	5.4	17.2	2.8	10.0
On foot	40.4	4.9	28.4	11.0
Others	4.8	4.8	13.0	11.7
Total (no.)	100.0 (166)	100.0 (268)	100.0 (215)	100.0 (410)

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

become generalised (the main form of transport is their own car, especially in non-working periods). If we look at the means of transport used in travel to work and during non-working time, we confirm a dual principle of immobility and mobility in Alcoutim (Table 2.7): more people live close to their work (about 40% walk to work) and travel more when not working, with the majority using their own cars (73.1%) and also with greater use of public transport (17.2%).

   To end our geographical reading of these flows, we will now look at other reasons for travel (Table 2.8). On one hand, going out to eat or for a drink is less frequent (around 37% of the respondents in São Brás and 33% in Alcoutim go to restaurants or cafés in other municipalities), though people travel from Alcoutim to Vila Real de Santo António and Faro and from São Brás de Alportel to Faro, Loulé and Tavira for this purpose. On the other hand, services that are rarer in terms of availability, such as doctor's appointments, require longer trips because of their scarcity and out of necessity (47% in São Brás and 57% in Alcoutim go to health services outside their municipality). These trips are not so frequent: 79.1% of the respondents in Alcoutim and 85% of those in São Brás travel outside the municipality to health services only

Table 2.8   Travel for leisure and health reasons (% of total trips)

Destination	Alcoutim		S. Brás de Alportel	
	Restaurants, pubs	Going to the doctor	Restaurants, pubs	Going to the doctor
Faro	42.7	80.0	67.8	84.8
VRSA	39.3	10.0	0.0	0.0
Loulé	2.2	1.0	20.4	7.3
Tavira	3.4	1.0	5.9	1.0
Others	12.4	8.0	5.9	6.9
Total of people moving (no.)	89	153	152	191
% of total respondents	33.2	57.1	37.1	46.6

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

a few times a year. However, there is a particular effort when it comes to the older populations, who have to travel farther in the case of Alcoutim.

Faro is a central destination for both municipalities. The local authorities often provide public transport services as part of their social policies. For example, there are buses to take young people to upper secondary school or to take elderly people to Faro Hospital, or mobile health units are set up within the municipalities.

2.5 The Social Constitution of Mobility

Now that we have characterised the geography of travel for different reasons (family networks, migration, shopping, leisure, etc.), it is essential to understand how mobility determines and is determined by a number of sociological variables. We will now analyse the effect of these pendular movements on the everyday life of the residents in both municipalities. As presented, mobility is a reality for the population of São Brás de Alportel, a municipality that has undergone considerable sociodemographic development, and of Alcoutim, which, on the other hand, has suffered ongoing depopulation. Indeed, the data on mobility in Alcoutim are actually quite surprising as it is an ultra-peripheral municipality in terms of its geographical location and its aging demographic composition.

The construction of a general mobility index[4] shows the travel frequency and there is no great difference between municipalities, though in São Brás there is greater polarisation between more and less intense mobility practices. Nonetheless, if we include the age variable, we find a substantial difference between the behaviour of younger and older people (Table 2.9). Here, 46.3% of young people travel more,

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[4] This index is the result of combining six variables that measure the regularity of travel: for supermarket shopping, going to shops and shopping centres, going to the cinema, theatre and concerts, visiting friends or relatives, going to restaurants and cafés and going to bars and clubs.

Table 2.9 Intensity of mobility by age and municipality (no. and % of total)

Municipality	Frequency	Age			Total
		Up to 35	35–64	65 and over	
São Brás de Alportel	Intense and very intense	46	26	4	76
		49.5	15.7	2.8	19.0
	Not very intense	39	81	45	165
		41.9	48.8	31.9	41.3
	Sporadic	8	59	92	159
		8.6	35.5	65.2	39.8
	Total	93	166	141	400
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Alcoutim	Intense and very intense	16	24	0	40
		39.0	17.5	0.0	15.7
	Not very intense	25	95	31	151
		61.0	69.3	40.8	59.4
	Sporadic	0	18	45	63
		0.0	13.1	59.2	24.8
	Total	41	137	76	254
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

while the figure is less than 2% for older people (at this level of mobility). This profile does not differ much between the two municipalities (Table 2.9). In fact, the close relationship between mobility and age is not particular to these populations and can be found in other socio-spatial contexts in which young people have a greater capacity for travel (Carmo, 2010).

The picture is very similar when we consider the level of school attainment. Here, more educated people have higher levels of mobility: 41.7% of the respondents with upper secondary or tertiary education had high mobility as opposed to 3.1% of those who had not gone beyond primary school. There are no great differences between the two municipalities. There is obviously a degree of correspondence between these data and those for age: low school attainment is over-represented amongst the elderly.

If we consider mobility by social class, we find that the category of professionals and managers has the most intense mobility level (40%), followed by administrative employees (33.3%). On the other hand, retail and service employees, industrial workers, entrepreneurs, directors and self-employed workers have lower levels of intense mobility (24.4, 20.3, 19.1 and 10.5%, respectively). The figures for mobility based on social class are partly related to the data on school attainment, as the two classes with intense mobility practices are precisely those with the highest qualifications.

We can therefore say that mobility practices intensify in more educated groups and in younger populations. In fact, these are the variables that contribute most to a sociological differentiation in terms of mobility. Curiously, we found no great

Table 2.10   Intensity of travel for shopping by age and municipality (no. and % of total)

Municipality	Frequency	Age			
		Up to 35	35–64	65 and over	Total
São Brás de Alportel	Very intense	22	26	2	50
		23.2	15.4	1.4	12.3
	Intense	36	49	20	105
		37.9	29.0	14.1	25.9
	Not very intense	33	57	34	124
		34.7	33.7	23.9	30.5
	Sporadic	4	37	86	127
		4.2	21.9	60.6	31.3
	Total	95	169	142	406
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Alcoutim	Very intense	19	49	16	84
		46.3	34.0	20.0	31.7
	Intense	17	55	10	82
		41.5	38.2	12.5	30.9
	Not very intense	5	28	24	57
		12.2	19.4	30.0	21.5
	Sporadic	0	12	30	42
		0.0	8.3	37.5	15.8
	Total	41	144	80	265
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

differences on the basis of gender, as men and women have very close levels of mobility in both municipalities.

However, if we limit our analysis to travel for shopping,[5] we come across some relevant differences between the two municipalities. Although there is still the same type of polarisation between age groups, we find a greater intensity in travel in Alcoutim than in São Brás (Table 2.10). In other words, in all age groups, the intensity of travel outside their municipalities for shopping purposes is always greater in Alcoutim, as 46.3% of younger people have very intense mobility, as opposed to only 23.2% in São Brás. The same applies to the older age groups, at 20–1.4%, respectively. There is a similar trend for the education variable, although the difference between municipalities is smaller.

These data can be interpreted in light of two interdependent processes. On one hand, they confirm the hypothesis that mobility (and its greater intensity) is far from being a phenomenon that is exclusive to more urban areas or has more dynamism of urbanisation. In this case, the degree of mobility in the population living in the more marginal, peripheral area is quite expressive and, when it comes to travel for shopping purposes, it is higher than in São Brás, whose area is more integrated in

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[5] The more intense mobility for these shopping purposes justified dividing this index into 'very intense' and 'intense'.

the district capital's urban system. On the other hand, this intense mobility on the part of Alcoutim residents is also the result of its geographical and socioeconomic marginality. Living in this municipality, people are more or less obliged to travel to meet certain needs that they would not otherwise be able to satisfy if they resorted only to the range of goods and services available locally.

Using Durkheim's conceptualisation, we could say that, after a certain point, the continued reduction in material density, expressed by the demographic indicators of depopulation and marginalisation for example, may promote increased mobility. Although this finding may seem paradoxical at first, it consolidates the theoretic studies in which we question precisely this linear logic between densification (urban and population) and increased mobility, based on the assumption of an inverse relationship where, in a less densely populated setting, there is supposedly less mobility. In fact, according to the data, we found that an exponential increase in mobility may also occur in sparsely populated settings.

Nonetheless, it is important to stress that this increase is found basically in travel for shopping purposes. Regarding mobility resulting from the availability of work outside the municipality, it is much more intense and generalised in São Brás, benefiting from its proximity to Faro. This phenomenon is practically nonexistent in Alcoutim, as almost all the population of working age works in the municipality. This situation is one of the more decisive effects of its ongoing socioeconomic and geographical marginalisation, as it is impractical for its residents to find employment alternatives in the small number of jobs that are available in the municipality. As a result, many people have left the municipality in recent decades and those who have stayed on are those who still manage to keep or find jobs locally.

2.6 Solidarity and Mutual Knowledge

As mentioned above, the second goal of this chapter was to understand whether, in these areas located in different settings, mobility has an important impact on forms of interpersonal relationships. Does the generalisation of mobility in everyday life change traditional forms of social relationships?

The dominant type of solidarity in more traditional rural areas was characterised by close social and identity proximity, reflected by mutual knowledge and a level of interpersonal trust. These ties have tended to decline with more generalised urbanisation and population densification processes. In other words, the increase in material and dynamic densities has caused a profound change in traditional forms of solidarity.

On analysing the data, it was found that processes of intense social dynamism may develop in sparsely populated areas, as is the case of mobility. Therefore, the principle defining a certain linear correspondence between types of density has to be questioned. However, does this mean that the area's physical and morphological component has lost importance as a variable to be taken into account in the analysis of social relationships?

The comparison that we have been making between two different areas may help us to reflect on the pertinence of this question. Let us begin with the issue of trust. In the survey, we asked whether the respondents trusted their neighbours and to what extent. On average, around 43% of the interviewees said that they trusted all their neighbours. However, if we look at each municipality individually, we find a considerable difference. In Alcoutim, 55.3% said that they trusted all their neighbours while in São Brás only 34.6% said the same.

In sociological terms, there is a similar trend for the degree of trust to increase with age in both municipalities (Table 2.11). Fewer younger people trust all their neighbours, though the figures are very different in each municipality: 21.7% in São Brás and 45.2% in Alcoutim. Although the degree of trust in neighbours increases with age in both territories, the percentages tend to be higher in all age groups in Alcoutim. The same trends occur when we include the education variable. From this we can infer that people with more intense mobility (young people and those with higher school attainment) show the lowest degrees of trust between neighbours. In fact, the data reflects precisely this if we cross-reference intensity of mobility with trust in neighbours. In the intense mobility category, only 25.7% said that they trusted all their neighbours, as opposed to 42.2% and 53.9% in situations of less mobility. Even so, this discrepancy tends to fade a little in Alcoutim.

Table 2.11 Trust in neighbours by age and municipality (no. and % of total)

Municipality	Trust in neighbors	Age			
		Up to 35	35–64	65 and over	Total
São Brás de Alportel	In all	20	51	67	138
		21.7	30.5	47.9	34.6
	In most	19	49	28	96
		20.7	29.3	20.0	24.1
	In some	42	56	38	136
		45.7	33.5	27.1	34.1
	In none	11	11	7	29
		12.0	6.6	5.0	7.3
	Total	92	167	140	399
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Alcoutim	In all	19	78	50	147
		45.2	54.2	62.5	55.3
	In most	7	34	18	59
		16.7	23.6	22.5	22.2
	In some	12	29	11	52
		28.6	20.1	13.8	19.5
	In none	4	3	1	8
		9.5	2.1	1.3	3.0
	Total	42	144	80	266
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

Some strata of the population with a certain sociological profile (such as young and more qualified people) tend not only to have more intense mobility practices but also to trust fewer neighbours. However, at the same time, a proportional difference appears between municipalities: the scope of interpersonal trust is much greater in Alcoutim, even when considering each of the sociological categories mentioned.

However, taking into account other relational dimensions, the difference between the two municipalities increases exponentially in such a way that it reduces the influence of the variables analysed. Where mutual knowledge is concerned, a considerable difference prevails between the respondents in São Brás, where only 55.3% said that they knew almost all their neighbours, and the 86.9% of the residents in Alcoutim (Table 2.12).

We find the same trend, although it is not so polarised, in the frequency with which respondents talk to their neighbours. More than two-thirds of the residents in Alcoutim answered that they talked to them practically every day, as opposed to 37.8% in São Brás (see Table 2.13).

Taking account of these results, we find that the composition of the territories and the type of changes they undergo are decisive factors in the forms of interpersonal relationships. We could assert that material density is a conditioning factor for levels of mutual knowledge and interpersonal trust in local communities. The effects of the urbanisation and substantial demographic growth in São Brás are necessarily reflected in forms of social relationship, where the more traditional components are becoming less important. On the contrary, the ongoing loss of population and the permanent marginalisation of Alcoutim are factors that influence the continuance of more traditional social traits specific to rural areas.

Table 2.12   Familiarity with neighbours and by municipality (no. and % of total)

| Do you know your neighbours? | Municipality | | Total |
	S. Brás de Alportel	Alcoutim	
No	9	1	10
	2.2	0.4	1.5
Very few	27	3	30
	6.6	1.1	4.4
Some	91	13	104
	22.2	4.9	15.4
Most	56	18	74
	13.7	6.7	10.9
All or almost all	226	233	459
	55.3	86.9	67.8
Total	409	268	677
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

Table 2.13 Frequency of conversations with neighbours and by municipality

Do you usually talk to your neighbours?	Municipality		
	São Brás de Alportel	Alcoutim	Total
Practically every day	153	180	333
	37.8	67.2	49.5
Several days a week	154	67	221
	38.0	25.0	32.8
Basically at weekends	12	7	19
	3.0	2.6	2.8
Rarely	86	14	100
	21.2	5.2	14.9
Total	405	268	673
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey applied (CIES, 2009)

2.7 Conclusion

As mentioned in the theory section of this chapter, there is a close relationship between the production of mobilities (Cresswell, 2006) and the production of space (Lefebvre, 1974). It is not, therefore, a relationship of a hierarchical nature in which the place represents merely a kind of scenario in which a varied set of travel and movements takes place. Rather, it is above all a relationship of tension:

> The increase and intensification of mobility cause an organic disruption that leads us to configure the social space not as an undifferentiated surface impervious to the dizzying passage of flows, but as a kind of rising and falling mountain range that interferes and suffers constant interference as a result of interaction with countless trips and movements. In a sense, we can say that mobilities generate new spatialities and that they, in turn, shape and redirect circuits (Carmo, 2009b, p. 49).

On analysing the data on these two different territories, we found that this relationship generates and was generated by profound and sometimes unexpected tensions. In fact, if we take account of certain assumptions that have oriented a part of the sociological perspective, the data on Alcoutim are, in fact, a little surprising. When all is said and done, mobility is far from being an exclusively urban and metropolitan reality, as it constitutes a form of rural life in itself. Paradoxically, one of the symptoms of depopulation and demographic regression may be an exponential increase in spatial mobility. In other words, in places that are constantly losing people and that are simultaneously experiencing a certain functional dismantling of their local economy (not only in agriculture, but also in the loss of certain private and public services), the capacity for mobility represents an essential resource for those who have stayed and wish to continue to live in this type of area.

Here it is important to note that around 95% of the respondents in both municipalities expressed an interest in continuing to live there. Therefore, this trend towards

fixed populations is observed not only in the area that is growing and becoming urbanised but also in the one that has serious marginalisation problems. And it is not unreasonable to conclude that mobility conditions are an essential factor in guaranteeing that they stay in either of them. Concerning Alcoutim, where the vast majority of the population of working age works in the municipality, it is travel for shopping (goods and services) that is particularly important. In São Brás, there is also commuting to work, facilitated by the relative proximity of the largest city in the region (Faro).

The contrasting mobility profiles result from and interfere with the transformation of the area itself and therefore reporting to forms of interpersonal relationship in different ways. In the case of Alcoutim, which is a sparsely populated area with small settlements, greater mobility coexists with traditional forms of mutual knowledge and reciprocal trust. People travel more though this does not profoundly alter the framework of physical and social proximity. In São Brás de Alportel, there are considerable changes that reflect the impact of urbanisation on neighbours' relationships and a reduction in the extent of mutual knowledge.

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