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Brazilian Diaspora in the Czech Republic: An Ethnographic Probe into the Brazilian Community

Abstract

This research draws on an online survey and semi-structured qualitative interviews with Brazilians living in the Czech Republic. Despite the limitation of a relatively small sample size, this research offers a compelling exploration of the Brazilian community's life in the Czech Republic, contributing to a broader understanding of diaspora dynamics in the region. While the number of Brazilians in the Czech Republic remains low and there are no significant historical ties between the countries, it nevertheless represents an important research topic in the field of 'new diasporas' that may arise in different parts of the world. In our paper, we discuss different themes that relate to the migrants' experience of living abroad and how they conceptualise their Brazilian identity under new conditions. We use an interpretive approach to understand the subjective meanings ascribed by the members of the diaspora to relations in the country of origin and in the Czech Republic.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa baseia-se em uma pesquisa online e em entrevistas qualitativas semiestruturadas com brasileiros que vivem na República Tcheca. Apesar da limitação de um tamanho de amostra relativamente pequeno, esta pesquisa oferece uma exploração convincente da vida da comunidade brasileira na República Tcheca, contribuindo para uma compreensão mais ampla da dinâmica da diáspora na região. Embora o número de brasileiros na República Tcheca permaneça baixo e não existam laços históricos significativos entre os países, representa, no entanto, um importante tópico de pesquisa no campo das "novas diásporas" que podem surgir em diferentes partes do mundo. Em nosso artigo, discutimos diferentes temas relacionados à experiência dos migrantes de viver no exterior e como eles conceituam sua identidade brasileira sob novas condições. Utilizamos uma abordagem interpretativa para compreender os significados subjetivos atribuídos pelos membros da diáspora às relações no país de origem e na República Tcheca.

Introduction

The Czech Republic is home to many ethnic and national minorities whose composition is determined by the geographic location in Central Europe of the country and in some cases also by historical ties with countries outside Europe (e.g. relatively strong Vietnamese community). The Brazilian diaspora in the Czech Republic represents a very small community. According to the Czech Statistical Office, there were 1,291 Brazilians in the Czech Republic, who held a residence permit of 12 months or longer (Czech Statistical Office, 2023). The numbers imply that

the community of Brazilians is very small compared to Czechs living in Brazil. While the actual community of Czechs in Brazil counts around 5,000 people, it is estimated that approx. half a million Brazilians are of Czech ancestry, including some famous people. Among them, probably the most known person is the grandfather of Brazilian president (1956–1961) Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira (Embaixada da República Tcheca em Brasília, 2022).

Unlike Brazil, the Czech Republic has only become a country of immigration recently. Until the 1990s, Czechoslovakia was a country of emigration. However, with the breakup of Czechoslovakia and subsequent economic opportunities for migrants that followed, the Czech Republic became a country of immigration. Since 2014, the Czech Republic has allowed dual citizenship. The main countries of origin of foreigners in the Czech Republic are relatively stable over time and include Ukraine, Slovakia, Vietnam, Russia, and Romania. Currently, the largest group of foreigners in the Czech Republic is formed by Ukrainians. In 2022, nationals of Ukraine in the Czech Republic numbered 637 thousand (of which 432 thousand people were granted temporary protection). The other two most represented groups are the citizens of Slovakia (117 000) and Vietnam (66 000) (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2023). The capital city Prague hosts the most foreigners in the Czech Republic by large and the discrepancies in the numbers of foreigners across the region are remarkable. At the same time, the setup of our research has enabled us to inquire about the experience of foreigners who live in different regions of the Czech Republic. Moreover, it is important to inquire about the experience of migrants who live in a relatively new country of immigration and how their transnational connections are formed and sustained over time.

The main aim of this article is to conduct a probe into the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic and reveal its characteristics in relation to diaspora theories. In other words, the theories on diasporas will be assessed and derived into key features, which will be explored in the context of the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic. There are two main reasons behind the aim. First, research on the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic is relatively rare and even well-written analyses might be outdated because they were published years ago. Second, diaspora research is unconsolidated and requires further assessment which might bring original ideas for theoretical concepts. Methodically, this contribution is an exploratory case study using original data collected by the authors. We use surveys and interviews to elicit different information from Brazilians living in the Czech Republic. We use an interpretive approach to reveal the meanings given by members of the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic to different issues that are important in their lives. Hence, this research gives insight into a less explored community within the Czech Republic and at the same time, investigates larger transnational processes that form the diasporic consciousness of Brazilians living abroad.

Diaspora research: From ethnic nationalism to transnational entities

The term geography is rarely used in connection with diaspora despite its invocation of space, place, or scale (Glick Schiller, 2011). However, the term diaspora has been increasingly used to strengthen the sense of unity among people residing in different geographical locations. For the purposes of our research, Brazilian diaspora means people having Brazilian citizenship or identifying themselves as Brazilian who (for some reason) migrated to the territory of the Czech Republic. The word 'migrated' is purposefully used in the specification as dispersal still has a connotation of non-voluntary migration due to its early connection with dramatic historic events

despite many scholars using the term as a synonym for migrant groups. However, over time, the word diaspora has evolved to include national groups not necessarily displaced by force (Siar, 2014). Next, we will discuss the conceptual evolution of the term diaspora and the diaspora policies used by certain states to engage diaspora members.

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the word *diaspora* comes from the ancient Greek words *dia* and *speiro* meaning 'to sow over' (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2022). Unsurprisingly, the word referred to Greeks in the Hellenic world and was also referring to the expulsion of Israelites or Jews from their ancestral homeland in the 6th century. In the past, it was used to refer mainly to the classical Jewish, Greek, or Armenian diasporas. In the last decades, the term was developed and theorised by scholars who are far from a unified understanding of the word as definitions vary significantly. For example, Grossman (2019) made a large-scale assessment by using large-scale data analysis software to reveal the most relevant attributes of the diaspora definition. According to Grossman (2019, p. 1264), the diaspora is *'a transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity'*. As noted by Grossman (2019), this definition is based on six key characteristics including (1) transnationalism; (2) community; (3) dispersal and immigration; (4) being outside the homeland; (5) homeland orientation; and (6) group identity. All six characteristics are further assessed in this research demonstrating interesting variability within a single definition.

Other authors, such as Cohen (2022, p. 6), characterise diasporic inception by being dispersed from an original 'centre' to two or more foreign regions. Diaspora members retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland and remain separate from their host societies. They see their homeland as idealised and they relate to it and their ethnocommunal consciousness. Further research on diasporic consciousness has spun from the British Sikh diaspora and the role of Bollywood cinema in reconciling their value systems (Takhar et al., 2012) to diaspora building a sense of commonality as well as distance among Haitians (Glick Schiller, 2011). Duarte (2005) has investigated how Brazilians in Australia re-conceptualise their Brazilian identity under diasporic conditions. The study identified four patterns that can be seen as indicative of diaspora consciousness, (1) the co-presence of 'here' and 'there'; (2) the re-creation of 'Brazilian spaces' in Australia; (3) 'othering' in relation to Anglo-Australians, and (4) a reflexive appraisal of the homeland and its cultural values and norms. It is yet to see how this is valid in other contexts but we will discuss more about the research on Brazilian diaspora in the following section. It seems that literature remains 'chiefly concerned with diasporas in the west and north, and [with] processes of place-making and claims-making in Western countries of arrival' (Alexander et al., 2016, p. 2). However, there are also exceptions to this and our paper attempts to shed light on diaspora experience in a new country of immigration.

The term diaspora can encompass the actual members of the communities. On one hand, diasporas can be treated as 'bona fide actual entities' with quantifiable memberships, which essentializes their ethnic component (Sheffer, 2003). On the other hand, diasporas need to stress their transnational component and their connection with people in the countries of origin. Some scholars distinguish between ethnonational and transnational diasporas (Sheffer, 2006). There are different capacities and strategies posed by the Armenian or Indian ethnonational diaspora and Latino or Muslim transnational networks. Sheffer (2006) further notes that the role of diasporas has been strengthened in the past years. At the same time, people who create transna-

tional entities are not necessarily migrants. They might be a 1.5-, second or third generation of migrants or they can only engage in the larger transnational social field because of other reasons (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Tölölyan (1991, p. 5) called diasporas 'the exemplary communities of the transnational moment'. While embodying the transnational turn in migration studies, diasporas have also played a significant role in the creation of transnational communities.

Some scholars perceive diaspora in more abstract terms and put an emphasis on peoples' engagement in the diaspora. It can mean the personal attachment of people towards diasporas, or even more abstract use to denote 'an idiom, stance or claim' (Brubaker, 2005). Not everyone decides to engage in the diaspora as some people prefer to identify with the country of settlement. Glick Schiller et al. (1992, p. 11) argue that 'while some migrants identify more with one society than the other, the majority seem to maintain several identities that link them simultaneously to more than one nation.' However, not all migrants are transnational. Therefore, the conceptualization of elective diasporas helps to recognize this trend (Jöns et al., 2015). For them, it can help 'replace the biologically and territorially grounded concepts ... that emphasise ... emotional attachment and one's choice to participate in diasporic communities' (Jöns et al., 2015, p. 114). Hence, it is important to highlight the voluntariness in association with the diaspora and that not everyone prefers to be connected with other diaspora members or the country of origin.

Cohen (1996, p. 516) argues that transnational bonds no longer have to be cemented by migration or by exclusive territorial claims. Diasporas can be held together through the mind or a shared imagination. This leads to the fact that diasporas can be perceived as imagined communities (Anderson, 1983). While the term imagined community was originally coined to refer to the nation, it can nevertheless be useful in the conceptualization of diasporas. Imagination is also important in the possibility of returning to the country of origin. For some members of the diaspora, the (imagined) return represents a part of their diasporic experience. Some members of the diaspora might eventually return and create a 'counter-diaspora' (Christou & King, 2015). Some diaspora returnees might feel alienated from the society where they migrated and create a symbolic boundary between themselves and host country population (Pawłowska, 2017). The concept of diasporic return has been greatly developed by Tsuda (1999, 2003) in the case of Brazilian-Japanese returnees to both Japan and Brazil. Brazilians of Japanese descent migrated to Japan in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of economic incentives to migrate as unskilled workers. Interestingly, their number was estimated at 220,000 and continued to grow despite the economic recession in Japan (Tsuda, 1999). Between 2007 and 2011, roughly 107,000 migrants returned to Brazil and about 170,000 Brazilians continue to live and work in Japan (Migration Policy Institute [MPI], 2018).

Another feature of diasporas is the role of networks that have, to an extent, become transnational. There is a triadic relationship (Safran, 1991; Vertovec, 1999) between (a) globally dispersed ethnic groups, (b) the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside, and (c) the homeland states and contexts from which they or their ancestors came. Diaspora policies of the homeland represent another important strand of research. The 'politics of homeland' engages members of diasporas or transnational communities in a variety of ways (Vertovec, 1999). Clifford (1994) examined the politics of diasporas, exploring how diaspora communities can engage in activism, advocacy, and political mobilisation. Furthermore, diasporas can influence policy decisions and engage in issues related to human rights, conflicts, and humanitarian causes. The role of diasporas can also be related to lobbying for various causes (such as the Arme-

nian diaspora's lobbying for the recognition of the Armenian genocide in 1915 or the Kurdish diaspora's lobbying for the recognition of the Kurdish state). It can also be connected with electoral influence both in countries of origin and countries of settlement. Similarly, diasporas can engage in migration and development (through remittances, social remittances and collective remittances) and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding (Laakso & Hautaniemi, 2014).

Brazilian diaspora

Brazil has recently shifted its role from a country of immigration to a country of emigration and there is ongoing research on the Brazilian diaspora (Padilla, 2011). Its size is estimated at more than 3 million people globally (Marcus, 2014). On average, about 100,000 Brazilians have left the country per year since 2000, with about half of the total from the southeastern states of Minas Gerais, Paraná, São Paulo, and Goiás (MPI, 2018). The greatest numbers of Brazilians live in Northern America and consequently, most research has focused on these diaspora groups (Barbosa, 2016; Margolis, 1993). In the Czech Republic, there are more than 1,000 Brazilians. Brazil does not have a specific law to engage its diaspora members, nor does it have a ministry or a specialised agency dealing with the members of the diaspora. However, there is an Undersecretary General for Brazilian Communities Abroad in the Ministry of External Relations. Brazil allows dual citizenship, enabling Brazilians who have acquired citizenship in another country to maintain their Brazilian nationality (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). It allows Brazilians living abroad to participate in national elections regardless of their geographical location.

A large strand of research on Brazilian diaspora inquired about its members' identity. Duarte (2005) researched 'diasporic consciousness' of Brazilians living in Australia who came mainly as a labour diaspora. For many of them, the reason to come was to save enough money to guarantee a better standard of living after their return to Brazil. Apart from economic reasons, frequently cited reason among the respondents was 'search for adventure' and 'disillusionment with Brazil'. The latter also appeared in Sales' (1999) account of ethnic identity construction among Brazilians in the USA. However, the metaphor of 'roots' being central to Brazilian identity among the diaspora members was central to respondents in Duarte's (2005) paper. In a metaphorical way, one respondent put it, 'Australia is my second home, and I love living here, but my heart is 'green and yellow'. This corresponds with the way Clifford (1994, p. 308) conceptualises diaspora discourse which 'articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes ... outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference'. Given this, new forms of identity and community consciousness appear.

Some research on Brazilian diaspora has also focused on the dispersion of Pentecostalism from Brazil thanks to its diaspora (Chaves, 2017; Ikeuchi, 2019; Rocha & Vásquez, 2013). Even Brazilian athletes were seen as the missionaries of this religion (Rial, 2012). There is also research on African inspired religion in Brazil and its perseverance and transnational dimension (Matory, 2009). For example, *Orixás*, deities of several African religions related to Yoruba, have appeared in European countries (Saraiva, 2017). Another strand of research on Brazilian diaspora has dealt with the music, art and television programmes forming and catering to the Brazilian diaspora. Despite the language being different from other 'Latino' diasporas and the juxtaposition of the 'Anglo' host culture and the migrants' home culture, there is a shared Latin American identity (Bachmann, 2011). Finally, research has also noted the habitus of capoeira, a martial art, differs in the UK and Brazil (Delamont & Stephens, 2008). The practice of capoeira

in Canada has engaged with the local multicultural and Aboriginal politics and it has called into question the past heritage and transnational circulation routes (Joseph, 2012). The word 'saudade' that evokes nostalgia and melancholic feelings of longing for something often appeared in the works on the Brazilian diaspora (das Graças Brightwell, 2020; López-Calvo, 2019).

Data and methods

Authors faced many challenges in finding enough respondents for the online questionnaire, which was built up to cover most of the theoretical aspects identified as relevant for the complex understanding of the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic. The collection was conducted between 1st March and 30th April 2023. There were different ways how research participants were recruited. One of them was a Facebook group titled 'Brasileiros em Praga' (Brasilians in Prague) containing some 174 members. Due to the very low number of respondents, we have used another way and asked the Brazilian embassy in Prague with a request to help us with the promotion of the research. As a result, the Embassy promoted the questionnaire on its social networks, which attracted several more respondents. Finally, we asked respondents to share the questionnaires among other Brazilians living in the Czech Republic.

After two months, a sample of n=44 respondents filled out the questionnaire. It is important to note, that the sample is not at all representative, which is given by the fact that respondents were contacted mainly via social networks and thereby there was not a random sampling procedure involved. Moreover, the number of respondents is relatively low, representing approx. 4 percent of the Brazilian population living in the Czech Republic and findings can not be generalized to the entire Brazilian diaspora living in the Czech Republic. Instead, findings refer to the studied group and may only suggest potential trends within the broader population.

On the other hand, there are serious debates on the minimum sample size and statistical significance (e. g. in z or t test). There is a debate over the claim that a minimum sample of n=30 shall reasonably lead to validity of the normal distribution (see, e.g., Hesterberg, n.d.; Kwak & Kim, 2017; Perezgonzales, 2016, p. 4). However, a larger sample is always better and the significance is influenced also by other factors including the field of application. It is evident that the sample of 30 people in medical research or pharmacology is too small. However, in social sciences using qualitative assessment the sample might be enough to provide some idea about basic characteristics of a specific group, especially when the research is accompanied by social anthropological attitudes to illustrate the cases. It is evident that a relatively little sample is one of the key flaws of the presented research. However, despite this fact, it provides an interesting probe into the life of the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic.

To triangulate our data and add more details on the life of Brazilians living in the Czech Republic, we conducted in-depth interviews with survey participants, who agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview. The online interviews were conducted during the months of August and September 2023. Among the interviewees were 8 Brazilians that have been living in the Czech Republic in the past years. Their length of stay in the Czech Republic ranged from 2 to 15 years. Table 1 below contains their general classification and further information about their stay and reason to move to the Czech Republic.

These participants are all adults who volunteered and agreed to answer questions about other aspects of their stay. There was an oral informed consent process and participants were able to withdraw from research any time or not to answer any questions. The interviews were

Table 1
Preliminary information on participants

Participant	Gender	Length of stay	Reason for moving from Brazil
1	Male	6 years	Transferred jobs within the same company
2	Female	6 years	Study (Bachelor's)
3	Female	2 years	Study (Czech language)
4	Female	2 years	Study (postdoc)
5	Male	15 years	Expat
6	Male	5 years	Study (PhD) and work
7	Male	4 years	Transferred jobs within the same company
8	Male	2 years	Study (Master's)

Note. Source: authors.

conducted in English or Brazilian Portuguese based on the preferences of the participants. Participants 1, 6, 7 and 8 were interviewed individually. Participants 2-5 participated in the same focus group interview. We manually transcribed the interviews and translated them into English, if necessary. We then coded them in Atlas.ti software.

Survey

Based on the median, the typical Brazilian in the Czech Republic is a young, 34-year-old woman with a university degree in a non-technical area, who has already spent four years in Prague, working for some corporate company dealing with finance or trade. However, this picture might be misleading, as Brazilians living in Czechia represent a highly heterogeneous group, which is evident also from socio-demographic analysis. In our sample, there are 24 women and 20 men with a very similar average age in both groups close to 36 years and median of 34 years. Overall, Brazilians in the Czech Republic have a high level of education. Out of 44 people, 40 hold university degrees and one out of the remaining four is still studying. There are no significant differences between men and women regarding education level. What slightly differs is the area of education; men tend to have technical education more often (13 out of 20 men) than women (just 9 out of 24 women). What differs is also the average length of stay in the Czech Republic, which is on average 56.7 months, however the median is some 10 months lower. Women respondents lived in Czechia on average for 58.2 months and men 54.9 months. There is, however, a long interval among individual respondents, ranging from 2 months to over 20 years.

It is important to note that the length of stay is an important independent variable that correlates well with other dependent variables. For example, the length of stay (unsurprisingly) positively correlated with the level of Czech language skill ($P = 0.65$) and having a Czech partner ($P = 0.43$). The strongest correlation is naturally in between the length of being with a Czech partner (independent variable) and staying in the Czech Republic ($P = 0.76$). In other words, having a Czech partner and staying longer in the Czech Republic leads to better Czech language skill. Both men and women have similar language skills: on a scale from 0 'none' to 10 'almost native speaker' the self-evaluation scored on average of 3.2.

There are also other tendencies observed related to length of stay. The longer stay in the Czech Republic, the fewer tendency to return to Brazil within the next few years ($P = -0.36$) and lower the intensity of contacts with friends and family in Brazil ($P = -0.38$). On the other hand, longer stay in the Czech Republic is positively related to having experienced of discrimination or

prejudice due to Brazilian origin (P = 0.33). This might be caused by having more opportunities and social interactions over time. Having a Czech partner was one of main motivations to travel and stay in the Czech Republic (12 out of 44 respondents), which is of the same strength as traveling and staying in the Czech Republic due to study. However, the main motivation behind is professional (15 out of 44 respondents) while the quality of life in a safe country is only of little relevance (5 out of 44 respondents). It means that economic factors are dominant in migrating to the Czech Republic. However, some of the respondents indicated previous contacts or positive relationship towards the country:

> *'My mother was living in the Czech Republic for 7 years and then returned to Brazil. She was talking about the Czech Republic a lot and I wanted to have the same experience'* (survey respondent 6); or *'when I was young, I was here for a study stay. After some years I have decided to return'* (survey respondent 18) or '*I have had some relatives, who lived here for some time and they recommended the Czech Republic as a country for a good life'* (survey respondent 7).

Respondents indicating economic motivations replied that '*I came here because of a very specific job position*' (survey respondent 4) or because '*a country issued a visa for me*' (survey respondent 33).

Economic life of Brazilians is related to many factors. Due to relatively high levels of education, Brazilians work in various high-performing sectors of the economy or qualified professions. Most of the respondents work in the IT sector (12 out of 44) which is followed by trade and finance (9 out of 44). Five respondents work in university related jobs, as lecturers or researchers and the same number of respondents work in technical professions requiring high technical qualification (such as engineers, technology specialists, industry experts etc). Four respondents work in low-qualified professions, such as waitress, assistants, receptionists etc. There are in total 6 students in the sample of 44, and also some people with rare professions including an animal care zoologist or artistic carpenter. Overall, the vast majority of Brazilians (36 people) think that their economic situation and living standard in the Czech Republic is much better or slightly better than in Brazil. In total 11 respondents send money back home, to the family, at least once per year.

Family aspect is very important in the life of Brazilians. In the question 'what do you miss the most about Brazil in the Czech Republic?', 12 respondents mentioned family. However, some other things prevailed: 26 respondents out of 44 mentioned Brazilian food. Friends, Brazilian climate or festivals were also often mentioned. Family (back in Brazil) also plays an important motivation factor for return. Respondents were asked to evaluate on a scale from 0 'not at all' to 10 'almost certain' how much is probable to return to Brazil within 12 months, a horizon of a few years and longer horizon beyond five years. The average expectation of return within 12 months is as little as 1.8 without gender difference. In the mid-term horizon of a few years, it is slightly higher at the average of 4.2, which is slightly higher in the case of women (4.6) and lower in the case of men (3.4). Out of 44, 28 respondents did not plan to return, even in the long term period and there are 16 respondents who ever consider return due to different factors.

Respondents considering return had to chose pre-defined factors and add significance of the factor ranging from 0 to 10. Most important factor behind decision to return was realisation, that 'Brazil is their home' (average score of 4,6); second and third factor with average score close to 4,0 was the desire to die and be buried in the homeland, which is almost equally strong as the intention to return and contribute something back to Brazilian society. Another three

factors proved relevant, with a score average of 3,7: the motivation to enjoy new skills in Brazil, family reasons such as the help to ageing parents, or the motivation to work back in Brazil. The weakest factor seems to be the motivation to find a partner in Brazil or form a family there (average score of 2,7). Generally, women tend to think about returning more than men; the patriotic reasons and the intention to die and be buried in the homeland are even stronger than motivations relating to the family. This factor is stronger among women (average close to 7 compared to average 2 in the case of men). Among men it is merely a realisation that 'Brazil is their home'. This preliminary analysis leads to the premise that Brazilian women are more tied to a homeland, which could be proven also in the number of contact with Brazilians in Brazil, frequency of flying back home or interest in the home country.

This premise was not confirmed as the frequency of flying back home is almost same among women and men. Only 4 respondents from the sample of 44 travel back home several times per year. Much likely is travelling once per year (17 respondents) or once per several years (16 respondents) and 7 respondents have not been back to Brazil yet. Unsurprisingly, those having family back in Brazil are having an increased frequency of flying back home. Also regarding contacts (contacting Brazilians in Brazil or other Brazilians in the Czech Republic) does not differ much among men and women. What is different is the frequency. While Brazilians in Brazil (including family) are contacted usually several times a week, other Brazilians in the Czech Republic are contacted in lower intensity, usually several times a month. In total 19 respondents from the sample of 44 declare daily contact with Brazilians living in Brazil, which shows their significant transnational ties. In this subgroup, women are more represented than men.

After living in the Czech Republic, most of the Brazilians (22 respondents) declare no effect on their Brazilian identity in terms of strengthening or weakening, 12 respondents are declaring weakening of the identity and 10 respondents are declaring stronger Brazilian identity. There seems to be two interesting factors related to identity. First, an increasing level of Czech language skills leads to declared weakening of Brazilian identity ($P = -0.34$) and second, increased living standard (in comparison to Brazil) leads to declared weakening of Brazilian identity ($P = -0.33$). Although the significance of P is not very high, both correlations are logical and may be based on causality.

A special area is perception of Czech system openness to Brazilians in comparison to Czechs. In general, Brazilian men consider the Czech healthcare, education and labour market more closed than Brazilian women. On on a scale from '0' (not at all open) to '10' (very open), the education scored on average 4.65 (men) to 5.37 (women), labour market scored 6.7 (men) to 7.0 (women) and healthcare scored 6 (men) to 7 (women). The analysis of factors behind showed that expecting return back to Brazil within 12 months negatively correlates well with labour market openness ($P = -0.51$). In other words, those who think that the Czech labour market is closed are soon returning back to Brazil. There seem to be other reasons behind this. For example, the length of a partnership with a Czech partner (independent variable) is positively correlated with open perception, however, the Pearson coefficient is not strong, at $P = 0.26$ in case of the labour market or healthcare but even less in the case of education ($P = 0.15$). Moreover, perceiving labour market open correlates with the perception of open healthcare ($P = 0.57$). This is quite logical causality due to compulsory social and healthcare insurance for workers and employers to pay.

Interviews

First, as a means to investigate how their feeling of belonging shifted after them moving away, we asked participants whether they currently consider Brazil or the Czech Republic to be their home. Attachment to family or other interpersonal relationships who currently live in Brazil was a predominant reason among half of the responses who felt more attached to Brazil. On the other hand, the participants who did not choose Brazil either had partners who were European or claimed they have adapted to the 'European lifestyle'. Some of the interviewees elaborated on their personal reasons.

> *"After 15 years in Czechia, I don't feel in Brazil at home anymore, so I would say it is the Czech Republic now. I know the place very well and I complain about the same things as Czechs"* (Participant 5).
>
> *"I thought* [*it was*] *Brazil but now I feel I don't have a home now, so neither.* (...) *Here, people are too quiet.* (...) *In Brazil everything is so loud everywhere. In Europe, it's so calm – you take the bus and it's so quiet"* (Participant 2).

None of the interviewees manifested a strong interest in moving back to Brazil at the time of the interview. However, a few participants mentioned the possibility of onward migration to other countries in Europe instead of staying in the Czech Republic.

Connected to the theme of transnational engagement are the elections. Participating in Brazilian elections is mandatory for Brazilian citizens even if they live abroad. Alternatively, if they choose not to cast their votes, the Electoral Ministry demands paying a nominal fee and filling out a form with a justification for being absent. The maximum penalty is the cancellation of one of their national identification numbers, the *Cadastro de Pessoas Físicas* (or CPF). Three of our participants claimed they have not participated in the presidential election of 2022, while others reported having participated by voting at the Brazilian Embassy in Prague. Among those who did not vote, bureaucracy and travelling were appointed as some of the reasons.

Participants also discussed the things they yearned for while outside of their country of origin. The most recurrent theme in their answers was related to making drinks or cooking dishes from their national cuisine. Additionally, the majority of the answers around the topic of 'missing Brazil' mentioned family and Brazilian friends. In their words:

> *"I don't miss the country Brazil at all, but I miss certain things from or in Brazil. I miss Rio de Janeiro, my hometown, and my friends there.* (...) *I sometimes make myself some caipirinhas or listen to bossa nova when I'm feeling nostalgic"* (Participant 8).
>
> *"I miss Brazil. And of course, the food.* (...) *I usually try to cook Brazilian food at home but it's not always possible because of the ingredients, mainly vegetables and fruits. But other than that, I have some Brazilian friends here so we meet very regularly. And other than that I guess what I mean the most from Brazil is my family. For instance, I usually talk to my mother once a week, usually during Sunday"* (Participant 7).

Interestingly, local places and local culture were seen as important to interviewees rather than an overarching 'Brazilian culture'. Many of them stressed the large diversity of Brazil and its regional differences (compared to the relatively homogeneous Czech Republic). Keeping in touch with significant others from Brazil was also a habit that most of the other participants claimed to have and social media is the preferred form of communication. They also mention that such communication occurs frequently.

It is also through the internet that most Brazilians we interviewed consume news-related content about Brazil. In order to investigate whether their informational environment has changed after immigration, we asked them if they still follow the news from Brazil. Five participants mentioned that they are frequent users of websites and social media accounts of Brazilian news outlets. Additionally, some of them report differences in the type of information they receive while living in the Czech Republic.

> *"I follow the news* [*about Brazil*] *on the internet but I must say that the news from other countries do not get much coverage here. In Brazil, on the other hand, that happens quite often. So I feel that being here means to live in a sort of a bubble. There is plenty of news about Czechia, Ukraine, and sometimes Germany"* (Participant 2).
>
> *"Same as* [*participant 4*]. *Also, I follow news outlets for expats in Prague. They're all in English and I feel they are very filtered in a way. I don't think I am getting the content I should get"* (Participant 3).

Among the participants who claimed not to follow news from Brazil regularly or at all, the reasons mentioned were the following:

> *"Information is still the same and is quite negative and I'm not sure how that would influence my life. So I'd rather skip it"* (Participant 1).
>
> *"*[*About watching news programs from Brazil*] (...) *basically limiting the time, because if you are too much into Brazil, then you're not integrating into the Czech Republic"* (Participant 6).
>
> *"Sometimes I read newspapers, sometimes I get information from social media and family, but I try to avoid consuming too much news from Brazil. I find them to be often heartbreaking and I don't like being reminded of the reasons why I chose to leave the country and not come back"* (Participant 8).

Another theme that was discussed related to respondents' understanding of their national identity. When discussing this topic, we asked them to define what it means to be Brazilian.

> *"People in Brazil are very friendly but definitely not self-aware. Generally loud, they never go by rules. Brazilians are nice, but will come 30 minutes late, but then still apologise. Brazilians tend to be dishonest, sometimes not in a bad way but just because of the system. We're born in a corrupt system, it's embedded in the culture. But overall people are very positive and happy and definitely hard workers and a very heterogeneous population"* (Participant 1).
>
> *"Being happy, speaking loud. Maybe dancing as well and really in love with sports and being able to adapt in any condition, and this is the recipe of Brazil"* (Participant 6).

The participants also stressed the heterogeneity of the population.

> *"Sometimes I miss the loudness, which is characteristic to Brazilians.* (...) *We live with passion, we do things with love and we connect through food with other people.* (...) *We have to touch other people, we hug... but compared to the other countries in Europe and also Czech Republic, Brazilians tend to see things in a loving way, we don't see black and white, but something in between* (...) *we see people in an emotional and not rational way"* (Participant 2).
>
> *"*(...) *There's not only one type of Brazilian, there are many. So I think in general it is just being born there, speaking Brazilian Portuguese and having the culture"* (Participant 7).

When delving into the intricacies of what living away from Brazil could mean for their Brazilian identity. Some respondents believed that living away from Brazil could mean losing some of their Brazilian identity. As an example, they also discussed difficulties in speaking Brazilian Portuguese.

> *"Portuguese is a language that changes so fast, especially because of the internet. Every year when I visit Brazil there is some expression I don't understand"* (Participant 2).
>
> *"I agree. When I speak with my family through the phone they always tell me I sound like an Italian that just arrived in São Paulo. They can barely understand me"* (Participant 5).

However, some participants did not think that it would have an impact on the affective part of their Brazilian identity and feeling like a Brazilian.

> *"I am afraid I am gonna lose the communication/cultural aspects. Because everything changes so fast. Maybe this will make me less Brazilian in the eyes of other Brazilians, but not for myself"* (Participant 4).

The last question regarded the topic of facing discrimination while living in the Czech Republic. Among the respondents who claimed they have experienced such episodes, certain locations, physical characteristics and the language barrier were considered relevant factors. Some foreigners encountered difficulties with the state administration when they did not feel welcome.

> *"In my case… I am white male, tall and slim, so people initially would have nothing against me. I could be from anywhere. But then when I need to speak a language, a barrier appears. So I think it's more towards a foreigner in general, not directly Brazilian. But I would imagine black people or women or black women for sure they face that. Because I've seen that. And not a direct discrimination, but it's what happens often in the official offices. I really think they do it on purpose"* (Participant 1).
>
> *"The only time when I did not feel welcome was during my appointments at the immigration agency. The workers there are notoriously bad-tempered and seem to do their best to make all immigrants feel unwelcome"* (Participant 8).

There were also instances of verbal violence when people challenged them for not speaking Czech in public places. While these are isolated incidents, they show a worrying pattern that can threaten the feeling of belonging of foreigners in the Czech Republic.

> *"Also, one time I was at the metro station and a guy heard me speaking in Portuguese with my wife and he started to stare at me and say: 'Máš problém?'*[1] *and I said 'Nemluvím česky'*[2]*. I don't know what he was trying to do, if he was just trying to start a fight with me… so this was weird. And then later he was doing the same thing with another guy. So I guess he was just drunk or wanting to start a fight with someone that doesn't speak Czech"* (Participant 4).
>
> *"*[*Agreeing with participant 4*] *Once I was on the bus in Prague speaking on the phone and an old lady started yelling at me saying 'we are in the Czech Republic, you have to speak Czech' "* (Participant 2).

The interviewees agreed that the situation can differ across regions of the Czech Republic and in smaller and bigger cities.

> *"For me, it depends on the region in Czech. It varies largely but basically in big cities like Prague or Brno, there is no discrimination. But when you go to a village, definitely. You feel like an alien coming out of outer space and everybody looks at you. It strongly depends on the looks. People in villages get confused because they don't know you, what you think or do, whether you are a threat or not. But this is not only the case in Czechia, but I also felt this in Ireland, too"* (Participant 5).

[1]In English: "Do you have a problem?", with an invective connotation.
[2]In English: "I don't speak Czech".

> *"I also lived outside Prague in a village in the South Moravian Region… If I went out with my Brazilian shirt, I would definitely be looked at by someone. 'It's like okay, you are from outside.' I feel that when Czechs approach me they don't know what I am.. I can look like a Czech but if I pronounce something wrong it completely falls apart"* (Participant 6).

Discussion and concluding remarks

The results obtained from the survey coincide partially with what was reported during the interviews. First, the correspondence between the educational profile of both interview and survey respondents is noticeable and a clear indication that the Brazilian community living in the Czech Republic is, in its majority, highly skilled. This means that many of the Brazilians living there have a tertiary education and work in highly specialised professions. Secondly, the intention of not desiring to return to Brazil in the near future was high in both samples. While there was some intention of possible onward migration within the EU, the majority of respondents wanted to stay in the Czech Republic for a foreseeable time. This could indicate that the Brazilian community is embedded in the Czech Republic and has a non-transient nature despite its small size.

There is an element of similarity between our qualitative findings and those of Duarte (2005). More specifically, on how Brazilians in the diaspora we interviewed keep strong ties with their families and friends who live in Brazil and how that plays a pivotal role in their perception of home, that is, their 'roots'. This is, indeed, a strong factor within the identity of this diaspora group, and indicates that being far away from homeland does not mean a complete rupture from it. Further similarities also include some of the patterns that indicate their diaspora consciousness. We can deprehend from the interviews that many Brazilians attempt to 'live here and there' and forge transnational connections. They keep following local news, conversing with loved ones frequently through social media despite the time difference and participating in the elections. However, the latter is also a requirement by law so there is an element of coercion despite some interviewees not taking part by choice (and facing the consequences such as a penalty).

Concerning the situation in the Czech Republic, some interviewees reported hostility regarding their appearance or speaking a different language. Certain locations, physical characteristics and the language barrier appeared to be relevant factors for encountering discrimination. This means that feelings of belonging of Brazilians in the Czech Republic might be endangered by these factors. Simultaneously, Brazilians in the Czech Republic surveyed in our research reported a high level of intention to stay in the Czech Republic or elsewhere in the European Union. Among the factors that might lead to this are family ties in the Czech Republic or disenfranchisement with the situation in Brazil.

Also, some concepts used by our interviewees to define what it means to be Brazilian reinforce the previous findings on how some of social norms and cultural values are appraised. When comparing Brazilian society to the one they found while living in the Czech Republic, Brazilians consider themselves more loud and lively, as well as less rational and more emotional. The 'disillusionment with Brazil' was present in some of the responses of our interviewees when answering why they do not keep up with news from Brazil and is yet another similarity between our findings and the ones of Duarte (2005) and Sales (1999). While showing

certain similarities, our results cannot be generalised to Brazilians living in other countries and our research is having some inherent limits, notably: lack of randomized sampling method (as we have used on-line survey and online qualitative semi-structured interviews in the individual and group setting), and relatively small sample of respondents, representing only approx. 4 % of Brazilians living in the Czech Republic.

However, when accepting these limits, the research represents an attempt to focus on a less well-known migrant group in the Czech Republic and inquire about its features, specifics, and perception of life outside of Brazil. There are no large discrepancies between the findings from the survey and interviews, and the interviews allowed us to delve more into the conditions of how this diasporic group perceives itself and the day-to-day challenges they face in their lives in the Czech Republic. Certainly, it would be interesting to follow up with a more focused study comparing the Brazilian diaspora in different European countries. The Brazilian diaspora is quite specific due to its language being dissimilar to other Latin American groups. However, it would be interesting to find out how its experience differs from other Latin American migrants living in Europe.

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