Transnational Activism in the Overseas Brazilian Community: The Emergence of Migrant Organizations

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Gustavo MEIRELES

Immigrant organizations in receiving countries have multiplied and helped connect migrants to their homeland, and played a role in the process of community building in host societies. Studies have been conducted on the matter of how such organizations might affect the direction of the social integration of immigrants, as well as how they contribute to the development of sending countries. In this paper, the author focuses on how the contexts of reception of immigrants can affect the activities of organizations. He argues that the social, political and economic environment in the host society affected the development of immigrant organizations of the overseas Brazilian community. By focusing on the largest Brazilian communities in the developed world, the author could identify that changes in the environment that surrounded these immigrants triggered a movement for organization of the community.

Keywords: Brazilian diaspora, Brazilian communities abroad, diaspora institutions, migrant association, transnational migration

Introduction

Immigrant organizations in receiving countries have multiplied as a result of rapid international migration, globalization and the rise of new transportation and communication technologies which have aided long-distance and cross-border flows (Zhou & Lee, 2013). Such organizations connect migrants not only to their homeland, but also play a role in the process of community building in host societies. Many studies have been conducted on the matter of how such organizations might affect the direction of the social integration of immigrants (towards the sending or the receiving

country), as well as how they contribute to the development of sending countries. However, in the process of understanding how these organizations function, it is important to consider the process by which they came into being.

In this paper, we shall analyze how the social, political and economic environment in the host society affected the development of immigrant organizations in the overseas Brazilian community. In order to do so, we focus on the largest Brazilian communities in the developed world: those of the United States of America, Europe and Japan. We argue that changes in the social, political and economic spheres in these countries have triggered a movement for organization of the community. As countries moved towards stricter immigration laws and economic situation deteriorated, these new public interest issues helped create greater cohesiveness of the group. As Portes, Escobar and Radford (2007) state, contexts of reception can affect the activities of organizations, depending on the level of discrimination meted on the newcomers. However, this process has not manifested itself in the same way in all three communities. Therefore, we studied each case individually in order to identify the differences.

In order to reach the goal set above, we intend to answer the following question: how did the social, political and economic context of the host society affect the creation of organizations by Brazilians living abroad? In terms of methodology, our analysis will consist of reviewing previous research on the matter of overseas Brazilians, as well as reports by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, especially in the cases of Europe and the USA. In the case of Japan, the author has conducted field work in the provinces of Shizuoka and Nagano during the period of 2011 to 2016 and has also participated in meetings of the Citizen's Council of Tokyo[1] up to this date. Therefore, the field research will also be taken into consideration.

In the next section, the theoretical background of transnationalism and the participation of immigrants in ethnic organizations will be discussed. In the following section, we analyze the impact of restrictive policies that originated in the Schengen Treaty and its impact on the Brazilian community in Europe. Here our focus will be on the case of Portugal since it represents the oldest case of a Brazilian organization abroad and that group has had a strong impact in other Brazilian communities in and outside of Europe. In section three, we turn our attention to the USA and how changes in visa issuing policies and concerns of national security might have affected migrants from Brazil living in the country. In section four, we study the case of Japan, where an economic recession followed by a financial crisis had an enormous impact in Brazilian workers. Extremely high unemployment rates and insecurity fears led to strengthening of the ties between those who chose to stay in the country. In the last section, we summarize the main argument and present our conclusions based on the findings of this study.

1. Transnationalism and Immigrant Organizations

There has been a lot of work in the field of immigration focusing on the process by which those who migrate abandon their homeland and go through the process of adapting and creating roots in a new society and culture. In order to better understand the process of community building, we shall first analyze how the matter has been discussed in a theoretical level.

The classical approach to how immigrants interact with the host society is that of assimilation theories. One key concept used in this case has been referred to as ethnic enclaves, which are "urban clusters of immigrants from the same sending country" (Zhou & Lee, 2013). The ethnic enclaves are seen as a step in the direction of assimilation, where immigrants can meet their survival needs and ease resettlement problems. According to these theories, enclaves

will eventually decline and disappear as immigrants assimilate to the host society and fewer immigrants arrive to support ethnic associations.

A second approach is that of "institutional completeness". This term refers to the degree to which a range of neighborhood based institutions sufficiently satisfy members' needs. According to Breton (1964), the institutional completeness of the community affects the composition of the interpersonal network of the members of an ethnic group. The author argues that this happens through four processes: substitution (when the ethnic group succeeds in holding members' allegiance by preventing their contact with the native community by taking hold in the immigrants' life); extension of nationality sentiments within the community of the personal networks of the participants in institutions; introduction of new issues or activation of old ones for public debate; and the attempt of leaders of organizations to maintain or enlarge their clientele.

Breton goes on to assert that three factors might foster the institutional completeness of an ethnic community: the possession of a differentiating social or cultural attribute (language, religion, etc.), the level of resources amongst members of the ethnic group, and the pattern of migration. However, the author also defends the position that if the rate of migration is low, or the migration comes to a halt, ethnic organizations will eventually disappear or lose their ethnic identity, corroborating the assimilation theory.

In contrast to the unilinear assimilationist paradigm that dominated classical migration theory, a new concept of transnational migration took form especially during the 1990s. This concept highlights the fact that in their daily lives migrants "depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state" (Schiller, Basch & Blanc, 1995).

Nevertheless, when discussing academic production in the field,

Zhou & Lee (2013) argue that research has failed to give immigrant organizations the proper treatment by focusing on the role of transnationalism in sending countries at the macro level, and the role of individuals and families at the meso level. Portes, Escobar & Radfort (2007) also assert that most transnational activities are not conducted on an individual basis, but through organizations. Thus, it is important to consider the activities of such organizations in terms of the settling process of immigrants. The authors also explain that the form and activities of organizations created by immigrant groups will be influenced by: sociopolitical context of exit, the character of involvement of the sending country and the contexts of reception.

Therefore, we argue that in the case of overseas Brazilians, the context in which these migrants were received in host societies had a significant impact in the process of organization of the communities. As countries moved towards stricter immigration procedures and laws and economic situation deteriorated, new public interest issues rose and helped create greater cohesiveness of the group. In the next section we begin with the analysis of the case studies.

2. Restrictive Immigration Policies and the Mobilization of Brazilians in Europe

For most of its independent history, Brazil was known as migrant receiving country. In 1964, with the country in recession and massive inflation, the military succeeded in a *coup d'état* and an authoritarian regime was established. Under a government which was eager to restrain any free speech, staggering economic growth and public security worries, many Brazilians opted to leave the country in search of better opportunities (Mita, 2011). During the 1970s, the repressive authoritarian regime brought about a wave of political exiles. As for the 1980s, the main concern was the

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economy. According to a report by the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on Emigration, during the years of 1985 and 1987 around 1.25 million people (corresponding close to 1% of the population) fled the country[2]. Recent numbers provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimate the number of Brazilians abroad at around 2.78 million people (2014)[3].

The activism of Brazilians living abroad dates to the beginning of the 1990s and it is directly related to the social, political and economic environment that surrounded these immigrants. In the case of Europe, the restrictive policies that resulted from the Schengen Agreement, which led to the deportation, death and even murder of undocumented immigrants, were a defining factor in stimulating Brazilians to demand the recognition of rights both in Brazil as in the host society (Feldman-Bianco, 2011). Firstly, we shall analyze the actions developed by Brazilians in this continent, and especially in Portugal, where we find the first signs of a mobilization by these migrants.

In the post-colonial period, Portugal became a main migrant destination for citizens of former colonies[4]. Nevertheless, after the signing of the Schengen Treaty in 1991 and the promulgation of a new Law for Foreigners in 1992, there was an increase in the screenings and deportations in Portuguese airports. The Schengen Treaty was first signed in 1985 by five of the ten members of the European Economic Community. In 1990, the agreement was supplemented by the Schengen Convention which proposed the abolition of systematic internal border controls and a common visa policy amongst member countries. Portugal adhered to the treaty in the following year. Primarily, the Schengen treaties operated independently from the European Union. It was not until 1999, with the signing of the Amsterdam Treaty, that they were incorporated into European Union law at the same time including opt-out provisions for the two member states that remained outside

the Schengen area, namely Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The increase in screenings and deportations in Portuguese airports, which started as early as 1993 and target mainly Brazilians and Cabo-Verdeans, was a sensitive diplomatic matter for Brazilian authorities since it touched upon the Bilateral Treaty of Equal Rights of 1972, signed between the Portugal and its South-American former colony. Ratified in Brazil through the Decree No. 70.391 of April 12th, 1972[5], the treaty states that both Brazilians and Portuguese possess the same rights and obligations as nationals of their country of residence, and that does not represent the loss of the original nationality. However, with the signing of the Schengen Treaty, European legislation began to take a more restrictive stance on immigration, with an increasing criminalization of citizens from outside the community, and especially those who are undocumented.

It was under the environment described above that the Casa de Brasil de Lisboa (CBL) started their activities with the goal of fighting for the rights of migrants in Portugal. This organization was founded in 1992 and its members included Brazilians, Portuguese-descendants and also Portuguese who had long lived in Brazil. While most of its members were liberal professionals, some of them were political exiles and therefore had strong connections to high officials in both countries. Its members started gathering during the 1989 presidential campaign, when the then candidate Luís Inácio "Lula" da Silva contacted Workers' Party (commonly known as "PT" which stands for the Portuguese party name "Partido dos Trabalhadores") members and supporters who lived in Portugal. This connection between the Workers' Party and members of the overseas Brazilian community would prove important in terms of changing Brazilian government policy towards Brazilians living abroad (Feldman-Bianco, 2016).

Later in 1992, many of those who participated in the 1989 presidential campaign gathered again, this time to mobilize in favor

of the request to impeach President Fernando Collor. It was then that the decision was taken to maintain the mobilization process of Brazilians and create an association. It is important to note how a political event in Brazil (country of origin) played a crucial role in creating a Brazilian association in Portugal (host country) (Santos, 2012).

The CBL began activities in favor of immigrants in Portugal began in the year of their foundation, when they joined the immigrant association African Countries of Official Portuguese Language (Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa – PALOP). Even though there were different needs between the Brazilian and African populations in Portugal, the process of regulation of undocumented migrants and the new Law for Foreigners of 1992 brought these groups together. They shared a belief that the "Portuguese speaking countries should be awarded a differential treatment due to historical and cultural reasons" and that "the European integration process should not deny these bonds" (Feldman-Bianco, 2011).

As it was mentioned above, in 1993 increased screenings led to the deportations of Brazilians and escalated to a diplomatic conflict between Brazil and Portugal. This dissent amongst the two countries was exacerbated by the Portuguese ambassador in Brazil, according to which those who had their entrance to Portugal denied were "bums and mulatas[6] in short skirts" (Feldman-Bianco, 2011). Such statements caused strong reactions from both the Brazilian government as well as from Portuguese associations in Brazil and Brazilian associations in Portugal. After Brazil retaliated and threatened to leave the Bilateral Treaty of Equal Rights, the Portuguese government tried to solve the problem by evoking the special historical, cultural and language bonds that connect the two nations. This was the same rhetoric used by immigrant groups from former Portuguese colonies in trying to defend their rights to

special treatment.

After the Socialist Party won the presidential elections in 1996, the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities (Alto Comissariado para Imigrações e Minorias Étnicas – ACIME[7]) was created in that same year under the first administration of António Guterres. This was a campaign promise made to various immigrant associations, many of which had contacts at the Socialist Party. In 1998, the Consultative Council for Immigration Affairs (Conselho Consultivo para os Assuntos da Imigração – COCAI) was created. This council was responsible for institutionalizing the dialogue between government and migrant associations. These policies from the Portuguese government highlight how the country has presented some positive responses to the demands of migrant groups. The fact that the country possesses a law that regulates migrant associations is also a rare fact in Europe.

The CBL continues to defend the rights of migrants (documented or not) and to fight racism and xenophobia in Europe. In terms of mobilization for the rights of Brazilians living in Portugal and Europe, the activities of this group started in 1997, when the first Community Councils were held at Brazilian consulates. The CBL readily mobilized members and in that same year helped organize the First International Seminar on Brazilian Emigration. The event had the support of the Brazilian Consulate, the Center for Studies of International Migration and the University of Campinas (UNICAMP). Even though this was an event organized by the communities themselves, members of the legislative power from both Brazil and Portugal also participated. This represents a hallmark in terms of organization of the Brazilian diaspora since it represents the first time they could organize themselves to formulate joint demands towards the Brazilian government (Milanez, 2013).

In 2002, the First Iberian Meeting of Brazilian Communities Abroad was held at the Catholic University of Portugal, in Lisbon.

This meeting was idealized by Attorney Gustavo Schelb, who also relied on the Migration and Human Rights Institute to help organize the event. Other participants included Caritas[8] (from both Brazil and Portugal), the Portuguese Organization for Migration and the Pastoral for Brazilians Abroad, as well as the Brazilian government (represented by the Attorney General's Office) and Bank of Brazil (a public company). At the end of the Meeting, a document that came to be known as the Lisbon Document (or Lisbon Letter)[9] was announced. It demanded the formulation of policies for Brazilians living abroad, with a clear locus for policy making, and called for some sort of representation for those living outside of Brazil. These demands turned into policy and institutional change in the following years.

In 2007, during the Second Meeting of Brazilians in Europe, the Network of Brazilians was created with the goal of becoming an organized civil society permanent forum to deal with matters which concern the community. The event was held in Brussels, Belgium, and the number of participants reached seventy people, representing 11 different organizations. Also at the end of this event, a document containing demands towards the Brazilian government (the Brussels Document[10]) was published. The document highlighted the fact that no representation from the Brazilian government was present at the event and stressed the need of a more active policy regarding overseas Brazilians.

Later, the Third Meeting of Brazilians in Europe was held in Barcelona in 2009 and the First Seminar on Brazilian Migration and Gender took place in Rome in 2010. Throughout these numerous events, the CBL and other Brazilian associations have played an important part not only in the organizing process, but also in terms of negotiating with both Brazilian and Portuguese authorities.

As it was mentioned earlier in this section, restrictive policies in

the European context were the starting point of the activities of these migrant groups. As Portugal failed to follow the rules Bilateral Treaty of Equal Rights due to the signing of the Schengen Treaty, Brazilians found themselves under high scrutiny and many were the cases of deportations. Under such circumstances, members of the Brazilian community, some of which had strong connections to political parties and the government both in Brazil and Portugal, began to organize themselves and envisioned an association that could fight for the rights of migrants. Next, we shall analyze the developments in other Brazilian communities around the globe.

3. Immigration Policy, National Security and the Brazilian Community in the USA

The United States of America (USA) is home to the largest Brazilian community abroad. With an estimated population of 1,410,000 people (2015)[11], Brazilians in the North-American country have usually found work in the low-wage service sector of the economy. As Margolis states, "perhaps no segment of the labor market has hired more Brazilians than domestic service, a decidedly female job niche" (Margolis, 2013). As for the migrant men, the most common male occupation is restaurant work, while in some North-American suburbs many men are employed in civil construction and landscaping (Margolis, 2013).

During the 1990s, most Brazilians arrived in the USA through valid tourist visas and then eventually would overstay the allowed period. However, after we enter the decade of 2000, the number of those who enter the country illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexican border began to rise. The First Iberian Meeting of Brazilian Communities Abroad mentioned above was actually a response to the death of Brazilian citizens who tried to cross the border. In face of the vulnerability faced by these migrants, the Brazilian government and Attorney Gustavo Schelb felt the need to discuss

the problems the overseas community was challenged with.

The surge in those who choose to cross the Mexican border is related to changes in term of stricter rules for immigration in the North-American country. Even though the country's immigration laws have swayed from opening and closing doors according to the needs of the economy, after the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the Oklahoma City bombings of 1996 and especially the September 11th attacks in 2001 and the ensuing "War on Terror", the USA has adopted severe new rules regarding immigration. Entrance in the country and paths to legalization were made more difficult[12]. Even today we can witness how the economic and national security scenarios have affected the migration process of Brazilians. The rejection of visas to Brazilian tourists wishing to visit the USA is supposed to reach over 15% in 2016, almost triple the number of the previous year. Allegedly, the rise in the denials is justified by the economic crisis in Brazil and a perception that more people would be willing to illegally enter the country[13].

In terms of associativism and mobilization in the Brazilian community, many authors have pointed out that "aside from religious institutions, their common ethnicity does not bind them in organized, cooperative associations" (Margolis, 2013). This is often explained by the fact that many Brazilians feel distrust towards their fellow compatriots and also by the fact that some feel that participating in such groups might mean they are unlikely to go home. But the main reason of division inside the Brazilian community is that of class lines. Those in the upper classes fear that association with people in lower classes might jeopardize their assimilation into the USA's society (Beserra, 2003).

In spite of the factors mentioned above, it would be wrong to assume that Brazilians in the USA do not mobilize or have not formed associations. Studies of Brazilian communities have shown how most of these migrants are still dependent on their compatriots

in times of trouble or when searching for job opportunities and places to live. There are also organizations that serve the Brazilian community in various areas, such as sports, neighborhood, youth and parent-student organizations. In her study of the Brazilians in the east coast of the USA, Margolis noted how the greater Boston area is the home to several of these organizations, some with political character. She argues that the Brazilian community there is somewhat older than in other regions and is more concentrated in fewer areas. Also, Brazilians are not the only Portuguese speakers in the region. There is a sizeable number of migrants from Portugal, the Azores and Cape Verde. The oldest of these organizations is the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese-Speakers (MAPS), which dates from 1970 and provides services specifically related to labor issues and legal status.

In 2003, President Luís Inácio "Lula" da Silva visited New York and met activists from the Workers' Party who lived in Boston. The following year, activists and community leaders in the USA gathered at Danbury, Connecticut and agreed on the importance of organizing a national meeting to discuss the future of the Brazilian community in the country. Those efforts culminated in the First Meeting of Brazilian Leadership in the USA, which took place in Boston in 2005. At the end of the event a document, which came to be called the Boston Document (or Boston Letter)[14], was introduced. It made demands that focused on consular services, especially the increase of itinerary consulates. Moreover, it stated that consular services should not be restricted to the "emission of documents", but should also include "support for the community".

In this section we discussed how Brazilian in the USA, albeit the divisions that might be caused by matters of social class and feelings of distrust, have been able to organize themselves and create associations to serve the migrant community. In this case, just as in the European one, strict immigration policies seem to have played

an important role in stimulating the creation of such organizations. Since many of the services provided are related to working conditions and legal support, the situation of the Brazilian community has been strongly influenced by the economic and social environments. In the following section, we shall analyze the case of Brazilians in Japan and try to understand how they differ when compared to the two cases above.

4.　The Japanese Labor Market and its Impact on Brazilian Immigrants

The rapid increase in the number of Brazilians living in Japan is usually associated with the 1989 reform of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. Nevertheless, such surge in the Brazilian population can be traced back to before the revision of the law, a movement that began with first generation Japanese that had migrated to Brazil in the post-war period. The first generation return-migrants who worked in Japan were the first ones to take the role of labor recruiters.

As Japanese companies realized the opportunities in terms of labor reserve that lied in Brazil, many of these return-migrants were sent back to the South-American country to contract more Brazilians. In time, recruiting agencies grew in number and in services offered. In addition to the recruiting, many of them began to offer loans to cover expenses incurred in moving to Japan, creating a system that would became the standard in the immigration process of Brazilians to the Asian country.

The system mentioned above has important consequences in terms of spatial distribution and social relations of the Brazilian. Since the recruiting agency is responsible for the defining of where the migrants will work and deciding the housing, there is a tendency for the foreigners to be dispersed according to job availability, disregarding factors such as family ties or kinship. Also, since

Brazilians are scattered all over the country, and are always on the move looking for better job opportunities, most members of the community will have to reconstruct their social relations upon arrival in Japan, or in a new region inside the country. If they can stay in the same region for a long period of time, and the process of settling is under way, these new social relations might become the social capital necessary for the community to organize itself. However that does not correspond to the majority of the cases.

In terms of the employment of these Brazilians, even though we should note that some of them are working in the services area, as well performing white-collar jobs, still the majority is employed in factories. The number of migrants hired directly by the factory they are working is also extremely low. Most of them secure positions through contractors or employment agencies that determine the place they will be working in a form of indirect hire.

Starting from the late 1990s, the period of stay of the Brazilians in Japan gradually increased as a consequence of the recession in Japanese economy. With the prolonged stay, problems involving the local Japanese community start to rise especially in regions of high concentration of Brazilians. As a response to that, we notice the participation of immigrant rights nonprofit organizations working as mediators between the migrants and local governments, in what Shipper (2008) has dubbed associative activism.

From the end of the 1990s and throughout the 2000s we witness new developments that have triggered a stronger participation emanating from the migrant community. The city of Hamamatsu, in the province of Shizuoka, is famous for its sizable Brazilian community. At its peak in 2008, this city of roughly 813,000[15] people had 19,461 Brazilian citizens, corresponding to almost 60% of the foreigners living in the city. This number has now fallen to 8,454 in 2016[16]. During the year of 1997, a topic that was present in many of Hamamatsu's newspapers headlines was that of the

matter of health security for foreign residents. The reason for that lies in the fact that a civil society group named "Grupo Esperança e Paz" (Group Hope and Peace), composed of Brazilian, Peruvian and Japanese residents, submitted a petition to the city mayor, the city council and to the Shizuoka Prefecture Governor and the Prefectural Assembly, demanding medical service coverage for foreign residents.

The polemic exploded when members of the Group, and ethnic journalistic organizations, reacted negatively to a statement by a member of the city's Health Protection Board criticizing the foreigner citizens for making those demands. This case represents the first time in the story of Hamamatsu in which a civil group whose core members are Brazilian officially submitted a petition to local authorities. Even if we look at the national level, we can see that cases like this are not very common.

Years later, the 2008 economic crisis had a huge impact in terms of labor conditions for the Brazilians in Japan. According to a survey[17] conducted in 2009 by the "Group Ganbare Brazilians" with the goal of evaluating the effects of the crisis on the Brazilian community in Hamamatsu, over 47% of the sample was unemployed at that time. As pointed out by a study conducted by Uchida, the direct effect of the economic crisis was the sharp decline in the demand of manufacturing production (Uchida, 2008)[18]. Consequently, firms tend to balance such reduction with a diminishment of the labor costs, usually by the reduction of salaries and/or downsizing the number of employees. As it was mentioned before, the percentage of Brazilians that were unemployed was extremely high, especially when compared with the Japanese unemployment rate.

One of the reasons for such a high degree of unemployment amongst one ethnic group is explained by Higuchi (2010) as a direct consequence of the fact that Brazilians are concentrated in certain

niche labor markets. Such jobs concentrate in the automobile industry, electronic components, civil construction, food processing and other manufactures. Both the automobile and the electronics industry are highly dependent on exports and extremely vulnerable to the changes in the international market. The contracting of Brazilians under temporary employment and through recruiting reflects that reality as these migrants were hired and lay off according to the labor force necessity of big companies.

According to Higuchi, Brazilians who were employed in other industries, and especially in food processing, were in a more stable condition. Even though many of them had their working hours reduced, they were not fired in high quantities as the Brazilians who worked in the automobile and electronics industries. Therefore, the elevated degree of unemployment of this ethnic group can be partly explained by their high concentration in these industries. The matter of multicultural coexistence policies becomes a relevant point when we start to investigate the reasons why such concentration exists in first place.

Under such circumstances, many Brazilians were compelled to organize themselves, both to endure the difficult times, as well as to demand solutions from the authorities. Community leaders (ethnic business owners, church leaders, members of NPOs, etc.) depend on the survival of the community itself and had high incentives to collaborate in the endeavor of organizing its members.

It was out of the 2008 economic crisis that the National Network of Brazilians in Japan originated. This network was founded in 2009 and has the goal of uniting different sectors of the Brazilian community in Japan in an effort to create meaningful representation for these migrants. They also organized the "Movimento Brasil Solidário" to support the victims of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. This represents an important turning point for the Brazilians in Japan for it represents the moment they start to

actively participate in different arenas of Japanese society in a more coordinated manner.

In this section, we discussed how conditions in the Japan have affected the community of Brazilian immigrants. We highlighted how an incident regarding the health insurance of foreigners, as well as the negative view towards of foreigners, helped foster organizations to defend the rights of the immigrants. Also, the Brazilian community was adversely affected by the 2008 Financial Crisis because many of these workers have jobs concentrated in niche markets. With high rates of unemployment and discouraging prospects for the future, many of those who decided to stay in the country decided to fight for better employment conditions, helping create new organizations and a nationwide network.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have analyzed how the social, political and economic environment in the host society affected the development of immigrant organizations in the overseas Brazilian community. By focusing on the three largest Brazilian communities in the developed world, we could identify that changes in the environment that surrounded these immigrants triggered a movement for organization of the community.

In the cases of Europe and the USA, restrictive immigration polices seem to be the main issue of public interest. Even though the Brazilians in those countries are often said to be distrustful towards each other divisive between class lines, the setting of issues of public interest have helped bring some cohesion to the community. The arousal of strict immigration laws and negative views towards immigrants, in particular Brazilian ones, were detrimental to this particular group, and therefore gave incentive for action.

In the case of Japan this process took place in a different manner.

The 1989 Reform of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition allowed for Japanese descendants to live and work in the country in a legal manner. Therefore, since the great majority of Brazilians in Japan have a legal status, the matter of strict immigration laws did not represent a major problem or public interest issue, as it did to compatriots in Europe and the USA. Here, problems of health insurance (associated with negative views towards immigrants) seemed to be the first catalyst of some initial mobilization.

That was followed by the 2008 financial crisis and the overwhelming impact it had on Brazilians in terms of unemployment. As Brazilians employed under temporary contracts and usually those jobs are concentrated in certain niche labor markets which are extremely vulnerable to the changes in the international market, the economic crisis represented high unemployment rates in the community. Under such circumstances, many Brazilians were compelled to organize themselves and make sure the community could survive the difficult times.

Lastly, we go back to our initial research question, that is "how did the social, political and economic context of the host society affect the creation of organizations by Brazilians living abroad?". We argue that changes in the context under which the immigrants

Chart 1: Public Interest Issue x Region

	Europe	USA	Japan
Public Interest Issue	-Restrictive Immigration Policies (Schengen Treaty) -Negative views towards immigrants	-Restrictive Immigration Policies (National Security) -Negative views towards immigrants	-Health insurance -Labor Market (unemployment) -Negative views towards immigrants

Source: Author

were received and the social, political and economic environment that surrounded them in host societies provided the conditions for certain groups to raise the matter of public interest issues and therefore create organizations to defend those interests.

Notes

1) Citizen Councils are non-partisan and informal discussion forums, which function as channels to transmit suggestions from Brazilian nationals to the consulates.

2) Comissão Parlamentar Mista de Inquérito da Emigração (2006). Relatório Final da Comissão Parlamentar Mista de Inquérito. Available at: https://www.senado.gov.br/comissoes/CPI/Emigracao/RelFinalCP MIEmigracao.pdf. Accessed March 7th, 2017.

3) Data available at: http://www.ebc.com.br/noticias/2015/04/dados-do-itamaraty-indicam-que-numero-de-presos-no-exterior-caiu-131-em-2014. Accessed March 7th, 2017.

4) Since 1981 Portuguese citizens and descendants have the right to double citizenship.

5) Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/decreto/D70391. htm. Accessed March 7th, 2017.

6) The term "mulato(a)" is used to refer to persons born of one white parent and onr black parent or to persons born of a mulato parent or parents. While the term is widely used in Latin-American countries without being taken as pejorative, in the United States it is considered archaic and in some cases offensive.

7) In 2007, ACIME was rearranged to become the High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Diversity (Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e o Diálogo Cultural-ACIDI)

8) Caritas Internationalis is a confederation of Catholic relief, development and social service organizations operating in over 200 countries and territories worldwide.

9) Available at: the final report from the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on Illegal Emigration (https://www.senado.gov.br/ comissoes/CPI/Emigracao/RelFinalCPMIEmigracao.pdf)

10) Available at: http://csem.org.br/pdfs/documento_de_bruxelas.pdf. Accessed March 7th, 2017

11) Numbers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil. Data available at: http://www.brasileirosnomundo.itamaraty.gov.br/a-comunidade/estimativas-populacionais-das-comunidades. Accessed March 7th, 2017.

12) More information available at ∼ http://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/internacional/noticia/2016-09/depois-de-atentado-do-11-de-setembro-eua-mudaram-forma-de-encarar. Accessed March 7th, 2017.

13) More information available at: http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2016/11/1834330-recusa-de-vistos-dos-estados-unidos-a-brasileiros-deve-triplicar-em-2016.shtml. Accessed March 7th, 2017.

14) Available at: the final report from the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on Illegal Emigration (https://www.senado.gov.br/comissoes/CPI/Emigracao/RelFinalCPMIEmigracao.pdf). Accessed March 7th, 2017

15) Data available at: http://www.city.hamamatsu.shizuoka.jp/gyousei/library/1_jinkou-setai/documents/suikeijinkou-jinkoudoutai_h20.pdf. Accessed March 7th, 2017.

16) HICE. Data available at: http://www.hi-hice.jp/aboutus/statistics.html. Accessed March 7th, 2017.

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