

---- EARLY VIEW ----

THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BRAZILIAN IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TORONTO

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The study aims at analyzing the socio-demographic profile of Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurship in Toronto, its entrepreneurial behavioral traits, in addition to their business profiles. **Methodology/approach:** The research is multi-method, with qualitative predominance, being exploratory-descriptive. For data-collection, it was conducted a survey and further deepening with face-to-face interviews and field observations. **Main results:** The majority declared themselves to be from the Brazilian Southeast, white, 35 to 49 years old, married, with children, high academic and professional background. The influence of the state of social malaise in Brazil and the official Canadian discourse, seem to act as factors of 'expulsion-attraction' to migration. The job condition of unemployment upon immigrants' arrival can 'push' them into necessity-driven entrepreneurship, although there are also ventures that have identified opportunities. Most of the businesses are small and operate in the service sector, concentrated on the West End of Toronto. In many businesses, there was a strong search for identification with the ethnic community itself, which suggests the formation of an 'enclave economy', but in some cases, the main market for local consumers was targeted. **Theoretical/methodological contributions:** The article highlights the importance of conducting multi-method research to understand possible entrepreneurial configurations by Brazilian immigrants. **Relevance/originality:** The article has academic relevance given the scarce work on the theme of Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurship overseas. Very little is known about this phenomenon in Canada. **Social and management contributions:** The entrepreneurial trajectories described minimize risks for future immigrants; also, the discussion about the social capital of the ethnic community allows comparisons with the business of Brazilians in other countries.

Keywords: Immigrant Entrepreneurship. Brazilians. Toronto. Canada.



A EXPERIÊNCIA CANADENSE NA PERSPECTIVA DO EMPREENDEDORISMO IMIGRANTE BRASILEIRO EM TORONTO

RESUMO

Objetivo do estudo: Analisar o perfil sociodemográfico do empreendedorismo imigrante brasileiro em Toronto, seus traços comportamentais empreendedores e o negócio propriamente dito. **Metodologia/abordagem:** Trata-se de uma pesquisa multimétodos, exploratória-descritiva, com predominância qualitativa. Para a coleta de dados, foram realizadas *surveys*, aprofundadas com entrevistas presenciais e observações de campo. **Principais resultados:** A maioria se declarou proveniente do sudeste brasileiro, branca, de 35 a 49 anos, casada, com filhos, *background* acadêmico e profissional elevados. A influência do estado de mal-estar social no Brasil e do discurso oficial canadense parece atuar como fator de expulsão-atração à migração. A condição laboral de desempregados, na chegada dos imigrantes, pode “empurrá-los” a um empreendedorismo por necessidade, embora também sejam verificados negócios criados por oportunidade. Majoritariamente, os empreendimentos são de pequeno porte, do setor de prestação de serviços, com destaque aos que se concentram em West End, na cidade de Toronto. Nesse contexto, percebeu-se uma forte busca de identificação com a comunidade étnica ao qual os indivíduos pertencem, o que sugere a formação de economia de enclave. **Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas:** O artigo evidencia a importância de se realizar uma pesquisa multimétodos, com fins de entender as possíveis configurações empreendedoras dos imigrantes brasileiros. **Relevância/originalidade:** Há relevância acadêmica devido aos escassos trabalhos na temática do empreendedorismo de imigrantes brasileiros no exterior, sendo que pouco se sabe sobre esse fenômeno no Canadá. **Contribuições sociais e para a gestão:** As trajetórias empreendedoras descritas minimizam riscos para futuros imigrantes; além disso, a discussão sobre o capital social da comunidade étnica permite comparações com os negócios de brasileiros em outros países.

Palavras-chave: Empreendedorismo imigrante. Brasileiros. Toronto. Canadá.

1. INTRODUCTION

The immigration debate has become increasingly relevant and present. Mainly, due to the great displacement of African and Syrian refugees towards Europe (Bocachica Ávila, 2020; Gonzales, 2020), coupled with the controversial speech of the then-candidate and now president from the United States of America (USA), Donald Trump, emphasizing the "Mexican issue" in that country (Piñeiro & Landa, 2018; Sarabia, 2020). In Brazil, several issues related to Haitian (Baeninger, 2018) and Venezuelan (Simões, 2018; Calais, Lima, Vidal, Pazos, Mokdeci, & Goldstain, 2020) immigration have aroused interest in the subject.

Studies have pointed to the social and economic impacts of these large migratory flows (Trenz & Triandfyllidou, 2017; Schimmele & Wu, 2015; Summers, 2015; Xie & Gough, 2011; Akbar, 2019; Buettner & Muenz, 2020) so that the discussion of the consequences of such movements has become intense over the years.

It appears that at the end of the XX century and the beginning of the XXI century profound changes occurred at an international level, and the changes arising from the productive restructuring process generated implications for the mobility of capital and people in different parts of the globe (Sassen, 1988). In this direction, the idea has been defended that such flows redraw countries in migratory spaces in the international division of labor (De Hass, 2010), therefore, ‘as the localities are inserted in the global logic, international migrations will tend to intensify’ (Baeninger, 2018, p. 464).



Thus, considering that not all immigrants have professional qualifications or financial resources to make a regular trajectory, many of these migrants use the possible means to reach their aim of living in another country. In this sense, academia has pointed to entrepreneurship as one of the forms of the immigrant's economic rise (Portes & Zhou, 1992; Cruz, Falcão, & Barreto, 2018).

Evidence shows a growing interest at the international level regarding the theme of “Ethnic and Immigrant Entrepreneurship” (Ma, Zhao, Wang, & Lee, 2013; Cruz & Falcão, 2017). In Brazil, only recently there have been some studies focusing on the academic literature produced on the subject, especially regarding immigrant entrepreneurship of Brazilians abroad (Cruz, Falcão, & Barreto, 2018; Cruz, Falcão, & Mancebo, 2019), as well as on the foreigners’ immigrant entrepreneurship in Brazil (Diniz, Guimarães, & Fernandes, 2019).

When looking at the recent scenario of Brazilian political-institutional and economic crisis, which brought severe reflexes in the social sphere, one can spot a trend of intensification of Brazilian emigration overseas (Brazil, 2016), especially of those individuals coming from the middle class (Margolis, 1994; 2013). Within this context, Canada became an important destination for qualified Brazilian migration.

Pioneer studies sought to analyze the phenomenon of Brazilian immigration to North America in general (Margolis, 1994; 2013), as well as to Canada particularly (Goza, 1999). However, from the thematic point of view of ‘Brazilian immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship’, in Canada, it is recognized that little is known so far, to say the least. Thus, when considering the consistent increase in the Brazilian immigrant population in that country, in addition to the wide knowledge gap about its activities and entrepreneurial characteristics (Machado, Hossein, Cruz, 2019; Machado & Hossein, 2018) there is a considerable relevance to analyze the patterns of Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurship in Canada. Therefore, this article aimed to analyze aspects related to the sociodemographic profile of the Brazilian entrepreneurial ‘community’ in Toronto, its entrepreneurial behavioral traits, in addition to the business itself.

From a theoretical point of view, the present work aims to contribute to the broader understanding of the structuring of the business of Brazilian immigrants, their related and conditioning factors. From a practical perspective, it aims at contributing to the understanding of Brazilian immigrants/entrepreneurs, unveiling their meanings and scope, so that future business overseas can be managed with greater precision.

2. EVOLUTION OF ETHNIC AND IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP KNOWLEDGE

Initially, it should be noted that authors such as Bonacich (1973) and Light and Bhachu (1990), differentiate the terms ‘immigrant’ and ‘ethnic group’ as follows: (i) the immigrant is one who migrated or a foreigner belonging to the first generation; (ii) individuals belonging to an ethnic minority (the immigrants themselves or their descendants) are treated as an ethnic group. This distinction is pertinent since the literature on the entrepreneurial action of these groups brings a distinction between ‘Immigrant Entrepreneurship’ and ‘Ethnic Entrepreneurship’.

In general, studies aimed at ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship, which peculiarly present disciplinary interactions (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013; Ma, Zhao, Wang, & Lee, 2013; Cruz & Falcão, 2017). Furthermore, these authors pointed to some areas that formed this field, identifying the preponderance of sociology in its beginnings, and later, of geography. More recently, there has been an analysis of sociological and economic aspects, supported by Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capitals and in the comparative analysis of income generation of different ethnic groups. In this sense, some authors were crucial in creating and shaping these research tracks (Alba & Nee, 2014; Zhou, 2004; Alba & Logan, 1993; Portes & Zhou, 1992).



In a publication that became a reference, Rath (2000) sought to demonstrate the main directions within the field called 'Immigrant Businesses', emphasizing the economic, political-institutional, and social environment dimensions. In this sense, the main currents of study can be defined as follows: 'Ethnic Minorities and Enclaves' (see Werbner, 1980; Bonacich, 1973); 'Disadvantage in the Labor Market and Self-Employment' (see Portes & Zhou, 1992; Light, 1979); 'Ethnic Entrepreneurship' (see Bonacich, 1993; Waldinger, Aldrich, & Ward, 1990); 'Interactive Model' or 'Integrative Approach (economic/institutional)' (see Light & Rosenstein, 1995; Waldinger, Aldrich, & Ward, 1990); 'Political Economy of Immigrant Businesses' (see Sassen, 1991); and 'Immigrant Business and the Role of Government' or 'Political-Institutional Framework' (see Bonacich, 1993).

Notwithstanding, its multidisciplinary character has been highlighted as a challenge for researching the field. Besides, it has been identified that the studies did not use any specific theory (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013). Despite all that, it is possible to point out some theoretical propositions which were addressed: (i) human capital theories - to analyze the characteristics of immigrants; (ii) social cognitive theory - to study the influence of the social environment in the search for entrepreneurial opportunities; (iii) social theory - to investigate similarities between immigrant entrepreneurs located in different regions; (iv) national culture - to understand individualistic and collectivist dimensions; (v) theories of intersectionality and the psychological perspective - to analyze the entrepreneurial behavior of immigrant women (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013).

Ma, Zhao, Wang, and Lee (2013), in turn, carried out a study in a set of 403 articles and identified the main research themes in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature which occurred between 1999 and 2008, namely: enclave economies, ethnic firms, social insertion of immigrant entrepreneurs, immigrant networks and transnational entrepreneurs. The authors stated that the debate on ethnic entrepreneurship revolves around the figure of 'immigrant entrepreneurs', 'immigrant business networks', and 'transnational entrepreneurs'.

Also, through a bibliometric review, based on extant literature from 1980 to 2016, Cruz and Falcão (2017) presented the main authors, research subjects, and their respective departments of origin, among other categories of analysis. According to these authors, due to the repercussion of their contributions, some researchers have guided the discussion within the field, for example, through the theory of assimilation and self-employment (Portes & Zhou, 1992), as well as cultural and social issues of the organizational ecology (Evans & Leighton, 1989).

Other studies have sought to analyze complementary theoretical models of spatial assimilation and stratification by location (Iceland & Wilkes, 2006; Alba & Logan, 1993), research that dealt with aspects related to the field of geography and urban studies. Moreover, the survival mechanisms originating from organizational ecology, studied in sociology and the area of administration, are also discussed within the context of different ethnicities, as well as the issue of gender in entrepreneurship (Cruz & Falcão, 2017).

Studies such as Nee, Sanders, and Sernau (1994), in turn, show trends of immigrants who tend to move away from underemployment, which is linked to the more informal ethnic economy. They seek formal jobs outside the enclave, either due to their level of education or to other cultural factors.

Other studies have aimed at examining ethnic markets (Logan, Alba, & McNulty, 1994), as well as transnationalism (Portes, Guarnizo, & Haller, 2002), phenomena considered as an alternative form of economic adaptation for ethnic minorities in companies. These studies have been based on the theory of networks, applied to the transnational context.

A key factor identified for ethnic entrepreneurship and transnational immigrants is what is called networking. This works, concurrently, as a support mechanism and a guide in the selection of destinations and business opportunities (Cruz, Falcão, & Mancebo, 2019). In this line, it has been verified the occurrence of three forms of network formations, namely: the networks of origin (ethnic,



national), the destination networks, and the networks of the industry, also called 'networks of practice' (Drori, Honig, & Wright, 2009). Also, it was found that the networks formed in the 'ethnic enclaves' reduce barriers to emigration, as well as increase economic opportunities, while participants take advantage of their resources for the establishment of immigrant firms (Cruz, Falcão, & Barreto, 2018; Drori, Honig, & Wright, 2009).

According to Zhou (2004), there are three basic categories of ethnic entrepreneurship: (i) the 'intermediate minority' or 'middlemen minority' - that plays an intermediate position between the dominant group and the individuals embedded in the enclave, is generally represented by small business owners; (ii) 'ethnic market niches' - represented by labor-intensive, low-profit businesses, suppliers of 'exotic products' to traditional markets, in addition to being targeted at various sectors of the economy in poorer neighborhoods; (iii) the 'enclave economies' - functions as an integrated cultural entity, with strong ties of solidarity and/or 'co-ethnicity', privileged access to informal financial capital and the ethnic workforce, in addition to being generally concentrated geographically.

Still, in the perspective of ethnic entrepreneurship, it should be considered that specific ethnic needs can create a niche market within the community (Light, 1972), promoting barriers for competitors to entry (Masurel, Nijkamp, Tastan, & Vindigni, 2002). Besides, there is the possibility of non-conventional forms of supply and distribution (Wilson & Portes, 1980), as well as the supply of alternative financial capital (Greene, 1997).

Some ethnic communities are established in a specific geographic location, which may promote an ecosystem of companies that supply this specific ethnic market (Zhou, 2004). Another possibility that can be verified is the adoption of a supply strategy for the main (dominant) market in a large urban center (Portes, 1981).

Thus, in general, it can be considered that there are basically two types of immigrant entrepreneurs: those who are socially identified or affiliated with their ethnic communities and those who are not. The first type, characteristically, is more likely to become an entrepreneur of the 'ethnic enclave', as they tend to feel more connected to their communities by certain emotional, cultural ties, prestige, or even by the destination. Therefore, these entrepreneurs also seek to improve their community sense through altruistic actions, going as far as helping a future competitor to establish themselves in this same enclave (Lee, 1999).

Above all, immigrant entrepreneurs serve their ethnic communities through their connections, since, through them, they have access to essential resources. In this sense, the more intense the identification with their ethnic groups, the more likely entrepreneurs are to develop 'enclave strategies' (Achidi-Ndofor & Priem, 2011).

Studies have been undertaken in the light of the theoretical approach of the three types of capital: (i) social; (ii) human; and (iii) economic (Achidi-Ndofor & Priem, 2011). This approach is thought to be interesting, as in addition to strictly economic issues, it refers to aspects related to formal education, professional and/or business experiences, as well as to the professional relationship network of the immigrant entrepreneur. To these three types of capital, it is believed, could be added the 'cognitive', which has to do with the ability to learn and to deal with situations of greater complexity or ambiguity.

More recently, there are proposals to advance the frontiers of studies focused on ethnic entrepreneurship (Rath & Schutjens, 2019), especially concerning the interrelationship between ethnic entrepreneurship and urban governance, with five new research paths being suggested: i) go beyond the city limits; ii) go beyond the metropolis and explore rural and peripheral areas; iii) move towards the conditions for the survival of firms/small businesses; iv) go beyond the description; and v) go beyond the unidirectional impact, therefore towards a multi-level context.



3. ABOUT BRAZILIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

Over time, it is recognized that Canada has seen immigration as an instrument to promote its demographic and economic growth. However, it is noteworthy that the country's current immigration policy has focused on attracting highly qualified immigrants, as well as to serve functions lacking in the workforce. That position can be understood in the context of a greater insertion of the country in international trade and a smaller need to create a large domestic market (Fraga, 2018). In this sense, since 2002, the country has officially defined three basic categories of permanent residence: (i) family reunifications; (ii) economic; and (iii) humanitarian (Fraga, 2018).

Thus, despite Canada being a country that still requires immigrants, as well as being recognized for having adopted multiculturalism as a state policy (Cameron, 2004), the migratory phenomenon still shows itself as an object of social tensions, being one of its causes the labor market barriers to entry (Fraga, 2018). In this regard, linguistic competence with one of the two official languages of the country (English and French), is still evidenced as a key factor to labor insertion. Also, there is a salient difficulty of having diplomas and professional experiences acquired before immigration recognized (Fraga, 2018).

Because of these highlighted challenges, it is possible to assume that entrepreneurship has proved to be an important means of economic advancement since it is known that immigrants and certain minority ethnic groups have higher rates of self-employment than the dominant population (Hiebert, 2003). In fact, in the universe of small and medium-sized companies in Canada, there is a prominent social and cultural diversity (Gulati, 2012).

Therefore, Brazilian immigration in Canada is inserted in this context, considering that this is not a recent phenomenon, but a migratory flow that took on greater momentum in the second half of the 1980s (Sega, 2018). According to Goza (1999), the main factor for the Brazilian 'diaspora' in the 1980s was the political and economic crises - the lost decade - in Brazil, and this emigration flow directed to Canada continued to grow afterward from the 1990s (Sega, 2018). In any case, Canada has become an important destination for Brazilian migration, not only because of economic insecurity in Brazil but due to a broader state of insecurity (Schervier, 2005).

According to extant statistics of 2013, the number of Brazilians in the country was estimated at 39,300 (Brazil, 2016), with the largest contingent of Brazilian immigrants in Canada settled in Toronto (Province of Ontario) (Sega, 2018). The population is comprised of citizens coming from different social strata namely, members of the Brazilian elite residing in Canada for decades and with strong ties to the Canadian elite; middle class citizens with high schooling and informal sector workers (Margolis, 2013; Sega, 2018). Moreover, many Brazilian newcomers in Canada find work in the informal sector, mostly in Portuguese enterprises, in various branches of activity: civil construction; cleaning services; restaurants; other types of low-paid jobs (Margolis, 2013). However, immigrant entrepreneurship of the Brazilian middle class emerges due to the lack of opportunities with a decent salary in Brazil. Also, it makes Brazilians accept underemployment in the host country, however, recent immigration has been increasingly qualified (Sega, 2018).

4. METHOD

The current investigation is framed as exploratory-descriptive, bibliographic, and field multi-method research (Vergara, 2007). The main data collection techniques used were unsystematic observation (Minayo, 2009), the application of a survey-type questionnaire, and face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Vergara, 2007).

Participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (i) to act as entrepreneurs, regardless of the industry, the size and duration of their businesses; (ii) varied time in the country; (iii) half composed



by men and half by women, preferably; (iv) varied ages; (v) varied educational and/or academic background.

Before the arrival of the researcher responsible for the project in Toronto, it was judged as pertinent, the inclusion in the list of participants, of subjects who worked in institutions that support Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurs in Canada. This initiative, for several reasons, proved to be useful, as it was possible to obtain information on issues related to immigration and transnational entrepreneurship, in addition to being a source of potential contacts for field research at the destination. Thus, a first interview was conducted in São Paulo, SP, using a specific semi-structured interview script, which focused on issues regarding the support institutions.

The next step consisted of collecting secondary data on the businesses and locations that most concentrate Brazilian immigrants in Toronto, as well as the bibliographic study on the topic of interest. To identify and/or confirm Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurs businesses, it was useful to conduct on-site observation, that is, the practice of “walking” through the places with the greatest concentration of Brazilian immigrants and “talking” with entrepreneurs to confirm that the business was owned by Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurs. Also, from that field observation, it was possible to perceive visible aspects of the business (for example, use of symbols that refer to Brazilian nationality or identity, Brazilian culture, Portuguese language, etc.). The use of a notebook to write down field notes was extremely useful, to record impressions and insights from these observations.

The verification of advertisements in newspapers and magazines aimed at the ‘Lusophone community’, mainly present in the media directed to Brazilians, was a source that proved to be useful for prospecting potential research participants, in addition to social media - such as LinkedIn and Facebook - also used as a source of access to the field. Therefore, once the businesses and/or entrepreneurs were spotted, the researcher established contact with them via email and/or telephone and/or social media, inviting them to participate. Besides, it was used the snowball sampling technique (Bailey, 2019).

For the application of the questionnaire, an electronic form was created using the Google Forms tool. The guiding items of that instrument were as follows: 1. Socio-demographic data of the ‘Brazilian entrepreneurial community’ profile; 2. About the decision to leave Brazil; 3. About the opening of the company in Canada; 4. Quotes and comments on their current businesses; 5. Quotes and comments on the entrepreneurs themselves.

The sample of the survey was non-probabilistic, selected by convenience and intentionally (Vergara, 2007).

To deepen the understanding of the phenomenon in focus, semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face, which were recorded on audio and, later, their content was fully transcribed. The interviews took about an hour, being carried out on the most convenient and opportune days, places, and times chosen by the subjects. To define the participants of this stage, the accessibility criterion was adopted (Vergara, 2007), using again the snowball sampling technique. Concerning the number of participants, at this stage of the investigation, the understanding of researchers led to not establishing a number a priori, since a representative and probabilistic sample was not achieved (Bauer & Gaskell, 2017). The interviews focused on aspects related to the participants' migratory experience, their professional and/or business experiences, as well as attitudinal and/or behavioral issues related to entrepreneurship, among other points.

For data analysis obtained through the survey, simple descriptive statistics was used, at least at this point. Regarding the interpretation of data from the interviews, the content analysis method was used (Bardin, 1977). The results obtained were subsequently compared with the recent extant literature on the topic, to achieve the research objectives and contribute to the advancement of the field of study on the topic of interest.



5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Sample profile

The valid sample of this study was comprised of 41 (forty-one) participants, in addition to 3 (three) representatives of institutions that support immigrant entrepreneurship, of which 2 (two) consular members (RCC; RCB) and 1 (one) from non-profit social/assistance character. The other 41 (forty-one) are Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurs in Canada, 27 (twenty-seven) of whom, besides having answered the questionnaire, were also interviewed. Table 1, below, presents the profile of the 41 entrepreneurs.

Brazilian State of Origin		Working status upon arrival in Canada		Declared skin color	
São Paulo	36.58%	No job prospect	73.17%	White	65.85%
Minas Gerais	19.51%	Already an entrepreneur	12.19%	Black	2.44%
Rio de Janeiro	14.63%	With informal employment	7.32%	Mulato	24.39%
Bahia	7.32%	No reply	7.32%	Yellow	7.31%
Paraná	2.44%	Schooling/Education		No answer	-
Pernambuco	4.88%	Postgraduate studies	43.90%	Marital status	
Rio Grande do Sul	4.88%	Undergraduate	34.15%	Married	63.41%
Goiás	4.88%	High school	17.07%	Divorced	14.63%
Rondônia	2.44%	Elementary and Middle	4.80%	Separated	4.87%
Distrito federal	2.44%	Time in Canada		Single	12.19%
Activity in Brazil		1 – 2 years	7.32%	Widower	2.43%
Employee	58.53%	3 – 4 years	17.07%	Age (years)	
Entrepreneur	29.26%	5 – 6 years	7.32%	18-24	2.50%
Didn't work	12.21%	7 – 9 years	-	25- 34	7.50%
Gender		10 – 19 years	29.27%	35- 44	37.50%
Female	70.73%	20 – 29 years	29.27%	45- 54	25.00%
Male	29.27%	30 – 39 years	9.75%	55- 64	22.50%

Table 1.

Profile of entrepreneurs interviewed.

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding proficiency in English and French, Canada's official languages, the sample shows: (i) English: 90% (n=36) reads well and 5% (n=2) reasonably, 85.36% (n=35) speaks well and 12.19% (n=5) reasonably, 75.60% (n=31) writes well and 21.95% (n=9) reasonably, 92.5% (n=37) understands well and 7.5% (n=3) reasonably; (ii) French: 56.41% (n=22) reads almost nothing and 25.64% (n=10) little, 58.97% (n=23) speaks almost nothing and 28.20% (n=11) little, 64.10% (n=25) writes almost nothing and 25.64% (n=10) little, 52.63% (n=20) understands almost nothing and 28.94% (n=11) declared little understanding.

5.2. Motivations for immigrating and staying in Canada

When we sought to know about the decision to leave Brazil, one of the main alleged motivations had to do with 'security' issues, which in some cases refers to the 'lack of security', or to a 'feeling of



insecurity’, or ‘violence’, but also ‘instability’ to plan life in the long term, with a ‘better quality of life’. Therefore, ‘security’ is looked in a broader sense, as pointed by Schervier (2005).

Another sociodemographic characteristic of the sample has to do with their working status upon arrival in Canada. In this sense, 73.17% (n=30) claimed to arrive ‘without a job prospect’, 12.19% (n=5) were ‘already an entrepreneur’ and 7.32% (n=3) had ‘an informal job’ with 87.80% (n=36) settling themselves, at least initially, in the city of Toronto. The most frequent reasons for choosing this city as a place of residence had to do with ‘job opportunities’, and due ‘having acquaintances, friends or relatives in the city’, which, to some extent, it can be seen as an element of ‘psychological security’, of ‘not being alone’, of ‘having support, if necessary’.

5.3. Behavior and profile of entrepreneurs

Regarding participants' experience and entrepreneurial behavior issues, for about 45% (n=18) the business opened in Canada was their first ‘company’ ever, 32.5% (n=13) had only 1 (one) firm and 22.5% (n = 9) had 2 (two) or more companies previously. Regarding to having written a business plan before opening their company/business, 63.41% (n=26) answered ‘no’ and 36.59% (n= 15) ‘yes’. When asked if they would have given up on the idea of being an entrepreneur, if they had received a well-paid job offer in Canada instead, approximately 76.92% (n=30) answered ‘no’ and 23.08% (n=9) ‘yes’. Their main explanation for the negative answer had to do with the idea of ‘doing what you like’, ‘having more freedom’, to ‘greater autonomy’ or ‘I’m having fun!’ (E13, 1 year in Canada). When asked which of the two ambitions most resembled theirs before opening their current company/business, about 7.32% (n=3) indicated ‘getting rich’ and 92.58% (n=38) ‘materialize the company’.

When asked if they had thought about being an entrepreneur in Canada, before leaving Brazil, 68.29% (n=28) answered ‘no’ and about 31.71% (n=13) ‘yes’. Such data may suggest, together with the 78.95% of arrivals ‘without a job prospect’, that a considerable part of the participants may have decided to undertake due to a ‘necessity’.

Regarding some business characteristics, tables 2 and 3 show the results on the types of business developed and the sectors in which they operate, respectively.

Type of business	Quantity (within sample)	%
Cooperative	1	2.44
Family business	2	4.88
Partnership	10	24.39
Own	28	68.29
Total	41	100

Table 2.
Type of business.

Source: own elaboration.



Sector of Operation	Quantity	%
Commercial (retail)	9	22.50
Trade and Industry	3	7.50
Trade and Services	2	5.00
Services	26	65.00
Total	40	100

Table 3.

Type of business.

Source: own elaboration.

When asked if the business was formally registered, 87.81% (n=36) answered ‘yes’ and 12.19% (n=5) ‘no’. As for the size of their businesses - taking into account the number of employees as a reference - 100% (n=41) are a small business, although 6 (six) of them had no employees, thus configuring themselves as self-employment, a situation that officially prevents them from considering these companies as small businesses (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada - ISED, 2019). About their business activity/sector, it stands out: food and beverages (n=7 or 17.07%), health and well-being (n=7 or 17.07%), cleaning services (n=4 or 9.76%), and consulting services (n=3 or 7.32%), among others.

Regarding the origin of the initial capital of their business, about 85.71% (n=36) indicated ‘self-financing’ or ‘own resources’, 7.14% (n=3) ‘friend’ or ‘family’, 4.76% (n=2) ‘bank credit’, and 2.38% (n = 1) ‘preseed money– UofT hub’. As for the average time for the return on the initial investment, 46.15% (n=18) replied that it returned within 1 year, for 30.78% (n=12) the return occurred between 1 and a half years and 3 years, and for 20.51% (n=8) the return has not yet occurred. Regarding the origin of financial resources for business expansion, 48% (n=12) indicated ‘self-financing’ or ‘own resources’, 28% (n=7) ‘bank credit’, 20% (n=5) ‘profit retained’, and 4% (n=1) indicated ‘government resource’. When asked if there was any difficulty or a constraint to obtain bank financing/loan to expand their businesses, 66.67% (n=20) said ‘no’ and 33.33% (n=10) answered ‘yes’, being one of their main reasons the ‘lack of credit history, at least at the beginning of their activities’ (E26, 4 years in Canada), or ‘at the beginning, for this type of business’ (E27, 11 years in Canada).

In a recent report concerning Innovation, Science and Economic Development in Canada (ISED, 2019), it is evident the relevance that Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) has in the country's economy, both in terms of job creation and income, participation in exports and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), among other indicators. Therefore, the business of Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurs is also inserted in this context, that is, bringing a dynamic contribution to the development of the host country.

An attempt was also made to analyze the location/concentration of Brazilian immigrants business in GTA (The Greater Toronto Area), showing that 73.17% (n=30) of business were based in Toronto and 12.19% (n=5) in Mississauga, the other cities indicated (Oshawa, Vaughan, Durhan Region, Oakville, Richmond Hill, and York Region), hosted one business each. Now, in terms of business concentration within Toronto, some locations stand out, namely (i) St. Claire Avenue West/Corso Italia-Davenport (n=4) and Earls court (n=3); (ii) Dundas Street West/Little Portugal (n=3). The West End region, of the City of Toronto, tends to be an area of greater presence of Brazilian immigrant businesses, which can be suggested because it is an area of recognized Brazilian concentration. Language can be a crucial factor in this geographic choice, since it is perceived that these Brazilian businesses are close to a Portuguese business neighborhood, described by Teixeira (2001) and identified in Figure 1, below:



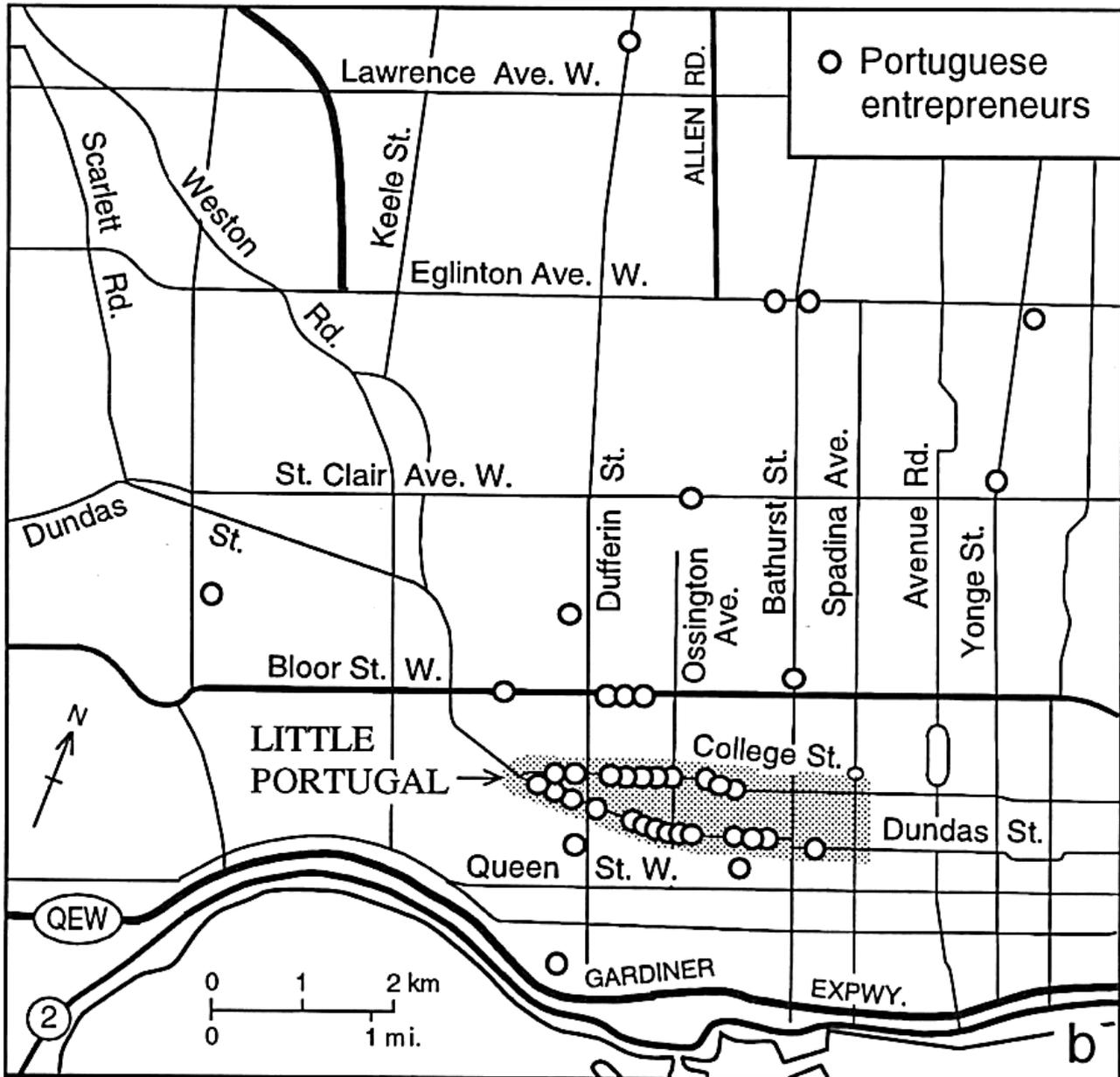


Figure 1.
 Portuguese business in Toronto.
 Source: Teixeira (2001).

Part of the recognition of business concentration, in a way, had already occurred when conducting onsite observation, of these and other locations. It was possible to identify, therefore, that in several businesses ‘visited’ - as well as others that have not yet participated in the study - it was not uncommon for the Brazilian flag to be displayed on the facade (or the use of its colors and ‘features’). Moreover, in some cases, the flag of the business owners’ Brazilian home state - usually seen inside the establishment, replaced the national flag. The businesses’ name often referred to Brazil, in addition to derivations of its name, as well as places in Brazil (cities) or even regional linguistic expressions (e. g. ‘uai’). In Brazilian cuisine restaurants, for example, the owners greet their customers in Portuguese, the menus were in Portuguese/English, and in some cases, the television was turned on in some Brazilian cable TV channel - usually newscast, or else Brazilian music was heard inside the establishment (e. g. Bossa Nova, Brazilian pop songs, etc.). Another visible artifact has to do with the decoration of establishments, such as pictures and photos of places, peoples, and other themes in



Brazil, regional objects (handicrafts), etc. In general, it can be said that it was possible to verify that the majority of the customers were Brazilian, at the time of on-site observations.

Such observations suggested, at first, that several of these businesses were forming what could be called an 'enclave economy' (Zhou, 2004), sometimes assuming an ethnic entrepreneurial 'face', insofar as they seemed to aim at the ethnic community market niche (Light, 1972). Furthermore, the strong presence of ethnic identification symbols in businesses - what is here called visible artifacts - reinforced the impression that these entrepreneurs had an intense identification with their ethnic group, and therefore, they would be more likely to develop 'enclave strategies' (Achidi-Ndofor & Priem, 2011). Still, immigrant entrepreneurs more identified with their ethnic community would be more likely to become entrepreneurs of their own 'ethnic enclave' (Lee, 1999).

To analyze this question with a little more precision, it was sought, through the application of the questionnaire and interviews, to identify two main points, among other aspects: (i) the origin of the majority of the customers (target market); (ii) the country of origin of the majority of employees. As a result of the first analysis, that is, the identification of the origin of the target audience, 59.46% (n=22) indicated they were 'Brazilians residing in Canada', 24.33% (n=9) 'Canadians', 13.51% (n=5) 'other foreign residents' (mainly Portuguese and Hispanic-American), and 2.70% (n=1) 'Brazilian tourists'. However, almost all subjects of the interviews pointed out that the clientele is diverse. Concerning the second item, the origin of the workforce employed in the business, 71.43% (n=25) pointed out that they were Brazilian, for various reasons, depending on the industry. In the case of beauty salons, for example, the mastery of the Portuguese language is important, as well as the technical skills of the profession, since "Brazilians have more ability to deal with some more difficult types of hair", as stated by E27. As for the cleaning services, for instance, it is not always essential to have a Brazilian employee, given that business, in most cases, does not focus on "other Brazilians", as pointed out by E14 (13 years in Canada) and E22 (17 years in Canada). In both mentioned activities, Brazilians seem to enjoy a good reputation, for example, for being 'skillful', 'versatile', 'flexible', 'hygienic', etc.

As already mentioned, the results presented here are partial, since the collection of primary data is still in progress. Aspects related to certain marketing strategies, the role of human, social and cognitive capitals in the scope of the business, the knowledge of the participants on the government support systems for small businesses, were not evidenced in this research.

5.4 On social capital related to Brazilian business

As shown previously, cultural elements are particularly important for attracting ethnic clients, revealing the intertwining of culture and ethnic social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, the evidence points to the opportunity structures and the target audience of immigrant companies that are also subject to immigrant affiliation with their communities (Cruz, Falcão, & Mancebo, 2019).

Ethnic social networks are important for hiring workers, a fact evidenced when it was identified that 51.35% of the companies use employees of Brazilian origin, since 'linguistic and cultural ease' are considered relevant factors. In the case of beauty salons, for example, the command of the Portuguese language is important, as well as the technical skills of the profession, according to one of the statements: 'Brazilians are better able to deal with some more difficult types of hair' (E27). On the other hand, for the cleaning services sector, it is not essential to have an employee of Brazilian origin, as business is generally not focused on other Brazilians. However, in general, in the two areas of activity (Beauty and Cleaning Services), Brazilians seem to enjoy a good reputation, for example, for being "qualified", "versatile", "flexible", and "hygienic".

Social ties have also proved to be effective in meeting the difficulties of obtaining bank loans: 'First, if the immigrant has no history in Canada [...] informality or lack of portfolio etc., [...] 70% of the



difficulties to get the first customers were not related to their product [...], but the cultural issue as a barrier' (E1). Therefore, 'cultural adaptation', in the broadest sense of the term, plays a great role in the establishment of businesses: 'The difficulty is in bringing your Brazilian 'luggage' [...] to the host culture [...] you arrive in a much less complicated country, you are lost [laughs].' (E35), or '[...] to immigrate is to be born again, [...], and in addition to the language, the cultural context [...] difficulty in dealing with this adaptation.' (E33).

Still, regarding cultural issues, there seems to be enough evidence that leads to the idea of a possible cultural/social assimilation of Brazilian immigrants in the Canadian sociocultural context (Sega, 2013), so that foreigners, for a better adaptation and acquisition of the so-called 'Canadian experience' need to develop certain cultural characteristics of the dominant group. Canadian experience is an aspect that is not limited to a work experience, as such, but also to the assimilation of what is socially valued, as aspects related, for example, to 'professionalism' (responsibility, punctuality, diligence, promptness, efficiency, practicality, etc.). This perspective seems to be coherent with that of multiculturalism, that is, an idea that presupposes a dominant culture that accepts, tolerates, and recognizes other cultures in the cultural space under its domain (Machado & Teixeira, 2019; Santos & Meneses, 2010).

Regarding to the 'how to do business in Canada' - regardless of the sector of activity and the branch of activity - and specifically from the point of view of this cultural assimilation for possible relationship strategies, it can be said that this is another challenge. Thus, there is a need to adjust to a less ambiguous socio-cultural context, with the way of disposing of time, with more direct communication, with the need for strong networking, among other aspects. Concerning this there is evidence on E1's speech: 'The difficulty of entering the Canadian market is twofold for the immigrant (if) ... you do not have the cultural knowledge of the country.'

With these aspects of cultural assimilation in mind, it must be considered that there may be influence(s) - with a greater or lesser tendency to change - on the behavioral profile of the Brazilian immigrant entrepreneur (e. g. the necessary adoption of a posture of compliance commitments, professionalism, efficiency, respect for the law, practicality, among other attributes). As pointed out by RCB: '[...] you have to show that you are Canadian, that you are able to do things on your own, that you are an entrepreneur, that you are ingenious, hardworking, that adapts easily and does not choose the job, and that you are able, above all, to solve problems, to be efficient, to be competent.'

Regarding access to strategic information channels, the entrepreneurs declared that they obtained information about Canada, and its market through several sources, namely, the Canadian Consulate, the Canadian government's immigration websites, the Câmara de Comércio Brasil-Canadá (CCBC), the Brazil-Canada Business Federation (FCBB), the Brazil-Canada Chamber of Commerce (BCCC), government agencies (e.g. Enterprise Toronto), incubators, consultants/lawyers, as well as direct contacts with other entrepreneurs/city professionals and 'travel research'.

It can be seen, on the one hand, Brazilians increasingly understand the importance of social networks, as well as the importance of various business organizations, such as CCBC, FBCC, BCCC, CONCID (Brazilian Citizenship Council of Ontario), among others. On the other hand, there is a certain discourse of 'distrust' within the ethnic community itself, which, eventually, can harm business. Among other possible reasons, this may be due to the ambiguous relationship among Brazilians (Machado & Teixeira, 2016): 'Brazilians do not know how to behave; they do not understand the private space of the other. So, they are very inclusive, they talk about others, this is disapproved [...] in Brazil everything is a little more informal. (E7)'



6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this article was to analyze aspects related to the sociodemographic profile of the Brazilian entrepreneurial “community” in Toronto, its entrepreneurial behavioral traits, in addition to their business characteristics. Moreover, it aimed at filling the knowledge gap about Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurship in Canada, starting with the GTA.

Regarding the sociodemographic profile of the participants, most of them come from the Southeast Region (São Paulo, Minas Gerais e Rio de Janeiro), with other representatives from the South, Northeast, Midwest and North Regions, self-declared mostly white-skinned. The predominant age group is between 35 to 39 years, followed by 40 to 44 years, representing periods of life with potential for high productivity in work. Most participants claimed to be married and to have children.

The level of education of the participants was high, with almost half of them being postgraduates, in several areas of knowledge, mainly in Administration. English proficiency was also high, but French proficiency was significantly lower. Such characteristics, potentially, may have some implications for eventual internal mobility.

The main motivation for leaving Brazil had to do with ‘security’ in a broad sense, in addition to the search for a ‘better quality of life’. Both evidence a state of social malaise in Brazil - not just today - and the effectiveness of the official Canadian discourse, in expressing a ‘country of opportunities’, ‘multicultural’, which have an ‘excellent education’, etc. Those seem to function as ‘expulsion’ and ‘attraction’ factors, respectively.

It can be considered that the labor conditions upon arrival proved to be unfavorable since the majority pointed out that they had come ‘with no prospect of work’ and others ‘with informal employment’, therefore with a weak employment relationship, placing them in a situation of greater vulnerability.

Toronto was identified as a cosmopolitan, dynamic, and a city full of opportunities, being a big city, but well organized.

The profile of the most recent immigrant entrepreneurs has shown to be highly educated, more fluent in English, and pertaining a professional background in higher organizational levels. Also, they were interested and proficient in technology, with some entrepreneurs leading startups in the technology field. In fact, a strong ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation in Toronto and its region attracted and encouraged startups in several technology areas to settle.

The city of Toronto was appointed as the headquarters of most of the Brazilian immigrant businesses, with emphasis on the concentration in the following locations: St. Claire Avenue West/Corso Italia-Davenport, Earls court, and in Dundas Street West/Little Portugal. It seems that the West End region tends to be an area with a greater presence of Brazilian immigrant businesses, due to a recognized area of Brazilian residence.

Generally, the business of Brazilian immigrants is small, with the majority operating in the service sector, in various fields of activity. Besides, it was possible to perceive, in several businesses, a strong search for identification with the ethnic community itself, which may suggest the possible formation of an ‘enclave economy’ (in some branches of activity). On the other hand, in other branches of activity, businesses seem to target the mainstream market, without necessarily excluding the local Brazilian community or even the provision of services to Brazil.

The present study does not address the specifics of the branches of activities since it involves companies from different sectors. Also, despite the most part of participants responding that their firms were formally registered, it is envisaged that there may be a considerable amount of ‘businesses’ that are informal, and that are, in this research, underrepresented.



Therefore, with a view to future work, it is suggested to carry out studies segmented by sector of activity and/or branch of activity, as well as research aimed at ‘businesses’ that are operating informally.

Regarding to theoretical contributions, the present work aims to show how Brazilian immigrant businesses in Toronto are configured, evidencing issues related to the cultural adaptation of Brazilians, the behavior and profile of entrepreneurs including specific mechanisms involved in social capital. As this is a group that is little researched, the present work can contribute, in practical terms, to point out ways for future immigrants who will settle in the region.

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