The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in the Psychological and Sociocultural Adaptation of Brazilian Immigrants in the United States and Japan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the role of non-governmental organizations in the sociocultural and psychological adaptation of Brazilian Immigrants in the United States and Japan. In order to achieve its goal, this work begins by exploring key features of the Brazilian immigrant communities in the United States and Japan, as well as describing the historical contexts, emphasizing push-and-pull factors, which since the 1980s, have led thousands of Brazilians to immigrate to these countries.

Following this, this work seeks to consolidate its theoretical foundation by conceptualizing adaptation and listing relevant variables that influence this process. Adaptation is a notoriously complex phenomenon and is best analyzed from a variety of perspectives. Therefore, in order to understand adaptation in a fuller sense, this work will approach two theoretical standpoints. The first theoretical standpoint, psychological adaptation, is known as an individual phenomenon resulting from the immigrant's levels of well-being, predicted by the satisfaction of basic psychological and physiological needs, and often conditional on the ability to mentally deal with situations appraised as stressful. Meanwhile, the second theoretical foundation, sociocultural adaptation, refers to the immigrant's ability to cope with the challenges of daily life in a new sociocultural context. Therefore, sociocultural adaptation is understood within a learning model, resulting from the development of skills relevant to navigating the host country.

After introducing its theoretical framework, through a thorough review of the literature, this study will explore the concepts of non-governmental organizations and then, focus on the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan, emphasizing the main variables that influence these processes. Furthermore, it will investigate the work of non-governmental organizations and how they can influence the adaptation of Brazilian communities in the American and Japanese societies, addressing key variables that influence or determine the well-being and skills learning to navigate and deal with life in each country.

To complement that literature review, this research uses data collected through two fieldworks carried out in Japan and in the United States, which used in-depth semi-structured interviews combined with observation as methodologies. The fieldwork was conducted with employees and users of non-governmental organizations, as well as partners from the public sector such as city halls, the Consulate General of Brazil in Tokyo, and religious leaders, to explore the work of non-governmental organizations and how they contribute to the promoting the well-being and the capacity to deal with life among Brazilian immigrants.

Combining theoretical analysis from the literature reviews and empirical data from fieldwork, this study examines how Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan, despite sharing a common homeland, possess and rely on significantly distinct adaptation variables, requiring different initiatives by local non-governmental organizations, also in partnership with the public sector, especially in terms of providing basic needs, developing capacities, and giving voice. In this context, it further discusses the importance of non-governmental organizations as “bridges” that connect immigrants to the local and Brazilian public sector, and broader society.

To conclude, this study summarizes its findings regarding how non-governmental organizations can play a valuable role in promoting Brazilian immigrants' well-being and appropriate skills learning in the United States and Japan, enhancing their psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes, and ends by pointing out its limitations and providing recommendations for future studies on the topic.

Keywords: Adaptation, Sociocultural, Psychological, non-governmental organizations, Immigration, Brazilians, Japan, United States

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For one has the right to shout. So, I am shouting.

– Clarice Lispector, *A Hora Da Estrela*

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Research Interests and Analytical Framework

Known as the “lost decade”, in the 1980s, Brazil was harmed by a deep economic crisis marked by hyperinflation, political instability, and economic stagnation, leading to staggering unemployment rates and lower purchase power among Brazilian citizens. This crisis began two decades earlier, in the mid-1960s, after Brazil was bogged down in international loans made to improve the country's infrastructure, aimed at attracting foreign investors. In the following decade, the oil crisis in 1973, which triggered high-interest rates and the collection of international debts by lenders, forced Brazil to seek further foreign financial support to maintain its growth and domestic demands, while paying off foreign loans. Nevertheless, in the early 1990s, the economic and living conditions of Brazilians, which were already deeply affected, were once again hit when the federal government froze the savings of millions of Brazilians, triggering the bankruptcy of several surviving businesses and the unemployment of millions more Brazilians, taking the economic crisis to reach its peak.

Popular dissatisfaction, especially among the middle class, due to lower purchasing power, higher cost of living, and lack of prospects for recovery drove thousands of Brazilians into exile from the economic crisis in search of work opportunities abroad, transforming Brazil, which had been the destination of thousands of immigrants throughout the 20th century, in a country of emigrants. Among the main destinations for Brazilian sojourners looking for better living conditions abroad were countries like the United States of America, Portugal, Spain, and Japan.

While Portugal and Spain were chosen destinations for obvious reasons of language and sociocultural similarity, due to their common Latin origin, the United States of America emerged as a feasible option due to the establishment of several Brazilian companies, such as airlines, that brought their Brazilian crews. These first immigrants began to open their own businesses and attract more Brazilians, most of them with low qualifications, to work at lower wages, establishing a network of contacts between Brazil and the United States that has continuously drawn friends and relatives that, over the years, have consolidated what is currently the largest community of Brazilians abroad.

Social networks are at the core of Brazilian immigration to the United States, considering that the American government does not have any incentive policies to attract them, so there are

usually no formal recruiting agencies that arrange immigration procedures. As a result, the majority of Brazilians immigrate to the United States through irregular methods such as overstaying their visitor visas or crossing the border from Mexico. These immigrants initially aim to make money as quickly as possible and invest in Brazil, in order to return to a better living and economic condition than the one they left.

Due to being undocumented, Brazilians suffer a professional downgrade, performing jobs such as housecleaning or in the construction sector, where they are often exploited, and underpaid, but due to the fear of being reported to immigration agents, they hardly report their employers. Furthermore, due to their undocumented status, they have little to no access to public benefits, which puts them in a highly vulnerable position in terms of social protection and security.

Although the initial intention of Brazilians, when they leave Brazil, is to return, studies have shown that there is a strong tendency for them to remain indefinitely or permanently in the United States, reshaping the profile of the community and bringing new challenges to be addressed. In the past, the community was composed mainly of men but has become very diverse, with larger numbers of families and children. The perspective of permanence raises concerns regarding the social and economic mobility of the Brazilian community, which is deeply connected with the possibility of accessing education for children and better employment positions in the United States but is strictly limited due to lack of legal documentation, driving it to remain in a marginal position.

While the United States emerged as the main destination for Brazilian sojourners between the 1980s and 1990s, Japan also appeared as an attractive option for Brazilians, but under significantly different conditions. In the 1990s, in order to fill the demand for workers in the booming industry and domestic economy, reform of Japanese immigration laws allowed Brazilians of Japanese descent to obtain residence visas to reside in Japan. With this type of visa, those Brazilians, together with their spouses (of Japanese descent or not), have become able to reside in Japan, performing any type of activity, such as working and studying, with the possibility of unlimited renewals, making the Brazilian community in Japan unique for its ethnic identity and its regular documentation status.

Because of the reform of Japanese immigration laws, several contractors emerged in the market to recruit Brazilians to work in Japan. These contractors are still the main bridge between Japanese industries and Brazilian workers and take care of the entire process from start to finish, such as visa application, airplane tickets, work, and housing. In Japan, although the visa allows the exercise of any activity, the majority of Brazilians are concentrated in the factory sector, as workers in the automobile and electronics industries. Furthermore, a striking feature of these Brazilians is that they are outsourced workers by the contractors, leaving them with a weak employment relationship with the industries where they work. Hence, because they are concentrated in a single

sector and have few ties to their employers, Brazilians are vulnerable and can be the first ones to be laid off in eventual economic crises.

Similar to those in the United States, in Japan, Brazilians immigrate trying to escape the financial difficulties in Brazil, with the initial objective of making money as soon as possible to return and invest in a commercial business or real estate. For that reason, Brazilian immigrants who leave for Japan are known as *dekasegi*, a Japanese term used to refer to transient workers who move to another place temporarily to work, make money, and then return to their homeland. However, it is notable that this term is falling into disuse, as in recent years there has been a growing intention among Brazilians to settle permanently in Japan, as many of them are applying for permanent residency and buying houses.

The transformation of the community from predominantly male in the early 1990s to more couples and families is also reshaping the temporal perspectives of the community as well as bringing new challenges, such as the socioeconomic advancement of the community, which has attracted the attention of researchers in recent decades. Although in Japan access to the job market and education are not restricted by immigration status as in the United States, significant difficulties are encountered by Brazilian immigrants, mainly due to sociocultural differences, keeping this population in a marginalized position.

The United States and Japan are both homes to immense Brazilian communities, which, despite sharing the same homeland, have unique characteristics and experience significantly different realities, which is what aroused the author's interest in choosing these two countries as the main stages to conduct his research. For example, as seen earlier, while in the United States, where the largest Brazilian population abroad lives, the community is notable for being mostly undocumented, Japan is the only country in the world, among those with a large Brazilian population abroad, where almost every Brazilian resides on regular immigration status. Moreover, the community in Japan is also considered unique in that it shares the same ethnic ancestry as the host society. As a result of the significant differences between these two communities, the adaptation variables in Japan contrast with those of Brazilian immigrants in the United States, leading to a meaningful comparison. Studying the different processes which they go through provides an opportunity, in addition to exploring the diversity of adaptation phenomena, to gain an understanding of the versatility of non-governmental organizations, as well as their ability to serve communities that, despite sharing the same roots, have very different realities and needs.

The first step of this work aims to explore the main characteristics and outline the profiles of both Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan. After examining the main aspects of Brazilian populations in each country, this work seeks to consolidate its theoretical pillars. Therefore, the second step of this research focuses on understanding and conceptualizing adaptation, exploring

theoretical standpoints through which this phenomenon can be analyzed. An analysis of the relevant bibliography pertaining to the theme reveals that adaptation is a complex phenomenon and that it must be analyzed from a variety of viewpoints. Therefore, this study explores adaptation from psychological and sociocultural perspectives as well as the interaction between them in order to comprehend this phenomenon in its fullest sense.

Psychological adaptation is known as an individual phenomenon resulting from the immigrant's levels of well-being, determined, for instance, by the satisfaction of basic psychological and physiological needs, and often conditioned by the ability to mentally deal with situations considered stressful in the host country. As it is a subjective phenomenon, it is influenced by personal variables, such as personality and the presence of a source of emotional support, such as family. Psychological adaptation outcomes show to be higher at first, lower, and then higher again, following a U-curve.

Sociocultural adaptation refers to the immigrant's ability to cope with the challenges of daily life in the host country. Therefore, sociocultural adaptation is understood within a learning model, and its results are related to the development of skills relevant to navigating the host context. While psychological adaptation is determined by personal factors, sociocultural adaptation is known to be influenced by situational variables such as sociocultural distance between homeland and host country, presence of social support, and language proficiency. Studies indicate that sociocultural adaptation levels follow an ascending line over time, suggesting that they are lower at the beginning and increase as immigrants learn relevant skills and become better able to cope with daily life in the host country.

Having solidified its theoretical bases, this research moves on to its third, seeking to conceptualize non-governmental organizations, and the fourth step, to explore the processes of psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in both countries. Considering the differences between the two cases, investigating which variables and how specific traits of each community influence their adaptation processes is a major foundation for this research. Although analyzing the phenomenon of adaptation from a psychological and sociocultural perspective is a practice widely adopted in this field of study, it was not found, to the best of the author's efforts, a previous work that analyzes the adaptation of Brazilians in the United States and Japan, from the psychological and sociocultural perspectives, listing and exploring the main variables, in each case and comparatively, that influence these processes. For instance, a remarkable difference between the two communities is documentation status (in the United States, mostly irregular, while in Japan, mostly regular), while in Japan, a unique feature is the common ethnical heritage that the majority of Brazilian immigrants have with the Japanese society. This dissertation allows verifying how these variables play a role in psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes and, although it is not

the main intention of this work, to test hypotheses such as that documentation status necessarily means lower levels of adaptation and that sharing ethnic heritage by immigrants with the host society necessarily means less sociocultural distance.

In its fifth step, this research seeks to investigate, from a qualitative point of view, the work of non-governmental organizations and how they can influence the adaptation of Brazilian communities in the American and Japanese societies, addressing the variables that affect the well-being and skills learning to navigate and deal with life in each case. To verify the adaptation process of the Brazilian community in each country and the contributions of non-governmental organizations, a thorough bibliographic review added to two fieldworks with NGOs in Japan and the United States was carried out, which will be detailed in the following topics. Finally, in its sixth step, this study aims to fulfill its main interest and reach its core objective, which is, by crossing and analyzing its findings from its theoretical and empirical research, to answer: How non-governmental organizations contribute to promoting Brazilian immigrants' well-being and skills learning in the United States and Japan, *i.e.*, what is their role in enhancing Brazilians' psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes?

At last, with an end-to-end approach, after a six-step effort, being 1) outline the profiles of Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan, 2) consolidate a theoretical framework using the foundations of psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation, 3) conceptualize non-governmental organizations and examine the literature on their role in the adaptation of immigrants, 4) investigate the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan, emphasizing the main variables that influence these processes, 5) explore through a field study the work of non-governmental organizations and how they contribute in the adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan, and 6) analyze and compare how non-governmental organizations contribute to the promotion of well-being and capacity to deal with life, *i.e.*, to the psychological and sociocultural adaptation levels in the distinct cases of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan, this qualitative study attempts to leave as its contribution to academic development further understanding of psychological and sociocultural adaptation phenomena and advancement to understanding the role of non-governmental organizations in these processes. In addition, as studying the adaptation of two highly distinct Brazilian immigrant communities from a psychological and sociocultural perspective, combined with learning how non-governmental organizations can enhance these processes by addressing key variables that predict these phenomena through a comparison of cases between the United States and Japan, is, to the best of the author's knowledge, an unexplored area, this study intends to contribute with novel views to the field of immigration studies.

1.2 Literature Review on the Sociocultural and Psychological Adaptation of Brazilian Immigrants and the Role of Non-governmental Organizations

The focus of this literature review is to 1) define non-governmental organizations, 2) identify previous findings on how non-governmental organizations have contributed to the overall adaptation of immigrants, 3) investigate findings on psychological and sociocultural adaptation variables of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan, and 4) explore findings on the work of non-governmental organizations in the United States and Japan and how they address the main variables of psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants. Furthermore, this review aims to observe possible gaps within the previous bibliography that this study could contribute to filling.

Non-governmental organizations are often defined as organized, self-governing, not-for-profit agencies that work "for a cause or objective that benefits a certain group of individuals," (Rehill 2012:23). Non-governmental organizations are identified by the literature as one of the greater actors involved in causes related to immigrants. The existing bibliography on the contribution of non-governmental organizations suggests that they play a crucial role in three main areas: meet basic needs (to enhance overall well-being), build capacities (to enable immigrants to deal with the challenges of life in the host country), and give voice (to defend and expand the rights of immigrants).

A wide array of immigrant-focused services by NGOs could be found in the bibliography. Especially soon after arrival and during times of crisis or natural disasters, humanitarian aid, mental and physical health, donation of food and clothing, and provision of shelter are commonly mentioned. Information and education services, such as language and vocational classes and training, and translation services are also often found. Furthermore, several studies focus on the role of organizations in defending the rights of immigrants, especially when they are deprived of rights, as in the case of the undocumented, providing services such as legal counseling and court defense. These services aim to alleviate the vulnerability that these immigrants face because they do not have legal permission to stay and work in the country, being constantly targets of physical and psychological exploitation.

The role of non-governmental organizations is also very much emphasized in the public sector, which often lacks the necessary resources, is inefficient, or is unable to identify the demands of immigrant communities and meet their most urgent needs. Therefore, the partnership between the public sector and non-governmental organizations appears as an important strategy to achieve certain objectives, such as "admission and reception, management of diversity, and integration of immigrants" (Dimitriadis *et al.* 2019:2), which could hardly be addressed by the public sector alone.

After conceptualizing non-governmental organizations and carrying out a general review of their contributions to the adaptation of immigrants, this work moves on to its main focus, which is the cases of Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan. Here, a possible gap was found in the literature, which this work will aim to fill. Although analyzing the phenomena of psychological and sociocultural adaptation, listing variables that potentially predict this process is a practice considered reliable and that has been adopted by previous authors, no studies have been found, to the best of the author's efforts, that have applied these theoretical models to the cases of Brazilians in Japan and the United States, not only shedding light to variables but also establishing comparison. This research argues that to understand the contributions that non-governmental organizations make to adaptation, it is essential to first understand what the foundations of the adaptation of the immigrant community in focus are, considering its characteristics and specific needs. Therefore, efforts will be devoted to exploring potential predictors of psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan.

A review of the literature will reveal that previous studies have dedicated themselves to describing important aspects of the lives of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan. Life as an immigrant has proved to be far more challenging and far less glamorous than imagined. In the United States, the American dream that the immigrants seek is often impeded by factors such as lack of knowledge of cultural aspects and local legislation, and discrimination. Overworking is also an often-stressed factor, considering that the majority of immigrants want to make money as quickly as possible, often leading to mental issues such as depression. Not speaking the language is also mentioned by some authors as a deadlock to learning skills for coping with life, finding better job opportunities, and bonding with the American society, harming their sociocultural adaptation. However, no other factor in the literature seems to have a heavier weight and affect immigrants' lives such as irregular immigration status, which negatively impacts, at different levels, their psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes.

Thousands of immigrants enter the United States through the Mexican border with the help of human smugglers. The crossing through the desert is for them a traumatic experience, because, in addition to the fatigue and bad treatment received by the smugglers, they can be imprisoned for months in immigration centers. Furthermore, irregular immigration status brings significant limitations to access to formal job opportunities, hindering the professional growth of immigrants. The fact that they do not have a legal permit to work, in addition to depriving them of social benefits such as unemployment insurance, puts them in a position of vulnerability as they are an easy target for exploitation by employers, and are not provided with appropriate safety equipment. Fearing being reported to immigration agents, undocumented immigrants choose not to report their

employers to the authorities when they are victims of exploitation and physical and psychological abuse.

Being out of regular status has also been shown to affect immigrants' social lives, as many choose to stay home whenever they can to avoid exposure. When it comes to health, being undocumented prevents access to private health insurance. In some states like Massachusetts, the government offers limited health insurance for low-income people, to which undocumented immigrants can apply. However, these insurances do not guarantee care in all areas and the wait for aid can last for years. As a result, immigrants neglect their health, significantly compromising their well-being. Barriers are also faced by undocumented children who, although they have access to education up to high school guaranteed, will hardly be able to enter and graduate from an American university, as they cannot compete for scholarships and some universities do not issue degrees without a registered social security number. Therefore, the undocumented Brazilian children are compelled to follow the same path as their parents in irregular work positions in the third sector, with no prospects for professional advancement, severely affecting their personal satisfaction levels, and limiting the social mobility of the community.

In the United States, there are no government incentives for Brazilians to immigrate as low-skilled workers, and the existence of contractors is not common, as it is in Japan. For this reason, the main source of support for immigrants is the immigrant community itself. The community is where Brazilian newcomers find necessary pieces of information, housing, and their first job. Therefore, social networks occupy an extremely important space within this community. A consequence of the strengthening of such social networks is the formation of centers for Brazilians such as churches and non-governmental organizations to expand support to more immigrants, since they normally receive little-to-no support from the public sector.

These organizations, in addition to representing a space where immigrants can feel safe because they are dealing with other Brazilians and speaking Portuguese, are places of socialization, where immigrants can exercise their national identity. Although there is not a vast literature focused on services promoted by non-governmental organizations, the existing studies demonstrate their efforts to ease the difficulties of life as undocumented immigrants. Some studies have highlighted the importance of services such as meeting basic needs, such as employment and housing, also access to educational programs such as vocational courses, accessory for them to obtain legalization, access to medical services, and legal protection. In this way, these organizations, in addition to helping immigrants to socialize, alleviate various difficulties for them, such as professional and social vulnerability, mitigating the negative impacts that the lack of legal documentation brings.

In Japan, work-related problems are identified as the main deadlock for both psychological and sociocultural adaptation. The professional downgrade is the first driver of low

levels of personal satisfaction, as the work performed by the *dekasegi* is usually manual, mechanical, often dirty, and heavy. Brazilians in Japan also immigrated with the main objective of making money as quickly as possible and most of their life is spent inside the factories. For this reason, the harm of overworking is mentioned extensively in the literature as a trigger for mental illness. Overworking is also pointed out as a cause due to which several Brazilians isolate themselves socially, including from their own family. Due to overwork, Brazilian families are disrupted, couples end up getting divorced, and parents have little time to watch their children's education, which can generate anxiety and depression. In addition, because they are outsourced workers, in times of crisis, Brazilians are in a vulnerable position, as thousands end up fired. Moreover, as their housing is provided by employers, they end up homeless, and unable to meet their basic needs. Although in Japan, Brazilians have access to public benefits, the literature shows that large numbers of them choose not to pay social security, in order to accumulate money faster.

The bibliography also emphasizes that overwork, by isolating Brazilians, ends up hindering access to opportunities to learn Japanese, which limits the learning of new skills and contact with the host society, which is detrimental to overall adaptation. Not knowing the language also has serious health consequences, since many Brazilians, because they cannot express themselves, do not visit the doctor. When it comes to children, the Japanese language is also pointed out as a major barrier. The literature indicates that Brazilian students also show great difficulty in learning the language, especially in relation to writing, which leads to high drop-out rates, seriously affecting their well-being levels and future. As a result, few Brazilian students attend Japanese high school and universities, being left to follow the same professional path as their parents, as factory workers, without promising chances of professional advancement.

In addition to the difficulty with the language, sociocultural distance is pointed out by the literature as one of the main factors, in Japan, that hinder the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilians. Due to the frictions caused by the sociocultural incompatibility, the literature reveals that there is a difficulty in integration between Brazilians and the local society. In more serious cases this incompatibility can become hostile and discriminatory, threatening the psychological well-being of immigrants. Therefore, although in Japan the dependence of Brazilians on the community appears to be less vital, given the existence of contractors, even so, it is in the community where they find their main source of support, especially emotional. The literature argues that in the community they find important protective resources that help them to cope with life as an immigrant.

Similar to what happens in the United States, in order to extend support, in Japan, immigrants organize themselves to set up organizations that today assist Brazilians in their main needs, mainly aimed at solving day-to-day issues, such as translation services for medical visits and

filling out forms in city halls and enhance children's education through classes and courses. Nevertheless, unlike the United States, due to the relative stability of Brazilian workers in Japan, little mention is made in the bibliography about basic needs services, legal assistance, and political participation.

1.3 Methodology

In addition to a thorough review of the literature, this research uses materials collected through two fieldworks carried out between August 2019 and January 2022, in Japan and the American state of Massachusetts. Throughout these 30 months, this study relied on 20 interviews in Japan and 18 in the United States with employees and users of non-governmental organizations, the local public sector, Brazilian embassies and consulates, and religious leaders, to explore the work of non-governmental organizations and how they contribute to the well-being and capacity to deal with life among Brazilian immigrants, enhancing their psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes. The methodologies adopted for these field studies were observation and in-depth interviews.

The author started this fieldwork in August 2019 by visiting one of the target non-governmental organizations in Japan, where he had the opportunity to visit its physical headquarters, attend preparatory classes aimed at Brazilian children who were trying to enter Japanese schools, and gather flyers, pamphlets, and other relevant documents. In addition, it was possible to conduct a preliminary conversation with the directors of the organization and interview students who were participating in the preparatory classes.

Nevertheless, a few months later, at the beginning of 2020, the world was severely penalized by a global pandemic that paralyzed the general functioning of both the public and private sectors. Consequently, during that year non-governmental organizations either ceased to function or resisted by functioning with extremely limited resources and did not respond to contact attempts made by the author, making interviews and observation opportunities unattainable.

With the start of vaccination against the covid-19 virus, at the beginning of 2021, the world began to take its first steps back to normality, and non-governmental organizations resumed work. However, the activities promoted by them, as well as the number of staff working, remained considerably limited. For this reason, the author's initial plans to conduct interviews with a minimum of 50 people, of whom a significant number were expected to be users, and to practice weekly observation in the widest range of activities possible were constrained.

Notwithstanding, it was possible to carry out interviews with 38 participants, and to practice observation during occasional visits and activities that were possible to be carried out, considering social distancing and sanitary measures that were in place, in the selected non-governmental organizations.

Despite recurrent attempts, the difficulty in participating in activities promoted by organizations and accessing users is considered by the author to be the main limitation of this work, since, consequently, the data collected are mostly from directors and employees of non-governmental organizations through their verbal testimonies and materials such as flyers and reports and website posts prepared by them, constricting the understanding of the work of non-governmental organizations and their role in the adaptation of Brazilian immigrants through a multilateral perspective. However, considering the importance of partnerships between non-governmental organizations and other sectors, this work endeavored to also interview members of Brazilian consulates and embassies, city halls, and religious centers, to expand the perspectives of analysis and avoid bias.

The selected organizations, in addition to following the definition of non-governmental organization adopted by this work, are all run mostly by Brazilians, and aimed at the Brazilian community. In Japan, where 20 people were interviewed, 4 non-governmental organizations will be approached, plus the Embassy of Brazil in Japan, the Consulate General of Brazil in Tokyo, and an association pertaining to the City Hall of the city of Toyohashi, in Aichi Prefecture. In the United States, where fieldwork was possible through a research fellowship at the Henry J. Leir Institute of Human Security, 18 people were interviewed, and 4 non-governmental organizations, a church, and the city hall of the city of Somerville will be addressed.

The interviews followed a semi-structured pattern with open-ended questions encompassing issues such as the organizations' focus, the types of services offered, users' profiles, partnerships with other organizations and sectors, and the main difficulties faced by the local community. All interviews ended with the question "How do you define the role of non-governmental organizations for Brazilian immigrants'/your adaptation?". Following the principles and ethics of research, the interviews were audio-recorded or taken notes from with the consent of the participants, as well as the use of data for the composition of this dissertation. To maintain the complete privacy of participants, pseudonyms will be used to refer to non-governmental organizations and participants. In addition, respondents will not have their occupations exposed, being differentiated only by servers or users. Only in the case of the Embassy of Brazil in Japan, the Consulate General of Brazil in Tokyo and the association pertaining to the City Hall of the city of Toyohashi, the real names of the institutions will be utilized.

1.4 Structure of the Study

As previously stressed, this work is divided into 6 stages, which will be distributed throughout this dissertation in 6 chapters. Chapter 2 (Research Background) develops step 1, introducing Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan, the main stages where this research is performed. This chapter, divided into two topics, one dedicated to the Brazilian community in Japan and the other to the United States, brings the historical context that led to, in the 1980s and 1990s, a diaspora of Brazilians in search of better-paying jobs abroad. Following that, it outlines the profile of Brazilian communities in each country over time to the present day, bringing forth important aspects such as demographic, social, labor characteristics, and future goals.

In Chapter 3 (Theoretical Framework), step 2 provides the theoretical foundation of this work, introducing the concepts of psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation, through which the adaptation of Brazilians in the United States and Japan will be analyzed later. The chapter is divided into two topics, one focused on psychological adaptation and the other focused on sociocultural adaptation, where the main variables and how they influence these phenomena are explored.

Chapter 4 is a literature review dedicated to deepening the main focus of this work, which is the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilians in the United States and Japan, and the contributions of the work of non-governmental organizations in these processes. This chapter is divided into 3 topics. The first topic refers to step 3, where a literature review is done to learn definitions of non-governmental organizations and to investigate their role in the adaptation of immigrants. The following topics refer to step 4, which aimed at exploring the literature on the adaptation of Brazilians in the United States and Japan and exposing the findings on variables believed to influence levels of well-being and skills to cope with life in the host country, *i.e.*, their psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes.

Chapter 5 (Case Studies) refers to step 5, which is dedicated to presenting data collected from two field studies carried out with servers, partners, and users of non-governmental organizations in Japan and the American state of Massachusetts. This chapter connects data from participants' in-depth interviews, observations, documents such as the annual report, flyers, and their websites and social media.

Chapter 6 (Discussion) is related to step 6 and is intended to discuss and analyze the contributions of non-governmental organizations in psychological and sociocultural adaptation in the cases of Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan. This chapter conducts a dialogue between the data collected on the profile of communities, adaptation theories, adaptation variables of Brazilian immigrants in each country, and the role of non-governmental organizations and partner

institutions such as consulates and churches. At the end of the discussion, this chapter suggests an understanding and its standpoint on how the work of non-governmental organizations ends up enhancing the overall well-being and capacities to deal with the challenges of daily life as immigrants in the United States and Japan, considering the distinct characteristics and specific demands from each community.

At last, chapter 7 (Conclusion) offers a review of the previous chapters, summarizing the main findings addressed by the research, and ends with a discussion on its theoretical implications, its limitations, and recommendations for future studies dedicated to the topic.

CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In Brazil, the late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by an economic crisis that had been dragging on for two decades. Hyperinflation, rising unemployment rates, and the freezing of Brazilians' savings accounts by the government led to the impoverishment of the population. Severely impacted by the consequences of such economic stagnation, thousands of Brazilians fled to developed countries in search of better job opportunities, higher wages, and overall quality of life. The United States and Japan, where this work is primarily focused, remain, to this day, two main destinations for economic immigrant Brazilians.

Aiming to introduce the Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan, this chapter will be divided into two topics describing the historical background, such as the push-and-pull factors that have been attracting so many Brazilian immigrants to the United States and Japan to this day, as well as outlining relevant characteristics of the communities in each country.

2.1 Brazilian Immigrants in the United States

North America, especially the United States, is considered the destination of the most significant migratory flow of Brazilians abroad (Fazito & Rios-Neto 2008). The pioneer American state to receive the first waves of Brazilian immigrants was Florida in the mid-1980s (Brum 2018). At the same time as Florida, in that decade, the first signs of the establishment of immigration of Brazilians (such as the emergence of restaurants, supermarkets, and cultural events) were observed in other states, especially in the northeast, in the state of Massachusetts (Zell & Skop 2011; Siqueira & Jansen 2012), and the west coast of the country, specifically in the region known as the Bay Area, where the cities of San Francisco and San Jose, in the state of California, are located (Ribeiro 1998). Although there is no official data, the 1980s are considered the initial milestone of this immigration flow, given the significant increase observed in the number of Brazilians who immigrated to the United States in that decade (Alloatti 2015). Since then, the influx of Brazilians in the United States can be broken down into three different phases, which will be explained throughout this chapter: the first, between the 1980s and 1990s; the second, between the mid-1990s and 2008; and the third, between the late 2000s and the present day (Brum 2018).

2.1.1 The First Wave: How it Started

The first wave of Brazilian immigrants to the United States in the 1980s was primarily driven by a deep economic recession faced by Brazil at that time (Sales & Lourero 2004; Zell & Skop 2011; Goza & Ryabov 2012; Lucas & Siqueira 2017; Brum 2018). Also known in Brazil as the "lost decade", the 1980s were marked by periods of severe financial stagnation and hyperinflation that left millions of Brazilians unemployed (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017). It was in this context that, as an attempt to escape the impacts of the economic crisis, thousands of Brazilians decided to leave the country in search of better financial opportunities abroad, being, therefore, defined as "exiles from the crisis" (Assis 2002: 10).

> In Brazil, the 1980s became known as the "lost decade", marked by political instability, declining economic performance, the rising cost of living, lowering purchase power, high inflation, rising unemployment, and the consequent deterioration of economic conditions and living conditions of a large part of the population, particularly the middle strata. (Fusco, Hirano & Peres 2002: 2)

In the early 1990s, the persisting economic crisis, the confiscation of the population's savings, and the policies set by the former Brazilian President Fernando Collor de Mello, named Plan Collor, triggered an "emigratory boom" (Lucas and Siqueira 201: 258) of middle-class Brazilians looking for work and better financial gains, and Brazilian businessmen that wanted to make business in the United States (Brum 2018). Social issues are also pointed out by some authors as motivation to emigrate, such as insecurity caused by violence (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017). As a result, "for the first time in its history, Brazil has gone from being a country of net immigration to one of net emigration" (Zell & Skop 2011: 469).

In that context, Brazilian multinational companies began to settle in the state of Florida, and transfer some of their employees. The growing number of Brazilians in that state attracted, in turn, the attention of other Brazilian companies, such as airlines TAM and VASP, and Banco do Brasil (Bank of Brazil), which set up their branches there. Therefore, even more, Brazilians were transferred, under temporary contracts, to the United States, bringing their families with them. Meanwhile, in other American states, such as Massachusetts and California, middle-class Brazilians came to occupy low-skilled jobs, started their own businesses over time and, "as an outlet to pay lower wages, as well as to help relatives and friends" (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto, 2017: 39) who were in Brazil, invited them to move to the United States, consolidating an immigration network of Brazilians to the country.

"With the arrival of the first groups of [Brazilian] migrants to the United States, the social networks that connect the two countries began to strengthen, develop, and sustain a wave that is still strong in current days" (Fusco, Hirano & Peres 2002: 3). These social networks are still essential today to maintain the immigration flow, serving as a channel for information about, for example, job opportunities available at the destination, and not only influence but, in cases, determine the decision to immigrate and remain in the United States (Brum 2017). "A migrant once established ends up 'pulling' other migrants, usually their relatives, friends, and countrymen" (Oliveira, Meriz & Ihá 2007: 7). "Kinship and friendship networks are the main supporters of the process, such as travel scheduling, initial support in the destination country, and provide information on accommodation and employment" (Fusco, Hirano & Peres 2002: 3).

2.1.2 The Second Wave: Social Networks as a Pull Factor

With the arrival of Brazilians as workers informally hired by their already established conational peers in the United States, the second phase of Brazilian immigration to the country began, "characterized by less qualified workers, with little or no familiarity with the local language" (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017: 39), attracted by "greater employment opportunities and significantly higher pay levels" (Sales & Loureiro 2004: 2). However, "what was often revealed as an 'opportunity' was actually represented by the presence of relatives who lived there" (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017: 43).

> Between the 1990s and 2010, there was a large contingent of Brazilians recruited to work in emerging businesses of the Brazilian enclave [...]. Most of these immigrant workers had a lower level of qualification, and many were unfamiliar with English. […] This type of recruitment has been one of the crucial factors for [...] mass immigration to the US. This second wave of immigration involved an even larger number of people compared [...] to the first wave of migration. They have become less integrated with the American community, mainly due to language and cultural barriers. (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017: 47)

Despite the increasing number of Brazilians trying to immigrate, "there was no incentive from the US government" (Fusco, Hirano & Peres 2002: 3) for new immigrants to enter the country as low-skilled workers. Thus, the majority of Brazilians who decided to venture into the United States resorted to illicit methods of immigration. For this reason, a remarkable feature

of this new migratory flow is that most immigrants are undocumented (Bum 2018). Undocumented immigrants can be classified into two different categories, which are

> a) the clandestine, who have already penetrated the territory of destination by circumventing the normative impositions for this practice, and b) the irregular ones that although legally immigrate, remain for time-lapse and conditions different from those allowed at the time of entry, thus fitting the condition of illegal. (Becker 2013: 12)

The initial strategy of Brazilians wishing to emigrate to the United States is to obtain a "tourist visa immediately, so they would be able to travel, enter and settle in American territory, requiring just to contact the travel agency and their family or friends at the destination" (Fazito & Rios-Neto 2008: 313). In that case, the immigrants simply overstay after their leave to stay expires to remain in the country, becoming out of status (Zell & Skop 2011). On the other hand, many people, after having their tourist visa application denied several times, rely on illegal mechanisms, such as

> clandestine travel on cargo ships; crossing with various scales by various European or Latin American countries; group crossing across the Mexican border, aided by *coyotes*; forgery of passports and other documents to facilitate disembarkation at US ports of entry. (Fazito & Rios-Neto 2008: 310)

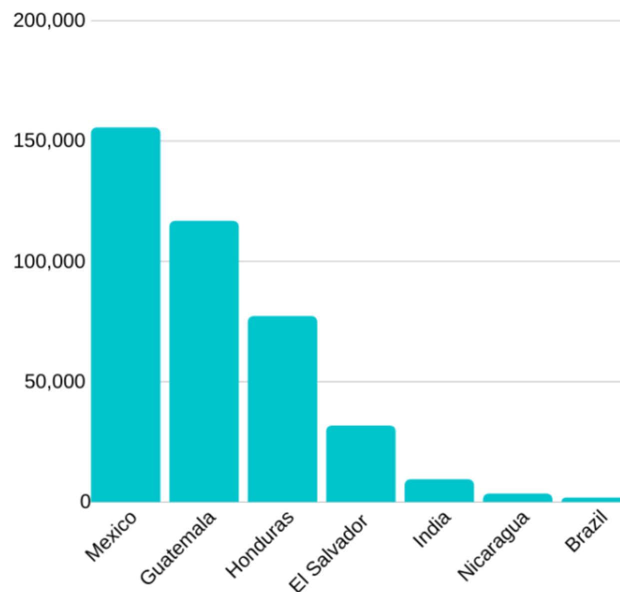
As a result,

> by 2005, Brazilians were the fastest-growing group of 'other than Mexicans' detained at the border, with untold thousands eluding capture. Brazil had become one of the top four nations of origin for illegal entries via Mexico. The financial cost of unauthorized migration to the US is high (estimates [...] range from $1000 to $2000 for a round-trip flight to as high as $10,000 for transportation across the Mexican border). (Zell & Skop 2011: 3)

2.1.3 Demographic and Work-Related Characteristics

The United States Border Patrol data[1] for fiscal year (2018) reveals that Brazilians were the seventh most detained nationality trying to cross the American borders illegally. First were Mexicans (155,452), second were Guatemalans (116,708), third were Hondurans (77,128), fourth was Salvadorans (31, 636), fifth was Indians (9, 234), sixth was Nicaraguans (3, 337), and, finally, seventh the Brazilians (1,634), as shown in the graph below:

Graph 2 – 1 – The United States Border Patrol Nationwide Apprehensions by Citizenship in 2018



Source: U.S. Border Patrol, 2018.

Another notable feature of this immigration flow is the economic motivation (Marinucci 2005). The main objective of the Brazilians who immigrate to the United States is to work hard, gather a considerable amount of money, take advantage of the wider employment opportunities there and the higher value of the American dollar against the Brazilian currency, Real, invest their savings in investments in Brazil, and finally return to their hometowns as quickly as possible to live there in a wealthy way (Joseph 2011). The goal is "to stay in the country for a short time, just long enough to make some savings and return to Brazil with the

[1] Available at <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2019-Mar/BP%20Apps%20by%20Sector%20and%20Citizenship%20FY07-FY18.pdf> Accessed on March 16th, 2020.

hope of having a better life" (Jouët-Pastré 2003: 183). According to a sample survey, "80% of those who moved to the US were motivated by 'search for a job', and that percentage rises to 88% among men" (Marinucci 2005: 8).

> The goal of Brazilian immigrants [...] is to '*Fazer a America*', which translates literally to 'making' or 'doing' America. This process consists of immigrating to the United States for 2-5 years and working in (primarily) unskilled jobs to earn and save as much money as possible for the return migration to Brazil [...]. In essence, Brazilian migrants view the US migration as a project of upward social mobility, which they believe will allow them to have a better quality of life in Brazil post-migration that would not have been possible had they not migrated to the United States. Their ultimate goal is to accomplish the American dream, not in the United States, but in Brazil after the US migration. (Joseph 2011: 171)

To achieve the objective of returning to Brazil, the immigrants periodically send generous remittances to their families left behind to, in addition to affording them a better life, invest in some kind of business. Although it is impossible to determine exactly the value of funds sent by Brazilians from the United States (Goza & Ryabov 2012), the estimates are that out of the $5.6 billion accounted for by the International Development Bank in remittances received from emigrants by Brazil in 2004, about $1.8 billion would come from the United States, representing approximately 32% of the total amount (Marinucci 2005). After returning, the immigrants become entrepreneurs "who achieved what they wanted, increased their purchasing power and could invest their economies" (Neto 2011: 26). Evidence of their investments can be observed in their hometowns, through the emergence of new commercial facilities, housing companies, and "new neighborhoods predominating vertical buildings financed with investments of migrants" (Pereira & Smith 2013: 119).

Notwithstanding, while in the United States, the immigrants are faced with a new occupational reality, characterized by a decline in their professional status. The types of work performed by Brazilian immigrants in the United States are mostly low-skilled, commonly in the third sector, in positions that "are generally unappreciated" (Alloati 2015: 208), under conditions considered "arduous, unhealthy and unfair" (Fleischer 2001: 3). Brazilians with a university degree, unable to work formally due to being undocumented, are forced to perform tasks that do not match their professional qualifications and "to which they would never be subjected in Brazil" (Bueno 2011: 31). However, relatively high wages compared to those earned in Brazil make up

for the loss of professional status, as “good payment provides dignity. [...] What is lost in prestige is gained in remuneration” (Margolis 2011: 88).

Within the informal service sector, the roles performed by Brazilian immigrants are very diverse, being most common ones: Housecleaning (Bueno 2011; Fleischer 2001; Ribeiro 1998; Becker 2013); Painter or bricklayer in construction (Becker 2013; Fleischer 2001); Taxi or bus driver (Bueno 2011; Fleischer 2001; Ribeiro 1998); Elderly caregiver (Bueno 2011; Fleischer 2001; Ribeiro 1998); Food or newspaper delivery service (Becker 2013; Ribeiro 1998; Fleischer 2001); Waiter, dishwasher, kitchen worker clerk at restaurants (Becker 2013; Fleischer 2001); General Services Assistant at Hospitals and Hotels (Becker 2013; Fleischer 2001); Babysitter (Bueno 2011; Ribeiro 1998). Moreover, there is a clear division of occupations by gender (Becker 2013). “During their time in the United States, female migrants primarily worked cleaning houses, waiting tables, and babysitters, while male immigrants worked in landscaping or construction and washed dishes in restaurants” (Joseph 2011: 175). The workload of Brazilians in the United States is knowingly intense (Siqueira & Jansen 2012). “Part of this population undergoes two or three intense daily work shifts” (Duarte, Junior & Siqueira 2013: 368), working between 11 and 19 hours daily and in at least two different places.

As an alternative to that intense workload, after settling down in the United States, Brazilians engage in their own businesses, often designed to meet the needs of their own conational community, such as “Brazilian restaurants, salons, and shops that sell products from Brazil” (Margolis 2011: 88). In the state of Massachusetts, 71 businesses run by Brazilians were counted, predominantly in the city of Framingham (Sales 2006). Meanwhile, in the state of Florida, over 80 commercial facilities run by Brazilians were found the cities of Pompano Beach and Orlando (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017).

> South Florida has a wide range of Brazilian-owned businesses, including gas stations, restaurants, diners, travel, and money-transfer agencies, moving companies, furniture, and mobile phone stores, and of course, the stores that sell articles from Brazil. (Brum 2018: 247)

The small businesses set up by Brazilians are, for the most part, the main, albeit irregularly, access of recently arrived Brazilians to the labor market. Hence, recruiting companies are mostly never used sources for employment among Brazilian immigrants. Contrarily, referrals from family and friends are the most important resource for finding work in the United States. Usually, Brazilian business owners prioritize hiring their conational peers, leading to about 71% of Brazilian immigrants having gotten their first job through the mediation of family and friends

(Siqueira & Jansen 2012). That is also a consequence of the American immigration policies, which prohibit employers from hiring undocumented workers. “It is considered illegal to hire a worker while under alien territory under these conditions, according to section 274a of the Immigration and Nationality Act” (Becker 2013: 58).

> This crackdown is part of a broader effort against illegal immigration in the United States that is being intensified, [in which] federal authorities have implemented an electronic system whereby companies verify the migratory status of their employees or face high fines for hiring illegal workers and even possible prison sentences. (Bitencourt & Figueiredo 2014: 6)

Nevertheless, legal prohibition does not completely inhibit hiring undocumented immigrants, by American and foreign employers. The main advantage of hiring undocumented workers is the low wages and the vulnerability in which they live. Consequently, Brazilian employees are not rarely found being exploited by their employers, including, in some cases, by the Brazilian ones. Although the existence of a long-established Brazilian community with business owners who are willing to hire undocumented newcomers is most often an advantage, it can also entail vulnerability. For Brazilians in the United States, including business owners and employers, making money is their number one goal. In the meantime, Brazilians who are recently arrived and/or are undocumented are heavily dependent on their community and have no choice other than to go through whatever they are offered. Thus, recruiting undocumented Brazilians at low salaries can also be less an act of solidarity than a means to take advantage of Brazilian employees.

Hiring undocumented immigrants is a “way to exploit cheap labor. In addition to the instability and vulnerability due to the absence of legal protection” (Ribeiro 1998: 3). The fear of being reported to immigration officials and getting deported prevents immigrants from reacting and demanding better working conditions (Becker 2013). Moreover,

> immigrants tend to work in high physical demand and low worker control jobs, in low wage and insecure informal jobs with high turnover, often subject to poor working conditions. They may be exposed to racial/ethnic discrimination at work, have language barriers, receive poor or no safety and health training, and suffer abuse from employers who have no accountability for failing to protect them against hazardous exposures. (Siqueira & Jansen 2012: 486)

In addition to the vulnerability of undocumented immigrants as workers, they are often a target of discrimination from the host society and are accused of stealing jobs that could be occupied by Americans. However, this statement contrasts with the fact that activities normally performed by the foreign workers, “considered heavy, dirty, poorly paid and socially devalued” (Becker 2013: 52), are precisely those refused by the Americans. Despite being easy targets of discrimination, “examples of individuals who succeeded in raising money from work that was not well regarded” (Aloatti 2015: 208) ended up giving the image of hardworking people to Brazilian immigrants over time.

Regarding the number of Brazilians currently living in the United States, their undocumented status makes it difficult to estimate it, since the counting made by official American government agencies only accounts for regular-resident immigrants (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017). “The undocumented character of this migration [...] makes the destination countries unable to collect data in their censuses because the fear inherent to the undocumented (illegal) situation prevents the declaration by migrants” (Fusco 2002: 162). However, the combination of data from different sources, such as “US Census data, data on the detention of Brazilians by the US Immigration Bureau, lists from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, international returnee concentration index, several surveys conducted the United States” (Silva & Neto 2011: 26) as well as “records of consular units that counted attendances” (Alloatti 2015: 206), allows to reach more accurately the actual number of Brazilians living in the United States.

According to data from the United States census of 2016[2], which counts only regular immigrants, 409,595 Brazilians resided in the country, while in that same year, estimates from the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs[3] pointed to a contrasting 1,410,000 Brazilians living in the United States. The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs number represents 45.7% of the total of 3,083,255 Brazilians residing abroad, confirming the United States as the main destination. By subtracting the total of regular immigrants counted by the United States census from the total of immigrants counted by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs census, it can be concluded that 1,000,405 (70.9%) of Brazilians living in the United States are undocumented. Due to the stark difference in estimates between the two censuses and the exorbitant number of undocumented immigrants, the Brazilian community is known as an “invisible minority in the United States” (Joseph 2011: 171).

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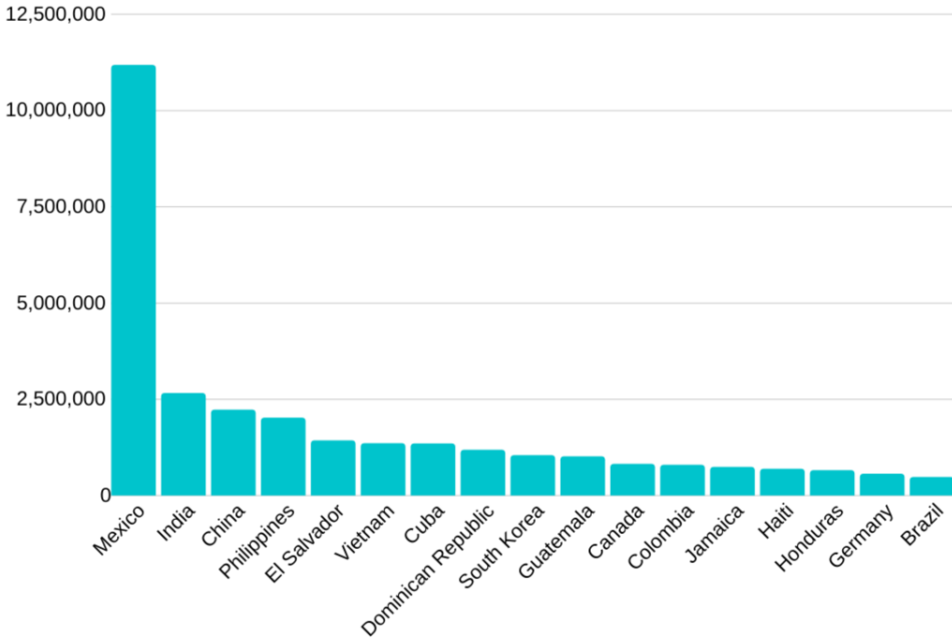
[2]Available at <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B05006&tid=ACSDT1Y2016.B05006> Accessed on March 10th, 2020

[3]Available at <http://www.brasileirosnomundo.itamaraty.gov.br/a-comunidade/estimativas-populacionais-dascomunidades/Estimativas%20RCN%202015%20-%20Atualizado.pdf > Accessed on March 10th, 2020

The United States Census Bureau's newest data[4] on the Brazil-born population, launched in 2018, put Brazilians as the 17th largest foreign population in the country, with 472,637 people, as shown in the graph below.

Graph 2 – 2 – Number of Foreign Residents in the United States by Place of Birth



Source: United States Census Bureau, 2018.

The origin and geographic distribution of the Brazilian community in the United States in recent years have certain singularities. A striking feature is the "great concentration of the flows in a few points of origin and destination" (Neto 2011: 23). The main Brazilian sending states to the United States are Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Goias, and Santa Catarina (Fazito & Rio-Netos 2008). Furthermore, countless studies emphatically point to the city of Governador Valadares, in the state of Mina Gerais, as the main source of Brazilians who leaves to start a new life in the United States. A sample survey with Brazilians residing in the U.S. found that more than 64% of the participants were from the State of Minas Gerais, with 17% being from the city of Governador Valadares (Goza 1992).

[4]Available at <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B05006&tid=ACSDT1Y2018.B05006&hidePreview=tru e6>Accessed on March 10th, 2020

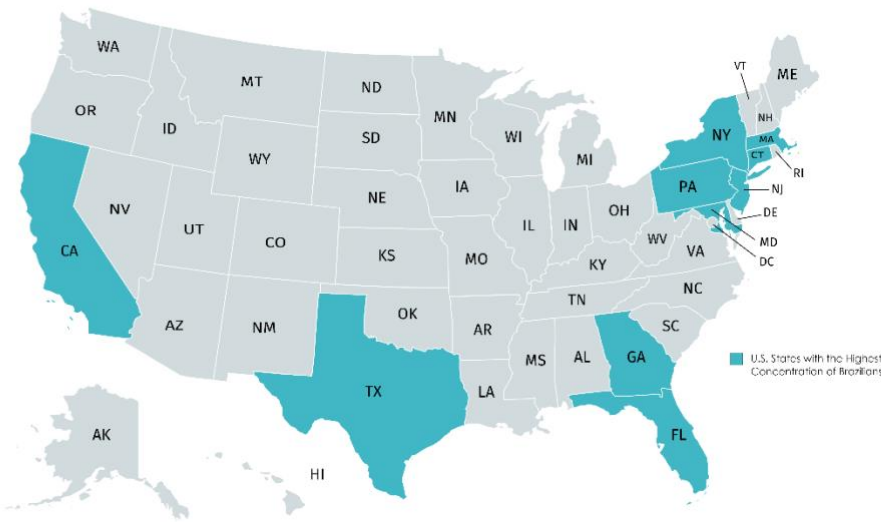
> Although Brazilians from various parts of Brazil have migrated to the United States, the majority come from a small city in the state of Minas Gerais called Governador Valadares and migrate to the northeastern United States [...]. Governador Valadares (GV) has historically been the largest immigrant-sending city to the United States from Brazil, and the city has been socially, economically, and culturally influenced by US migration. Nearly 80% of local residents, known as Valadarenses, have family members or friends in the United States. (Joseph 2011: 171)

When it comes to the destination in the United States, Brazilians are concentrated in states such as New Jersey, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, and California. These 5 states are home to almost 2/3 of the entire Brazilian community residing in the United States (Marinucci 2005). Of the cities with the largest number of Brazilians, 5 are in Florida and 4 in Massachusetts. Broward County in Pompano Beach, Florida, is the region with the highest concentration (14.9% of the local population) of Brazilians across the country (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto, 2017). Nevertheless, states like New Mexico, Texas, and New Hampshire have recently shown a significant increase in the number of Brazilian residents (Marinucci 2005).

Estimates from the Migration Policy Institute[5], accounting for only documented immigrants, show that the states with the highest concentration of Brazilians are Florida (88,400), Massachusetts (69,400), California (41,300), New Jersey (29,600), New York (24,400), Texas (19,000), Connecticut (16,900), Georgia (11,600), Pennsylvania (10,500), and Maryland (8,800), as seen in the following map.

[5] Available at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-state-andcounty?width=850&height=850&iframe=true > Accessed on April 20th, 2020.

Map 2 – 1 – The U.S. States with the Highest Concentration of Brazilians



Source: MPI, 2018.

The fact that the majority of Brazilian immigrants are concentrated in a few regions of the United States, as well as the fact that they mostly come from the same regions of Brazil is due to the social networks that have been established over time, “that connect communities of origin to specific destination points” (Fusco 2005: 1). For instance, immigrants residing in San Francisco, California, are mostly from the Brazilian state of Goias, while those from Florida are largely from the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and those in the Northeast, such as in New Jersey and Massachusetts, are from the state of Minas Gerais (Fusco 2005). As mentioned previously, it is common for Brazilian immigrants, after arriving in the United States, to go to the places where relatives or friends are living, because they will receive from them the initial support needed to settle down and find a job. Thus, “the regions that most attract migrants are those that best make available the resources of social capital present in migratory networks” (Fusco 2005: 6).

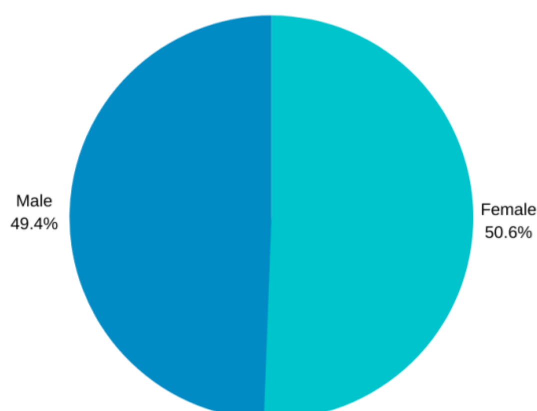
> The concentration of fellow countrymen, that is, coming from the same state and, frequently, from the same Brazilian micro-region [...] both in departures and arrivals, as well as on the routes and, mainly, in settling with immigrant communities in the USA, intrinsically shows the active preponderance of immigration social networks. (Fazito & Rios-Neto 2008: 310)

Over the generations, a transformation in gender and age composition of the Brazilian community in the United States could be observed. The flow of Brazilians to the United States was markedly male in its early years, with women having greater participation only several years later, and then surpassing the number of men in the 1990s (Goza 1992). The pioneering of men in this immigration flow reflects a common pattern found in the literature on family immigration. "Men tend to emigrate alone, often leaving their wives and children in their home country, while among married women who emigrate, they are more often accompanied by their husbands and bringing their children" (Goza 1992: 72). Furthermore, the reason for the male predominance at the beginning and the female predominance only afterward

> refers to the legal condition of the immigrant: men, due to the risk of the project, risk more the first time; women migrate in a second moment, when social networks are already more consolidated, so the trip takes place after the establishment of men in the destination country. (Fusco, Hirano & Peres 2002: 5)

A sample survey of 566 respondents showed that it was 1994 when female immigrants outnumbered men in the United States (Fusco, Hirano & Peres 2002). Also, the 2010 census developed by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the latest on the gender composition of Brazilian immigrants in the United States, confirms that the number of women (59, 247) was higher than that of men (57, 857) in that year, according to the following proportion:

Graph 2 – 3 – Brazilians in the United States by Gender



Source: IBGE, 2010.[6]

[6]Available at < http://www.brasileirosnomundo.itamaraty.gov.br/a-comunidade/estimativas-populacionais-dasc omunidades/estimativas-do-ibge/censo-demografico-ibge-2010.pdf> Accessed on Dec 20th, 2019.

The Brazilian community in the United States has transacted into a highly diverse group, "made up of diverse profiles of individuals" (Duarte, Junior & Siqueira 2013: 368), with a strong female and child presence, of which many are "coming from a process of family reunification" (Sales & Loureiro 2004: 1). Nowadays, "the contingent of Brazilians is no longer constituted only of young people migrating alone, but also of a great diversity of gender and age which shows the constitution of families" (Oliveira, Meriz & Ihá 2007: 3).

These transformations faced by the community have been drawing the attention of researchers and, little by little, immigrant children have become the most focused object in this field of research (Sales & Loureiro 2004). Brazilian immigrants can be classified into 3 different generations, according to their place of birth and age when they immigrated to the United States (Oliveira, Meriz & Ihá 2007). The first generation is immigrants born in Brazil who moved to the United States as adults; the 1.5 generation is classified as those born in Brazil, "children of immigrants, who migrated at a very young age [...] [while] "those who were born in the United States, children of immigrant parents, would constitute the second generation" (Oliveira, Meriz & Ihá 2007: 4). For generation 1.5 it is given the name "immigrant children", while for the second generation "immigrant's children" (Sales & Loureiro 2004).

The current demographic composition of the community with a significant presence of children, is fraught with new challenges, with special characteristics and needs, mainly regarding their education and professional future. "Undocumented children have as much right to free public education as those with US citizenship or permanent residence" (Sales & Loureiro 2004: 28), being their attendance at school even mandatory by law. However, when it comes to access to American universities, the reality is not the same (Oliveira, Meriz & Ihá 2007).

> The migratory status becomes an impediment to the continuity of studies, as undocumented immigrants do not have access to scholarship programs, to which only US citizens can apply [...] which makes it very expensive to access higher education. (Oliveira, Meriz & Ihá 2007: 5)

Despite not existing any law that prohibits the access of undocumented students to universities, in addition to the extremely expensive tuition fees, factors such as the requirement for documents proving the regularity of the immigration status to issue the diploma at the end of the course, as well as the refusal of some universities to accept enrollment forms without a social security number, obstruct the path to higher education (Sales & Loureiro 2004). As a result, many immigrant students, even before finishing high school, decide to give up their studies, a decision often supported by the parents themselves, given their "lack of interest in their children's

performance at school, as well as in their children quitting, because they are working all the time" (Sales & Loureiro 2004: 24). Thus, young immigrants may end up staying at the same occupational levels as their parents, in jobs that require low qualifications and without any prospect of professional growth, passing on this condition across the generations and hindering the social mobility of the community over time (Oliveira, Meriz & Ihá 2007).

A larger number of families, as well as the constitution of the second generation of Brazilians in the United States, has changed the temporal perspectives of the community about their permanence in that country, as many of them are now inclining toward the decision to remain permanently (Sales & Loureiro 2004). In addition, other factors also weigh in the decision between staying or leaving. For instance, "most immigrants had to reevaluate the project of staying for a short time and making a lot of money" (Aloatti 2015: 9), as "everyday life in the United States has shown that it is necessary more than the four or five years that were supposed in the initial project" (Oliveira, Meriz & Ihá 2007: 2) to achieve the goal of buying a house or setting up a business in Brazil.

Furthermore, marriages between Brazilian immigrants and American citizens are becoming more and more common (Jouët-Pastré 2003). Meanwhile, the number of Brazilians that are being able to upgrade their status from undocumented to a resident, expanding their possibilities in the United States, as to be able to work formally, acquire a social security number, and contribute to social security, setting strong bonds that might lead to staying permanently in the country, has been growing. Sampling data showed that

> almost 40% of respondents simply cannot say whether they will return to Brazil or remain in the USA. About 15% reported that they have no plans to return, while a percentage equivalent to that indicated that they intend to return to Brazil to invest or use their savings for some other purpose. This is a surprisingly small number, considering that the majority of the respondents stated that that was one of the main reasons for emigration [initially]. (Margolis 2011: 89)

Additionally, factors such as high unemployment rates, urban violence, and the high cost of living in Brazil, discourage Brazilians from returning to their homelands. In parallel, those factors keep triggering new waves of Brazilians to move abroad. According to the Brazilian News platform R7[7] (2018), in the last six years, the number of records of Brazilians leaving the country has grown by 165%, mainly motivated by dissatisfaction with the economy and politics,

[7] Available at <https://noticias.r7.com/internacional/saida-definitiva-de-brasileiros-do-pais-cresce-165-em-seis-anos-28082018 > Accessed on April 28th, 2020.

with the United States and Portugal being the main chosen destinations, due to cultural and linguistic proximity (in the case of Portugal).

2.1.4 Third Wave: The American Dream of the Brazilian Elite

The most recent expansion of immigration to the United States is considered the start of the third wave of Brazilian immigrants, triggered by economic instability and violence in Brazil (Brum 2018). The volume of the flow is proportional to the depth of the crisis currently faced in Brazil, as the more severe the crisis is, the more voluminous the flow is expected to be (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017). In contrast to what was seen in the second wave, the third wave has peculiar traits, being composed mainly of wealthy Brazilians "with a high level of education and/ or with high qualification in the various areas of their professional performance" (Brum 2018: 255), with "capacity of making investments, that choose to develop businesses abroad, aiming a new way of life, emigrating totally or partially with their families" (Cruz 2016: 3). Fleeing the crisis, these wealthy and professionally qualified Brazilians are looking for a higher standard of living, as well as "protecting their assets by investing in real estate and businesses in the USA" (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017: 39), mainly in the state of Florida, due to the relative proximity to Brazil, warmer weather, and the presence of a network of Brazilians already well established.

> The rich are fed up with Brazil regarding violence and corruption, so some of the rich folks are actually moving their families […]. […] They feel safer with their families in Miami [...]. The political and economic instability associated with the escalating violence serves as a huge incentive for the rich people to make investments in the US, where Miami and Orlando are preferred choices because of the language and Latin culture. (Brum 2018: 254)

In order to qualify for regular immigration status, wealthy Brazilians make investments in the United States that may exceed USD 1 million. This gives them the right to apply for a green card and, in some cases, opens a path to citizenship. Contrary to previous waves, these Brazilian immigrants intend to stay in the United States permanently, with no intention of returning to Brazil.

2.2 Brazilian Immigrants in Japan

Before going deep into the specificities of Brazilian immigration to Japan, it is important to cover the historical factors that preceded it. In order to understand the Brazilians living in Japan, as well as the facts and reasons that led them to immigrate, it is necessary to go back to the immigration flow that started between Brazil and Japan in 1908, that lasted until the year 1973 when the Japanese were the ones who left their country for Brazil. In this topic, by briefly doing this historical review, in addition to learning about the immigration flow of Japanese people to Brazil, it will be possible to see how at different times, Brazil and Japan have faced opposite macro-structural contexts, with economic and demographic factors that stimulated immigration between the two countries (Quintana 2013).

2.2.1 Japanese Immigration to Brazil: Relevant Historical Factors

Japanese immigration to Brazil will be divided here into two periods, the first from its beginning, in 1908, until the end of World War II, and the second from the end of World War II until the arrival of the last ship that took Japanese immigrants to Brazil, in 1973. Between the two periods, the main difference to note is the distinct time perspectives of those immigrants regarding their stay in Brazil, which were heavily influenced by the outcomes of the war.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Brazil went through a vast shortage of workforce on its farms as a result of the Aurea Law, which abolished slavery in the country. Meanwhile, Japan was facing significant political, economic, and social changes. With the end of the Edo Period, characterized by feudalism and international isolation, Japan was experiencing a new stage of its history, known as the Meiji Era, where it underwent an intense process of modernization, marked by industrial, economic, and urban development, displacing the main productive sources from the fields to the cities, which triggered massive unemployment of small producers and merchants and a consequent rural exodus (Costa 2007).

Despite the rapid urban growth experienced by Japan at the time, the influx of people to the cities led to a population surplus that would later become a major social problem. As a solution to that, the Japanese government started a campaign to encourage emigration. The first group of Japanese to venture into foreign lands left Japan in 1885, towards the American state of Hawaii. Years later, in 1895, a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation was signed by the Brazilian and Japanese governments in Paris, beginning the discussions that would bring about the beginning of Japanese immigration to Brazil (Costa 2007), which officially started on June 18th of 1908, when the Japanese ship Kasato Maru docked at the Port of Santos, in São

Paulo, Brazil, where 781 Japanese nationals disembarked to work on Brazilian farms, aiming to make money quickly and then return to their homelands (Ocada 2006).

Working conditions on Brazilian farms were harsh, and the goal of making money and returning to Japan quickly proved to be much more difficult to achieve than initially imagined. However, even if challenging, returning remained the goal of those immigrants. Nonetheless, at the end of World War II, Japan's defeat represented for the majority of Japanese people in Brazil the end of the hope of returning. Going back to Japan, devastated by war, became an impossible dream. Thus, from that moment on they became aware that they would have to remain in Brazil permanently, which drove them to deal with life there with a new perspective, seeing themselves no longer as transient immigrants, but as permanent residents. The Japanese community underwent an intense process of integration into Brazilian society, taking actions such as the adoption of Brazilian names, conversion to the predominant religion in the country, Catholicism, openness to interethnic marriages, and enrollment of their children in Brazilian schools, aiming to provide a better future for them there (Yoshida 2015).

During the decades following the Second World War, the integration of the Japanese community into Brazilian society became stronger, and the economic and social position occupied by them began to level up, mainly due to their dedication to education. On the other side of the world, Japan recovered from the war and started developing rapidly, beginning a period known as the Japanese economic miracle. Consequently, the quality of life of the population became better, leading Japanese citizens to no longer need to seek a better life abroad as before (Izumi 2012). Thus, in 1973, the last group of Japanese immigrants arrived in Brazil, marking the official end of Japanese immigration to that country, leaving there what is today the largest Japanese community in the world outside Japan.

The end of Japanese immigration to Brazil, however, did not mean the end of the migratory relations between these two countries, as soon afterward, in the 1980s, signs of a new immigration flow between them began to show up. However, this time, the flow followed the opposite direction. Ships gave way to airplanes, and Brazilian farms gave way to Japanese industries, being now Brazilians of Japanese descent or possessing a Japanese passport, those taking off towards Japan in search of better job opportunities.

2.2.2 Japan's New Immigration Laws and the *Dekasegi* Phenomenon

As previously explained, from the 1980s to the early 1990s, Brazil went through a strong economic recession. The context that triggered this crisis started in the mid-1960s when Brazil was also experiencing an industrial development process. In order to attract foreign capital to the

economy, high investments, financed, in large part, from loans made internationally, were made aiming at enhancing the country's infrastructure (Asari & Melchior 2003). Years later, the oil crisis that occurred in the 1970s resulted in staggering interest rates, fines, and debt collection internationally, forcing Brazil to resort even more to external assistance to maintain its domestic industrial growth, while settling its previous international debts. The economic deficit, however, drove the growth hitherto experienced by Brazil inevitably to stagnation, sinking the country into a crisis marked by extremely high rates of inflation. Subsequently, in the early 1990s, the political and economic crisis in Brazil worsened further, due to policies of the federal government that froze the savings of thousands of Brazilians, harming especially the middle class, which had its purchasing power significantly reduced, leading to the bankruptcy of several businesses, increase of unemployment rates and, consequently, much lower levels of quality of life (Costa 2007).

At the same time, in Asia, Japan was emerging as an economic power, standing out for its growing industry in different fields, such as technology, engineering, electronics, and automotive (Costa 2007). Between the 1950s and the 1970s, Japanese Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates reached a promising 9% per year (Costa 2007). Notwithstanding, Japan's availability of workers internally did not keep up with its rising economy and industrialization rates. The low and continuously declining birth rates combined with the high educational level of the Japanese population are pointed out as the main reasons for the insufficiency of local blue-collar workers (Quintana 2013). In the decades following the Second World War, there was a large investment by Japan not only in the economy but also in the education of its citizens, which built a population of highly specialized workers, contributing significantly to the shortage of personnel for the factory-working sector (Kato 1992), as "Japanese people did not want to work in small and medium-sized companies that did not offer opportunities for functional growth" (Lopes *et al.* 2015: 3). In contrast, the better-paying job opportunities offered by factories in Japan began to attract several people from Asian countries, such as China, the Philippines, and Bangladesh, who went to Japan on tourist visas, but with a second intention to reside and work, which led approximately 300,000 immigrants to settle in Japan irregularly in the 1980s (Sasaki 1998).

In order to stop the influx of irregular immigrants, as well as to solve the problem of workforce shortage, in 1990, the Japanese central government reformed its Immigration Control Laws. In their new settings, these laws, in addition to punishing, with fines and even criminally, companies that employed foreign nationals without a work permit, granted people of Japanese descent from abroad, up to the third generation, as well as their spouses (regardless of whether or not they are descendants of Japanese) and children, the right to immigrate to Japan as long-term residents, which would allow them to live in Japan, perform any kind of activity and renew their visas unlimitedly (Lopes *et al.* 2015: 3). News about the possibility of working in Japan and

making good money rapidly spread among Japanese Brazilian communities from all over Brazil, and several companies called *empreiteiras* (contractors or recruiters) were set up by members of the community that had contacts in Japan, to recruit and arrange the entire immigration procedures of Japanese Brazilians willing to emigrate (Costa 2007).

The financial difficulties faced in Brazil in contrast to the possibility of working regularly in Japan and receiving considerably higher wages drove thousands of Japanese Brazilians to leave for the land of their ancestors seeking better opportunities. Similar to those who fled from the difficulties experienced in Brazil to the United States, Brazilians who emigrated to Japan were attracted by the possibility of quick financial gains, intended to live there for an average period of two or three years, and had as their main objective to invest the money saved in real estates and businesses once back in Brazil (Costa 2007). The year 1990 officially marked the reversal of the immigration flow between Brazil and Japan, when numerous Brazilians began moving to Japan to work, mainly, in electronics and automotive factories (Tashima & Torres 2016).

The Brazilian immigrants who went to Japan to work received the name *dekasegi* (Maejima & Caniato 2012).

> The origin of the word *dekasegi* comes from the Japanese word "*deru*" which means to leave and "*kasegu*" defined as to earn money and work to make a living [...]. The term originally referred to Japanese farmers from the north of the country who left their lands during harsh winters to temporarily work in the industries of the south to later return to their origins […]. More recently, the term has been associated with the flow of Japanese descendants born outside Japan, the so-called *Nikkei*, who leave for the Japanese country, thus following the opposite path of their ancestors, but with the same objective, making money. In Brazil, the word gained its own connotation and came to refer to *Nikkei* who go to Japan temporarily to perform low-qualification work. (Tashima & Torres 2016: 5)

The correspondence between the word *dekasegi* and the reality of the Brazilians in Japan, however, has been being questioned in recent years, since more and more of these immigrants have been deciding to adopt Japan as their permanent home, being no longer transients (Soares and Motta 2012). The main reasons for this change in plans are the perception by them that the objective of raising money may take much longer than initially calculated, especially considering the debts that Brazilians in Japan made before departing, *e.g.*, airline tickets and visa fees, with the contractors that handled and financed their immigration processes. "The arrival […] in Japan begins with discounts on salaries with expenses related to health and social security insurance, meals with accommodation, and income tax. Travel expenses are often financed by the company and

subsequently discounted from the employee" (Soares & Motta 2012: 288), and usually take up to 6 months to be paid off.

The continuous economic instability in Brazil coupled with long-term disconnection from the Brazilian labor market make returning a difficult reality to be achieved by Brazilians in Japan. "Many Brazilians will not return to Brazil, as they have formed a family, acquired real estate [in Japan], have not saved enough to return to their country or have no prospects for work and/or occupation if they return" (Utsunomiya 2011: 6). Thus, currently, "the emigration of Brazilians abroad has changed from temporary to permanent, or to a longer stay compared to those of past decades" (Ribeiro & Covezzi 2014: 2).

> In the early 2000s, many *dekasegi* started to become [permanent] immigrants, given their permanent prospects of residency in Japan without an expected return […]. [While] in 1998, only 2,644 [Brazilians] citizens had a permanent visa, [in 2000] that number rose to more than 100,000. (Motta & Smith 2012: 9)

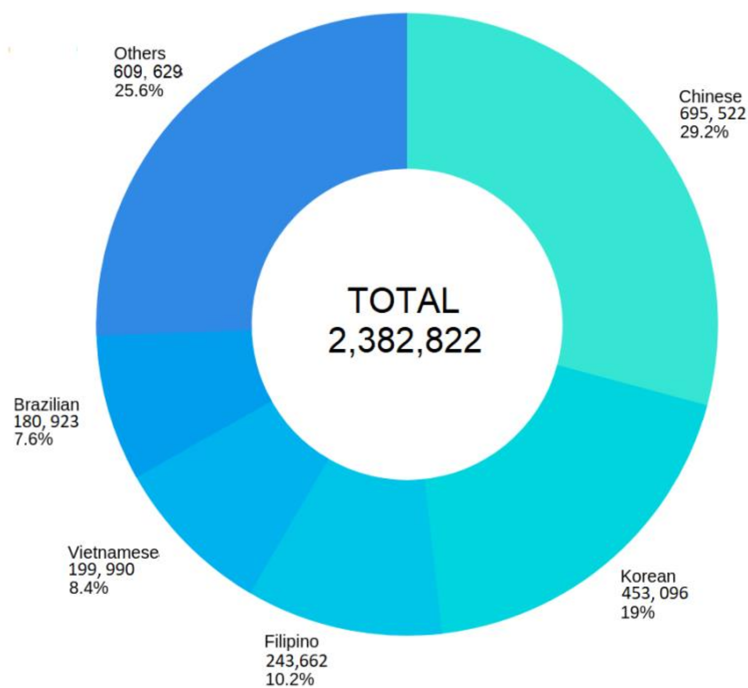
The *dekasegi* immigration phenomenon is often described as a circular movement, given that several Brazilians keep constantly going back and forth between Brazil and Japan (Costa 2007). For those Brazilians, "going to Japan as *dekasegi* is an escape valve for when things get worse in Brazil" (Sasaki 1998: 24).

> The number of individuals who spend a season in that country [Japan] is quite significant, driven, as has already been said, by the "*dekasegi* spirit" of accumulating savings abroad in order to remake their lives in Brazil. Returning, however, is not always easy, either due to the difficulty of readapting to the daily life in Brazil, where the rates of crime, unemployment, and social organization stand out in contrast to those seen in Japan, or due to the lack of preparation and guidance on how to invest the savings they so hardly made, which, in several cases, lead to them losing all they have saved. Thus, many find themselves compelled to try life in Japan again, whether for a longer season until conditions in Brazil allow them to return to a more favorable situation, or to try to recover, in a shorter period of time, the money they lost in an unsuccessful investment. (Costa 2007: 74)

2.2.3 Demographic and Work-Related Characteristics

Data from the Consulate General of Brazil in Tokyo[8] indicates that the Brazilian community in Japan had 208,538 members, in 2020. Meanwhile, data retrieved by Yoshida (2019: 11) shows that the Brazilians were the 5th largest foreign community living in Japan, in 2016, as seen below.

Graph 2 – 4 – Number of Foreign Residents in Japan by Nationality

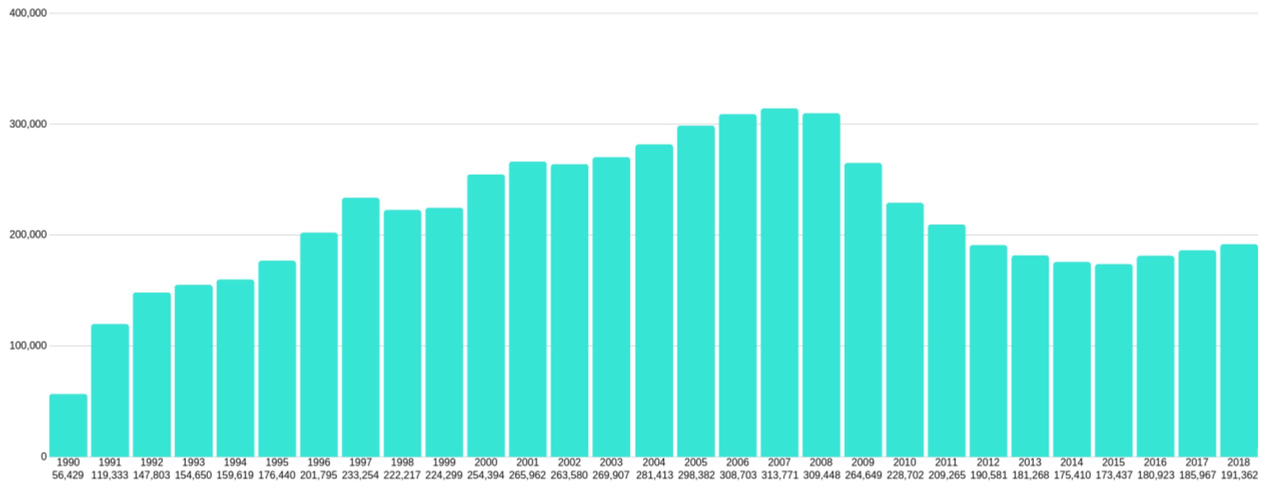


Source: Yoshida (2019: 11).

The number of Brazilian residing in Japan by year can be seen in the following chart, which shows that from 1990 onwards the community growth became substantial. However, it is also noteworthy that the growth that was constant until 2007, from 2008 to 2015 suffered a sharp drop, with the number of Brazilians in Japan decreasing by almost half.

[8]Available at <http://cgtoquio.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-br/estatisticas_da_comunidade.xml> Accessed on May 10th, 2022.

Graph 2 – 5 – Number of Brazilians in Japan by Year



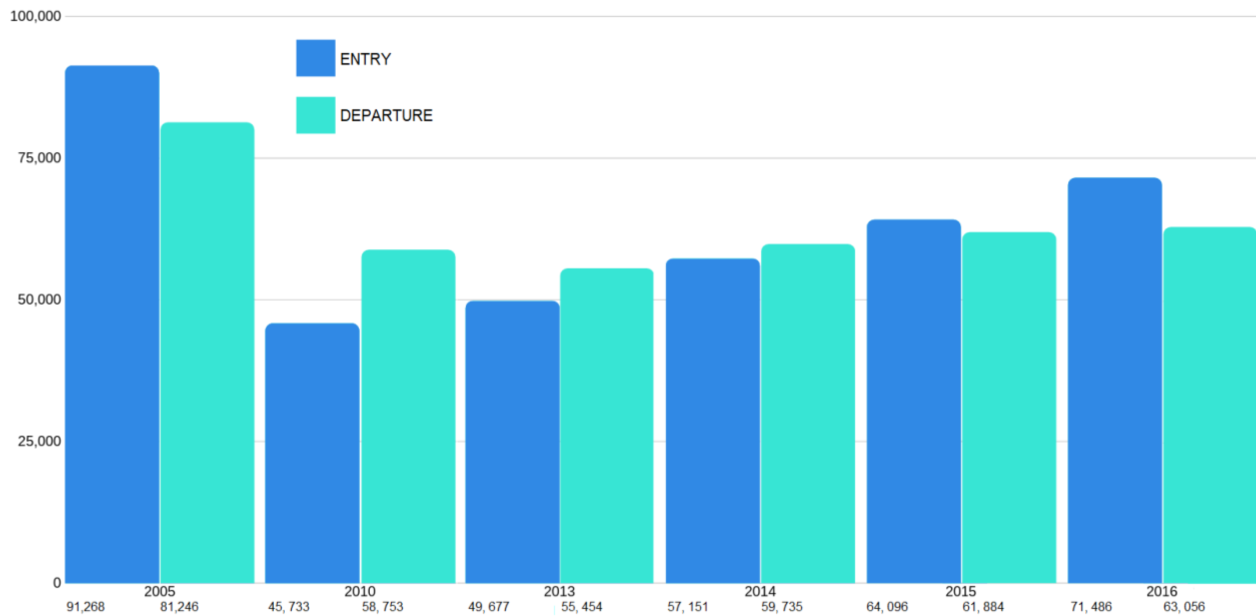
Source: Yoshida (2019: 12).

The economic recession unleashed by the Lehman Brothers shock in 2008 hit Japan very heavily and brought serious consequences to its economy, such as a significant stagnation in the industrial sector, precisely where larger numbers of Brazilians were employed, provoking a mass layoff, and leaving almost half of the entire community with no other option than to return to Brazil (Suzuki 2013). The specific reasons that led several Brazilians to be fired during that economic crisis will be explained later in this topic, where their working conditions are explained. In addition to the economic recession, a strong earthquake that hit Japan in 2011 further prompted thousands of Brazilians to return. At that time,

> approximately 100 thousand Brazilians returned to Brazil after the global crisis. That year [2008], the Japanese economy was affected by the crisis, reducing the number of jobs for immigrants, including for Brazilians [...] thus, many Brazilians were unemployed […]. [Later,] in 2011, the earthquake and *tsunami* that hit Japan followed by the threat of a nuclear accident were also reasons for a new return flow for Brazilians. (Tashima & Torres 2016: 7)

2015 was the last year in which the curve on the number of Brazilians in Japan pointed down. Since that year, for the first time since the Lehman Brothers shock, Brazilians entering Japan outnumbered Brazilians leaving the country, resuming the community's population growth, as seen from the graph below.

Graph 2 – 6 – Entry and Departure of Brazilians to/from Japan by Year



Source: Yoshida (2019: 13).

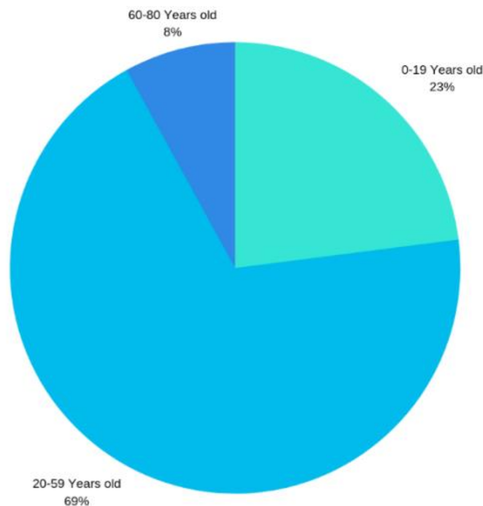
Among the reasons that led to an increase in the number of Brazilians entering Japan as of 2015, there is the recovery of the Japanese economy and industry, rising production levels, and demand for foreign workers. In addition, political, economic, and social difficulties, such as unemployment and urban violence, have been continuingly driving thousands of Brazilians to seek better opportunities abroad.

The composition by gender and age of the Brazilian community in Japan has changed over time. In the early years of the *dekasegi* immigration, the male predominance was clear, prevailing adult men, whether single or married. In order to save money faster in Japan, married men left their children and wives in Brazil. Only by the end of the 90s, did the community become more diversified, counting more on women and children (Oliveira 2008). As seen before, this dynamic is common in Brazilian immigrant communities abroad, such as in Japan and the United States.

> The beginning of this migratory flow of Brazilians to Japan was marked, above all, by a greater incidence of male people, since the intention of this migration was essentially temporary. This […] characteristic was not an exclusive component of the migratory flow between Brazil and Japan only, on the contrary, this characteristic ran more or less sharply in all the outflow waves of Brazilians towards developed countries, especially during the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. (Oliveira 2008: 3)

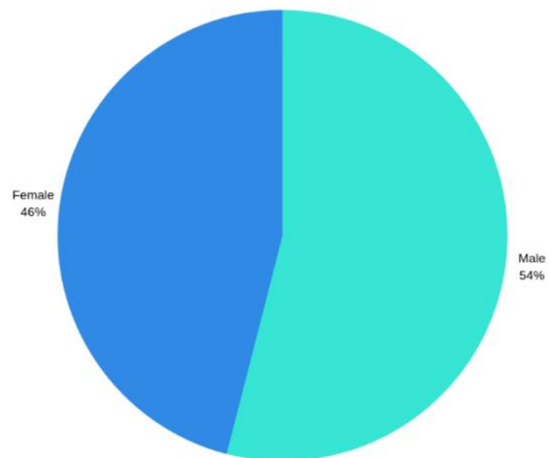
The age and gender composition of the Brazilian community in Japan can be seen in the graphs below:

Graph 2 – 7 – Brazilians in Japan by Age Group



Source: Yoshida (2019: 15).

Graph 2 – 8 – Brazilians in Japan by Gender



Source: Yoshida (2019: 15).

By the end of the 1990s, the Brazilian community's profile change in Japan brought up several new issues to be addressed. Permanence prospects and growing female, children, and family presence "are factors that imply a series of new problems and consequent attempts to solve them" (Oliveira 2008: 6). Some of these problems have become the main research focus in this field of studies recently, such as, for example, issues related to the education of Brazilian children in Japan, who are often unable to adapt to Japanese schools and end up either quitting studying or attending Brazilian schools set up by members of the community (Ribeiro & Covezzi: 2014). Furthermore, many of the students who manage to finish high school end up working as factory workers like their parents, even when there is no kind of legal impediment for them to seek higher education and white-collar jobs (Minami 2013).

> In 2008, about 22% of the Brazilian population in Japan was children and teenagers, from zero to 19 years old. With this surge, Brazilian daycare centers and schools began to appear, offering an alternative to Japanese education for those who wish to follow the Brazilian curriculum. […] Thus, in Japan there are Brazilian students who study at the Brazilian school, those who attend Japanese school, and those who are not part of any

> educational system. It is important to note that there is a considerable number of adolescents outside the school environment due to the fact that in Japan high school is not mandatory and the entrance is through an exam in which young Brazilians have little chance of success due to their precarious fluency in the language. Furthermore, schooling is not required by law for foreign children. (Tashima & Torres 2016: 17)

One of the biggest challenges faced by Brazilian children in Japanese schools, especially when they arrive older, is to learn to write and read the Japanese alphabets, which Japanese children start learning from a very early age (Costa 2007).

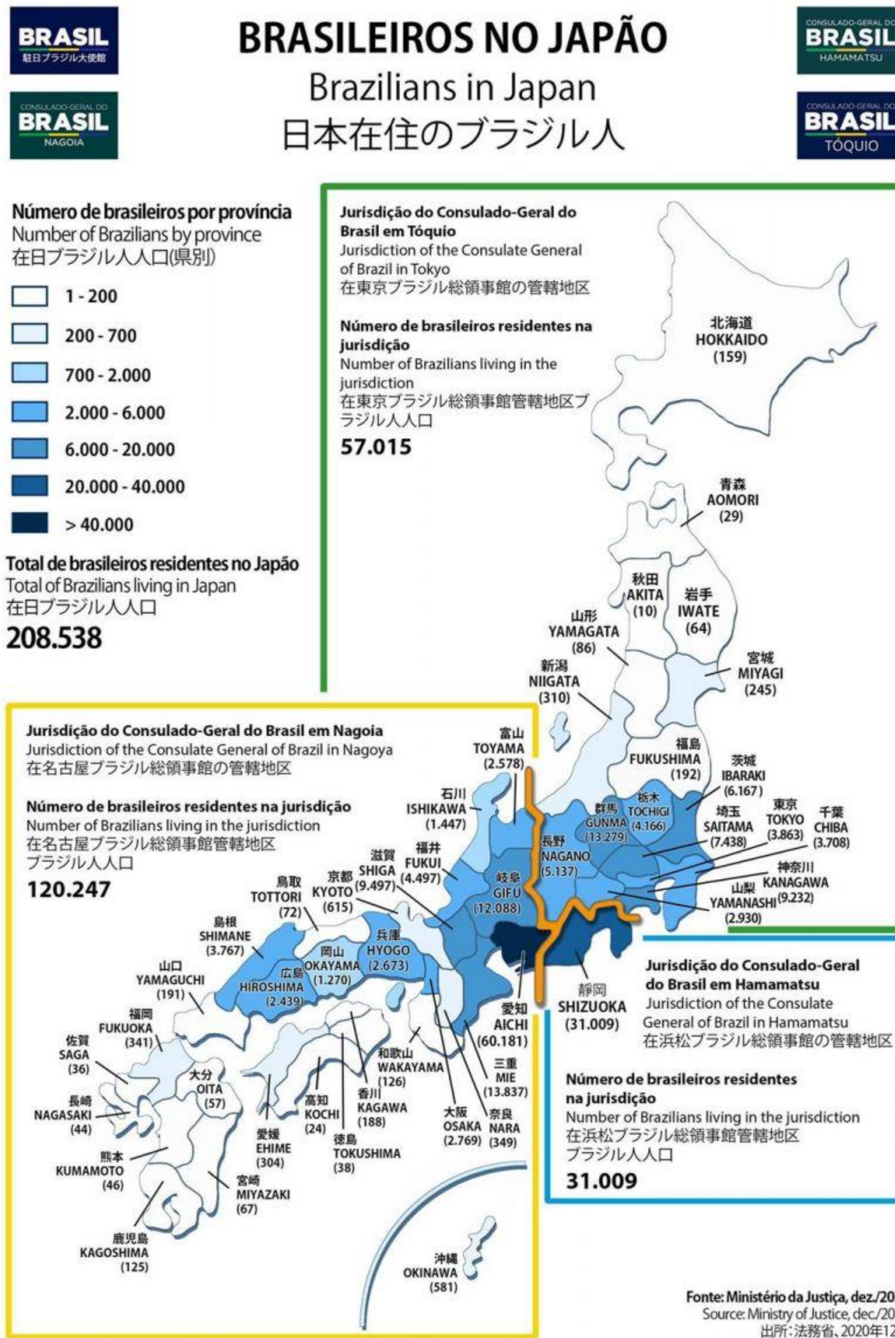
> At the end of the first six years of school, the student is expected to recognize and be proficient in 1,006 ideograms, some of which take up to 23 distinct traces to be written. They should also know the two other Japanese alphabets, the hiragana (50 characters) and the katakana (also 50 characters). At the end of the ninth grade, their ideogram knowledge must be by 1,945 characters. (Costa 2007: 101)

When it comes to the adult Brazilians education levels in Japan, data from a sample survey suggests that approximately 10% of them have completed only elementary school, while approximately 42% have completed high school, and approximately 10% own a university degree (Costa 2007).

When it comes to their home states in Brazil, the same survey found out that the 2 main Brazilian states sending people to Japan are São Paulo and Paraná, a self-evident result, considering that these are the two states where, in the past, thousands Japanese immigrants settled in Brazil, becoming home of the largest communities of Japanese Brazilians in the country (Costa 2007).

In Japan, Brazilian are mainly located in the central west of the country. The 10 provinces with the largest number of Brazilians are Aichi, Shizuoka, Mie, Gunma, Gifu, Shiga, Kanagawa, Saitama, Ibaraki, and Nagano, as seen in the map below. The concentration of Brazilians in these prefectures occurs due to the existence of factories for electronics and cars, where the majority of Brazilians work (Beltrão & Sugahara 2006).

Map 2 – 2 – Japanese Prefectures with the Highest Concentration of Brazilians

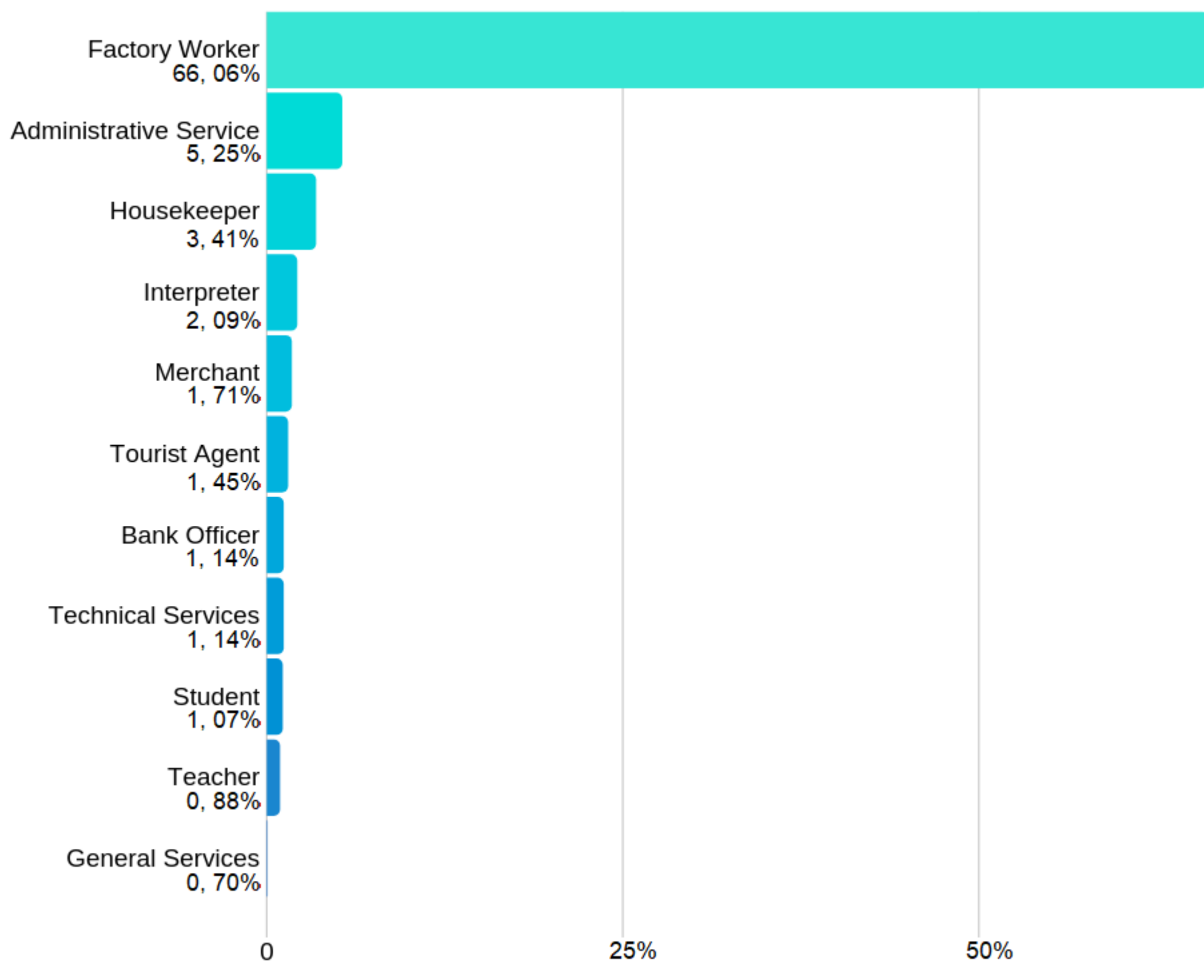


Source: Consulate General of Brazil in Tokyo, 2020.[9]

[9]Available at <http://cgtoquio.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-br/estatisticas_da_comunidade.xml> Accessed on May 10th, 2022.

Even though the majority of Brazilians work in factories, they can also be found to a lesser extent in various other types of occupations, as indicated below.

Graph 2 – 9 – Brazilians in Japan by Occupation



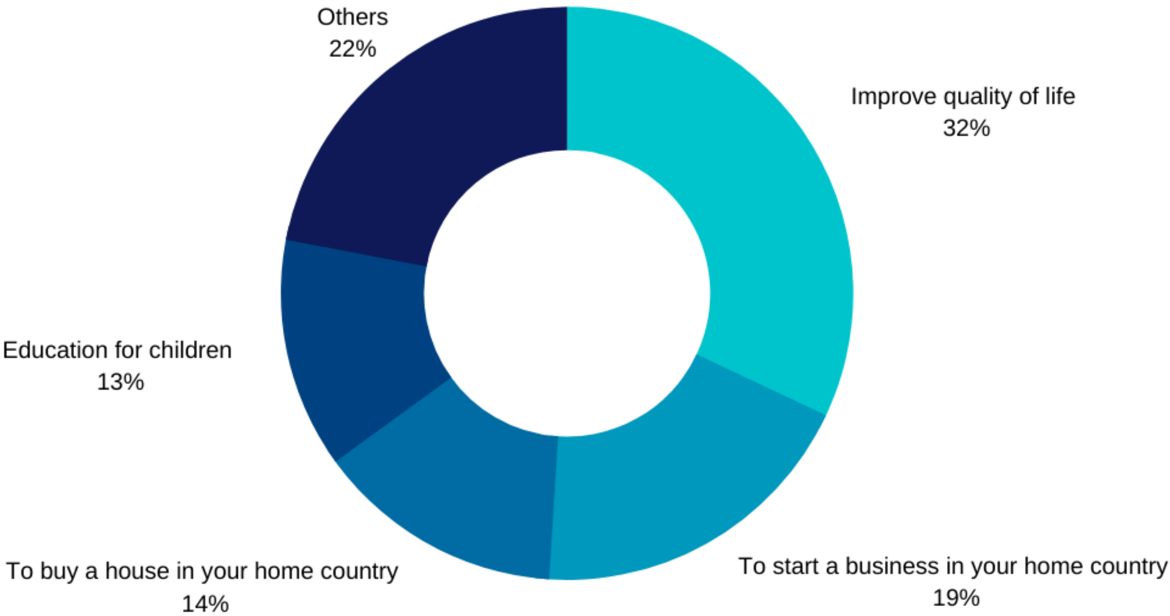
Source: Yoshida (2019: 17).

In the factories, the routine Brazilian immigrants face is commonly long and heavy. Due to the bad conditions, some researchers classify the work in the factories as "5K", alluding to the 5 Japanese words beginning with K: *Kirai* (hateful), *Kibishii* (tough), *Kitanai* (dirty), *Kiken* (unsafe) and *Kitsui* (heavy) (Sasaki 1999). Furthermore, their work routine varies, normally, from 8 to 14 hours daily since it is common to need to work overtime. Also, many of them work on the night shift (*yakin*) or alternate weekly between the daily shift (*hirukin*) and the night shift, a practice known as *nikotai* (Costa 2007).

The types of work aimed at men and women are usually different. While men tend to perform tasks that require more physical effort, women perform lighter tasks that require more attention, such as quality checking of manufactured parts. Among men and women, the difference that stands out the most is salary, with women receiving considerably less than men. In Japan, "many companies discourage women from entering the labor market by paying women less, a reduction of around 40% in the amount paid to men" (Tashima 2016: 16). While salaries for men "range from ¥ 1,200 to ¥ 1,400 an hour, for women it varies between ¥ 900 and ¥ 1,000" (Costa 2007: 25).

The money saved in Japan is destined by immigrants to savings accounts that they own in Brazil. "A significant portion of the money surplus acquired through work in the factories [...] is sent to Brazil [...] either for supporting family members or for investments in the country, [adding up] about 2 billion a year in Brazilian accounts" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 11). The remittances sent by Brazilians to Brazil are mainly to improve their quality of life, and to open their own businesses, as disclosed by the chart below (Costa 2007).

Graph 2 – 10 – Purposes of remittances sent to Brazil by Brazilian Immigrants in Japan



Source: Costa (2007: 138).

The process used by Brazilians to get a job in Japan is institutionalized, as mentioned before, through contractors that hire Brazilians as their employees and outsource them to partner factories upon arrival in Japan. Recruiting immigrants as outsourced workers is a common practice among Japanese factories to refrain from labor responsibilities to employees. Outsourced immigrant

workers can "be fired at any time, without any type of restriction or indemnity on the part of the employer, […] characterizing this workforce as a cheap, temporary, flexible, and disposable resource" (Covezzi, Castro & Lima 2014: 6). Such practice, while giving flexibility to Japanese factories to increase or decrease their staff according to their needs, means vulnerability to employees, who can be easily dispensed, if necessary, as happened in 2008 due to Lehman Brothers' shock.

> The 2008 economic crisis had devastating consequences for national economies, companies, and workers in developed and industrialized countries, as unemployment rose rapidly with the slowing global economy [...]. Migrant workers are a group especially vulnerable to these economic turbulences and in the labor market, as they generally do not have the same rights and protections as national workers. [...] As the economic crisis led to the bankruptcy of a large number of contractors, consequently many Japanese Brazilian workers were unemployed. However, this goes beyond unemployment, since most of the contractors provide workers with housing and assist in services related to the education of the children of Japanese Brazilian workers. (Suzuki 2013: 68-69)

In addition, outsourcing

> serves as a buffer for market oscillations, protecting industries in times of crisis, due to the ease of lay-offs that, on the other hand, deprotect the employee. It was in this context that, in 2008, amid the crisis triggered by the Lehman Brothers shock, thousands of Brazilians lost their jobs. (Yoshida 2019: 18)

This type of labor relation between Japanese companies and Brazilian workers has its origins in a production system known as "Toyotism". As the name suggests, Toyotism was created by the Japanese automotive company Toyota and was set up to adapt production levels to those of demand, and in that way reduce waste and storage. A striking characteristic of Toyotism is its "horizontal structure, meaning that the production of parts and materials, as well as services that are not the company's specialty, can be outsourced, attributing some competencies to smaller companies" (Yoshida 2015: 37). Unlike the American production system "Fordism", which produces on a large scale, trusting that all its products will be consumed, Toyotism produces only according to market demand (Suzuki 2011).

> Toyotism differs from Fordism basically because it has the following characteristics: it produces according to demand, as it aims to meet the demands of the consumer

market in an individualized way, unlike the mass production of Taylorism and Fordism; that is why its production is varied and very heterogeneous, different from the Fordist homogeneity. (Suzuki 2011: 5)

2.3 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has endeavored to explore the main characteristics of Brazilian immigrant communities in the United States and Japan, as well as to identify the historical factors that initiated and have been sustaining this migratory flow until the present day. Between the late 1980s and early 1990s, Brazil was shaken by the consequences of an economic crisis that had lasted for more than two decades, causing hyperinflation, unemployment, companies' bankruptcy, lower purchasing power, and general impoverishment of the population. As a result, a country that used to be an immigration destination became a starting point, as thousands of Brazilians began to depart towards developed countries in search of better job opportunities.

Among the main destinations chosen by Brazilians are the United States and Japan. Their motivation to immigrate is similar, being primarily economic and transitory, *i.e.*, they seek better-paying jobs abroad, in order to make money, and then return to Brazil to invest in a business or real estate and achieve a better overall quality of life. In Japan, immigrants are known as the "*dekasegi*", which refers to people working seasonally temporarily in another region to make money. In both cases, a change in these communities' profiles was noticed. In the early 1990s, they were mostly composed of young adult men alone. However, both communities have transformed over time, being currently mostly female, and having a high presence of children, often due to family reunification processes.

The Brazilian community in the United States is the largest in the world. Although it is difficult to count the exact number, due to the out-of-status condition of the majority, estimates assume the existence of approximately 1,500,000 Brazilians residing there. Their largest states of residence are Florida and Massachusetts, while the main state to send from Brazil is the state of Minas Gerais. In Japan, the community currently has approximately 200,000 Brazilians, according to official data, distributed in several provinces, such as Aichi, Shizuoka, and Gunma, and coming mainly from the Brazilian states São Paulo and Paraná.

In both cases, Brazilian immigrants undergo a professional downgrade, performing heavy tasks that require low qualification, known, according to the bibliography on Japan, as the "5k", related to the Japanese words *Kirai* (hateful), *Kibishii* (tough), *Kitanai* (dirty), *Kiken* (unsafe) and *Kitsui* (arduous). In the United States, among men, the main work performed is in construction, while among women, it is in cleaning services and babysitting. In Japan, men and

women predominantly work in automobile or electronics factories. While women are known to perform lighter tasks, such as quality checking, men are assigned heavier roles. Overworking is, in both cases, a latent reality, as the Brazilian workers work more than 12 hours a day, often without weekly breaks, as a strategy to earn more money as quickly as possible.

Outstanding differences could be pointed out between the Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan. When it comes to the Brazilian community in the United States, two main characteristics should be emphasized. First, in the United States, although it is the main destination for Brazilians, there has never been a formal incentive by the American government to attract them. Therefore, in order to immigrate, the majority of Brazilians enter the United States as tourists and overstay their leaves to stay or enter clandestinely crossing the desert across the border from Mexico. As a result, it is currently estimated that more than 70% of Brazilian residents in the United States are undocumented, which triggers a constant state of vulnerability and several limitations on their lives, such as no access to the formal job market, public benefits, driver's license, in addition to psychological impacts, such as anxiety for fear of being deported. Secondly, another outstanding feature of the Brazilian community is the interdependence among its members, which is a consequence of the lack of legal documentation. Given the impossibility of accessing formal means, Brazilians are heavily dependent on the community at various levels. Before leaving Brazil, Brazilians rely on the help of relatives and friends who already live in the United States to obtain information regarding visas or travel through Mexico. After arriving in the United States, they find housing and work through the support of other Brazilians, as the formal hiring of undocumented immigrants is criminalized. Therefore, social networks are an indispensable resource in the United States, without which Brazilians would hardly be able to survive.

When it comes to the Brazilian community in Japan, some unique traits highlighted in this chapter must also be stressed. Unlike the United States, in Japan, since 1990, there has been a strong incentive to attract Brazilian immigrants to that country. In order to meet the demand for workers in the growing Japanese industry, reform of immigration laws has begun to allow descendants of Japanese, up to the third generation, known as the *Nikkei*, to reside in Japan as long-term residents, a visa that can be renewed repeatedly. Brazil, having been one of the main destinations for Japanese immigrants from the early to mid-20th century, now has a significant community of *Nikkei* people, who may qualify for the long-term resident visa. Since the reform of immigration laws, several recruiting agencies, called *empreiteiras*, have emerged to mediate the hiring between Japanese companies and Brazilian workers. These contractors take care of the entire immigration process, such as visas, plane tickets, housing, and work. Nevertheless, the existence of contractors, despite facilitating immigration procedures, also brings some

disadvantages. The main disadvantage is that Brazilians recruited by the contractors are considered employees of the contractors, who outsource them to Japanese companies. Consequently, there is a fragile employment link between Japanese companies and Brazilian workers. In an eventual economic crisis, as happened in 2008 due to the Lehman Brothers shock, thousands of Brazilians can be easily laid off. Furthermore, as often the housing occupied by them belongs to the companies, thousands may end up homeless. In addition, although they are entitled to pay social security, they choose not to do so, in order to accumulate money faster. Thus, although Brazilians in Japan are predominantly regular immigrants and enjoy relative stability, they still live under a considerable degree of vulnerability.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Adaptation is a process in which "persons reorganize or rebuild their lives after relocating to a new sociocultural context" (Ryan, Dooley & Benson 2008: 2). Different theoretical frameworks can be used to analyze this phenomenon from different perspectives. In order to understand adaptation in its fullest sense, it is necessary to investigate and address key variables that predict this process. Contrarily, studies that ignore "any of these broad classes of variables will be incomplete and will be unable to comprehend individuals who are experiencing acculturation" (Berry 1997: 10).

This chapter, the second step of this work, is aimed at investigating the phenomenon of adaptation and laying the theoretical groundwork for this research. In order to address as many variables as possible and understand adaptation in its utmost complete concept, two theoretical models will be combined. Thus, this chapter will be divided into two parts, exploring adaptation through a sociocultural perspective, followed by a psychological perspective, listing key variables that influence each model.

3.1 The Foundations of Sociocultural Adaptation

3.1.1 Definition

Sociocultural adaptation refers to an immigrant's ability to cope with life in a new sociocultural context (Berry 1997). Therefore, at the core of sociocultural adaptation is the extent to which an immigrant has relevant skills to manage life, alleviating daily difficulties. Skills learning is at the heart of this phenomenon, with good sociocultural adaptation outcomes being heavily associated with learning and developing skills that will enable an immigrant to deal with life in a new milieu on a day-to-day basis (Demes & Geeraert 2014). Thus, sociocultural adaptation can be understood within a skill learning model (Searle & Ward 1990), and "a person can be said to have adapted socioculturally when he or she knows how to behave according to the norms of the foreign culture in which they are living" (Savicki 2010: 1).

According to several other authors, sociocultural adaptation can be defined as "appropriate skills in sociocultural domains for surviving in a new culture" (Hui, Chen, Leung & Berry 2015: 3), "ability to deal with daily problems, particularly in the areas of family life […] [which entails] unlearning aspects of one's previous repertoire that are no longer appropriate" (Berry,

1997: 8), adopting a new behavioral repertoire acquired from culture and social skills learning, "behavioral and cognitive components of cultural learning for performing effectively in a new milieu" (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez & Furnham 2006: 2), learning of "necessary social skills that are more suitable for the new cultural environment" (Khatiwada 2010: 68), "cultural competence […], relating to the long-term behavioral outcomes one learns in order to perform daily tasks in the host" country (Mahmood & Burke 2018: 3), "acquisition of culture -specific social skills" (Sochos & Diniz 2012: 3), "ability to regain lost resources (*e.g.,* social support) and gain new ones relevant to the host environment (*e.g.,* proficiency in the host language)" (Ryan, Dooley & Benson 2008: 13), "individual's response to environmental demands and any subsequent changes in his or her person" (Dykhouse 2016: 13), "developing specific cultural skills which facilitate the negotiation of the interactive aspects of functioning in the new environment" (Tchoh & Mertan 2018: 4), and as

> the possession of the social and cultural skills or competencies necessary to deal with everyday social situations and demands in one's immediate context. Sociocultural competence involves the ability to interact effectively and comfortably with cultural outgroup members, which presupposes both sensibility to the beliefs, values, and norms of the cultural outgroup, as well as the ability to effectively communicate with its members […]. These skills affect the ease with which an individual navigates the surrounding sociocultural environment and accomplishes goals, such as performing tasks, making friends, participating in social activities, and understanding and communicating with others. (Newman, Hartman & Taber 2012: 4)

While settling down in a new milieu, immigrants usually face two main forms of difficulties: to relate to the hosting society and its cultural perspectives, such as "its main values, beliefs and practices" (Sochos & Diniz 2012: 3), and to handle everyday activities like shopping, and getting around using public transportation. To adapt socioculturally, immigrants face problems that go beyond cultural differences, such as the inability to satisfactorily "resolving practical problems [...], [such as] renting a house, arranging an appointment in a surgery, and other similar everyday tasks require culture-specific information and skills" (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham 2006: 2).

Nevertheless, previous literature diverges concerning the meaning of "skills learning". Although learning new skills is unanimously pointed out as the foundation of sociocultural adaptation, several authors understand it as adopting and reproducing typical behaviors of the host society, while others define it as getting to know and understand local sociocultural aspects. While some authors "argue that the host society's socio-cultural norms must not only be learned but adopted

by the immigrants" (Yoshida 2019: 27) and change “his/her behavior to better fit in the new environment” (Tchoh & Mertan 2018: 4), other authors claim that skills learning does not entail “adopting”, but it requires awareness of sociocultural traits to navigate the host environment. Those who disagree that immigrants need to change and adopt local sociocultural patterns, justify that sociocultural adaptation

> does not necessarily demand that individuals accept the new sets of social and cultural norms. […] The underlying rationale for this assumption is that the acquisition of culturally appropriate information allows individuals to develop culturally appropriate social skills, which facilitates social interaction and management of day-to-day life in the new context. (Khatiwada 2010: 68)

In addition, they argue that the degree of knowledge by immigrants about local sociocultural traits tends to be only proportional to their daily demands. Thus,

> different realities lead to different adaptation strategies and […] good sociocultural adaptation does not necessarily mean embeddedness, such as assimilation of sociocultural patterns and proficiency in the local language but having skills satisfactorily proportional to the particular needs of the immigrant. Thus, […] although many immigrants share processes that rely on similar factors, the phenomenon of adaptation does not definitely follow a uniform pattern and must be analyzed according to the context of the immigrant, who may count on different resources, and in distinct ways, to […] cope with life, *i.e.*, to achieve good results of […] sociocultural adaptation in the host country. (Yoshida 2021: 36)

3.1.2 Variables of Sociocultural Adaptation

Previous studies list several factors believed to influence sociocultural adaptation outcomes, called situational variables (Ward & Kennedy 1993). Variables such as social and cultural knowledge, language proficiency, relational resources such as relatedness and social support, discrimination and xenophobia, cultural distance “(*i.e.*, the overall difference in assumptions, values/beliefs, norms, and institutions between host and home countries)” (Kong 2017: 1), and length of residence are indicated as the main predictors of sociocultural adaptation outcomes (Yoshida 2019). Also, variables such as demographics, engagement in social activities, and staying or returning prospects, as well as factors related to the immigrant background such as immigration

status, age, generation, gender, personality, marital status, educational status, professional status, and financial security, are also associated with sociocultural adaptation outcomes (Yoshida 2019).

For some authors, "length of residence in the new culture, immigration status (having resident permits or being 'illegal') and perceived discrimination were the most powerful predictors of sociocultural adjustment of immigrants" (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham 2006: 1), in addition to being universal. Coping strategies adopted by immigrants, as well as contextual factors such as the implementation of good immigration policies, were also considered to influence the process of sociocultural adaptation (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder 2001).

3.1.2.1 Cultural Distance

Considering that sociocultural adaptation is based on learning new skills relevant to dealing with life in the host country, it can be pointed out that cultural differences/distance are at the center of this process, since the need to acquiring new skills is commonly determined by the degree of difference existing between the sociocultural patterns of the immigrant's homeland and the country of destination (Dykhouse 2016). Culture can be defined as "shared ideas by a group about what is good, right, and appropriate in society; norms for behavior; the way in which societies function" (Dykhouse 2016: 27), and as "a socially interactive process of construction including shared activity between its members in the form of cultural practices and shared meaning expressed as cultural interpretation" (Motti-Stefanidi 2018: 3).

Sociocultural differences are analyzed at the group level, as they do not refer to an individual's particular characteristics. Sociocultural differences are normally determined by nations, *i.e.*, national borders. This does not mean, however, that within a nation there are no differences, nor that national borders necessarily trigger sociocultural differences (Dykhouse 2018). Nevertheless, "despite the connection and cultural exchange that can be established among people from all over the world through the phenomenon of globalization, national boundaries remain steady and can still be considered the main determinant of sociocultural boundaries" (Yoshida 2019: 25).

The cultural distance can be understood as perceived cultural contrasts and similarities between the country of origin and the host country and refers to norms, standards, values, behaviors sociocultural commonalities shared by members of a particular social group that differentiate them from others (White, Absher & Huggins 2011). Furthermore, "cultural distance (how dissimilar the two cultures are in the language, religion etc.), too, lies not uniquely in the background of the individual acculturating but in the dissimilarity between the two cultures in contact" (Berry 1997: 30).

When immigrants settle down in a new milieu, they are confronted with several different sociocultural repertoires that do not fit with those of their homelands (Yoshida 2019). Therefore, "one of many factors that may impact the sojourner's experience, understanding, and adaptation while traveling may be the cultural distance between home and host cultures" (Dykhouse 2016: 17), since, as "people who experience cross-cultural geographical moves may find that behaviors that were socially appropriate in one context may not be accepted in a new country or culture (Hoersting & Jenkins 2011: 1). Thereby, "moving to a new country involves relearning how to manage day-to-day life demands" (Yoshida 2019: 25) and gain cultural knowledge.

> Cultural knowledge should be interpreted in a broad sense. It includes familiarity with various services and systems in a particular cultural environment, such as public transport systems and banks. It also includes knowledge of the physical surroundings and climate. Cultural beliefs refer to shared religious or philosophical systems that give people a sense of meaning in their lives. (Ryan, Dooley, & Benson 2008: 7)

The ability to absorb relevant knowledge depends on the origin and destination of the immigrant. Only elements that differ from those of the homeland may need to be learned (Demes & Geeraert 2014), hence "the amount of difficulty […] is related to the level of cultural similarity […] with the host" (Khatiwada 2010: 30), *i.e.*, the more socioculturally distant origin and destination are, the harder it will be for immigrants to learn appropriate skills to cope with life. Thus, "the general and consistent finding is that the greater the cultural differences, the less positive is the adaptation. (Berry 1997: 19). Meanwhile, "immigrants whose sociocultural background resembles the one of the host-society may have a lower need for skill-learning, facing a smoother adaptation process" (Yoshida 2019: 34). For instance, a study on the sociocultural adaptation of international students in Japan found that students from east Asia showed better coping skills and better academic performance compared to Western students (Yamashita & Tanaka 2010). The reason for such result is based on the relative cultural and racial proximity that Chinese, Korean and Taiwanese students have with the Japanese society. Similarly, international students in the United States that grew up being exposed to American culture "were more likely to report higher levels of English proficiency, higher likelihood of staying in the U.S. after graduation, and lower levels of depression […] [and] difficulty in functioning in the American society" (Sümer 2009: 53). Moreover, "Chinese students have reported facing greater difficulty in Western societies […], while international students who value close interpersonal relationships and collectivism find it difficult to adapt in the U.S. where the emphasis is placed on independence and individualism" (Khatiwada 2010: 31).

On the other hand, larger cultural differences are believed to hinder sociocultural adaptation, since "social difficulty is related to the cultural distance between home and host culture and is also associated with perceived cultural differences" (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham 2006: 2). Thus, "those who perceive greater cultural distance between two cultures are likely to experience more social difficulty during the transition process" (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham 2006: 2). The bigger the sociocultural difference is, the bigger can be the negative impacts on the adaptation process, *e.g.*, higher chances of conflicts between individuals from different ethnic groups and more need to learn new skills. In addition, the more socioculturally distant a majority group is from the minority group, the more disadvantaged the minority group is likely to be (Searle & Ward 1990).

One of the main negative consequences of relevant sociocultural differences is culture shock, triggered by "the emergence and continued presence of unfamiliar culture and the displacement of the original cultural composition" (Newman, Hartman, & Taber 2012: 4). Culture shock tends to be intense at the beginning of the transition and to lessen over time.

> Culture shock can be conceptualized as feelings of strain, stress, and anxiety as a result of contact with a new culture and the feelings of impotence and confusion resulting from the loss of the familiar cultural environment [...]. Culture shock is generally considered to occur in four stages. (1) The honeymoon stage is in which the individual, like a tourist, is excited and fascinated by the new environment. (2) Then comes the crisis or the culture shock phase in which the individual becomes increasingly dissatisfied with his new environment, minor issues are blown out of proportion, cultural differences become annoying, and the individual experiences many tensions and frustrations. (3) The third stage is the adjustment phase in which the individual learns how to settle in the new cultural environment. [...] (4) In the fourth and final stage, the individual develops a stable adaptation and can solve problems encountered and manage his or her life in the new environment. (Tchoh & Mertan 2016: 3)

Furthermore, culture shock can be analyzed from the following approaches:

> The affective process of culture shock is viewed to be rooted in the stresses associated with moving to an unknown and unfamiliar location. The behavioral process, on the other hand, focuses on the difficulties associated with adjusting to a new cultural environment when there is a lack of culturally-relevant skill sets. Lastly, the cognitive process focuses on psychological mechanisms involving both self-perception (*i.e.*, social identity

> development) and other-perception (*i.e.*, intergroup relations processes). (Presbitero 2016: 2)

Despite the negative impact that larger cultural distance tends to trigger, the literature points to variables capable of buffering that impact, such as the support by both host society and immigrants to cultural diversity. Supporting cultural diversity refers to

> the widespread acceptance of the value of a society of cultural diversity (*i.e.,* the presence of a positive "multicultural ideology"); relatively low levels of prejudice (*i.e.*, minimal ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination); positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups (*i.e.,* no specific intergroup hatreds); and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups. (Berry 1997: 7)

In addition, multiculturalism also carries the ideology of cultural diversity as a benefit to society and preaches equality and equal rights. Even if the sociocultural characteristics between immigrants and host society are very different, these differences may be less relevant if these two groups are more inclined towards multiculturalism and open to engaging in intercultural relations (Hui, Chen, Leung, & Berry 2015). Therefore, the impact of cultural distance to adaptation outcomes must consider the views of the two groups, but especially the hosts', on cultural pluralism. Findings show that countries that were built by immigrants are more likely to be hospitable and provided with mature immigration policies aimed at multiculturalism because international migration has been a historically continuous process (Berry 1997).

Immigration policies are divided into two different categories: immigration control policies and social integration policies. The first

> deal with decisions about the number, type, and national origin of immigrants who are accepted in the country […] [while the second] consists of approaches and measures adopted by state agencies to help immigrants integrate within the host society. Integration policies can also include measures to foster host community acceptance of immigrants. (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senécal 1997: 2).

Regarding the importance of integration policies, "endorsement of multiculturalism by society is deeply related to the political orientation of its government, [...] [and] policies can perform a decisive role on host society's posture towards immigrants" (Yoshida 2019: 32). In addition, such policies are developed to promote the appropriate conditions to establish a satisfactory integration

between immigrants and mainstream society and tend to reflect the "ideological orientation of the economically, demographically, and politically dominant group of the host society in question" (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senécal 1997: 4). In certain countries, there are assimilation policies disguised as integration policies, aiming to induce immigrants to abandon their original sociocultural characteristics so they will fit into the local sociocultural model (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senécal 1997). When it comes to national immigration policies and programs,

> some are clearly assimilationist, expecting all immigrant and ethnocultural groups to become like those in the dominant society; others are integrationist, willing (even pleased) to accept and incorporate all groups to a large extent on their own cultural terms; yet others have pursued segregationist policies; and others have sought the marginalization of unwanted groups. (Berry 1997: 7)

When properly designed, with a genuine goal of boosting integration, integration policies "can have a substantial impact on the acculturation orientations of both immigrant communities and members of the host majority" (Bourhis *et al.* 1997: 5). For example, previous comparative studies found that immigrant communities showed better levels of adaptation in countries like Canada, where there is a strong endorsement of integration policies, as opposed to countries like France, where such policies are not in place (Bourhis *et al.* 1997). Those studies found that

> sociocultural (as well as psychological) adaptation of the immigrant youth was higher in Canada than in France […] [suggesting that] immigrants in countries with the least support for multiculturalism (*i.e.*, France and Germany), would show the lowest level of sociocultural adjustment. (Bourhis *et al.* 1997: 3)

Nevertheless, integration policies are extremely complex and must consider the particularities of immigrant communities (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008). For example, programs aimed at teaching skills, such as the local language, can be very efficient in cases of long-term or permanent foreign residents, since adaptation "among adult immigrants are [a] long and slow processes that may take over a decade and, therefore, require patience before their positive developments and outcomes become visible" (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008: 2), but may, on the other hand, be ineffective for short-term, transient immigrants.

3.1.2.2 Social Support

The openness of the mainstream society to immigrants is also widely discussed when it comes to social support. Social support is considered an important relational resource for learning new skills that are relevant to dealing with life in a new sociocultural context (Yoshida 2019). Moving to a new country implies the loss of important sources of support, such as family and friends. In addition, stressors such as “a new language, new culture, new physical environment, new ways of conducting many aspects of daily activity” (Socho & Diniz 2011: 3) make life difficult for immigrants. Hence, “in times of difficulty in dealing with the reality of the new milieu, social support appears to be especially crucial” (Yoshida 2019: 29).

Social support can come from both host society and conational community. The host society is pointed out as an important resource to learn new skills from and become able to navigate and cope with life. Meanwhile, within the conational community, immigrants can “share a cultural identity and a sense of togetherness” (Khatiwada 2010: 69). Social support can come from different sources, and they all have importance in helping immigrants “to better adapt both psychologically and socially and to cope with or overcome these difficulties” (Tchoh & Mertan 2018: 6).

Nevertheless, a review of the bibliography revealed that there is an emphasis given to the role of the host society in sociocultural adaptation outcomes. “For sociocultural adaptation, as for the source of social support, the relevance of ties with host-nationals is unanimously emphasized” (Yoshida 2019: 30). Learning relevant new skills is at the core of sociocultural adaptation and a large part of cross-cultural problems arises from the lack of a network. Due to the hosts' familiarity with local regulations, they are believed to be better able to help immigrants with immigrants’ daily life hassles. For this reason, better levels of sociocultural adaptation are often associated with more contact with hosts (Searle & Ward 1990).

Previous studies have shown that contact with hosts had positive effects on sociocultural adaptation (Tchoh & Mertan 2018). Relatedness with the mainstream society appeared to result in higher levels of sociocultural knowledge and fewer problems in navigating through life in the host country (Mähönen & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2016). Not only the amount of contact, but also the quality, is important, and the larger the level of integration between hosts and immigrants is, the better its positive impact on adaptation is.

> Studies have found that by interacting and developing ties with host nationals international students are better able to understand the local culture, build local support networks, improve language proficiency, improve communication skills, and acquire social skills necessary to adapt to the new context […]. Many studies have found a

> positive correlation between the adaptation of international students and the amount of social interaction they have with people from the host. (Khatiwada 2010: 36)

Notwithstanding, contact with the host society depends again on their degree of openness, as "integration of immigrants is a two-sided process that involves both adaptation and accommodation. A potential barrier to integration is an unreceptive host population" (Wu, Schimmele, & Hou 2012: 8).

If on the one hand acceptance and engagement by both parties favor sociocultural adaptation, factors such as negative opinions and hostility towards the other group, as well as ethnocentric attitudes lead to lower levels of psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Mähönen & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2016). Discrimination is known to bring highly damaging effects on adaptation outcomes (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham 2006).

Although less mentioned, social support coming from conational peers also seems to be significant in the process of sociocultural adaptation. The sense of community among immigrants is an important source of learning how to deal with life in a new country (Khatiwada 2010). Life as an immigrant has certain peculiarities that hosts are unfamiliar with. Large and long-established immigrant communities often have their own mechanisms for functioning and dealing with life that can be more readily absorbable by newcomer immigrants. Moreover, conational fellows are most of the time the main source of support for newcomers in matters such as housing and employment, especially when they are undocumented and have limited access to formal channels (Khatiwada 2010).

Notwithstanding, contact with conational peers can be associated with lower levels of sociocultural adaptation, as it can refrain immigrants from further learning locally relevant skills. Some studies argue that as conational peers are also in the process of adapting, they have fewer resources to be transmitted to other immigrants, which may harm their long-term adaptation (Tchoh & Mertan 2018). Other studies defend that adopting a bilateral strategy is a key mechanism to maximize sociocultural adaptation outcomes, as it makes it possible to take advantage of valuable resources from both groups, the mainstream and the conational, leading to a sense of comfort and intercultural competence (Güngör and Perdu 2017).

3.1.2.3 Language Proficiency

One of the main skills that can be learned from having contact with the mainstream society and that is essential for immigrants to navigate independently in the host country is the local language (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima 1998). "Language proficiency has been on the agenda

of integration research for many years and served as an important indicator of human capital, determining immigrants' structural integration" (Hochman & Davidov 2014: 1). This variable is pointed out as one of the main resources for dealing with life in the host country, and "has been proved to be the vital acculturative factor" (Hui, Chen, Leung, & Berry 2015: 5). Thus, the ability to speak, read and write the local language is the most relevant predictor of long-term sociocultural adaptation (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008).

Among the main benefits of excelling in the local language is to be better able to identify, understand and absorb information from the surroundings, significantly reducing the difficulties of daily life. Furthermore, learning the language increases the opportunities for interaction with the hosts which, in turn, makes it possible to learn several other relevant skills (Yoshida 2019). Knowledge of the language enables immersion in the host sociocultural context (Khatiwada 2010). Furthermore, the ability to communicate and interact with hosts leads to higher levels of integration (Yamashita & Tanaka 2010). For instance,

> in terms of English language fluency, students with increased language barriers experience greater difficulties adapting to the host culture […]. Therefore, lower language proficiency relates to decreased levels of intercultural competence […]. […] English language proficiency is a significant predictor of sociocultural adaptation, as the development of language skills helps international students to gain a better understanding of local culture and sociocultural aspects of daily life. (Mahmood and Burke's 2018: 16)

Furthermore, proficiency in the local language is also significant in immigrants' economic adaptation, which refers to the "degree to which work is obtained, is satisfying and is effective in the new culture" (Berry 1997: 8) and to the immigrant's "ability to access the labour market of the host environment and regain pre-migration levels of occupational status" (Ryan, Dooley & Benson 2008: 2). "The ability to communicate in the local language appears to play an important role in immigrant's economic prosperity [and] opens the doors of the labor market, exposing immigrants to better job opportunities" (Yoshida 2019: 29). Moreover, understanding the language allows immigrants to develop academic and professional qualifications and apply autonomously to employment opportunities, boosting their careers (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008). Thus, language can be considered a human capital that enhances immigrants' economic and professional success (Hochman & Davidov 2014). Contrarily, the inability to learn the language limits access to better employment opportunities and makes it difficult for the immigrant to "attain a decent socioeconomic status" (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008: 3).

3.1.2.4 Length of Residence, Generation Advancement, and Permanence Prospects

An immigrant's length of residence in the host country is another variable often stressed in the literature for significantly influencing sociocultural adaptation outcomes. The sociocultural adaptation is known to follow a linear path, having lower levels at first and rising over time, being "especially low at the beginning then improves in the earliest stages until it reaches the plateau" (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham 2006: 2). Soon after arriving at the destination, the difficulties of coping with life in the host country are naturally greater, considering that the immigrant has less knowledge and appropriate skills, which are acquired over time, enabling them to develop and deal with daily life.

> Adjustment problems were greatest at the entry into the new culture. Adjustment difficulties decreased between entry and four months of overseas experience with no further significant changes during the 5 and 12-month testing. In addition, as predicted, the magnitude of the correlation between psychological and sociocultural adjustment increased over time, with significant differences found between the point of entry and 1 year of residence abroad. (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima 1998: 286)

In addition, the levels of economic adaptation showed a gradual growth in the first months, becoming stable as new skills and qualifications, such as language learning, were acquired, bringing better job opportunities (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008). Therefore, the length of residence is considered one of the main predictors of adaptation. Given the variation of adaptation levels according to the length of residence, results coming from a uniform sample in terms of "phase of settlement" (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008: 3) may lead to misleading conclusions. Thus, it is important to analyze a sample of immigrants with different profiles in several aspects, such as length of residence, to obtain a better understanding of adaptation (Yoshida 2019).

Sociocultural adaptation of immigrant families shows good results over time and even better across generations. Second-generation immigrants, *i.e.*, children of immigrants born in the host country, tend to show higher levels of sociocultural comfort than the first-generation (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima 1998). Thus, at "each successive generation, the descendants of first-generation immigrants, […] [become] less distinguishable from the mainstream in regard to their socioeconomic status, social networks, and attitudes" (Wu, Schimmele, & Hou 2012: 5).

Among first-generation immigrants, studies show that the levels of adaptation can also differ depending on the age of the immigrant upon arrival in the host country. Although young first-

generation immigrants, also known as the 1.5 generation, also encounter more difficulties at first, they tend to adapt faster, as they are better able to readily absorb culture-specific relevant knowledge and skills (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008) and have a lower level of sociocultural embeddedness in their homeland when compared to adult immigrants (Yoshida 2019). "The younger the immigrant is, the fewer will be his or her ties with the homeland, and greater the ease of adaptability to the new milieu" (Yoshida 2019: 35), while first-generation adult immigrants “are unlikely to adapt completely, as they will hardly be able to ignore the sociocultural settings they lived with along their whole life back in their homeland” (Yoshida 2019: 36). Thus, first-generation adult immigrants “appear to encounter greater difficulties in feeling ‘at home’” (Wu, Schimmele, & Hou 2012: 24) in the host country.

In addition, 1.5 generation immigrants have an important additional resource that can catalyze their adaptation process: schools. Schools are believed to substantially contribute to the sociocultural adaptation and inclusion of immigrant children.

> The educational programs that schools adopt, the way they handle cultural pluralism, and relatedly the school climate and the quality of relationships between immigrant youth, on the one hand, and their peers and teachers, on the other, reflect to a large extent the attitudes of receiving society towards the presence of immigrants in the country. [Hence,] educational programs implemented in schools may significantly contribute to immigrant youth acculturation and development. (Motti-Stefanidi 2018: 8)

Nevertheless, generation alone is not determinant. Like all other variables, generation should be analyzed combined with other factors, such as the amount of contact with the host society and with conational peers, as thousands 1.5 and second-generation immigrants are “raised in a family setting with sociocultural references from the parent's home country, as well as, in many cases, within ethnic communities, which can significantly interfere on their adaptation outcomes” (Yoshida 2019: 36).

In addition to the length of residence and generation, the intention to remain in the host country permanently also appears to be associated with levels of sociocultural adaptation. Perspectives of permanence or return is a variable that, although not often mentioned in the literature, seems to significantly affect the behavior of immigrants in the host country. Therefore, the immigrant's perspective of their stay, as transient or permanent, in the host country is an important variable to be considered (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham 2005).

Immigrants who intend to stay in the host country temporarily tend not to put down roots. Thus, they establish weaker ties that can be more easily broken when they return to their country of

origin. Hence, their levels of embeddedness in the mainstream sociocultural context and engagement in learning new skills tend to be consequently lower. On the other hand, immigrants who wish to stay permanently tend to shape their behavior aiming to put down roots, establish more solid and lasting bonds, and commit to acquiring more relevant skills that will help them navigate autonomously in the host country in the long run. For instance,

> for most Brazilian immigrants in Japan, due to their prospect of shortly returning to Brazil, many skills for managing life are left unlearned, and few ties are established in Japan. Meanwhile, differently, immigrants who decided to live in Japan permanently tend to be naturally more interested in acquiring more coping skills to be more independent, as well as makings stronger bonds, such as buying a house. (Yoshida 2019: 36)

Despite the few mentions made to this variable and the lack of empirical evidence to attest to its relevance, it is key to analyzing sociocultural adaptation (Sümer 2009). For example, among international students in the United States, a clear difference in behavior between those who planned to return to their countries in the future and those who sought a future in the United States was found, such as motivation to study English and bond with the American society. In addition, students who intended to remain in the country after graduating showed lower levels of difficulties in dealing with life. Differently, students who stated that they did not aim to stay in the United States showed lower levels of English proficiency. Those students could be "less motivated to get involved in American culture due to their intention to return home […] [which might have reduced] the opportunities to improve English proficiency" (Sümer 2009: 54). Therefore, immigrants' perspectives regarding staying or returning should be taken into account when tailoring services aimed at them (Sümer 2009).

3.2 The Foundations of Psychological Adaptation

3.2.1 Definition

Psychological adaptation is known as a subjective phenomenon, that occurs at the individual level, resulting from the levels of well-being and self-satisfaction achieved by immigrants in their transition and settlement processes in the host society (Berry 1997). Psychological adaptation can be interpreted as "affective responses" (Hui, Chen, Leung, & Berry 2015: 3) to the host sociocultural context, which are conditioned to the levels of well-being and self-esteem of the immigrant. Furthermore, psychological adaptation is based on

> a set of internal psychological outcomes including a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health, and the achievement of personal satisfaction in the new cultural context. […] Psychological adaptation can be understood within a stress and coping model and refers to feelings of well-being or satisfaction with transitions. (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis, & Sabatier 2010: 2)

Human well-being is understood as satisfying basic psychological and physiological demands (Ryan, Dooley, & Benson 2008). In addition, psychological well-being is conditioned to having access to tools capable of mitigating negative effects resulting from exposure to situations considered stressful (Güngör & Perdu 2017). Therefore, levels of well-being are often associated with the ability to deal with stress. The greater and more refined an individual's ability to deal with everyday stressors is, the higher their levels of well-being and personal satisfaction will be. Human well-being is "directly related to possibilities and capacities of an immigrant to buffer the impacts caused by stress situations" (Yoshida 2019: 19).

> Resilient individuals are able to cope with stress effectively by using positive emotions, which in turn initiate a spiral towards enhanced well-being […]. Therefore, we considered low levels of stress and high levels of positive emotions as proxies of well-being. (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 4).

Stress is pointed out as a direct condition of human well-being. For this reason, psychological adaptation is a phenomenon that can be studied from the stress approach, described as contexts in which demands exceed an individual's capacity of coping (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis, & Sabatier 2010). Therefore, stress is known as the inability to resolve situations that challenge well-being, also encompassing concepts such as individual "needs, goals and demands" (Ryan, Dooley, & Benson 2008: 8).

When it comes to immigrants in a new sociocultural context, stress comes as acculturation stress (Berry 1997), popularly called culture shock, known as the stress derived from the acculturation process, "that occur[s] as a result of people coming into contact with cultures different from their own" (Brown, Gibbons, Hughes, & College 2013: 1109), which can trigger psychological disorders such as depression.

> In cases where serious conflict exists [...] individuals may experience 'culture shock' [...] or 'acculturative stress' [...] if they cannot easily change their repertoire. [...] When major

> difficulties are experienced [...], changes in the cultural context exceed the individual's capacity to cope, because of the magnitude, speed, or some other aspect of the change, leading to serious psychological disturbances, such as clinical depression, and incapacitating anxiety. (Berry 1997: 8)

Nevertheless, psychological issues resulting from acculturative stress "often increase soon after contact, followed by a general (but variable) decrease over time" (Berry 1997: 16). Meanwhile, psychological adaptation "may follow a curvilinear path approximating a U-curve" (Searle & Ward 1990: 2), since immediately upon arrival, immigrants tend to enjoy considerable high levels of well-being, which get negatively affected by acculturative stress, then re-establish over time.

3.2.2 Variables of Psychological Adaptation

In psychological adaptation, several factors are commonly associated with the levels of well-being and satisfaction of immigrants in a new milieu. These factors are known as personal variables because they are mostly an "individual- or psychological-level phenomena" (Berry 1997: 10), related to affective and emotional responses. Because the variables are personal, there is no scale capable of precisely measuring levels of well-being, self-satisfaction, and psychological adaptation, but it is possible to identify factors that influence the phenomenon (Demes & Geeraert 2014).

> The measurement of psychological adaptation has typically used general measures of well-being and ill-being [...]. To our knowledge no psychological adaptation scale exists, although several culture shock or acculturative stress measures may provide the next best solution. (Demes & Geeraert 2014: 2)

Among several variables stressed in the literature, the ones consistently mentioned as the most relevant are "personality variables, life change events, and social support, and are usually predicted by the successful pursuit of the integration acculturation strategy, and by minimal cultural distance" (Berry 1997: 16). Furthermore, variables such as "life changes […] locus of control, homesickness" (Ward and Kennedy 1993: 14) were also found. Levels of sociocultural adaptation were also noticed to be associated with psychological adaptation outcomes, given that the less able to deal with life in the host country an immigrant has, *e.g.*, not knowing how to speak the local language, the more stressful situations are likely to occur. In addition, psychological adaptation is

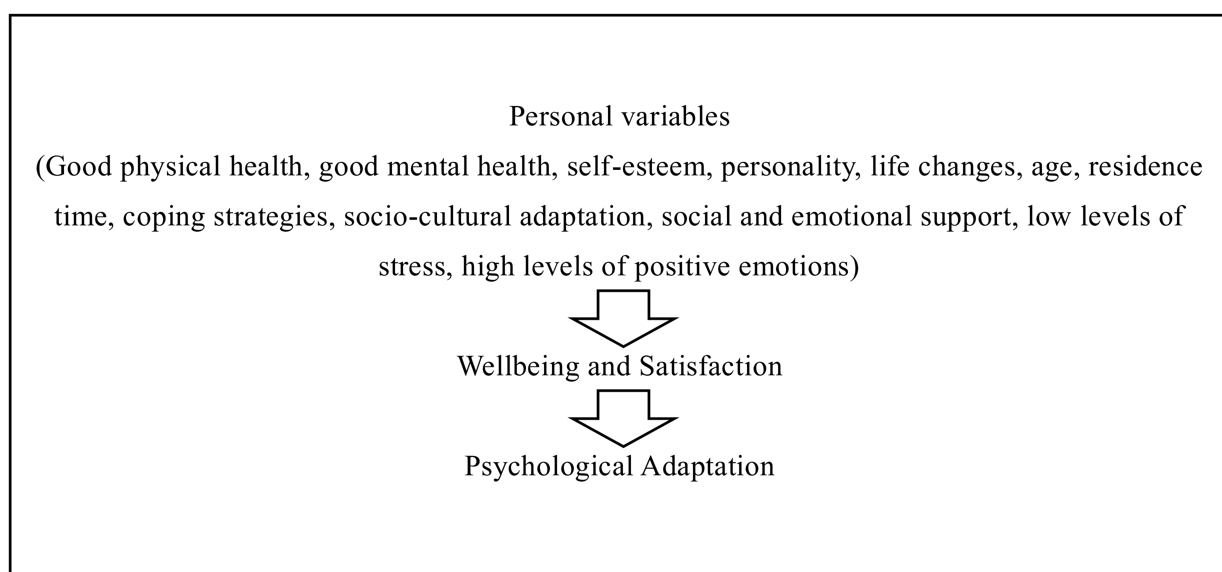
argued to result from pre-immigration factors such as "age, gender, personality, cultural distance from host society [and also] coping strategies employed by the acculturating individual, experiences of prejudice and discrimination […], and contextual factors like demography, immigration policy, and ethnic attitudes of the receiving society" (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder 2001: 9).

The existence of fundamental and universal protective resources that permit access and to develop internal and external skills that dampen the negative effects of acculturative stress, especially when it comes to socially vulnerable groups, regardless of "race, sex, culture, and social class" (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 2) is also suggested. The protective features found were

> relational resources (relationships with caregivers and peers), individual characteristics that highlight independence and autonomy (*e.g.*, self-efficacy, self-determination), and communal resources (*e.g.*, extracurricular activities or organizations and effective schools that enable disciplined effort and facilitate a sense of mastery and belonging). (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 2)

The definition of psychological adaptation as an individual-level phenomenon, resulting from levels of well-being and self-satisfaction, which derive from personal variables, can verified in the diagram below.

Figure 3 – 1 – Predictors of Psychological Adaptation



Source: Yoshida (2019: 20)

3.2.2.1 Social Support

Among all the variables, the literature on psychological adaptation suggests social support as the main driver of well-being in the process of acculturation and transition (Güngör & Perdu 2017; Searle & Ward 1990). "In the field of psychological well-being studies, among the variables that determine psychological adaptation, none is more emphasized than social and emotional support achieved through the establishment of social networks" (Yoshida 2019: 20). The importance given to social support is due to its important role in mental well-being, by reducing the negative impact caused by the stress that several immigrants go through while settling in an unfamiliar milieu (Searle & Ward 1990). Thus, social support is considered a significant tool in maintaining good psychological and physiological health, by providing "emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal functions" (Ng, Wang & Chan 2017: 21). The more access to social support, such as "relational, communal, and individual resources" (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 6) an immigrant has, the greater will be their well-being and self-satisfaction, as well as they will show

> greater feelings of competence in dealing with daily hassles in schools and other public domains (*i.e.*, sociocultural adaptation), and have stronger beliefs that they can achieve expected outcomes if they try hard enough (*i.e.*, self-efficacy), respectively. (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 6)

In addition, the protection provided by social support networks is known to positively affect several aspects of life as an immigrant, mainly due to its important role in combating stress (Yoshida 2019). For example, relational resources significantly contribute to healing loneliness, identified as one of the most frequent sources of stress and suffering among immigrants, and that harms their psychological well-being (Yoshida 2019). Moreover, relational resources seem "to be a valuable resource for immigrant and mainstream youth alike in coping with socioeconomic disadvantage" (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 9). The reason why social support plays a relevant role in human well-being and self-satisfaction is because

> humans also need to feel a sense of belonging to a community, as well as feeling esteemed and wanted. They need to engage in meaningful activities in their daily life, to feel they play a useful role in their community, and to have goals they feel to be worth striving for. They need to feel they have some control over their life conditions and destiny. (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 8).

Previous studies point out that strong engagement with other members of the conational community, as well as strong feelings of national identity, represent a significant source of well-being for immigrants. Ties with family and friends of the same nationality are called relatedness (Güngör & Perdu 2017). Relatedness, "in relation to the well-being of immigrants, was indeed psychologically the most beneficial resource for immigrant youths" (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 9) and fundamental to showing resilience in stressful situations. Therefore, relatedness "is undeniably the most significant resource of well-being" (Yoshida 2019: 20) of immigrants in a new sociocultural context.

Among the benefits of establishing close and solid ties with family and friends of the same nationality (relatedness), embeddedness, which refers to the level to which an immigrant is ingrained in a sociocultural group, is highlighted, being essential to feelings of "solidarity and cultural continuity needed for psychological adjustment" (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 1). Previous studies found, for example, that relatedness was associated with lower stress levels among Korean students who relied on social support from their conational peers, as well as "found that young immigrants with close relationships with their parents had higher levels of well-being, autonomy, social skills, trust in others, and a greater capacity to cope with socioeconomic disadvantages and discrimination" (Yoshida 2019: 21).

Although previous studies have discussed the importance of social support from the conational community to psychological adaptation outcomes among immigrants, the importance of relational resources from the mainstream society is less emphasized. There is a debate in the literature about which would be the source of social support most positively associated with good results of psychological adaptation among immigrants (Searle & Ward 1990). The literature is "somewhat ambiguous about the source of social support, with some researchers emphasizing the need for good interpersonal relations with hosts […] and others highlighting the quality of relationships with co-nationals" (Searle & Ward 1990: 10). An analysis developed from "83 studies with 23,197 participants found that integration [*i.e.*, contact with hosts] […] was positively associated with both psychological and sociocultural adaptation" (Ward 2013: 2). Furthermore, while both sources of support appear to be important, they are pointed out to impact different modalities of adaptation. While support from conational peers is more emphasized in relation to good levels of psychological adaptation, support from the host society appears, in the literature, as more relevant to the results of sociocultural adaptation.

> Strong 'co-national identity' […] was associated with lower levels of psychological distress, whereas strong "host-national identification" […] was related with lower levels of social difficulty. Thus, psychological adjustment is positively related to cultural

> maintenance, which translates to accessing support from other co-nationals. Sociocultural adaptation, on the other hand, is positively related to contact/participation, becoming involved in the host culture. (Creed 2006: 54)

Previous studies suggest that establishing social ties with members of the receiving society seems to play a secondary role in immigrants' psychological adaptation (Ward & Kennedy 1994). Notwithstanding, one more time, a bicultural or integrationist approach is suggested as the most beneficial strategy as it "is associated with the lowest level of acculturative stress" (Ward & Kennedy 1994: 6). Hence, such strategy, aimed at integration, appears to trigger lower levels of acculturative stress, higher levels of well-being, as well as enhancing factors such as physical health, self-esteem, positive thoughts, and sociability (Yoshida 2019).

Nevertheless, integration is an acculturation strategy that depends on the interest of both mainstream groups and minority groups in interacting (Berry 1997), and "social integration of immigrants refers to the extent to which these people form primary relations with the host society" (Wu, Schimmele, & Hou 2012: 4). For this reason, adopting an integrationist approach tends to be unfeasible in host societies that have anti-immigration opinions.

> The availability and success of such a dual adaptation strategy, of course, depends on the willingness of the dominant society to allow it, and the wish of co-ethnics to pursue it. Thus, there is an apparent interaction between population-level and individual-level factors in contributing to psychological adaptations. (Berry 1997: 23)

Likewise, when immigrants have a negative opinion about the host society, that may hinder the contact between the two groups, impeding integration, and triggering social difficulties that can lead to depression (Searle & Ward 1990). Contrarily, "endorsing cultural diversity and equal rights among non-dominant groups is relevant to immigrants' feelings of self-worth and enhances their satisfaction with life in an international and multicultural society" (Hui, Chen, Leung, & Berry 2015: 12). Furthermore, among factors that can influence the integration between immigrants and the host society, there are

> the dominant attitudes of the host culture regarding diversity, the specific type of group the immigrant belongs to (*e.g.*, political refugee, economic immigrant, etc.), the immigrants' attitudes towards the host and the home cultures, immigrant demographic and social characteristics, and immigrant psychological characteristics. (Sochos & Diniz 2012: 3)

Also, “cultural (*e.g.*, low parental education, heritage and mainstream culture distance), economic (*e.g.*, low-status jobs) and social barriers (*e.g.*, discrimination)” (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 10) are strongly associated with the levels of integration between immigrants and the host society.

If, on the one hand, the integrationist approach and multiculturalism can be beneficial to the well-being and psychological satisfaction of immigrants, barriers such as discrimination can result in marginalization and trigger a strong feeling of discomfort and insecurity among them (Wu, Schimmele, & Hou 2012). Discrimination is posed as the most harmful risk to the mental health and well-being of immigrants (Berry 1997). Furthermore, together with discrimination, low socioeconomic levels form a highly toxic combination to psychological health (Güngör & Perdu 2017). Nonetheless, “within less culturally plural societies it is more likely to exist prejudice against immigrant communities, which can lead their members to serious psychological issues” (Yoshida 2019: 25).

> The perception of acceptance (or discrimination) in the host society is a salient aspect of the life satisfaction of immigrants […]. Having social ties […] increases their life satisfaction. In contrast, the experience of discrimination has a well-observed negative effect on their life satisfaction, and it also can disrupt their adaptation to the host society. (Wu, Schimmele, & Hou 2012: 4)

3.2.2.2 Coping Strategies

Another predictor of psychological adaptation frequently pointed out in the literature is “coping strategies”, which appeared second only to social support in the number of mentions in the studied bibliography. Coping strategies are commonly defined as “the person’s behavioral and cognitive efforts to manage the internal and external demands” (Amiot, Terry, Wirawan, & Tim 2010: 3). “From this perspective, coping is viewed as a process where a person can alter his or her situation and/or alter how he or she interprets the situation” (Roldan-Bau 2013: 3), and “can be understood as the subjective interpretation, evaluation and reaction of each immigrant to a given situation” (Yoshida 2019: 23). Moreover, coping strategies can be classified at two different levels, being “[1.] problem-focused coping (attempting to change or solve the problem); and [2.] emotion-focused coping (attempting to regulate the emotions associated with the problem)” (Berry 1997: 15). As psychological adaptation takes place within a model of combating stressors, being influenced by factors such as personality, life changes, and social difficulties, coping strategies in combating acculturative stress are a significant resource for achieving good adaptation outcomes, *i.e.*, “psychological well-being and satisfaction in a new cultural context” (Ward & Kennedy 1994: 3).

As explained, an important feature of psychological adaptation is that it takes place at the individual level. For this reason, standardizing the strategies used to combat stress and achieve good levels of well-being can lead to shallow conclusions, since immigrants may base rely on divergent coping strategies (Yoshida 2019). In addition, certain stressors can produce different effects on each person. “A given stressor did not always produce the same effect across people […]. As such, a person’s appraisal of a given situation plays a pivotal role in their reaction to stress” (Roldan-Bau 2013: 53).

Considering the individuality of each immigrant, it is important to make a distinction between the individual and their ethnic group, since “experiences of one immigrant may be different from those of the group as a whole.” (Yoshida 2019: 22). However, it is noteworthy that the sociocultural background of an ethnic group can influence coping strategies, and it is common for individuals of the same origin to share similar interpretations and reactions to certain stressors (Roldan-Bau 2013). Thus, immigrants’ coping "frameworks may differ according to culture" (Yoshida 2019: 23). Sociocultural references carried by an immigrant group can impact

> dimensions involved in the coping process, such as cognitive appraisals, coping skills and coping outcomes […] [influencing] how a stressful situation is construed, as well as the specific coping goals involved (*e.g.*, reduce personal distress versus maintain in-group harmony) and the coping strategies used to deal with a given stressor. (Roldan-Bau 2013: 54).

For instance, North American societies tend to value individualism, autonomy, and independence, while Latin and Asian societies tend to value more collectivism, interdependence, and social order, which can influence their coping strategies. Moreover, among Latino people, it is more common to turn to the family for comfort and emotional support during times of difficulty, compared to European people, and young Latinos tend to turn to parents more often looking for support than black people. Furthermore, it has been found that among Latino women, it is very common to use religious faith as a foundation for dealing with stressful situations and seeking personal well-being (Roldan-Bau 2013).

> Religious coping (*e.g.*, praying, seeking God’s help, or putting faith in God) was an important coping strategy […]. Path analysis revealed that religious coping was associated with active but not passive coping […], and that religious coping was associated with greater psychological wellbeing. (Roldan-Bau 2013: 46)

3.2.2.3 Cultural Distance

Sociocultural differences, in addition to influencing coping strategies, are also considered an important variable of psychological adaptation, as they are directly related to the well-being and personal satisfaction of immigrants. Feelings of identification or rejection by immigrants regarding the sociocultural traits of the mainstream society are believed to significantly influence well-being. Hence, well-being is associated with immigrants' degree of identification with the host sociocultural context, in which the more they feel identified, the higher the levels of well-being are, while the more they reject, the lower the levels of well-being are. "Psychological problems arise when great discrepancies exist between the old and the new values [...]. Thus, the ability to reduce the discrepancy between the two sets of values may be the basis for positive adaptation during acculturation" (Sam 2000: 6). For example, Western societies are known to be more independent, while Asian societies more collectivist and interdependent. Thus, people from Asian countries may be more likely to feel less happy and satisfied if they live in societies dominated by westerners (Güngör & Perdu 2017).

In addition, as seen previously, culture distance can significantly influence sociocultural adaptation levels, since the greater the differences between the homeland and the host country, the greater the need to learn new skills is expected to be. Having fewer capacities to cope with life can increase stress, affecting psychological adaptation levels. Therefore, levels of sociocultural adaptation, *i.e.*, being endowed with relevant skills, can influence well-being and psychological adaptation outcomes. For example, Sümer's study on foreign students in the United States, found that "students with greater sociocultural adaptation difficulties [...] reported higher levels of depression" (Sümer 2009: 37). Similarly, Savicki's study on foreign students found that when there is a significant sociocultural difference between the host country and the homeland, it may be necessary to relearn an extensive new set of skills, which can be considerably difficult. Thus, large numbers of "students may experience the new learning situations as exhilarating and challenging, or threatening and even harmful. These perceptions can have consequences in terms of psychological adjustment" (Savicki 2010: 2).

Nevertheless, certain features found in the host country can significantly boost feelings of well-being. For example, in countries where there are lower levels of violence and better urban structure, immigrants are more likely to reach higher levels of well-being. When immigrants come from "a hostile environment, fleeing a conflict or violence, being able to live in an environment where security is assured leads to an increased sense of well-being and may be, psychologically, very significant to his or her adaptation" (Yoshida 2019: 24), given that "basic psychological needs include a sense of living in a safe and stable environment" (Ryan, Dooley, & Benson 2008: 8). On

the other hand, if, in the host country, there is a hostile context due to, for instance, ethnocentrism and xenophobia, the psychological and sociocultural challenges will be more intense, which can result in unsatisfactory levels of well-being (Yoshida 2019). Consequently, when differences cannot be managed well, the "immediate effects will be substantially negative and stress levels debilitating, including personal crises, and commonly anxiety and depression" (Berry 2016: 16).

3.2.2.4 Personality Traits

Personality is another predictor of psychological adaptation often mentioned in the literature. Although "historically, psychological adaptation has been examined within the stress and coping framework" (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis, & Sabatier 2010: 414), several studies point to the importance of personality traits in this phenomenon. Personality traits, such as "openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism/ emotional stability" (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis, & Sabatier 2010: 414) are known to influence psychological adaptation outcomes.

Notwithstanding, personality must be analyzed in relation to the sociocultural environment, and not in isolation, as "it is not so much the trait by itself but its "fit" with the new cultural setting that matters" (Berry 1997: 19). Therefore, personality traits, for instance, introversion and extraversion, may either represent a risk factor or a protective resource for the immigrant, depending on how those traits fit into the host milieu (Berry 1997).

> Personality traits may interact with culture-specific characteristics of the host environment in the prediction of psychological adjustment. […] That is, the more closely the individual's personality traits resemble host culture norms, the more adjustive those traits may be. (Searle & Ward 1990: 10)

Personality has direct effects on coping strategies, *i.e.*, on the ability to deal with stress. For example, psychological resilience, that is, the ability to withstand adversity and spring back into shape, as well as gratitude, positivity, and optimism influence stress management and can lead to higher levels of well-being and personal satisfaction (Güngör & Perdu 2017).

3.2.2.5 Age and Generation

Another variable pointed to be relevant to psychological adaptation outcomes is the immigrant's generation, which refers to the age at which an immigrant began their acculturation

process. The initial discomfort arising from acculturation, associated "with their newcomer status and socialization in a foreign culture" (Wu, Schimmele, & Hou 2012: 24), tends to considerably fade over time and across generations, a process called "intergenerational progress" (Wu, Schimmele, & Hou 2012: 23).

An immigrant's generation influences the foundations on which their well-being is based. For example, the psychological adaptation of immigrant children and adolescents is heavily associated with their academic performance and school life, as problems at school represent a relevant source of stress for students, which can profoundly affect their self-esteem and lead them to drop out of studies to preserve their well-being (Güngör & Perdu 2017). Moreover, "the paths walked, and the destinies traced are generally different between the generations, hence, the references of well-being also diverge, corresponding to their respective context specificities" (Yoshida 2019: 25).

Age is also commonly associated with how acculturation unfolds. Among adult immigrants, due to the high degree of embeddedness in their country's culture and having more solid personality traits, acculturation is more likely to be harder (Berry 1997). On the other hand, young children are believed to face a simpler process, because the degree of embeddedness in their original culture is not sufficient to "require much culture shedding or to create any serious culture conflict; or perhaps personal flexibility and adaptability are maximal during these early years" (Berry 1997: 17). Furthermore, the emotional support received from parents can be pointed out as a driver of well-being among immigrant children (Güngör & Perdu 2017). Nevertheless, when it comes to adolescents, the process can be more problematic, since "demands of parents and peers are maximal at this period, or […] the problems of life transitions between childhood and adulthood are compounded by cultural transitions" (Berry 1997: 17).

3.3 Concluding Remarks

This chapter aimed to build the theoretical foundation of this research. Adaptation is considered a complex phenomenon, which can be analyzed from different perspectives and influenced by a wide variety of variables. In order to understand adaptation in its fullest sense, this chapter brought two theoretical models, one from a psychological standpoint and the other from a sociocultural perspective. In this way, it was possible to consider several variables, regarded as relevant keywords for analytical descriptions, which influence adaptation outcomes. It was observed that psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation occur at different levels, and their results depend on different variables. Hence, it was also essential to comprehend these processes separately. However, these two phenomena interact, since levels of sociocultural adaptation can affect the well-

being of immigrants, in turn affecting psychological adaptation outcomes. Hence, this chapter, in addition to explaining the two phenomena individually, attempted to demonstrate how the presence or absence of skills to socioculturally adapt to life in the host country can ultimately affect the psychological adaptation of immigrants.

Sociocultural adaptation refers to immigrants' abilities to cope with daily life in the host country. When settling down in a foreign country, immigrants are often compelled to face significant sociocultural differences. These differences range from understanding social norms and beliefs to performing practical tasks such as groceries, opening a bank account, taking a bus, and visiting a doctor. Good results of sociocultural adaptation are associated with learning new skills, which will enable one to manage life, face challenges, and perform tasks in a new sociocultural context. Thus, this phenomenon is analyzed from a skill-learning model, where the more relevant skills immigrants have to deal with life hassles, the better their sociocultural adaptation outcomes are expected to be. Levels of sociocultural adaptation are believed to follow an ascending linear curve, indicating that there is a bigger initial difficulty, followed by a progressive improvement over time, as immigrants learn skills.

Several variables appear to be associated with sociocultural adaptation outcomes. According to previous studies, "length of residence in the new culture, immigration status (having resident permits or being 'illegal') and perceived discrimination were the most powerful predictors of sociocultural adjustment of immigrants" (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham 2006: 1). Notwithstanding, a thorough review of the bibliography shed light on other key variables of sociocultural adaptation. For example, considering that skills learning is at the heart of sociocultural adaptation, the sociocultural distance between the homeland and the host country is considered a relevant variable, since the more differences there are, the greater the demand to learn new skills is. Furthermore, relational resources such as ties with conational peers and host society are considered an important variable, as they can be a source through which knowledge can be acquired. Local language proficiency also appears to play a major role in sociocultural adaptation outcomes, as it is "an important indicator of human capital, determining immigrants' structural integration" (Hochman and Davidov 2014: 1). At last, perspectives of staying or returning can be an important variable, as it significantly influences the attitude of the immigrant in terms of engaging in learning new skills, *i.e.*, immigrants who intend to stay long-term or permanently have shown to have more skills to deal with life in the host country, displaying better results of sociocultural adaptation.

Psychological adaptation is understood as a phenomenon that occurs at the individual level, resulting from the levels of well-being and personal satisfaction while settling in a foreign country. Meanwhile, well-being is defined as satisfying basic psychological and physiological demands. In addition, well-being is related to the ability and possibility to deal with situations

considered stressful. Stress is expected to occur when a given situation exceeds the immigrant's ability to deal with it. Therefore, to achieve good levels of well-being it is necessary to have access to appropriate resources to deal with stress and satisfy basic needs. Thus, well-being levels are related to being able to cope and reduce the negative impacts of stress. In migratory studies, stress is addressed as "acculturation stress" or "culture shock", which is triggered by the difficulty of living in a foreign sociocultural repertoire and can lead to mental disorders such as anxiety and depression. Psychological adaptation levels usually follow a U-Curve, showing better results initially, decreasing as the first difficulties appear, and rising again as immigrants learn how to overcome them.

The variables that influence the results of psychological adaptation are known as "personal variables", considering that this phenomenon occurs at an individual level. Regular documentation status, "good physical health, good mental health, self-esteem, personality, life changes, age, length of residence, coping strategies, socio-cultural adaptation, social and emotional support, low levels of stress, high levels of positive emotions" (Yoshida 2019: 20) are known to be important indicators of well-being and satisfaction and, consequently, pointed out as relevant variables of psychological adaptation. Among them, social and emotional support from conational peers was emphasized as a major protective resource, playing an important role in tackling situations considered stressful. Meanwhile, factors such as discrimination, xenophobia, being undocumented, and professional downgrade are variables associated with lower levels of well-being and satisfaction, negatively affecting psychological adaptation outcomes, since "basic psychological needs include a sense of living in a safe and stable environment" (Ryan, Dooley, & Benson 2008: 8). Also, the better an immigrant can cope with life in the host country, such as by excelling in the local language, the higher the level of well-being and self-satisfaction they are expected to have, signaling interaction between psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

At last, it was found that external agents can also influence both the psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes of immigrants. It became evident, for instance, that integration policies initiated by the public sector are related to the level of adaptation of immigrants. Researchers found that immigrants in countries where government investment is made in integrating immigrants, such as Canada, tend to demonstrate higher levels of well-being and competency in daily living, *i.e.*, psychological, and sociocultural adaptation. Furthermore, the support of the conational community, in addition to the public sector, can be an invaluable source of well-being and learning new skills. Thus, in order to expand and strengthen this support, several organizations and associations have been formed by members of the immigrant communities. Religious faith, for example, is one of the main strategies Latina women use to cope with stressful situations, as previously described. Because of this, churches established by immigrants themselves are known to play a major role in adaptation. Therefore, in the subsequent chapters, the role of non-government organizations in the psychological

and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan as well as the support of churches, consulates, and the public sector will be explored and analyzed in greater depth.

CHAPTER FOUR
SOCIOCULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF BRAZILIAN IMMIGRANTS AND THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

This chapter is intended for a literature review and is divided into three topics. First, the focus will be on the conceptualization of non-governmental organizations, which can be depicted under a variety of definitions and vary according to the guidelines of the host country. In addition, they can vary on several levels such as size, mission, and objectives. Next, the focus will be narrowed to non-governmental organizations targeting immigrants, which, although there is wide diversity, the majority is focused on reception and integration programs. Therefore, the first topic of this chapter, as step 3 of this work, will seek to conceptualize non-governmental organizations and establish the definition to be used by this study and explore how the work of non-governmental organizations targeting immigrants can influence adaptation, according to the previous literature.

The next two topics, step 4 of this work, are intended to explore the bibliography on Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan. Using the theoretical model introduced in the previous chapter, these two topics will aim to identify key variables that predict adaptation, from psychological and sociocultural perspectives, as well as how non-governmental organizations can influence adaptation outcomes in the cases of Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan. The second topic will be dedicated to Brazilian immigrants in the United States, and the third topic will focus on Brazilian immigrants in Japan.

4.1 Non-governmental Organizations and Their Role in Adaptation

4.1.1 Non-governmental Organizations: Definitions and Settings

There are several types of organizational actors involved in causes related to immigration, mainly focused on the reception and integration of immigrants, being non-governmental organizations being one of the most relevant (Garkishc, Heidingsfelder & Beckmann 2017). The definition of a non-governmental organization may vary according to country guidelines. However, regardless of where they are based, there are common elements that they share.

Primarily, the main feature common to them is that, as the name suggests, they are non-governmental, despite being engaged in public causes, and are mostly non-profit (Garkish *et al.* 2017). Nevertheless, several other definitions of non-governmental organizations were found in the

literature. For example, they "can be broadly defined as all formal and informal social institutions between the state, the economy, and the private sphere" (Dimitriadis, Hajer, Fontanari, & Islar (2019: 8), or defined as "the modern-day manifestations of voluntary associations […] focusing on working for one cause, with a specific interest or goal, to address unmet needs" (Rehill 2012: 24). Furthermore, the following guidelines can be used to classify non-governmental organizations:

> an organization must meet all five of these criteria [being organized, private, non-profit-distributing, self-governing, and voluntary]. "Organized" means institutionalized to some extent. […] "Non-profit-distributing" means that any surplus generated by an organization may not be distributed to its owners, officers, or members, but plowed back into the organization's mission. "Self-governing" means equipped to control their own activities […]. "Voluntary" means that membership and contributions of time and money are not required or enforced by law or otherwise made a condition of citizenship or determined by birth. (Franco 2005: 23)

In the United States, non-governmental organizations are those categorized by the federal government's Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax code as 501(c). In order to be regarded as a 501(c) organization, "the group must have a board of directors and be self-governing, be formally constituted […] and cannot distribute profits to those who control it" (Rehill 2012: 23) in addition to being exempt from paying taxes, qualify to receive tax-deductible donations and be detached from the government apparatus. However, even within the 501(c) category, there is a vast array of categories, distinct in "size and in their missions" (Rehill 2012: 21). There is an estimate of existence of more than 1 million 501(c) organizations, which represents approximately 9% of the labor force and 6% of the American national income. Nevertheless, this dissertation does not necessarily use the definition of non-governmental organizations as IRS 501(c) organizations. Instead, it approaches them as "associations in which individuals work collectively, without a profit motive, for a cause or objective that benefits a certain group of individuals, regardless of (yet including the ones with) a corporate status" (Rehill 2012: 23).

Among the various types of organizations, it is also pertinent mentioning the distinction between the so-called "non-profit" and "non-governmental" organizations. "The choice of terminology is itself the subject of much debate and limited agreement" (Bromideh, 2011: 197), and "the terminology adopted by various [...] [authors] is not at all clear" (Badelt, 1999: 10). In addition, rather them attempting to distinguish them, it has been noted that some authors prefer to use the two nomenclatures together, *e.g.*, "NGOs and NPOs" or "NGOs or NPOs". Nevertheless, distinguishing them "is necessary in order to (1) prevent miscommunication and

(2) to illustrate the heterogeneity of what is often called Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) or Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs)" (Badelt, 1999: 10).

In several countries both types of organizations are considered one and the same, and their nomenclatures "are often used interchangeably" (Bromideh, 2011: 198). Some of the common characteristics shared by them are that they "have some degree of formal or institutional existence, *e.g.*, through some form of legal incorporation [...], they are non-profit […] [and] they are private in the sense of institutionally separated from government; they are free to govern themselves" (Badelt, 1999: 10). However, the main difference cited in the literature between "non-profit" and "non-governmental" organizations is the way their monetary resources are distributed. While non-governmental organizations may use their funds to pay their owners and employees for their work, "not-for-profit organization is an organization that does not distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders but instead uses them to help pursue its goals". Taking these concepts into account, the present dissertation found it appropriate to adopt the terminology "non-governmental" instead of "non-profit", as it better describes the organizations that participated in the fieldwork, since they all use their funds to pay their employees.

Non-governmental organizations can vary considerably in terms of size, reach, and resources. Although several non-governmental organizations are community-based and focus only on the local population where they are based, there are "from small organizations with limited resources that operate in a small community mostly with volunteers, to large, national organizations with well-paid professional staff and millions of dollars in expenditures" (Rehill 2012: 23).

The focus of non-governmental organizations is widely diverse, being in areas such as "volunteers services [...], public, legal and political advocacy, [...] humanitarian aid, social welfare and cultural services" (Garkish *et al*. 2017: 1861). When it comes to organizations targeted at immigrants, they "offer an array of services focusing on labor, education, information, business, health, and immigration status" (Rehill 2012: 35). In addition, they are commonly referred to as organizations, associations, or ethnic groups, as they were often set up by members of a particular ethnic or national group to meet the social, political, and economic demands of that group.

4.1.2 Immigration-Driven Non-governmental Organizations

Non-governmental organizations "have been effective agents for positive changes [...] and important players in various progressive movements fighting for the advancement of civil rights" (Vazquez 2008: 23) and is considered one of the most important actors within the immigration context, especially considering the growing number of people immigrating. In addition to political relevance, as mentioned earlier, many of these organizations are focused on the reception and

integration of immigrants. When it comes to integration, "newcomers have a vast range of shelter and support needs, spanning from language training to city familiarization" (Miller 2017: 6). Also, services such as "language training, accessibility to services, community workshops, and even the introduction of culturally sensitive housing projects" (Miller 2017: 5) are commonly offered by non-governmental organizations to alleviate immigrants' difficulties.

Such organizations also contribute to claiming sociocultural and geographical space, by establishing social ties, commercial establishments, and organizing events, demonstrating "the community's right to be distinct and to belong to the larger society" (Vazquez 2008: 39). Furthermore, they play a key role in the collective maintenance of immigrants' national and cultural identity. They

> are formed not only to express a collective identity by people who are settling in a new community; they are also formed because of collective action by a group of people who share the same local public interests or who share social service needs. The rationale for the formation of these organizations is two-fold: to address economic survival and to maintain a cultural identity. (Vazquez 2008: 39)

The necessity of creating non-governmental organizations for immigrants reflects the difficulties triggered by increasing immigration in receiving countries of which "governments seem to lack the capacities or the willingness to handle the multifaceted challenges caused by great numbers of incoming people" (Garkishc, Heidingsfelder, & Beckmann 2017: 1841). Consequently, "social changes along with an emerging lack of confidence in the state's capability to provide welfare [led] the nonprofit sector arose rapidly" (Rehill 2012: 25). Non-governmental organizations "formation is sparked by the presence or absence of a controversial legislative measure" (Wilson 2011: 4), aiming to fulfilling "roles and providing services previously allocated to government agencies" (Christensen 2002: 7).

The difficulty in dealing with immigration-related challenges tends to vary according to the history and profile of the host countries. While countries such as the United States and Canada, namely immigration countries, have a significant immigration history, countries such as Japan are not experienced in dealing with immigration issues, which "has implications for the current and future capability of third sector organizations in the respective countries to cope with contemporary migration and refugee movements" (Garkishc *et al.* 2017: 1850). As a result, in countries such as Japan, the literature on immigration-related third-sector organizations is considerably scarce (Garkishc *et al.* 2017). Notwithstanding, even in countries like the United States, research on this topic is still taking its first steps, as samples of these organizations are relatively recent, having been established over the last two decades (Vazquez 2008).

Neglected by the state, ethnic organizations are significantly necessary "to immigrant integration as they provide much-needed services, educate newcomers on civic and political processes, and empower individuals to participate and contribute to society" (Leon, Maronick, Vita, & Boris 2009: 33).

> Economic, social, resource-based, and cultural needs have long driven immigrant communities to organize [...]. The needs inherent in the migratory condition are many: education, employment, housing, clothing, language barrier, healthcare, and cultural and religious needs, among others [...]. Thus, the nonprofit sector has been of utmost importance for the maintenance of immigrant groups' welfare, *vis-à-vis* their social-economic and civil rights, or human rights as a minority group in the host country. (Rehill 2012: 25)

4.1.3 Partnerships Between the Government and Non-governmental Organizations

In addition to the important role that non-governmental organizations play for immigrant communities; previous studies discuss their relevance to the public sector through partnerships. Collaborative interactions between the non-governmental and governmental sectors are essential as a governance strategy (McNamara 2011). These collaborations happen when multiple institutions "share responsibility for interconnected tasks and work together to pursue collectively complex goals that cannot be accomplished by a single organization" (McNamara 2011: 2).

> In today's complex settings, program implementation and collaboration are tied closely. As scarce resources and limited funding become more common, it seems likely that public, private, and nonprofit organizations will continue to work together in cross-sector partnerships to increase individual capacities. (McNamara 2011: 1)

Cross-sector collaborations can be found under different nomenclatures in the literature, such as "interorganizational collaborations, strategic alliances, social alliances, joint ventures, coalitions, networks, and more recently, collaborative governance" (Meinhard, Lo, & Hyman 2016: 3). Nevertheless, regardless of the nomenclature used, the definition and objectives remain the same, with organizations working along with each other to promote mutual benefits through not only sharing information but also "use of organizational resources or coordination of services" (Meinhard, Lo, & Hyman 2016: 3).

As for the typologies of cross-sector partnerships, there are different categories in terms of methodologies and objectives. Thus, non-governmental organizations can interact in a (1) cooperative way, when they adopt common strategies to achieve common goals, (2) complementary, when they adopt different but complementary strategies to achieve common goals, (3) confrontational, when they adopt different strategies to achieve common goals, (4) co-optitive, when they adopt common strategies towards different ends (Christensen 2002).

When it comes to immigration, the state's focus is almost always on "enforcement and control" (Wilson 2011: 2), leaving other important elements such as integration behind. The public sector shows to have little interest and, therefore, little capacity to solve immigration challenges (Valentinov, Bolečeková, & Vaceková 2017). Due to such limitations, the public sector relies heavily on collaboration with organizations outside the government apparatus, to receive support to meet "societal needs that the public sector could not address" (Valentinov, Bolečeková, & Vaceková 2017: 652).

Notwithstanding, more efforts are needed to "create practices and policies that work in concert with governments to create a safe, secure space for newcomers" (Miller 2017: 11), and enhance policymaking related to "admission and reception, management of diversity, and integration of immigrants" (Dimitriadis *et al*. 2019: 2). Collaboration with non-governmental organizations is considered a significant resource to achieve such goals. One of the main advantages of the partnership between the public sector and non-governmental organizations is the exchange of information, which facilitates understanding the profile and concrete needs of immigrant communities, considering that the contact between non-governmental organizations and immigrant communities tends to be closer (Wilson 2012).

There is a huge gap between governments and immigrant communities, which non-governmental organizations help to fill, serving as an important bridge and communication channel. For example, in the Brazilian community in Japan, "local officials realized the value of the organization as a link to the Brazilian community and worked with the organization to share information about garbage disposal, recycling, disaster management plans, and other municipal works" (Vazquez 2008: 35). Establishing a channel of communication is relevant, especially in immigrant communities that are difficult to access, such as those where the majority of the people are undocumented and are afraid of exposing themselves to the government (Huntoon 2001). In addition to obtaining easier access to the community, governments also use non-governmental organizations to outsource certain tasks, minimizing their expenses (Shields, Drolet & Valenzuela 2016).

> Nonprofit agencies are believed to be better positioned to know the needs and to service immigrant clients thus improving efficiency and satisfaction levels […], while simultaneously resulting in significant cost savings because of the utilization of a cheaper nonprofit, and often non-unionized, workforce. Since nonprofit agencies are often rooted in the immigrant communities that they serve they are deemed better qualified than the state to provide services to immigrants because they have the organizational skills and connections to communities that allow them to better identify newcomers' needs. (Shields, Drolet & Valenzuela 2016: 17)

Although much is discussed about how cross-sector partnerships enhance services, they also have a major role in political debate and advocacy (Vazquez 2008). Non-governmental organizations represent a safe place where immigrants can express their needs, complaints, and desires, organize, and engage in political acts, such as petitions, marches, and rallies, influencing decision-making, since this is not possible for immigrants to do that through voting.

"By raising their voices collectively, immigrant-serving nonprofits bring to the forefront concerns of the disenfranchised and marginalized members of communities" (Vazquez 2008: 38). By doing so, they make it possible to develop policies that correspond to the real demands of immigrants. For example, there was a legalization program that took place in the United States in 1986, in which "nonprofit organizations served as a critical buffer between undocumented applicants and the government. That process led to the legalization of nearly 2.7 million undocumented immigrants out of more than 3 million applicants" (Kamasaki 2014: 121). Those organizations are "central torchbearers in the push for piecemeal forms of immigration legislation" (Wilson (011: 15) such as the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals).

In addition to acting as representatives, organizations invest in the development and direct civic participation of immigrants, offering them the necessary resources to empower them and enable them to act politically and fight for their rights (Leon, Maronick, Vita, & Boris 2009). According to the authors, by doing this, these organizations "increase people's sense of efficacy, provide them with political information, imbue them with political skills, develop their civic virtues, […] teach them to be critical […] [and] appear before city councils to raise their concerns and advocate for themselves" (Leon, Maronick, Vita, & Boris 2009: 19).

Nevertheless, coordination between the state and non-governmental organizations has disadvantages (Vazquez 2008). Most organizations are fueled by donations and grants, which many come from the public sector. For this reason, advocacy by organizations is often severely restricted by governments. "Most settlement service agencies are hampered by government ideals, and recently,

funding of NGOs […] groups who provide services to newcomers comes mostly from the government" (Miller 2017: 9).

> Conflict occurs when the government and nonprofits have different views of where the lines are between permissible acts of nonpartisan policy advocacy and engagement in political intervention. […] The increasing dependence on government funds and contracts has reduced advocacy efforts by nonprofit organizations, as they find it difficult to criticize the source of their funding. (Vazquez 2008: 28)

Despite these limitations, non-governmental organizations are still be considered political actors, given their advocating participation in political causes through coalitions capable of influencing "local and national policy debates on immigration issues that affect their clients on a daily basis" (Wilson 2011: 3).

4.1.4 Non-governmental Organizations Initiatives Aimed at Immigrants

In addition to the importance of non-governmental organizations in the civic and political participation of immigrants, several other roles attributed to these agencies were found in the literature. For example, their work in areas such as "offering food, medical aid, living space, legal advice, translation work, administrative support and a broad array of further services that have been extremely valuable" (Valentinov, Bolečeková, & Vaceková 2017: 652).

> They deliver various social, humanitarian, political, and cultural services to incoming people […] [and have] proven to be a supporting pillar to facilitate the integration, inclusion, and well-being of migrants, by providing such services, improving human welfare, and creating public and social values (Garkishc, Heidingsfelder, & Beckmann 2017: 1842)

Services related to clothing donation, language classes, shelters (Dimitriadis *et al*. 2019), employment, children's needs (Leon *et al.* 2009), mental health support, recreation, daily life navigation, and community engagement (Shields *et al.* 2016) are also widely mentioned in the bibliography. When it comes to health care, there are cases where non-governmental organizations have become "the primary healthcare provision for migrants outside the reception centres" (Dimitriadis *et al*. 2019: 10).

Integration is a central focus of most organizations. In order "to promote such integration, immigrant nonprofit organizations operate as holistic and multiservice providers, delivering a range of culturally sensitive services to their immigrant constituencies" (Wilson 2011: 3). Such organizations have a dual role, as in addition to empowering immigrants by offering relevant services to become "full members of the societal sphere […] [they also promote change in society and local governments that] enable both migrants and the respective systems to set the foundation for a successful integration" (Garkishc, Heidingsfelder, & Beckmann 2017: 1842).

Learning relevant skills, so that immigrant can meet their daily needs is at the core of integration. Thus, several organizations strive to empower immigrants to deal with daily life in the host country autonomously and independently, including

> everyday tasks such as setting up bank accounts, making and keeping medical appointments, or setting up a small business, as well as more daunting challenges like raising children who are exposed to the culture and norms of both their parents and their American peers. (Leon *et al*. 2009: 19)

Also, in order to promote the economic development of immigrants, services such as training, qualification courses, "counseling on career planning; job-find, resume writing and interview skills courses; workshops that would benefit the educational experience of immigrant youth; acquisition of technical language for certain professions" (Shields, Drolet, & Valenzuela 2016: 5) are commonly offered, as well as mediation between employees and employers.

While promoting integration, they facilitate the maintenance of national identity, offering a space where they can, in addition to receiving support, interact with people with a similar sociocultural background, facilitating understanding and empathy (Leon *et al*. 2009). Similarly, these organizations serve as community centers where newcomers find a comfort zone where they can behave according to their cultural norms, maintain their ethnic identities, and find solidarity (Rehill 2012). Given the identity proximity, these organizations can help "in a culturally competent way, whether that meant having multicultural and bilingual staff […], explicit language access policies […], or opportunities for ethnic community-building among clients" (Wilson 2011: 8). Furthermore, non-governmental organizations play a key role in integration, as they

> help individuals and families find a community; achieve economic stability and self-sufficiency; learn and respect a new social and political system, and become legal permanent residents or citizens. In the long run, […] [they] ease cultural and language

> incorporation while maintaining ethnic identity and solidarity, which are crucial to empowering newcomers to secure their place in American society. (Leon *et al*. 2009: 18)

When it comes to maintaining ethnic identity, in addition to building a sense of community and solidarity among immigrants, previous researchers also emphasize the role of other ethnic facilities such as churches. Like non-governmental organizations, religious centers often also take responsibility for the public sector in the settlement of immigrants (Dimitriadis *et al*. 2019). Meanwhile, in the churches solidarity between Brazilians becomes more easily perceptible, being "a catalyst of Brazilian ethnic manifestation. It is the one place where Brazilians are fully Brazilian and only Portuguese is spoken, producing a feeling [...] that awakens their identity as a community" (Rehil 2012: 35).

In addition to churches, non-governmental organizations also partner with various other types of agencies to strengthen themselves and expand the reach of their services. "Immigrant-serving nonprofits also collaborate with other groups in their geographic area. Most of these relationships involve referrals to one another but also, to a lesser extent, programmatic partnerships and grant collaboration" (Leon *et al*. 2009: 24). Also, to remain active, they rely on the support "not only with clients, volunteers, and activists, but also with the media, public sector, foundations, and other allies" (Wilson 2012: 5).

As mentioned, several services are provided to immigrants by non-governmental organizations. In order to understand the importance of such services, it is first mandatory to investigate which type of immigrants is being benefited, *i.e.*, refugees, or economic immigrants. Outlining the characteristics of the target population and its specific needs is an essential step "in order to provide adequate, effective and efficient services for migrants" (Garkishc, Heidingsfelder, & Beckmann 2017: 1850). In the case of refugees, for example, they tend "to enjoy higher levels of state support for settlement" (Shields, Drolet, & Valenzuela 2016: 12), when compared to economic immigrants.

Nevertheless, when it comes to economic immigrants, which is the case of the Brazilian immigrants approached by this dissertation, especially if they are undocumented, the main source of support tends to come from the third sector. To those immigrants, the main contributions are found in areas such as "basic services, human development, and public, legal and political advocacy and to a lesser degree, health care" (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1881). Also, "economic development, [and] psychological health care" services (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1881) can be found. The diagram below, reveals the main services offered by non-governmental organizations. The diagram is divided into the categories "providing basic services" focused on meeting the primary needs of immigrants, such as health, safety, and well-being; "developing capacities" focused on developing immigrants' skills

socially, professionally, and economically; and "giving voice", focused on participation and political advocacy.

Figure 4 – 1 – Services Offered by Non-governmental Organizations to Immigrants

Providing Basic Services

I. Safety
- Physical protection
- Shelter from prosecution
- Feeling safe
- Protection of women and minors

II. Humanitarian Aid
- Development cooperation & development aid
- Disaster relief
- Aid e.g. nutrition
- Water supply
- Development Programs
- Collection of Denotations
- Refugee camps management

III. Health
- Traumatization
- Mental therapy and health
- Hospital visits
- Medical and Physicians Aid
- Psychological Aid
- Providing primary-healthcare programs
- Migrant community health promotion
- Voluntary doctors in refugee camps

IV. Well Being
- Improve quality of live
- Belonging
- Sports
- Offer leisure activities
- Training programs
- Get together programs like reading rooms, entertainment facilities and outdoor activities
- Religious affairs and holidays

V. Provision of social welfare
- Assist with settlement
- Offer accommodations, shelter and housing services and programs
- Insurance
- Resettlement
- Social work
- Access to services e.g. health, education
- Provide Migration and Asylum-Seeker-Centers
- Adjustment programs
- Inclusion in social service systems
- Poverty Reduction Plan
- Interpreting services & language support
- Translation services
- Provide food packages
- Increase the living standards of migrants

Developing Capacities

VI. Human Development
- Knowledge transfer
- Language support, training and teaching
- Math training
- Skill building programs
- Education & Teaching services and programs
- Self-help
- Empowerment
- Information provider
- Support the access to classes
- Assist in schools
- Provide schools
- Servant leadership program

VII. Economic Development & Employment
- Human Capital
- Career and workforce development & training
- Economic capital
- Skill and capability development and training
- Job training
- Increase employability of migrants
- Hiring migrants as TSOs employees
- Economic network
- Labor Rights
- Working conditions
- Economic inequality
- Ensure economic survival
- Financial Aid/Support & cash assistance
- Subsidized programs
- Assist with work permits and contracts

VIII. Acculturation
- Cultural network
- Cultural capital
- Cultural identity
- Programs and support to become 'good' citizens
- Facilitate acculturation

IX. Social Capital
- Citizenship
- Social inequality
- Social network
- Civil services/ civic engagement provided by migrants
- Step from civil services to paid work
- Community engagement
- Enforce civil society and participatory democracy
- Encourage to do civic contributions
- Develop refugees to become 'good' citizens

Giving Voice

X. Public Advocacy
- Media coverage and campaigns
- (Mass) media, social media and public advocacy
- Fighting discrimination
- Awareness building
- Create positive attitudes towards migrants
- Improve the conditions of migrants
- Protest
- Societal change
- Representation
- Being an 'immigrant voice'
- Bundle the voices
- Advocacy research
- Empowerment for minority groups
- Being a mediator
- Campaigns
- Promote solidarity
- Create positive attributes towards migrants
- Fill the missing institutional gap
- Provide information
- Gain access to programs
- Create policy proposals
- Build networks
- Transnational advocacy

XI. Political Advocacy
- Deliver the migrants' voice to politicians
- Deliver reports to politics
- Political networks
- Political fights
- Campaign work
- Social movement
- Political education
- Political mobilization
- Apolitical
- Protector for democratic values
- Writing Petitions
- Create networks
- Influence the policy agenda

XII. Legal Advocacy
- Fight against persecution
- Legal prosecution & advice
- Fighting for minority, human and labor rights
- Legal consultation
- Legal Training and Workshops
- Educational work what rights migrant have in their host country
- Law educational programs
- Supervision

Research

Source: Garkishc *et al*. (2017: 1854)

The diagram shows that basic services, especially those aimed at integration, are among the most often provided, given their importance in promoting a good overall adaptation of immigrants to the host country, enabling them, for instance, to perform daily tasks independently. Moreover, such services aim to promote "successful integration and inclusion of migrants within all different spheres (economic, political, and legal and society and community). This process requires a multitude of different services that jointly enable migrants to cope with the conditions in the new country" (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1862).

In addition to training to perform tasks, in order to enhance the well-being of immigrants, organizations offer services such as "leisure activities, sports, and cultural and religious services, *e.g.*, parades and traditional festivals" (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1855). Regarding health care, organizations help immigrants navigate the local health system, while others directly provide primary medical services to immigrants. Given the vulnerability that immigrants face, especially when undocumented, security-oriented services are also widely offered. "Safety in the form of physical protection and shelter from prosecution is needed to guarantee the sheer survival of migration actors" (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1855). When there is a need, organizations are also active in providing humanitarian aid, such as but not limited to "disaster relief, nutrition aid, shelter, immediate health services, development programs, the collection and distribution of donations [such] as delivering humanitarian services to migrants crossing the Mexican desert to illegally enter the USA" (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1855).

Once basic needs have been taken care of, more emphasis can be placed on immigrant development. Development-related services may focus primarily on education, such as language courses, schooling for children, and then professional qualifications. Educational programs "represent a prerequisite to succeed in the job market" (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1857). Regarding professional qualifications, these organizations play an important role in

> empower migrants to successfully participate in the job market in the host country. […] [Non-governmentals] mainly provide job training to increase the employability of migrants […] including skill training to compensate for the low education of migrants […], practical work training […], and specific training, *e.g.*, regarding computer skills. (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1857)

Finally, services aimed at political advocacy for immigrants are very relevant in the "public, legal and political spheres [...] to bundle the voices of migrants, *e.g.*, regarding working conditions, education and health services" (Garkishc *et al*. 2017: 1859). Among the programs

launched to enhance political and civic participation, there are “legal advocacy, legal advice, trainings, [and] workshops” (Garkishc *et al.* 2017: 1860).

4.2 Psychological and Sociocultural Adaptation of Brazilians in the United States and the Role of Non-governmental Organizations

The United States of America is home to the largest Brazilian immigrant community overseas and remains the number one option among Brazilians who wish to live and work abroad. Living abroad, more precisely in North America or Europe, often confers status and popularity, being seen with admiration by Brazilians (Irigaray & Freitas 2014). For several people, “living abroad was a source of pride for family and friends, who had stayed in Brazil, showed a certain envy and desire to make the same move” (Irigaray & Freitas 2014: 635). However, the reality behind the supposed glamor of living abroad proves to be much harsher than what people paint, since “being a foreigner, learning new social codes, sometimes a new language, adapting to a new routine is a source of stress and suffering” (Irigaray & Freitas 2014: 635). The American dream can be much less fascinating than imagined by those who remain in Brazil from “a contact with the US through tourism or successful reports from relatives and friends” (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017: 38).

Previous studies have cataloged several factors that have been shown to significantly influence the well-being and/or the abilities to deal with daily life in the United States. Further “knowledge of the language, legislation and other local political, economic and cultural characteristics” (Ribeiro 2015: 18) among immigrants is necessary to better cope with life in the United States. Meanwhile, factors such as discrimination and “racial and anti-immigrant experiences” (Joseph 2011: 171) can negatively affect the mental health of immigrants and trigger “negative life changes, which can also affect physical health” (Joseph 2011: 171). Furthermore, the length of residence in the United States appears to be proportional to the possibility of developing depressive conditions, as "the longer in the immigrant remains in the United States and becomes acculturated, the incidence of negative health outcomes increases" (Joseph 2011: 171). Moreover, other factors such as sociocultural distance and socioeconomic downgrade (compared to that in Brazil) were also pointed out by the authors. Notwithstanding, no other factor has proved to be more relevant and harmful to Brazilian immigrants in the United States than documentation status.

4.2.1 Life as Undocumented Immigrants

One of the main contrasts perceived between the Brazilian community in Japan and in the United States is that the first is composed almost entirely of regular immigrants, and the second is formed of more than half of undocumented immigrants (Fusco 2002). In 2008 in Japan, the count of Brazilian immigrants in an undocumented situation was only 360 people, while in the United States there were 798,000 undocumented immigrants and 452,000 immigrants in regular status (Marinucci 2008). Moreover, in states that traditionally host Brazilians such as Massachusetts, the number of undocumented immigrants was up to 7 times higher than that of regular ones.

In the United States, Brazilians are constantly feeling worried and are always looking for a way to achieve legalization, as "stable or legal documentation status was associated with more favorable reports of quality of life in the United States" (Goza 1992: 175). Obtaining legalization is seen as a "rite of passage that divides, from the point of view of the immigrant's subjectivity, a life between a before and an after" (Magalhães & Buttermen 2017: 208). Becoming regular drastically transforms the lives of Brazilians, as in addition to opening the doors for them to access the formal labor market, and reducing insecurity and vulnerability, it brings more tranquility to the daily life of the immigrants, therefore, impacting their psychological, sociocultural, and economic adaptation (Ribeiro 1998). Therefore,

> having attained legal immigration status was one of the most important predictors of sociocultural adaptation. […] Having official residence permits not only facilitates access to services and assistance but also to the specific cultural knowledge shared by the members of the host culture. One possible explanation is the greater vulnerability and social exclusion of those who do not possess any legal status in the host country. […] 'Illegal' immigrants frequently have to avoid going out on the street because of the threat of being repatriated, and in general, do not perceive themselves as equal members of society but rather as invisible shadows. This can lead to feelings of defenselessness and fear and, therefore withdrawal from society. (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez & Furnham 2006: 12)

Notwithstanding, those who cannot manage to regularize their status are forced to live with the difficulties and restrictions that everyday life as an irregular immigrant brings. The dangers of irregular immigration begin even before arriving in the United States, as thousands of people, without a visa, opt to cross the border by land from Mexico through an institutionalized underground system, with the support of agencies in Brazil and criminals not infrequently related to human

trafficking networks (Fazito & Rios-Neto 2008). Thus, fear added to the physical and emotional distress of crossing the desert leads to great stress, harming the well-being of the immigrants.

After arriving in the United States, being undocumented keeps bringing several negative consequences to the lives of immigrants, being "latent, therefore, the dehumanization of these foreign immigrant individuals" (Becker 2013: 12). In addition to the natural challenges related to migration, such as dealing with sociocultural differences and family separation, “the qualitative experience of being a racialized and undocumented immigrant in the United States facilitates various stresses among this group that can affect their mental health” (Joseph 2011: 178), and “irregular residence in the USA entails a set of consequences that seriously harm the integrative process and the psychosocial balance of migrants” (Marinucci 2005: 7).

Fearing exposure, undocumented Brazilians purposefully make themselves invisible in their social lives, as it is a “basic rule of survival to remain hidden” (Marinucci 2015: 14). “They restrict their social life, go out little to avoid exposure, avoid suspicious” people and places, limit their networks to old friends, avoid getting into conflicts so as not to be denounced” (Ribeiro 1998: 11), triggering a “sense of unease while living in the United States [...] [and of] never being able to let their guard down” (Joseph 2011: 175), affecting their mental health and reducing chances of acquiring new relevant skills to deal with life in the United States, decreasing both sociocultural and psychological adaptation levels. These immigrants are constantly haunted by negative thoughts like

> concerns about being dragged from their beds in the middle of the night and being deported, which led to sleepless nights, despite exhausting labor-filled days […]. This fear was constant and certainly had implications for their overall well-being and especially their mental health. (Joseph 2011: 175)

In addition to the damage to mental health, being out of status also negatively impacts the physical health of immigrants, as they choose not to seek medical care for fear of exposure, and for their inability of navigating through a “fragmented, confused and hostile healthcare system. [In addition,] most employers do not provide health insurance and immigrants are unable to pay a premium insurance and/or medical care and still face language and cultural barriers” (Duarte, Junior & Siqueira 2013: 368), negatively affecting their sociocultural adaptation levels, which in turn, affects their psychological well-being.

Notwithstanding, even considering all the disadvantages of living in the United States, especially as an undocumented immigrant, immigrants show to prefer life in the United States, given the greater purchasing power there and the difficulties they used to face in Brazil (Cruz & Barreto 2016). Despite the difficulties,

> the overall impression [...] is the predominance of a feeling of reward. Work is hard, and taxes are not low, but seeing that the result of work effectively becomes quality of life causes a kind of citizen joy. The city works, the traffic flows, the public schools educate, and the public services seem to be endowed with the property of serving. It is as if the Brazilian immigrants were living in the conditions they would like to live in Brazil. (Cruz & Barreto 2016: 25)

4.2.2 Work-Related Difficulties

In addition to vulnerability, the types of work, often hard or unhealthy, performed by Brazilian immigrants also pose a risk to their physical and mental well-being. Similar to the "5K" jobs performed by the Brazilian *dekasegi* in Japan, in the United States, the jobs performed by Brazilians are known to be heavy, dirty, and risky, in addition to offering low wages and not conferring social prestige. Thus,

> given the potentially dangerous and hazardous nature of their jobs, especially in construction, a high number of preventable injuries and occupational diseases should be expected in this population. Exposure to toxic chemicals, ergonomic hazards, and hazardous conditions, such as working with dangerous machinery and on roofs, are common. (Siqueira & Jansen 2012: 486)

In addition to the poor working conditions, "overwork seems to be a common problem for Brazilian workers in Massachusetts" (Siqueira & Jansen 2012: 486), with work hours ranging from 10 to 14 hours a day, 6-7 days a week, with virtually no breaks throughout the year. The reason for overworking is the economic objective of these immigrants, who want to save money as soon as possible to return to Brazil. Temporary Brazilian immigrants are obsessed with "earning money in the United States at any physical or psychological costs, which could contribute to various physical and mental health problems" (Joseph 2011: 176).

In addition, several Brazilians who cross the border arrive in the United States with debts that can reach USD 25,000 to be paid off with the *coyotes* (people smugglers). Thus, "in the first months or years [they] will have to work simply to pay off the debt with the *coyotes*, relatives, or friends, sometimes already residing in the US" (Marinucci 2005: 10). For this reason, Brazilians refer to the United States as "*Escravos Unidos*", translated from Portuguese into English as the "United Slaves". The consequences of overwork combined with insalubrity can have high costs for

immigrants, as “this association of physical and psychological strain can lead to occupational diseases and occupational accidents [...], in addition to mental stress” (Junior & Siqueira 2013: 368). Needless to mention, in times of economic recession, such as in 2008, given the vulnerability of these immigrants, thousands were deeply affected and were forced to return to Brazil (Brum 2018).

Another trigger of work-related psychological discomfort is the professional downgrade faced by undocumented immigrants, which leads to low levels of self-esteem. “In the early days, they are forced to accept low-skilled jobs, sometimes sacrificing the occupational status they had in Brazil in exchange for higher wages" (Marinucci 2005: 8). After arriving in the United States, Brazilians “enter this sector of the labor market [...] and quickly lose their previous social identity. This disjunction between social roots and current reality provides a ‘cram’ in downward mobility” (Aloatti 2014: 9).

Furthermore, illiteracy in English also significantly limits access to better work opportunities, makes it difficult to navigate daily life, and consequently, negatively affects the psychological well-being of immigrants, harming psychological and sociocultural adaptation, and economic mobility. Such

> limiting factor has an ever-present effect in their health and safety at work. Lack of English proficiency probably limits the options of better jobs and may expose immigrant workers to hazards that could be prevented if they attended training courses, understood better their coworkers and supervisors, and could read warning signs in English, to cite just a few factors that impact immigrant worker health and safety. (Siqueira & Jansen 2012: 486).

Being undocumented, being Latino, and performing low-skilled jobs lead to not rare cases of discrimination, negatively affecting the psychological well-being of these immigrants, triggering symptoms such as “depression, sleep disorders, neurotic disorders, anxiety, musculoskeletal pain, angina, gastrointestinal disorders, and heart disease, among others” (Siqueiran & Jansen 2012: 486). Immigrants

> encountered discrimination in the form of exploitation from employers aware of their undocumented status. In addition to this, respondents’ living conditions and being away from family members in Brazil also caused additional distress. Thus, the combination of discrimination experiences and challenges of being an immigrant took a considerable toll on the physical and mental well-being of respondents in the form of weight gain and loss, lack of sleep, anxiety, fear, and depression. (Joseph 2011: 178)

In terms of social and labor security, vulnerability is often stressed among the main difficulties highlighted in the literature, considering that without documents immigrants have little to no legal rights. For being undocumented, immigrants are recruited without contracts, making any claim unlikely (Becker 2013). For this reason, many immigrants, even in times of need, refuse to resort to legal protection resources, as they fear having their status discovered and being repatriated. "The stigma of being a foreigner [...] and the fear of deportation stop attempts of […] retaliation in the face of abuse" (Becker 2013: 96).

Consequently, Brazilian immigrants often suffer from exploitation in their workplaces, as in addition to not having access to social security, they fear trying to look for their rights. Meanwhile, the employers, aware of the status of their employees, exploit them and take advantage of their permanent state of fear, which can trigger mental issues such as anxiety, panic attacks, and depression, jeopardizing the psychological adaptation outcomes. In turn, given their "structurally subordinate" condition (Ribeiro 1998: 11), plus the improbability of finding better professional opportunities, undocumented immigrants end up subject to psychological, physical, and material abuse.

> Undocumented migrants experienced the additional burden of being exploited by employers who threatened to report them to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Such demanding work schedules often facilitated poor diets that contributed to weight gain and lack of sleep, which yielded other potential health issues for respondents. (Joseph 2011: 175)

4.2.3 Challenges Faced by Brazilians Immigrant Children

In the case of undocumented children and adolescents, restrictions are observed mainly in education. "The international literature mostly suggests that immigrant [documentation] status is a risk factor for youth's adaptation" (Motti-Stefanidi 2018: 8). Moreover, the inability of parents to help their children in their learning, also due to the parent's illiteracy in English, jeopardizes their academic performance, triggering "a lot of anxiety and a feeling of inadequacy and shame" (Sales & Loureiro 2004: 7), decreasing their feelings of well-being and, consequently, psychological adaptation outcomes.

The educational system in the United States provides that every child, regardless of migratory status, with the right to attend school, "they are, in fact, obligated - like any other students - to attend school up to the minimum age established by law" (Sales & Loureiro 201: 28). Nevertheless, access to superior education is significantly more difficult, compelling undocumented

students to drop out of high school, and jeopardizing the community's economic adaptation. In the United States,

> these young people, until they complete high school [...], can attend American public schools, regardless of their migratory status. However, when they complete this stage and seek to enter college [...], their migratory status becomes an impediment to continuing their studies, as undocumented immigrants do not have access to scholarship programs, which only US citizens can apply for. This introduces a difference between young immigrants, generating those who will be able to enter university and those who cannot apply for scholarships and must pay as foreign students – which makes access to higher education very expensive. (Sales & Loureiro 201: 5)

Even though Brazilian children in the United States are pointed out to be gradually highly integrated, endowed with school capital, skills, and knowledge similar to their American classmates, their chances of continuing with studies beyond high school and growing professionally are extremely low due to the lack of documentation, forcing them to remain at the same professional level as their parents, in low-paid jobs with no prospects for advancement (Assis, Meriz & Ihá 2006). In other words, although the school initially serves to integrate immigrant children into American society, in the end, it also ends up segregating them if they are undocumented. As a result, such circumstances seriously damage their levels of personal satisfaction and jeopardizes the economic adaptation and mobility of the Brazilian community in the long term. "The lack of access to university thus generates losses that go beyond the individual and family sphere, indirectly affecting the entire community and delaying its process of maturation and integration" (Sales & Loureiro 2014: 25). In more extreme cases, it can "lead these teenagers to feel frustrated and tend to enter the world of crime. In other words, they are tempted to join the gangs and drug culture that plague US cities" (Sales & Loureiro 2014: 11). Hence, being or not undocumented can "mean the difference between having access to college or not, between working and studying [...] That is, for the second generation the issue of migratory status becomes having a burden that it didn't have for your parents" (Sales & Loureiro 2014: 11).

4.2.4 Discrimination

Discrimination is another factor widely highlighted in the literature given its damage to psychological well-being and integration, and possible learning of new skills, with the host society. Assis and Ihá (2007) state that "confrontations and conflicts generated by prejudice and racism [are]

always present in the daily lives of immigrants on US soil" (p. 16). Joseph (2011) attributes the anti-immigrant discrimination suffered by Brazilians to the fact that they are undocumented and Latino. According to the author's data, 50% of his respondents reported having suffered discrimination at some point by factors such as "racial classification, lack of English language proficiency, or being perceived as Hispanic and undocumented" (p. 171). In the author's words,

> such experiences of racial and anti-immigrant discrimination often influence the mental health of Latino immigrants [...]. [...] Existing studies on mental health among Latino immigrants, [...] demonstrate that the majority of this research has shown that racial and anti-immigrant discrimination is associated with poor mental health and negative life changes, which can also affect physical health. (p. 171)

Among the younger generation of immigrants, despite the higher degree of integration with mainstream society, discrimination is still present (Assis & Ihá 2007). It is within schools where the main difficulties occur, considering that the immigrant children attend schools in poorer and sometimes violent neighborhoods, together with other ethnic minorities. Thus, they end up suffering "identity shock, inter and intra-related to linguistics, sociocultural and political issues, in a process of exclusion and racism" (Assis & Ihá 2007p. 18).

4.2.5 Social Support from the Brazilian Community: A Source of Survival

When it comes to social support, given the difficulty in integrating with the local society due to factors such as limited access to the formal labor market, sociocultural differences, not speaking English, and anti-immigrant discrimination, little is found in the literature regarding the social support from the American citizens. On the other hand, because they live on the edges of the mainstream society and hardly have access to any formal means, Brazilians find their main source of psychological and social support within conational communities, essential for their survival.

Unlike Japan, where Brazilian communities are not necessarily centralized and are concentrated in regions where there are factories, in the United States, the concentration occurs necessarily in regions where large and long-established communities of Brazilians, as in the states of Massachusetts and Florida.

Furthermore, in contrast to immigration to Japan, where there are contracting companies that take care of the whole immigration procedures, from visa applications to housing upon arrival, in the United States, this kind of support comes from relatives and friends already living there. Before leaving Brazil, prospective immigrants need to "associate with people they trust, such as

relatives and friends, which develops and strengthens social ties among migrants and between countries of origin and destination" (Fusco, Hirano & Peres 2012: 28). Approximately 56% of Brazilian immigrants relied on Brazilians who were already in the United States to immigrate to that country (Fusco 2005). For this reason, like the contracting companies in Japan, the social networks in the United States occupy "fundamental intermediation spaces" (Fazito & Rio-Netos 2008: 313) in unauthorized immigration. Thus, social networks are an important tool to enable Brazilians before and after immigrating to the United States. "Interpersonal networks of established information minimize and bar risks. They help in the immigrant's departure, as well as in the destination, reducing or eliminating difficulties that could be present in their absence" (Lucas & Siqueira 2017: 271).

After arriving, approximately 91% of Brazilian immigrants relied on friends or relatives to obtain housing, and 86% to obtain their first job (Fusco 2005). Thus, it is within the Brazilian communities where Brazilians find their "first support for staying in place and, above all, the information needed to access the US labor market and other basic services" (Marinucci 2015: 11). In Florida, about 54% of Brazilians only hired other Brazilians (Cruz, Falcão & Barreto 2017), proving that several "Brazilian small business owners—ethnic restaurants and stores, construction businesses, and cleaning companies were the most common—prefer to hire Brazilians" (Siqueira & Jansen 2012: 486), being the community an essential source for new immigrants to be able to give their first steps and learn how to deal with daily-life challenges in the United States, influencing sociocultural adaptation, which will influence their well-being and psychological adaptation.

Relatedness with other Brazilians also plays an important role in the levels of well-being and satisfaction of immigrants. 90% of Brazilians have declared that their friends were mainly Brazilians (Goza 1992). Within Brazilian enclaves, although there are also cases where Brazilians exploit other Brazilians as previously explained, in most cases, "migrants find support and solidarity [...] which has the effect of causing an improvement in the health of those involved, as the feeling of vulnerability is overcome, and the individual feels strengthened within of the group" (Matsue 2012: 4). When with other Brazilians, immigrants encounter identity references similar to their own, which favors their psychosocial health (Marinucci 2015). In line with that, "individuals with meaningful social relationships (*e.g.*, relatives, friends) that provide psychological and other types of resources that tend to have better physical and mental health than individuals who do not" (Joseph 2011: 176), enhancing their psychological adaptation outcomes.

Among immigrant children and adolescents, the social and emotional support received from other Brazilians, and especially from their family, is also fundamental to their psychological well-being (Assis, Meriz & Ihá 2006). Social support from the family significantly impacts the experience of young immigrants during their adaptation processes, such as their integration with

American society, access to opportunities, and school and professional performance (Sales & Lourero 2004).

4.2.6 The Emergence of Community-Based Non-governmental Organizations and Their Significance

As social networks got stronger and more solid, the Brazilians began to associate and form organizations such as NGOs and Churches, to socialize, expand their space, cover their range of support, understand the problems faced by the community and defend their interests in front of local governments and Brazilian consulates (Brum 2018). As the majority of Brazilian immigrants are undocumented, "social networks develop and then expand and even become institutionalized over time" (Zell & Skop 2011: 1), becoming a significant source of support.

"The role of associations is historically important in the migratory path of any group [...] [as they] represent a space for conviviality, education, communication, social organization, socialization, information, reinterpretation of traditions, solidarity, and mediation between the original and the host society" (Brum (2018: 11), being very necessary and important for both psychological, sociocultural, and economic adaptation. Such organizations also have a strong political appeal, having already attracted "three ministers of the [Brazilian former President] Lula government to debate the community's problems" (Sales 2006: 88).

Non-governmental organizations are a significant representation of the organization of immigrants (Oliveira 2011). The importance of these organizations created, in most cases, by Brazilians can be verified in different spheres of life for immigrants. Studies classify Brazilian Non-governmental organizations into two main categories: those with cultural objectives and those with social objectives. Cultural ones promote the "valuation of Brazilian culture, aiming to foster a climate of intercultural dialogue and, at the same time, guarantee the migrants contact with identity references abandoned upon leaving their own country" (Marinucci 2005: 13), through activities such as music, culinary and religious practices. The social aspects offer support in the process of "insertion of Brazilians in the United States, trying to respond to their most basic and immediate needs, such as the search for employment and housing, knowledge or improvement of the language, access to health and educational services, [and] obtaining documentation" (Marinucci 2005: 13).

Those organizations, which are often called ethnic associations, not only play a fundamental role in maintaining the identity of immigrants but also help "to overcome social isolation; affirm group values and beliefs; provide care support to its members; and act in defense of their interests and in the resolution of conflicts with the receiving society" (Brum 2018: 12).

Furthermore, these associations appear to be significant in promoting contact between immigrants and mainstream society, serving as an intermediary.

Given the difficulties faced by Brazilian children, “a mobilization of social actors for the rights of undocumented students was strengthened, including the involvement of Brazilian community leaders” (Marinucci 2015: 14). Several non-governmental organizations are strongly engaged in supporting the studies of immigrant children and fighting to facilitate their access to university. These organizations promote relevant discussions regarding "perspectives for the approval of bills in favor of the undocumented student, [...] stages of the admission process in North American universities, [...] information available to the high school student school, which are not always easily within reach of the immigrant teenager” (Sales & Loureiro 2004: 31), aiming to boost their development and set them free from low-skilled jobs.

Another form of association frequently explored by the bibliography, given its relevant role in the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of immigrants, is the religious centers. Like non-governmental organizations, churches provide support in areas where the government, due to undocumented status and the negligence of Brazilian and American public bodies, fail to act. Thus, immigration and religion are intimately connected, and as Brazilian communities become established, the larger the presence of churches is (Brum 2018). Furthermore, churches offer important resources for well-being and the capacity to deal with life in the United States, by providing

> practical help for immigrants [as] English classes, help in finding employment, winter clothing donations, and financial assistance for the unemployed. Furthermore, these spaces are places of great sociability, with social centers, and also regularly hold dinners and other leisure activities[...]. Finally, the discourse of churches [...] can be comforting to immigrants, encouraging hard work, prosperity, and social mobility, which is decidedly in keeping with their personal aspirations. (Margolis 2001: 2)

"In addition to spiritual comfort, immigrants also find a space for sociability and help in churches, with indications for their most immediate demands for housing, work, schools for their children, and health services" (Sales 2006: 81). Also, churches serve as a platform to discuss the interests and fight for immigrants' rights, being used “so that leaders could talk about the reform of immigration laws and call the faithful to the mobilizations” (Sales 2006: 75). As previously mentioned, especially for the Latino community, relying on religious faith is an important coping strategy for dealing with stress and attaining comfort, being, an essential resource for their psychological adaptation.

In addition, the private sector, such as stores, supermarkets, restaurants, and offices, which currently exist in large numbers in cities with a high concentration of Brazilians, also play an important role in the adaptation of immigrants, helping them to cope with life in the United States and turning the host country into a more welcoming and comfortable environment for them. In cities with a high concentration of Brazilians, it is possible to find offices for “legal advice, insurance, assistance on legal migration issues, [...] [and services as] buying and selling real estate, investments, remittances” (Aloatti 2014: 2). It is also possible to find “many Brazilian medical professionals, dentists, lawyers, and accountants, who have, to a large extent, a Brazilian clientele” (Brum 2018: 247).

When it comes to the rights of Brazilian immigrants in the United States, a few mentions were found about the Brazilian consulates. Nevertheless, due to the increase of Brazilian communities abroad and the significant remittances sent by them to Brazil, the Brazilian government started to pay more attention to their existence. One of the achievements in which Brazilian consulates in the United States were involved was health insurance at more affordable prices for immigrants, regardless of their status (Brum 2018). Furthermore, other relevant areas of activity for consulates are

> measures related to circulation and documentation; encouraging migration regularization; the promotion of investments that sought to attract remittances; the promotion and reinforcement of language learning and the promotion of national culture; the development of increased actions in the areas of education, health, legal support, social security, labor rights, in addition to other types of social assistance. (Brum 2019: 81)

Another important creation by the consulates is the citizens' councils. Citizens' councils are an association of community members named as its representatives with members of Brazilian consulates, who together seek to discuss the main demands of the community and outline ways to meet them. The main topics discussed among council members are consular services, worker rights, anti-discrimination measures, health, education, and integration with American society (Ribeiro 2015).

4.3 Psychological and Sociocultural Adaptation of Brazilians in Japan and the Role of NGOs

Despite the scarce existing bibliography on the adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in Japan through the lenses of psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation, previous studies

have endeavored to investigate issues related to well-being and difficulties in dealing with daily life in Japan. The Brazilian community in Japan, faced with a country with sociocultural and legal characteristics so peculiar and different, has a considerable level of difficulty in understanding and behaving in Japan, which tends to negatively affect their lives on a personal, social, professional, and economic level (Costa 2007). Among Brazilians, "homesickness, not knowing the language, discrimination and overwork appeared, in this order, as the greatest difficulties faced in Japan" (Iwakami and Sugohara 1996: 17). Furthermore, due to the economic goals of the Brazilian immigrants in Japan, overworking to make money faster is a common behavior among them.

Also, factors such as job dissatisfaction, professional downgrade (given that several immigrants who worked in white-collar jobs in Brazil, work as factory workers in Japan), lack of perspective on returning to Brazil, relationship with the host society, emotional support from fellow peers, knowledge of sociocultural norms and quality of life (especially in terms of monetary gains and violence) significantly affect their well-being and their daily lives (Yoshida 2019). In addition, there are several Brazilians in Japan who report that "they have become used to life in Japan, but they do not necessarily feel satisfied" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 68).

The difficulties encountered by Brazilian immigrants in Japan have drawn the attention of academia, given the "numerous psychological and health complications for Brazilian immigrants" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 19). Meanwhile, emotions, such as strong feelings of vulnerability, end in physical and mental disorders, leading to at least 3% of the Brazilian community in Japan having been diagnosed with depression (Matsue 2012), a percentage believed to be much higher, considering that still few Brazilians in Japan tend to seek psychological assistance. Moving to

> to a different environment always involves the psychic challenge of containing the new and the unknown. From an interdisciplinary perspective, [...] beyond the individual dimension, there are historical and social positions, opportunities, and structural barriers in the trajectory of people that dramatically influence insertion in different places. (Ueno 2010: 13)

Several Brazilians decide to emigrate out of need and not because they wish to. Therefore, the majority of them are not psychologically prepared and conditioned for the challenges that life as immigrants entails, and have their mental health seriously affected, impacting both their sociocultural and psychological adaptation levels. Moreover, family separation, given that several people immigrate without their spouses and/or children, and social isolation brings loneliness, serving as a trigger for depression (Osawa 2006). Therefore, "the economic rewards of immigration

hardly compensate for the psychological conflicts and social isolation they are compelled to experience” (Quintana 2013: 27). Brazilian immigrants

> are subject to an unfavorable social environment as a negative immigrant minority in Japan. This includes not only Japanese ethnic prejudice and "discrimination" and their low social status as immigrant workers, but the stress of migration and living in a foreign society, an uncertain economic future back home, loneliness and homesickness, and family separation (for some), and the physical difficulties of manual labor. (Tsuda 1996: 375)

4.3.1 The Hardships of Life as a *Dekasegi* Worker

In the workplace, Brazilians in Japan find the most significant obstacles to their psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Yoshida 2019). During their life as *dekasegi*, Brazilians’ time is spent inside factories (Quintana 2013). The workload in Japan varies “from ten to fourteen hours a day, usually six days a week, with reduced rest breaks and under an intense pace of execution [...] which can often result in work-related accidents” (Costa 2007: 124). Therefore, it is natural that most of the problems faced by them take place within their workplaces.

The intense and extensive workloads negatively impact the lives of these workers in several spheres. For example, the routine and workload faced by Brazilian factory workers in Japan end up isolating them socially, depriving them of rest, leisure, and interaction with other people (Lopes, Lima, Silva, & Helal 2015). Such social isolation makes it difficult for them to interact with both other Brazilians and the Japanese, hindering access to important relational resources such as emotional support and learning new skills relevant to life in Japan, jeopardizing their overall adaptation (Yoshida 2019).

Another important negative impact of overworking is on family and marriages. It is common for couples to work in different shifts and end up spending little to no time together, which destabilizes the couple's harmony, leading to separation, affecting their well-being bringing serious psychological problems such as depression (Osawa 2006). Also, the negative impacts are seen on children, especially in their education, since the parents, in addition to not knowing how to speak Japanese, do not have time to monitor their children's studies. For this reason, “little family interaction and difficulties in marital life are aspects described as stressors in the lives of these Brazilians” (Tashima & Torres 2016:19), which can make good psychological adaptation outcomes unfeasible.

The tasks assigned to Brazilians in Japan known as the “5K” are “heavy, monotonous and repetitive” (Tashima & Torres 2016: 12), “impersonal and mechanical” (Matsue 2012: 3), which combined with the heavy workload and the short breaks end up affecting the personal well-being of workers, who are used to the flow of work in Brazil, that is more flexible. These characteristics, typical to the type of work performed by the *dekasegi*, make them feel “like pieces of a gear that cannot stop, or robots that do the work mechanically [...] [inserted in] a profoundly alienating work experience” (Matsue 2012: 3). “Such jobs become routine, repetitive, tedious and do not require an active and conscious effort by the workers, which resembles an irrational automaton” (Quintana 2013: 25).

In factories, in addition to the challenges related to work experienced by Brazilians, other issues also influence their adaptation. For instance, “cultural differences and the language barrier became stress and strain factors for most of these Brazilians” (Utsunomiya 2011: 6). The difficulty in adapting and following the work due to sociocultural differences and lack of language knowledge can promote friction between Brazilian and Japanese workers, which triggers discrimination. Furthermore, in the case of Japanese Brazilians, due to their Japanese physiognomy, “Japanese people tend to expect 'Japanese' behavior from them, that is, to speak and act as a native would naturally do. When this does not happen, the Japanese tend to treat them rudely and disrespectfully” (Quintana 2013: 27). These factors significantly affect the psychological adaptation of the *dekasegi*, as due to the difficulties found in the work environment, “emotional imbalances are frequent to the point where suicides are not rare” (Soares & Motta 2012: 8).

Considering the transitory permanence of Brazilians in Japan, the majority of them are outsourced workers. As result, despite all the efforts they put into work, there is no prospect of professional growth or greater financial gains for them. Furthermore, as outsourced workers, they have reduced security and stability at work, constraining their access to several labor rights. The *dekasegi* occupy a “precarious and flexible work position, where they have no employment relationship with the factories where they work and thus, are not entitled to any type of labor right” (Suzuki 2011: 8), and can be "dismissed at any time, without any restriction or compensation by the employer, [...] characterizing this workforce as a cheap, temporary, flexible and disposable resource" (Covezzi, Castro, & Lima 2014: 6). Thus, although the working class of Brazilians in Japan is made up almost entirely of immigrants on regular immigration status, they still do not have the same rights that a regular Japanese worker has.

> The legality of the migration process of *dekasegi*, however, did not guarantee civil and labor rights for Brazilians within Japanese society, contracts are generally made by intermediary companies that legally or illegally arrange for Brazilian workers, for

> temporary services and without many of the benefits that Japanese citizens normally receive. The services available are those that do not require skilled labor, are often dangerous, but with good remuneration. (Shinshito & Baeninger 2010: 3)

The consequences of such vulnerability could be seen during the Lehman shock in 2008, when, approximately 40% of Brazilians in Japan lost or were under threat of losing their jobs, which, in addition to unemployment, resulted in the loss of numerous basic resources necessary for human well-being, such as housing. Moreover, although there is currently a pension agreement between Brazil and Japan, which allows time worked in Japan to be counted towards retirement in Brazil, many Brazilians choose not to pay the Japanese pension system (*Shakai Hoken*), leading to "a large portion of Brazilian workers in Japan in an unstable and vulnerable situation concerning labor and social security issues" (Tashima 2016: 9).

Notwithstanding, the Brazilian community in Japan has been, little by little, showing a new profile, with large numbers of workers leaving factories and opening their businesses, or starting a career and other areas. This trend gives signs that over the years, skills to deal with life in Japan, such as mastering the language, have improved and that the sociocultural and economic adaptation of the community has been reaching higher levels.

> Although the majority of Brazilian migrants' employment contracts are still for temporary work, the greater adaptation of Brazilian workers to Japanese society, knowledge of the language, and a certain capitalization by these migrants allowed a portion of these Brazilians to get better jobs and make investments in Japan. (Covezzi, Castro, & Lima 2014: 16)

In addition, among Brazilian workers who left their jobs in the factories, many find their main source of well-being and self-satisfaction in their new careers or investments, signaling higher levels of psychological adaptation as well (Yoshida 2018).

4.3.2 Cultural Distance

Several other factors must also be considered when talking about the adaptation of Brazilians in Japan, such as sociocultural differences. Sociocultural differences are often felt in the workplace, as

> it is in this environment that the difficulties in accepting the Japanese way and culture are most strongly experienced by Brazilian immigrants since [...] most of their life in Japan is spent in the work environment, in most cases, inside factories, where they spend most of the day and the greatest social interactions with the Japanese and Brazilians take place. (Tashima & Torres 2016: 13)

Nevertheless, despite the focus on work, cultural distance is also strongly felt in general in daily life. Thus, “outside of work, cultural differences also form a barrier to immigrant adaptation” (Yoshida 2019: 39). The sociocultural differences between Brazilians and the Japanese can be verified “in the language, in the way they dress and interact, in the type of work they have, in the places they go to and where they settle down [...] and by other more subtle expressions such as some cultural traditions and practices” (Tashima & Torres 2016: 23). As a result of such differences, Brazilian immigrants perceive themselves in Japan within a context of “social anomie, where the norms, values and sociocultural codes of the country of origin have no more force or relevance in the new context. And, at the same time, the cultural values of the host country were not adopted by them” (Matsue 2012: 3).

Cultural distance affects immigrants’ both sociocultural and psychological adaptation, since, in addition to the difficulty in navigating the host milieu, traumas left by sociocultural shock are frequent. To escape from such traumas, aiming to preserve their psychological well-being, Brazilians frequently distance themselves from Japanese sociocultural standards and embrace those of their homeland by, for example, “speaking Portuguese in public, consciously 'acting Brazilian', wearing Brazilian clothes, eating Brazilian food, and dancing *samba*. As a result, they do not feel obligated or pressured to act according to Japanese cultural expectations” (Tsuda 1996: 398). Furthermore, many Brazilians start to idealize their homeland, such as “objects, people, nature and relationships in Brazil, trying to keep alive a past to which they are no longer part of” (Tashima & Torres 2016: 2).

The more different the home country is from the host country; the more sociocultural differences are believed to impact adaptation. The significant “cultural differences between Brazil and Japan are potential causes of hostility between the two groups” (Tashima & Torres 2016: 13) as well as cases of prejudice and discrimination, being a substantial threat to psychological adaptation outcomes.

Notwithstanding, while larger sociocultural distance weighs negatively, factors such as security, higher wages, greater purchasing power, and better urban structure found in Japan weigh favorably on feelings of satisfaction and well-being among Brazilian immigrants, which, in several cases, leads them to settle permanently.

> Positive aspects of Japanese society which are frequently mentioned include the convenience of living in Japan […] [while] some others note how Japan is generally cleaner and better organized than Brazil […]. When coupled with the substantial economic benefits of living in Japan, such factors become an added incentive for them to remain in the host society. (Tsuda 1996: 492)

4.3.3 Language Proficiency

On the other hand, the lack of language skills is pointed out by previous authors as one of the main obstacles to good psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation outcomes. "Proficiency in the language is the most cited difficulty among these immigrants in their adaptation processes" (Yoshida 2019: 40), being a determining factor. When it comes to psychological adaptation, "the isolation caused by not being able to express oneself and having a deeper conversation triggers a feeling of frustration, inability, and impotence, impairing the immigrant's self-esteem and psychological health" (Yoshida 2019: 84). In sociocultural adaptation, not excelling in the language can have profound negative effects on dealing with daily life. Language proficiency is "not only a communication tool but [...] an instrument of power" (Ueno 2010: 9), where the better the skills are, the more Brazilians will have power over their own lives. Contrarily, not being able to communicate significantly limits access to several possibilities, makes everyday life harder, and negatively affects feelings of self-satisfaction and well-being (Tashima & Torres 2016). Several Brazilians in Japan

> still experience difficulty expressing themselves. Often, they feel frustrated, powerless, and unable to express their opinions and suggestions due to the language barrier and discrimination they experience in the workplace. Isolating oneself socially, without having someone to talk to intimately, can pose a health hazard. (Matsue 2012: 1138)

The inability to communicate can be harmful not only to mental health but also to physical health, due to the difficulty of immigrants to seek professional help, such as making an appointment, understanding, and being understood by a psychologist or a medical doctor, which can result in serious consequences. "The health issue of most Brazilians living in Japan is even more problematic due to language difficulties, lack of interpreters in hospitals or clinics and the low adherence of Brazilians to health insurance from Japan" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 21), being not uncommon cases

of Brazilians ending up being forced to return to Brazil to seek medical treatment, showing that not having enough necessary skills can jeopardize not only mental health, but also physical health.

The difficulty of Brazilians in learning Japanese is mostly due to the long working hours and their transitory permanence in Japan, leading them to not see a meaning in learning the language, as they plan to return to Brazil shortly (Tsuda 1996). Another major barrier mentioned in the literature for Brazilians to learn Japanese is writing, both for adults and children. "The ideograms – *kanjis* – require a great effort to be learned, which makes reading acquisition difficult and discouraging" (Utsunomiya 2011: 6), hampering the "integration in society and […] also prevent the acquisition of cultural capital" (Beltrão & Sugahara 2016: 25). Also, it "limits the possibilities of acquiring new skills and, following, of personal and professional growth" (Yoshida 2019: 83), hindering sociocultural and economic adaptation.

In the case of school-age Brazilian immigrants, the "lack of knowledge of the language negatively impacts their education process. In addition, language, spoken and written represents the barrier to comprehending class content, hindering integration with Japanese colleagues […] and making class follow-up practically impossible" (Yoshida 2019: 40).

Another consequence of the inability to communicate is a lesser degree of bonding with the host society, known as one of the main predictors of sociocultural adaptation. While not excelling in Japanese makes it difficult to get closer to the host society, consequently, little contact with the hosts hinders language learning. Hence, in addition to sociocultural differences, "the lack of knowledge of the Japanese language by Brazilians could be considered the first obstacle in this interaction" (Quintana 2013: 25).

4.3.4 Social Support and Identity Issues

According to the literature, the main source of social support for immigrants should be the host society, once immigrants who have deeper ties with the host society tend to adapt socioculturally and economically more easily. However, when it comes to Brazilians in Japan, the relationship between Brazilians and the Japanese is marked by "difficulties related to living in a different cultural context, with meetings, disagreements, conflicts, and mutual adjustments" (Covezzi, Castro, & Lima 2014: 7).

Considering that Brazilian immigrants' main concern is "wage levels and job opportunities and [most of them] intend to remain abroad only temporarily, the possibility of an unfavorable treatment in the host society is not taken under serious consideration and does not serve as a significant deterrent to migration" (Tsuda 1996: 138). As the priority of the *dekasegi* immigrants is to work, many leave social interactions, especially with the host society, behind. As the majority

of immigrants have no intentions to put down roots and their "main objective of being there is to earn money, many opt for long working hours, leaving them little time for interaction with the Japanese culture. Therefore, there is a great separation between the Japanese and the Brazilian community" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 12), despite the fact that Brazilian immigrants are in regular immigration status and have Japanese ancestry, which could lead to assuming presumed closer ties to the host society and less need of attachment to the Brazilian community.

Notwithstanding, in addition to social losses, separation negatively impacts the psychological health of immigrants, especially in those of Japanese ancestry. The social isolation may have more serious consequences among Japanese Brazilian immigrants, due to the "ethnic and historical connection between this group and their hosts" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 13). Furthermore, due to the Japanese Brazilians' physiognomy, there is an expectancy that they will behave like a native Japanese person. When it comes to Japanese Brazilians, the Japanese people tend to expect a certain level of assimilation, such as adopting Japanese sociocultural patterns, which can lead to "great difficulty in psychological adjustment as they experience considerably more personal disruption and alienation from their former sources of ethnic belonging, identity, and cultural meaning" (Tsuda 1996: 378).

Among immigrants with an assimilationist behavior, as an attempt be accepted as a Japanese, the rates of mental illnesses are higher, in contrast to those with resistant behavior, as "because their cultural behavioral patterns remain intact, they can adjust to Japanese society with a minimum of personal disruption instead of experiencing the psychological stress of attempting to obey majority cultural norms" (Tsuda 1996: 457). As a defense mechanism, several immigrants try to build resistance to the local sociocultural pressures, in order to protect their psychological well-being, behavior patterns, and identities. This strategy is called by Tsuda as "counter-identity" and "serves as protection against […] derogatory influences" (Tsuda 1996: 403).

In order to feel more comfortable, Brazilians often seek refuge within their conational community, along with Brazilian family and friends. This is "a social and cultural survival strategy based on known and safe parameters, and they do it to face this new condition of life in a country with cultural and social patterns that are extremely different from Brazil" (Shinshito & Baeninger 2010: 4).

The "implications of migration on the mental and physical health of immigrants have been widely studied in academia [...] These results suggest the importance of social support in mental health in the context of migration" (Tashima & Torres 016: 19). Even in the case of the *dekasegi*, in which the entire immigration process is mediated by a contractor, and there is less degree of dependency on the community, the Brazilian communities contribute to a "less arid and difficult arrival" (Covezzi, Castro & Lima 2014: 17), and "assure that they will be part of a cohesive, personal

ethnic network of Japanese-Brazilians who can provide not just practical assistance, but also emotional, psychological and social support" (Tsuda 1996: 158). On the other hand, not having support from conational peers can be considerably damaging to the mental health of immigrants. For example, among Brazilians who immigrate unaccompanied by their family, the rates of mental disorders have shown to be higher (Tsuda 1996). Therefore, the support received from the Brazilian community is positively associated with psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes.

After arriving in Japan, social support from Brazilian family and friends is indicated as a valuable tool for psychological well-being, as it fosters a sense of security and alleviates feelings of displacement, loneliness, and "*Saudade*", a Portuguese word for a state of nostalgia and profound feeling of longing for something or someone distant, or as popularly described: "the love that remains". Social support from Brazilian family and friends is a significant "buffer against the negative experiences that minority individuals have in the dominant society. In addition to preventing loneliness and homesickness, the presence of the family eases the adaptation of the Japanese Brazilians" (Tsuda 1996: 406).

Furthermore, "protective benefits found within co-national communities, such as emotional support and culture maintenance have been shown to reduce stress, improving psychological adaptation outcomes" (Yoshida 2019: 80). In addition to its role in psychological adaptation, contrary to what has been found in various studies, the social support from other Brazilians has shown to play an important role in sociocultural adaptation (Yoshida 2019). In large and long-established immigrant communities, immigrants usually have their own mechanisms to deal with daily life in the host country, which are different from those adopted by the host society. Both can be equally efficient, but the ones found in the immigrant community tend to be more readily absorbable and accessible by new coming Brazilians (Yoshida 2019), which is also especially true in the case of undocumented immigrants in the United States, who can barely count on the support of the host society and need to have their own survival mechanisms, which contradicts assertions that may seem obvious before a deeper analysis, such as that the host society would necessarily be the main source of support for the sociocultural adaptation of immigrants, an argument defended by a few previous studies.

4.3.5 Communities-Based Non-governmental Organizations and Their Role in Permanent Settlement

In order to meet the needs of the community, a large network "of social assistance to the community and a complex network of companies and institutions aimed especially at the Brazilian public" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 1) has been established, such as "schools, restaurants, bars, clubs,

associations, bank agencies, television channels, magazines, among other institutions where the focus is the Brazilian public" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 10), a phenomenon named as the "*Saudade* industry" (Ishi 2010: 14). Those resources, in addition to allowing them "to reproduce the Brazilian way of being and acting, left immigrants more at ease, recreating environments that allow them to exercise their citizenship in the foreign territory" (Soares & Motta 2012: 9). For example,

> many religious centers carry out various activities and services aimed at the Brazilian community's emotional support, providing counseling and discussions on topics related to life in Japan and material and informational support since it is through religious groups that various information networks related to work, housing, and other matters of common interest to the community. Thus, religion has been conceived as an alternative strategy for coping with difficulties and has been consolidated as an important promoter of well-being and emotional comfort in the lives of the *dekasegi*. (Tashima & Torres 2016:21)

As mentioned by previous research, other relevant resources for the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of immigrants are non-governmental organizations, local governments, and Brazilian consulates. As the Brazilian community grew, immigrants began to institutionalize their support networks, creating non-governmental organizations, while local governments, such as city halls, and consulates also began to expand their services to meet the needs of that population (Convezzi, Castro, & Lima 2014).

> The growing Brazilian population in Japan has also encouraged the creation of support networks for Brazilian immigrants [...] whose objective is to provide legal support, organize conferences and publications on the *dekasegi* and [...] discuss issues related to the education and adaptation of Brazilian children [...]. There are also several service centers in Portuguese created by the Japanese community and also by the Brazilian community itself that provide information about employment, documents, and tax payments. (Tashima & Torres 2016: 11)

The main objectives of those institutions are to alleviate sociocultural and labor difficulties in Japan, promote greater integration between Brazilians and Japanese society, professional qualifications, and educational support, bringing a better quality of life and well-being to immigrants. Those non-governmental organizations frequently have the support of numerous other institutions, both private and public, such as companies, city halls, international associations, police, consulates, and embassies (Yoshida 2019). The services offered by them are

numerous and vary according to the proposal of each organization, and range from lectures on life in Japan, vocational courses, student support, psychological support, promotion of typical Brazilian events/festivities, translation services, and medical services, and even visits to prisons. There is, however, very scarce literature focused on or mentioning the emergence or importance of non-governmental organizations in Japan targeted at Brazilian immigrants, which severely limited the scope of an in-depth bibliographic review on that topic.

In Japan, consulates can also be considered important tools for the social well-being of immigrants, and for enforcing their rights as Brazilian citizens. “There are three Brazilian consulates in Japan, located in the cities of Tokyo, Nagoya and Hamamatsu, locations where Brazilian workers are concentrated, to facilitate negotiations, preparation of documents, among other services” (Covezzi, Castro, & Lima 2014: 16). In addition, some of the services they offer are support for education, health care, labor rights, legal support, and other types of social assistance, as well as promoting policies for linking and transferring resources. The Brazilian consulates and embassy in Japan have achieved noteworthy treaties for the immigrants, such as the "Social Security Agreement between Brazil and Japan", which determines that the working time performed by the *dekasegi* in Japan will be accounted for by the Brazilian social security, enacted in 2012.

Also, relevant measures are also being taken by the Japanese public sector, like city halls in cities where there is a large concentration of Brazilians, such as the distribution of information leaflets in Portuguese regarding the rules about the separation of garbage and signs in Portuguese on public roads, aiming at greater safety for the immigrants in traffic (Yoshida 2019). As a result, the comfort found by the Brazilians significantly influences their decision to stay permanently in Japan or return to Brazil. Still, around 89.2% of male and 85.7% of female immigrants keep seeing Japan only as a temporary destination and want to return to Brazil (Beltrão & Sugahara 2006: 75). “*Saudade*” weighs in favor of the decision to return to Brazil, “despite the strong economic incentives to stay in Japan” (Tsuda 1996: 495). Immigrants who intend to return to Brazil often feel less motivated to learn about Japanese sociocultural aspects, and the language and end up having a lower level of embeddedness. On the other hand, immigrants who have the prospect of settling down in Japan show more embeddedness and demonstrate more motivation to learn skills needed to deal with life there, displaying higher levels of sociocultural and economic adaptation.

Nevertheless, another significant issue highlighted in the literature concerns immigrants who behave like transients, showing fewer skills, detachedness, and less sense of embeddedness, never taking on the role of permanent immigrants, even after settling down in Japan, maintaining their expectation that they would return to Brazil in the near future. Previous authors called these immigrants "permanently transients" (Beltrão & Sugohara 2006: 61), describing them as immigrants

who "come to Japan with the intention of staying only for a short period and end up staying for decades but still interpret their stay as temporary. As a consequence, they end up never learning additional skills to cope with life in a more efficient and independent way" (Yoshida 2021: 35) and may experience significant difficulties in sociocultural adaptation even after residing in Japan for a long time. Therefore, the decision to put down roots in Japan or return to Brazil can profoundly influence how immigrants relate to the host country (Yoshida 2019) and can be regarded as an important variable of sociocultural adaptation.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter was intended to review the literature on the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilians in Japan and the United States, as well as on the role of non-governmental organizations in immigrants' adaptation processes. Divided into three topics, first, it aimed to conceptualize non-governmental organizations and investigate how the work performed by them can influence adaptation outcomes. Then, it turned its focus to the cases of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan, with the aim of identifying and analyzing the key variables that influence their psychological and sociocultural adaptation, as well as exploring how services provided by non-governmental organizations have played a role in these processes in each country.

The first topic, which aimed to conceptualize non-governmental organizations and investigate their influences on adaptation outcomes, revealed that non-governmental organizations may have different definitions, according to the countries in which they are based. Furthermore, they vary considerably in aspects such as, but not limited to, size, focus, mission, range, and resources. A common trait among the definitions is that, as the nomenclature suggests, they are detached from the state apparatus, although many are dedicated to public causes, and are not for profit. The definitions of non-governmental organizations adopted by this study were "modern-day manifestations of […] associations […] focusing on working for one cause, with a specific interest or goal, in order to address unmet needs" (Rehill 2012: 4) and "all types of […] associations in which individuals work collectively, without a profit motive, for a cause or objective that benefits a certain group of individuals" (Rehill 2012: 23).

Non-governmental organizations aimed at immigrants are often built by immigrants themselves with the objective of meeting the demands of their communities. Among immigrant-oriented non-governmental organizations, the main focuses found were on providing basic needs, developing capacities, and giving voice. Under providing basic needs, support can be found in

terms of shelter, medical care, and donation of food, clothing, and hygiene items. In developing capacities, organizations aim to provide immigrants with the necessary resources to enable them to cope with life in the host country and promote their professional mobility. Thus, services such as language classes, professional courses, and workshops are often emphasized. In addition, the role of non-governmental organizations in giving voice can be verified by programs aimed at the protection and defense of immigrants, and at political participation. With these programs, non-governmental organizations aim to claim and broaden the spaces occupied by immigrants in society. Cultural activities are also mentioned, which makes non-governmental organizations important social resources and for the maintenance of national identity.

In addition to the importance in terms of providing basic needs, developing capacities, and giving voice, the literature also emphasizes the role of non-governmental organizations in partnership with the public sector. Non-governmental organizations function as a channel of communication between the public sector and immigrant communities, reaching places where the state cannot reach, especially in the case of undocumented immigrants, where they fear being exposed. Therefore, partnerships between the state and non-governmental organizations are highly significant as they can "share responsibility for interconnected tasks and work together to pursue collectively complex goals that cannot be accomplished by a single organization" (McNamara 2011: 2).

After conceptualizing and exploring the role of non-governmental organizations in the adaptation outcomes of immigrants, in its next topics, this chapter dedicates to identifying and discussing variables of psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan.

In the United States, several variables could be identified in the literature, such as language difficulties, discrimination, and professional downgrade. However, irregular immigration status and support from the conational community stand out for significantly influencing, at several levels, the well-being and ability to cope with daily life, *i.e.*, psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

The psychological trauma driven by the lack of legal documentation begins, frequently, during the crossing of the border from Mexico, where in addition to physical exhaustion, immigrants are arrested, causing great mental distress. After arriving in the United States, the consequences of being undocumented profoundly affect immigrants' professional and social lives. Because they are not licensed to work, immigrants are often victims of physical, psychological, and material abuse by employers. However, for fear of exposing themselves and being deported, they rarely report having been abused to the authorities. Furthermore, these immigrants often engage in activities that are known to be heavy, dirty, and often dangerous, without appropriate

safety equipment, which poses a risk to their physical well-being. In addition, the lack of documentation prevents access to various benefits, such as unemployment insurance, retirement, private health insurance, and accident compensation. Being undocumented also significantly limits integration with local society as avoiding exposure is a "basic rule of survival" (Marinucci 2015: 14). With the inability to access formal means and the difficulty of connecting with the local population, there are serious mental damages and limitations to opportunities to develop capacities, which can cause negative effects on psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes.

Nevertheless, within the community, undocumented Brazilian immigrants find a structure and resources that make their survival possible, counterbalancing the difficulties brought about by the lack of regular documentation. Support from communities begins even before immigrating, as Brazilians tend to rely on relatives and friends for relevant information to start the process. Upon arriving in the United States, the community provides critical support on matters such as housing, work, and relevant information about daily life, and serves as a significant source of emotional support. Consequently, Brazilian immigrants become better able to cope with life and reduce the effects of stress, achieving higher levels of sociocultural and psychological adaptation.

As social networks strengthened, several associations and entities were created by Brazilians to meet the needs of the community. The literature emphasizes that these entities, such as non-governmental organizations and churches, emerged to expand the support offered by the community to the greatest possible number of people. Among their objectives are "respond to their most basic and immediate needs, such as the search for employment and housing, knowledge or improvement of the language, access to health and educational services, [and] obtaining documentation" (Marinucci 2005: 13), in addition to "to overcome social isolation; affirm group values and beliefs; provide care support to its members; and act in defense of their interests and in the resolution of conflicts with the receiving society" (Brum 2018: 12).

When it comes to Brazilians in Japan, variables such as sociocultural distance, overwork, and not knowing the Japanese language appeared as major factors against good levels of adaptation, while support from the Brazilian community appeared as an important resource for good levels of adaptation.

Considering that Brazilian immigrants in Japan, the *dekasegi*, aim to make money as quickly as possible, most of their time is spent in the factories. Therefore, overworking is often stressed because it brings negative consequences to social life and mental health. Overworking can significantly damage the family structure, triggering divorces, and depriving parents of caring for their children. In addition, overworking limits immigrants' social life, leisure, and rest,

intensifying feelings of loneliness, which can trigger mental disorders such as depression. Also, social isolation limits access to opportunities to learn life-relevant skills, undermining sociocultural adaptation outcomes. In addition to overworking, the type of work, described as the 5k, known to be heavy, dirty, and sometimes dangerous, often affects the mental and physical health of immigrants. Although Brazilian workers are regular and enjoy a relatively stable life, the literature points out that they are still in a position of vulnerability, as they have weak employment ties with the companies where they work. Therefore, in cases of crisis, they are the first ones to be fired, becoming unable to meet their basic needs.

In addition to work-related factors, sociocultural distance is pointed out as a major difficulty encountered by Brazilians while settling in Japan. Due to the significant differences between Brazil and Japan, a considerable number of difficulties, friction, and effort are normally found throughout the adaptation process, affecting the ability to cope with life in Japan, triggering stressful situations, and the levels of well-being and satisfaction. Furthermore, "language barriers became stress and strain factors for most of these Brazilians" (Utsunomiya 2011: 6). Not excelling in Japanese is a factor often highlighted in the literature, which substantially limits access to learning new skills and prevents immigrants from performing important tasks, such as visiting a doctor. Therefore, lack of language skills is also pointed out as one of the main obstacles to the sociocultural adaptation of Brazilians in Japan, which in turn triggers a low level of self-esteem, self-satisfaction, and sense of well-being, jeopardizing psychological adaptation outcomes.

The inability to communicate and lack of cultural affinity can promote friction between Brazilians and the host society. As a result, several immigrants take refuge within Brazilian communities. Although the literature does not indicate necessarily a dependence as in the case of the United States, in Japan, conational communities are identified as the main sources of social and emotional support among Brazilian immigrants, being an important resource for well-being, since it alleviates feelings of loneliness triggered by social isolation, thus being essential for good results of psychological adaptation, as well as a significant resource for learning new skills to cope with life, being essential for sociocultural adaptation as well.

As in the United States, in Japan, the solidification of the community has resulted in the emergence of several entities aimed at meeting the demands of immigrants. The literature points out that non-governmental organizations in Japan have endeavored to make life easier for Brazilians, aiming to alleviate the difficulties brought about by the significant cultural distance and inability to communicate, providing services such as translation, and distribution of pamphlets in Portuguese containing relevant information such as garbage separation and traffic regulation. In addition, the literature highlights the existence of vocational courses, student

support programs, and promotion of lectures and workshops, aimed at teaching relevant skills to deal with life in Japan as well as promoting social mobility in the community. At last, it was discussed about the consulates of Brazil in Japan, which provide services in areas such as education and entrepreneurship and have achieved important treaties for Brazilian immigrants such as the “Social Security Agreement between Brazil and Japan".

CHAPTER FIVE
CASE STUDIES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN

In addition to a thorough literature review, fieldwork was carried out to further understand the role of non-governmental organizations in the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants to the United States and Japan. "The goal in qualitative research is to utilize techniques to ensure that the data is as reliable as possible" (Christensen 2012: 32). Thus, this fieldwork used as its main methodologies in-depth semi-structured interviews combined with observation. Through in-depth interviews, it was possible to "clarify the history and role of the groups and organizations studied, their unique capabilities, and day-to-day challenges through the view of the interviewee" (Rehill 2012: 50). Meanwhile, observation allowed to "to develop a congruent analysis of what the participants do in relation to what they say they do; it allows the experience of being part of the scenario, rather than studying that given setting, detached from that reality" (Rehill 2012: 50). In addition, organizational documents, *e.g.*, annual activity reports, and data obtained from the official websites of the non-governmental organizations were used as resources to complement the main methodologies, allowing an overview of their main characteristics, and clarifying information obtained in the interviews.

The social distancing caused by the coronavirus pandemic between 2020 and 2022 imposed significant barriers to this fieldwork in several instances, making it impossible, for example, for all interviews to be carried out face-to-face, as had been initially proposed. Contrarily, most interviews had to be carried out over the phone or via Skype and were later transcribed, reviewed, and organized to produce quotations. How each interview was conducted and details about each participant can be found in the appendix located at the end of this work. Furthermore, the pandemic has also severely restricted activities promoted by non-governmental organizations, limiting observational opportunities. As a result, the reduction, or in some cases a complete discontinuance, of large numbers of activities by the non-governmental organizations made access difficult to a greater number of employees, volunteers, and, above all, users. Nevertheless, despite the limitations and difficulties along the way, this fieldwork endeavored to exhaust all possible means of conducting interviews and observations, managing, in the end, to collect data from 38 respondents and seize opportunities to conduct the observation.

The selected non-governmental organizations were chosen according to the definition adopted by this work as "voluntary associations in which individuals work collectively, without a

profit motive, for a cause or objective that benefits a certain group of individuals" (Rehill 2012: 23). Furthermore, it was required that, for logical reasons, the group of individuals to which these organizations were targeted was the local Brazilian immigrant community, and that they were preferably composed of, but not limited to, Brazilians.

In accordance with the principles of research ethics, all interviews were audio-recorded, or taken notes from, with the oral consent of the participants. Likewise, consent to the use of their statements was verbally amended after, at the beginning of each interview, the research and research purposes were fully described to them, and it was confirmed that they understood the information. To protect the privacy of each participant, their names will be kept confidential. Furthermore, the names of the organizations will also be kept private, except for the consulate of Brazil and the Embassy of Brazil in Tokyo. Instead of using their real names, pseudonyms will be used to identify the participants and the non-governmental organizations.

This work had the collaboration of 38 interviewees, of which 20 were from Japan and 18 from the United States. In Japan, the work of a total of 4 non-governmental organizations in Tokyo, Kanagawa, and Aichi prefectures from August 2019 to mid-2021 was investigated. In addition, 1 member of the Toyohashi city hall and 3 of the Brazilian consulate in Tokyo, due to their close partnership with non-governmental organizations, were interviewed. The 4 studied organizations in Japan will be named Organization 1, Organization 2, Organization 3, and Organization 4. Meanwhile, in the United States, fieldwork was carried out between October 2021 and January 2022 in the state of Massachusetts, made possible through a research fellowship at the Henry J. Leir Institute of Human Security belonging to Tufts University. A total of 4 non-governmental organizations were also investigated, all of them in the state of Massachusetts. In addition, a Somerville city official and two church priests were interviewed because of their partnership with the non-governmental organizations examined. In the following topics, information-rich data collected from this extensive fieldwork will be described in detail. The 4 studied organizations in Massachusetts, United States, will be named Organization A, Organization B, Organization C, and Organization D, and the church will be named Church A.

5.1 Non-governmental Organizations in Japan

5.1.1 Organization 1

Organization 1 is a non-profit institution dedicated to supporting Brazilian immigrants in Japan. It was founded in 1998 when travelling caravans held by the consulate general of Brazil in

Tokyo would travel throughout Japan to offer their services to populations from other regions of the country where Brazilians lived. On these occasions, volunteers accompanied the consulates' caravans to listen to and assist immigrants in their complaints regarding life in Japan, mainly in matters of adaptation and daily life, but also in legal and medical matters. These volunteers, as their activities became more relevant, organized themselves and formed the group Organization 1. In 2003, this group was institutionalized and officially recognized by the local government as a non-profit organization. Currently, Organization 1 is considered the largest non-governmental organization aimed at the Brazilian community in Japan and is the only one with operations throughout the whole country.

Organization 1 consists primarily of a board of directors chaired by Mr. Mori and Ms. Tanaka, current president of Organization 1, both of whom were interviewed for this research. In addition to the board of directors, Organization 1 also has permanent staff, such as the psychologist Dr. Maria and Dr. Lineu, and volunteers from different specialties such as medical care, education, social issues, legal issues, taxes, insurance, and work accident. One of the organization's most notable volunteers, Medical Doctor Olaf was, as well as Dr. Maria and Dr. Lineu, also interviewed for this work. In addition to employees and volunteers, Organization 1 also has the support and works together with other private and governmental institutions, such as Brazilian and Japanese companies, schools, city halls, police, and, mainly, the Brazilian embassy and the Brazilian consulate in Tokyo, which were also investigated for this work, given the great importance of their role in working in collaboration with the non-governmental organizations. According to Organization 1, the organization's partnership with other actors such as consulates general and the Brazilian embassy in Japan, city halls, police and local hospitals is important, as it brings these institutions closer to the Brazilian community, creating a channel of communication and exchange between them. In Mr. Mori's words "we have a lot of contact with the Japanese public sector who come to consult us on what needs to be done. We also have a lot of access to the ambassador and consulates, that consult NGOs a lot".

According to Mr. Mori, Brazilians are currently one of the largest foreign communities in Japan, the result of a phenomenon that began in 1990, but which was not accompanied by measures for social integration and professional development of these immigrants while living there. As a result, even today, thousands of Brazilians have considerable difficulty in dealing with the challenges of daily life in Japan, leading to negative consequences on their adaptation outcomes.

Motivated to help these immigrants in their lives, Organization 1 works in a number of spheres and offers various services to Brazilians in Japan. Mr. Mori explains that its objective is not only to meet the needs and alleviate difficulties, but also to empower immigrants, boost their physical and mental health, guarantee their rights, contribute to their social well-being, professional

and economic growth of the community, through the education of younger generations and entrepreneurship, and integrate the Brazilian community with Japanese society.

To achieve these goals, among the main activities currently run by the organization, psychological care can be mentioned as the most important service available today. Furthermore, Organization 1 offers medical advice; translation, as in medical, legal and everyday matters; counseling to Brazilian minors in correctional facilities; visits to and psychopedagogy support in Japanese schools where there is a noticeable difficulty among Brazilian students in learning and adapting; lectures, seminars and educational workshops aimed at learning about sociocultural aspects of Japan, as well as issues such as domestic violence, mental health, suicide, entrepreneurship, and legal matters; support to the education of children, aiming to reduce school dropouts and the encourage continuity of studies to university; social integration activities between Brazilians and Japanese, such as Brazilian cultural and artistic events aiming at bonding these two peoples; promotion of social and psychological research related to the Brazilian community's lives and demands; telephone consultations on subjects as diverse as legal, labor, tax and education matters; food donation; help in the event of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods and tsunamis, by sending food, supplies for first aid and psychological assistance, which are important for immigrants' psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

To go deeper into the activities performed by Organization 1, below will be explained in detail about 4 of the most important services provided by the it today, which are psychological services, educational services, workshops and seminars, and medical support in cases of a terminal illness.

5.1.1.1 Psychological Services

Organization 1 understands that the mental health of immigrants is based on 3 important pillars, being them emotional health, which is the ability to understand and externalize one's emotions; intellectual health, which is the ability to understand and face problems rationally; and social health, related to a healthy relationship with society and the surrounding space.

Aiming to support immigrants in these 3 pillars, the psychological service provided by Organization 1 began in 2008, a year in which, deeply affected by the crisis that shook the Japanese industry, several Brazilians lost not only their jobs but also their homes, given that the apartments occupied by them belonged to the contractors they worked for. In addition, given the sudden drop in income, they became unable to meet their basic needs, such as buying food. As a result, many Brazilians turned to Organization 1 for support in getting work, labor issues, and food donations.

Noting that in addition to everyday needs, many of these immigrants were also experiencing depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress, Organization 1 took its first steps towards structuring a psychological support service for Brazilians completely for free. Ms. Tanaka explains that the project is currently accessible to Brazilians across Japan and due to its relevance, has been recognized and funded by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare of Japan.

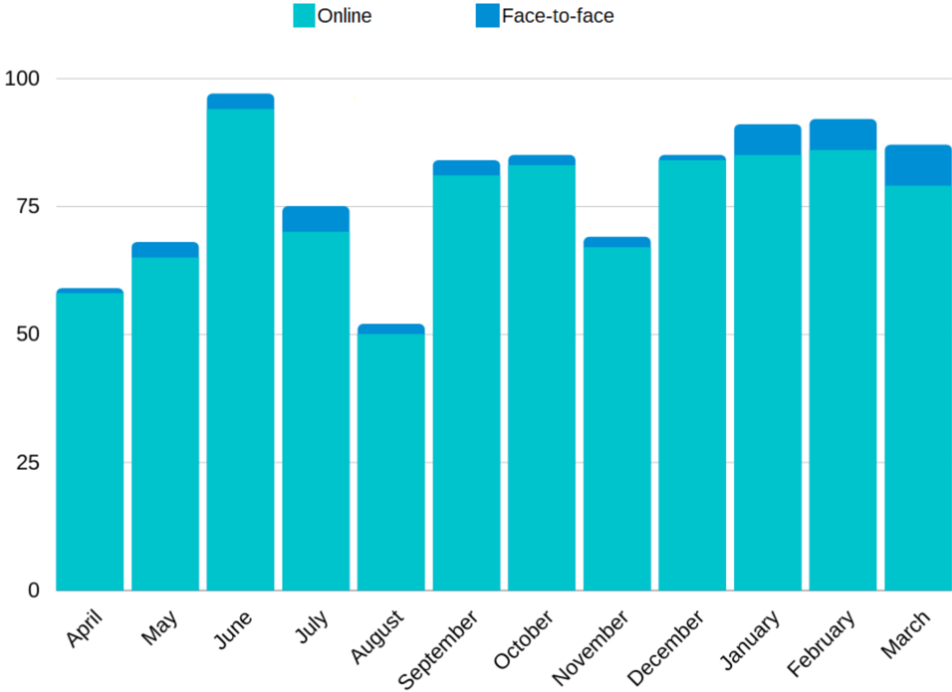
Initially, in 2008, this service was exclusively by telephone. In the following year, given the increase in demand, it started to be offered through video calls. In 2013, after the earthquake that hit the city of Sendai in 2011, again damaging the Japanese economy and affecting the employment of Brazilians, assistance started to be given in person at the consulate general of Brazil in Tokyo. Two years later, in 2015, having observed the program's success in Tokyo, the consulates general of Brazil in Nagoya and Hamamatsu, cities in two of the states with the highest concentration of Brazilians in Japan, also started to offer the same psychological service to Brazilians in those regions. Thus, currently, aiming to extend the service to as many Brazilians as possible in Japan, regardless of where they live, Organization 1 offers online, telephone, and face-to-face services. In the words of Ms. Tanaka, today, Organization 1's "flagship is the psychological service, where the greatest demand is concentrated and there are regular professionals hired for this", due to its importance in immigrants' lives.

Aiming to reach immigrant children, Organization 1 also has a program to visit Japanese and Brazilian schools and daycare centers and other smaller local non-governmental organizations, because, as seen earlier, children experience many difficulties in adapting. On these visits, Organization 1 offers group psychological counseling to those children mainly on issues related to everyday school, educational difficulties, and about life in Japan. The service dedicated to children will be further explained in a later topic.

Aiming to improve its services, Organization 1 annually promotes qualitative and quantitative research with both Brazilian immigrants and the organization's psychologists, in order to investigate and understand more in-depth what are the main difficulties and demands faced by Brazilians, as well as the impact of these services on their well-being and problem-solving. Data from these surveys found a high degree of satisfaction by immigrants with the assistance received. However, these data also revealed a necessity in most cases of an extension of psychological care for a longer period, aiming at a more effective and lasting result for the well-being of patients. For this reason, currently, the number of sessions varies according to the severity of the symptoms of each patient. The number of sessions can vary from 5 weeks, as in milder cases of depression and anxiety, to 6 months for severe cases, often combined with symptoms of panic attacks, compulsive obsession, self-harm, bipolar disorder, dissociation from reality and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

As mentioned, Organization 1 has 3 permanent psychologists in their staff, such as Dr. Lineu and Dr. Maria, who together serve, from Monday to Saturday, from morning until night, Brazilian immigrant patients online and in person, as well as carry out periodic visits to schools for group follow-up with Brazilian students. On a visit to Organization 1 headquarters for observation purposes, the Board of Directors provided and authorized using the data, not available to the public, from the organization's annual report for this research, which illustrates in detail the scope of the services offered. One of these data is on the number of appointments performed by psychologists between April 2019 and March 2020. During this period, 944 appointments were recorded, of which 902 took place online and 42 in person, as can be seen in graph form below.

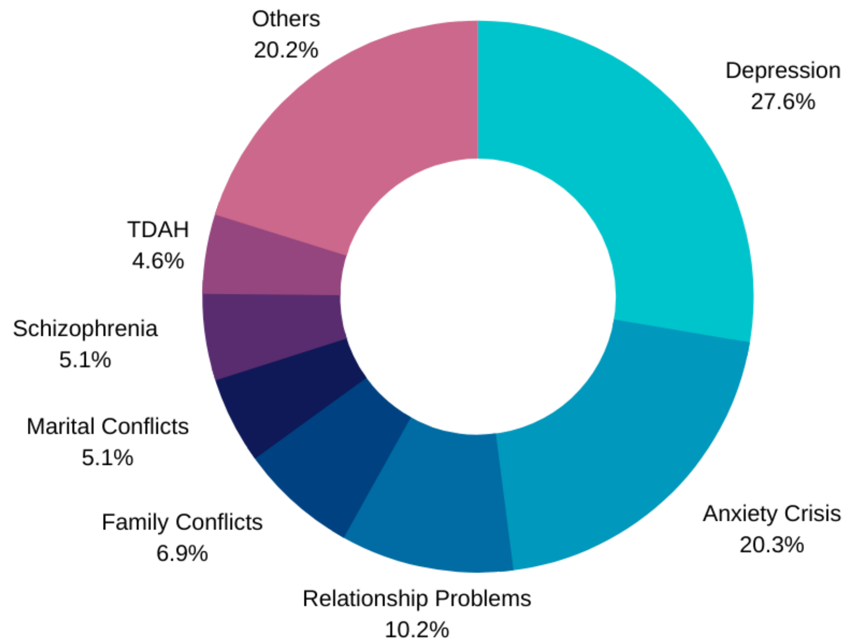
Graph 5 – 1 – Number of Psychological Consultations by Month in 2019



Source: Organization 1 Activity Report, 2019.

Another relevant data found in the report reveals the number of appointments and the motivation to look for psychological support. As can be seen below, depression, in the first place, affects more than 1/4 of the patients, while in second place comes anxiety disorder, while in third, the fourth, and fifth place are interpersonal issues, such as relationship problems, family conflicts, and marital conflicts, respectively, major obstacles for good psychological adaptation outcomes.

Graph 5 – 2 – Percentage of Consultations by Category

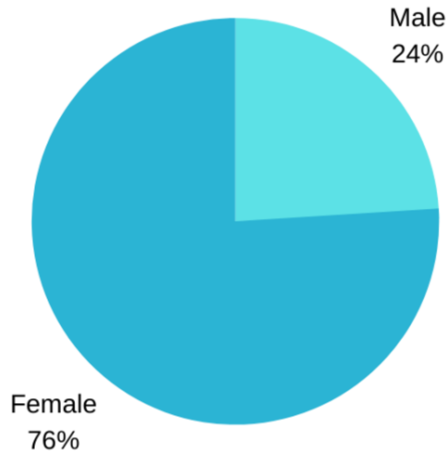


Source: Organization 1 Activity Report, 2019.

Psychologist Maria confirms that the main problems faced by immigrants are anxiety and depression. In her words, "in most cases they are people who are already in a very significant pathological condition where there is a lot of adaptive impairment where the person can't even leave home, can't have friends, does very few things and doesn't work", however, she continues, “even if the person is working and fulfilling their daily needs, they often have panic attacks, suffer from anxiety attacks or depression, and need help to get out of this state”. In addition, Ms. Tanaka explains that distance from the family is also commonly identified as a trigger for depressive disorders. According to her, “now with the pandemic, it has become even more evident that how much they miss their families and that makes people psychologically weak. The distance and homesickness shake people”. Thus, psychological support can be crucial for them.

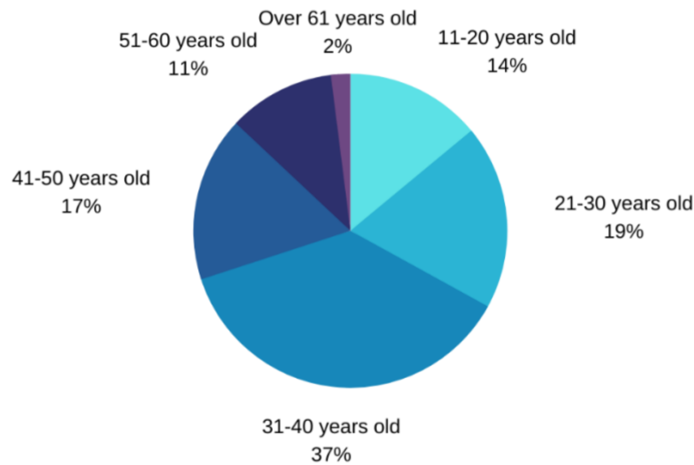
The proportion of patients by gender was also revealed, showing that a considerably higher percentage of women, 76%, sought psychological services, compared to just 24% of men. Psychologist Lineu justifies that the majority of his patients are women "because women take more care of health than men, and because the workload for women is lighter", to which psychologist Maria adds that there are "much more women than men because men still have a reservation about asking for help”. Meanwhile, when it comes to age group, the data revealed that most patients, 37%, in the online modality, are between 31 and 40 years old.

Graph 5 – 3 – Patients by Gender



Source: Organization 1 Activity Report, 2019.

Graph 5 – 4 – Online Patients by Age



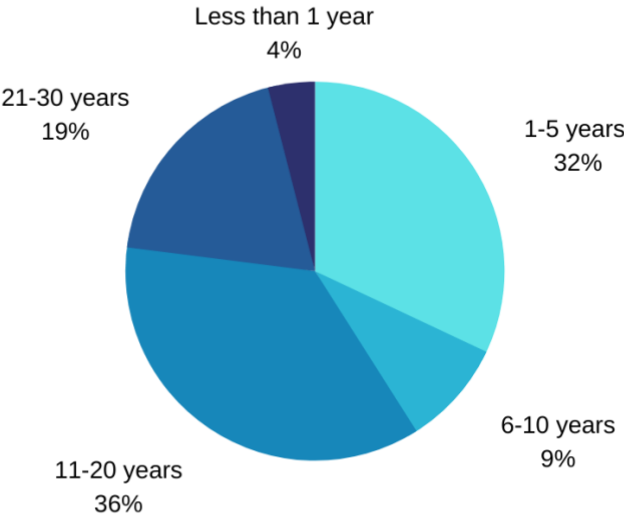
Source: Organization 1 Activity Report, 2019.

Also, the data in the report brings the main occupations of the patients who used the psychological service. As could be predicted, more than half of the patients, 60%, are factory workers, considering that, as explained above, most Brazilians in Japan are temporary workers in automobile and electronics factories. Students and unemployed people occupy the second and third positions, with 12% and 8% respectively.

Regarding the length of stay in Japan, 36% declared to have lived between 11-20 years, 32% between 1-5 years, and 19% between 21-30 years. Furthermore, data allows visualizing the severity of the mental health of patients according to the number of years they have been in Japan.

The number of more severe cases (ranging from mild to very severe) has been found in patients living in Japan for between 1 and 5 years, followed by 10 to 20 years, as noted below.

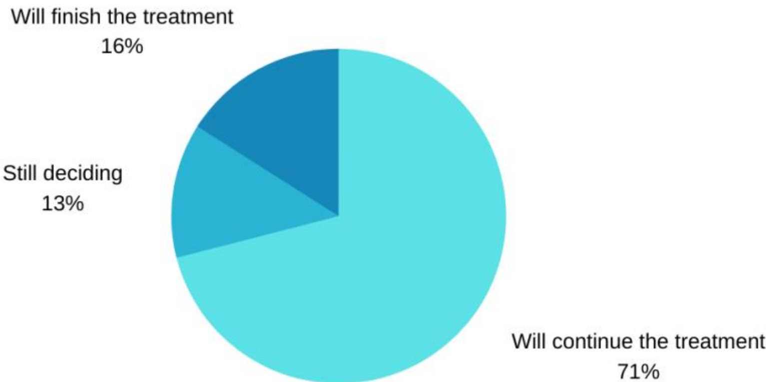
Graph 5 – 5 – Patients by Length of Residence



Source: Organization 1 Activity Report, 2019.

The data also show the progress and results achieved by patients at the end of therapy, according to the degree of severity of their mental health. The best results were found in those with relatively mild and slightly severe conditions. According to the organization, although there is usually an improvement, the number of patients who do not show changes is still significant, and in some cases, there is a worsening of the condition. In addition, regarding the prospect of discharge, 71% said they wanted to continue therapy, 16% wanted to be discharged, and 13% were still evaluating.

Graph 5 – 6 – Perspectives for Continuity of Treatment



Source: Organization 1 Activity Report, 2019.

5.1.1.2 Educational Services

Another point of concern for Organization 1 is the education of Brazilian children and adolescents in Japan, which poses several challenges in terms of learning, professional and economic development. According to Organization 1, currently, compared to the average number of Japanese children, the average number of Brazilian children enrolled in schools in Japan is low. Furthermore, the average number of Brazilian children enrolled in special education schools, such as those aimed at children with some degree of mental impairment, is higher than that of Japanese children. One of the current goals of Organization 1 is to investigate the causes that lead to this fact and provide adequate support for these children. To this end, the organization is conducting a survey, through interviews and observation, with Brazilian students and staff members from Japanese schools about possible developmental and emotional disorders among them.

Some of the results already obtained by their research demonstrate a lack of preparation and abilities of some Japanese schools to establish a reliable diagnosis regarding the mental abilities of Brazilian children. For example, one of the findings was that there is a difficulty for schools to determine if the learning and developmental difficulties of Brazilian children are due to their inability to communicate due to lack of knowledge of the language, or if the children really suffer from a mental disorder. Research conducted by the organization found that in many cases not enough time was devoted to applying the proper tests to diagnose signs of autism, for example. Furthermore, in most cases the tests were administered in the Japanese language without the presence of parents or an interpreter, which may have led to misleading results.

According to the organization, tests designed to measure a child's mental capacity and identify signs of impairment should be carried out in the child's language and in the presence of experts who are familiar, not only with the language, but also with the sociocultural context in which these children were raised. For Organization 1, to conduct these tests and obtain reliable results it is necessary to understand differences in education systems between Japan and Brazil, to conduct the test in Portuguese, and to have knowledge about the sociocultural contexts of both Brazil and the Brazilian communities in Japan.

Concern with the often-inadequate treatment received by Brazilian children was the main motivator that led Organization 1 to make constant visits to Japanese schools, in order to offer psychological support to children and guidance to parents and teachers. In this way, working on these four bases (Organization 1, children, parents, and schools), the organization hopes to provide children with an educational environment that is appropriate and efficient for their needs, that was very beneficial for the children’s well-being. Psychologist Lineu explains that often "children feel

insecure, unprotected, and have great difficulty in adapting because they do not excel in the language, which leads to many issues, in addition to problems in the relationship with their parents, who work too much".

One of the main challenges faced by Organization 1 in relation to the education of children is the parents' lack of knowledge about the Japanese educational system and the inability of the majority to communicate in the local language, which leads to misinformation and errors. To assist parents in this process, Organization 1 psychologists provide educational support, initially interviewing parents and children, and later teaching in detail aspects of the Japanese education system. When necessary, psychologists also apply a test in Portuguese to identify the level of development of children, as well as possible impairments. These tests can assess the level of development of children in areas such as processing speed, speech comprehension, perceptual inference, and memory. Furthermore, the organization always considers significant factors such as the sociocultural background of the children, as the test carries specific characteristics aimed at the Brazilian population. In this way, Organization 1 argues that it is possible to reach conclusive and reliable diagnoses that faithfully reflect the characteristics of the applying child.

The purpose of these tests is, if allowed by parents, to share their results with schools and teachers so that these children are properly cared for and educated. In addition, with the results in hand, Organization 1 can also guide parents on how best to support their children both at home and at school. For example, in a case in which the Brazilian child has an impairment, it is possible to understand their needs and then refer them to an appropriate doctor who will be able to prescribe a treatment. In this way, the school will be able, following the medical and psychological guidelines, to offer a welcoming environment that will meet the needs of the children, boosting their adaptation.

According to the organization, Brazilian children who are illiterate in the Japanese language and have serious difficulties in keeping up with classes are sometimes mistaken for mentally impaired children and sent to special classes. One major objective of Organization 1 is that this type of mistake is no longer made. Organization 1 frequently recommends that these children attend literacy tutoring but continue to attend regular classes in subjects such as arithmetic, to keep up with the development of their classmates. Thus, Organization 1, with its service, has helped schools and parents to understand children's difficulties and to think strategically about how to meet their needs.

The challenge currently faced by Organization 1 is how to expand this service to more regions, covering as many Brazilian students as possible. According to the organization, despite the project's efficiency, its reach is still limited, present only in cities where there is a high density of Brazilian residents. In addition, the organization also complains about the difficulty of accessing Japanese schools in some cities, which resist accepting the organization's support. For this reason,

Organization 1 is striving to, by working together with smaller local organizations and possibly local governments, expand the reach of its services so that as many Brazilian children as possible can be taken care of in their needs.

According to the organization, in 2018, there was an increase of 8.2% of foreigners enrolled in Japanese schools compared to the previous year. Therefore, Organization 1 emphasizes that support for children, not only Brazilians, but of any nationality, is an urgent need, given the growing influx of foreign workers who immigrate to Japan along with their families, in order to prepare parents for the coming challenges, and the schools to receive these children. In this way, Organization 1 wants its services to serve as inspiration for other organizations to direct the same educational support services to children of other nationalities.

5.1.1.3 Workshops and Seminars for Brazilians in Japan

Learning relevant skills is key to good sociocultural adaptation outcomes. Thus, noting the increase in the influx of Brazilians into Japan, Organization 1, in order to familiarize immigrants with life in the host country, began in 2018 to organize seminars and workshops, together with the consulate general of Brazil in Nagoya, aimed at, not only immigrants but also the mainstream society. The first seminar had as its theme the education of Brazilian children and was attended by parents and staff of Japanese schools. The second seminar had as its main topic legal issues where guest lawyers addressed issues relevant to life as immigrants, and in the background, this seminar also addressed scholarships to study in Japan. In addition to the support of the consulate general of Brazil in Nagoya, Organization 1 also had the support of the city hall, local police, and local non-profit organizations.

These seminars, in addition to offering valuable information about life in Japan, also seek to listen and identify problems present within the community. According to Organization 1, a perception that remained after the seminars is that several parents have little interest in knowing in depth about the Japanese educational system. In addition to the considerably lower number of participants in the education lectures than expected, interviews conducted with the parents during the workshops revealed that the main objective of them is to make money, not the education of their children. Moreover, the survey found that the parents are unwilling to switch to a job that requires fewer hours of work in order to be able to spend more time with their children. Talking to Japanese school leaders, the organization found that few Brazilian parents take a few hours off work to attend school events, such as parents' meetings, even when they have permission from the employer to do so, and for that reason, the presence of Brazilian parents is considerably low.

For this reason, Organization 1 considers the involvement of Brazilian parents in their children's school affairs a serious issue that needs to be worked on in the coming years. Organization 1 believes that making parents aware of the importance of education, as well as supporting children in their mental health, can have a significant long-term impact, by keeping children in schools and ideally contributing not only to their adaptation, but to the professional and economic development of the Brazilian community. To achieve this goal, Ms. Tanaka stated that, starting in April, they will start a free Japanese course and after-school to monitor children with difficulties in Japanese schools, with a follow-up system that includes helping with homework. In her words, “knowing the language is important, but it's just the beginning. There must also be a qualification. We want Brazilians to leave the factories behind”.

A major concern of Mr. Mori is the high rate of young Brazilians who give up on studying. Therefore, one of the goals of seminars and workshops is to inspire and motivate these students to continue studying. Ms. Tanaka justifies that a major challenge concerning students is the lack of prospects for the future. She says that “they don't know what to do with their lives, they are lost and dreamless. They lack examples and parameters. They don't know what to be when they grow up and can only think about working in a factory”, being the goal of the organization to change that.

Another finding of Organization 1 is that, unlike Prefectures such as Aichi, regions where there is a lower concentration of Brazilians have considerably more difficulty in welcoming immigrants, both in schools and in public places in general. For this reason, psychological assistance is an important resource.

Currently, with the aim of offering seminars and workshops more in line with the needs of Brazilians, Organization 1 seeks to understand the profile of the community in each region, mainly in terms of age, gender, occupation. In Prefectures such as Fukui, for instance, where there is a large percentage of young adults with children, the focus is mainly on education. However, at all events, Organization 1 seeks to cover all themes relevant to the lives of immigrants. To this end, the organization sets up service booths related to various subjects, such as legal, medical, and educational issues. In this way, in addition to attending the workshop and seminar sessions, participants can go directly to the booths of interest to them. At these booths, immigrants can seek and schedule psychological care, ask questions about scholarships, the Japanese educational system, issues related to work and labor laws, and seek medical support on issues such as medical examinations and the prevention and treatment of mental and physical illnesses.

Ms. Tanaka explains that the medical and legal support offered is essential for answering questions, given immigrants’ difficulties to search about that by themselves. Regarding legal issues, she says the main complaint is about labor law in Japan. In her words, “there is a lot of demand in this area, and we reach out to the consulate lawyers to help. In terms of visas, there are also many

questions, which we forward to the Tokyo immigration office, with which we have a channel of communication". Mr. Mori adds that in recent times, complaints related to domestic violence have also increased.

Data from the report made available by Organization 1 reveal that most of the participants were female (71%), aged between 30 and 49 years (86%). Regarding the demands of the participants of these events, the organization found that issues related to education are in the first place, followed by medical care, Japanese language learning, legal matters, and finally psychological support.

Raising the Japanese language skill level is, according to Mr. Mori, another major objective of Organization 1. According to him, not excelling in the “language is very limiting. Japan offers many opportunities, but many Brazilians cannot see them. Language barrier is the main obstacle to their development”, being a major deadlock for sociocultural adaptation. Psychologist Lineu justifies that interacting only with other Brazilians can be the cause of this problem. According to him, the “Brazilians come here and create a world apart from Japan, it is as if they had created a bell jar. This prevents them from participating in Japanese culture, so learning the language is very difficult.” Psychologist Maria adds that this factor also deeply affects students from Brazilian schools in Japan, as when they graduate, they "enter Japanese society without knowing how to speak and having no prospects for the future in Japan other than going to the factories."

Other highly relevant issues, such as adherence to social insurance, is also one of the topics approached by the organization in its events. Ms. Tanaka emphasizes that the Brazilians, motivated by the desire to gather money faster, do not pay social security, which puts them in a very vulnerable position. According to her, in these cases, they “call the NGOs because they are starving and do not have the right to unemployment insurance. That's why, during the pandemic, we started donating food and collecting food for families in precarious situations”. In addition to offering immediate help, Ms. Tanaka explains that Organization 1 seeks to raise awareness of these immigrants. In her words, "we donated food, but during screening, we try to understand why this family got into that situation, and we look for a solution to their situation, such as looking for a job or seeking social security".

5.1.1.4 Medical Care Services

Another extremely important service provided by Organization 1 reflects one of the main difficulties faced by Brazilian immigrants in Japan, and that may reflect low levels of sociocultural adaptation: understanding and accessing medical services. Although Organization 1 does not offer a medical care service on a regular basis, it does provide support when Brazilian patients, severely or

terminally ill, want to return to Brazil to continue the treatment with a Brazilian doctor along with their families.

This support began in 2005 as an expansion of an old service offered by the consulate called "disk-health" which had a telephone operator who answered daily phone calls from Brazilian immigrants who were suffering from an emergency and non-emergency illnesses. It started when the consulate general of Brazil in Tokyo brought a Brazilian cardiologist that speaks Japanese to Japan, named Dr. Olaf, in order to transfer to Brazil a young Brazilian who needed a heart transplant, a procedure rarely, according to the organization, performed in Japan. Since then, Dr. Olaf has become one of the main collaborators of Organization 1 and the consulate general of Brazil in Tokyo. Dr. Olaf, one of the interviewees for this research, reports that since 2005, given the relevance of that service, "I started being a [Organization 1] volunteer worker, and I said that whenever they had critically ill patients, they could count on me to come. Since 2005, I have come here 22 times".

According to Organization 1, transferring an ill patient is an extremely complex and bureaucratic process that requires numerous preparations, such as documents required by airlines and governments of origin and destination, medical equipment that must accompany patients throughout the journey, medical bed reservations in hospitals in Brazil and sometimes also in connecting countries.

Dr. Olaf says that there are cases extremely serious and already in a terminal stage and that the patients want to return to Brazil so they can spend their last days close to their families. However, other cases, also extremely serious, are directed to Brazil due to the greater development of medical care in certain areas in that country. According to him, Brazil is internationally recognized in areas such as organ transplants and degenerative heart diseases.

Although the service started at the consulate, due to the increase in demand, Organization 1, which traditionally works in partnership with the diplomatic authorities, took the lead and became the mediator between patients, the consulates, and Dr. Olaf. Dr. Olaf says that although there is no regularity in his visits, it usually happens twice a year, and each time an average of two patients in an extremely serious condition are taken back to Brazil.

As mentioned earlier, the reason why Dr. Olaf is a very relevant figure to this research is because his work reflects a serious consequence of the low levels of sociocultural adaptation of several Brazilians in Japan, who, due to not being able to navigate the Japanese health system, end up neglecting their own health. Dr. Olaf explains that at the beginning of the *dekasegi* immigration in the 1990s, the Brazilian population in Japan was mostly young and had simpler physical illnesses or psychiatric disorders, such as depression and anxiety attacks. However, after 30 years, the Brazilian community has now a considerable number of elderly people who have more complex diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, and degenerative diseases.

In addition to the aging of the population, Dr. Olaf points out that in the past, Brazilian immigrants, most *nissei* people (second-generation descendants, *i.e.*, children of Japanese), had greater ability in the Japanese language, as they learned the language with their parents and grandparents in Brazil. However, still, in the 1990s, the *sansei* (third-generation descendants, *i.e.*, grandchildren of Japanese) and Brazilian spouses without Japanese ancestry began to immigrate in greater numbers, most of them with little to no ability in the Japanese language. For this reason, to support these immigrants, the contractors started to hire translators to accompany them in medical sessions. However, the presence of translators is still limited and does not solve the problem of a large part of the population, who, because they do not know the language, do not pay national health insurance, or do not know how to look for a doctor in Japan, end up neglecting their health. The consequences are severe and, in some cases, cost immigrants their lives. In the words of Dr. Olaf, that is the case, for instance,

> of early-stage cancer that could have been taken care of but wasn't because they [the immigrants] didn't go to the doctor because they didn't know how to speak and there were no translators. Then, the cancer got worse, metastasized, and I come for them. One of the patients that I'm coming to pick up has terminal cancer, he had surgeries, underwent chemotherapy and radiotherapy and now he has nothing else to do. So those are deaths that could have been avoided.

The inability to communicate, which, according to Dr. Olaf, is the main cause of Brazilians neglecting their health, is also a consequence of the low level of integration between the Brazilian community and mainstream society. Organization 1explains that this service starts from the patient's demand and that Organization 1, together with the consulate general, takes care of all bureaucratic procedures until the patient's admission to the Brazilian hospital. However, financing for this service is normally provided by the patient's own family. When the family cannot afford the costs, Organization 1 promotes campaigns with the Brazilian community to obtain donations. Dr. Olaf says that the contractors, of which the patients are employees, help only with transportation within Japan and assistance in hospitals.

At last, Dr. Olaf expresses his concern for the future of the community. According to him, more Brazilians are expected to arrive in Japan in the coming years, being thousands of them *yonsei* (great grandchildren of Japanese) who have very little connection with Japan and do not know the language. Added to the aging of the population, Dr. Olaf fears that cases of serious illnesses among Brazilians in Japan will increase. In his words, "I think there will be a greater number of patients to be transferred to Brazil in the near future. New cases will arise because the population is aging here,

and the older one gets, the more diseases appear". Furthermore, Dr. Olaf points out that he is not aware of a similar service in other countries around the world for Brazilian communities and suggests the difficulties encountered by Brazilians in Japan could be harder than in other countries.

5.1.2 Organization 2

Organization 2 was informally set up in 2000 in Tsurumi city, Kanagawa Prefecture, having received in 2006 the status of a non-governmental organization. Currently, with the expansion and recognition of its work, the organization has the support of the government and education secretariat of Kanagawa prefecture, where its work is focused. Organization 2 is currently chaired by a Brazilian woman, named Mitie, and has a small group of employees, such as psychologists and teachers. Mitie, as well as some of her employees, were interviewed by the author of this dissertation.

Mitie explains that with the increase in Brazilians in Japan, problems related to integration, work, and daily life have deepened considerably. Organization 2's objective is to offer support to the Brazilian community residing in Kanagawa Prefecture. However, she emphasizes that it is important that these services serve as an educational and informational tool for immigrants to eventually become autonomous and independent, promoting community development, *i.e.*, enhancing their levels of sociocultural adaptation. To help the community, Organization 2 promotes activities related to Japanese education, language and culture, child development, health, medical care, information about daily life in Japan, vocational courses, events, lectures, workshops, social integration, and multicultural coexistence.

5.1.2.1 Educational Services

Due to the high density of Brazilian students in Kanagawa Prefecture, Organization 2 currently has education as its main focus, with a large part of its activities geared towards this end. Mitie says that a very common difficulty among Brazilian students, especially newcomers, is entering high school, as they do not understand Japanese, and it is necessary to pass a difficult entrance exam. For this reason, currently, just over half, only 60% of foreign students in Japan enter high school. Another frequent problem for Brazilian students, continues Mitie, is the lack of parental support at home with homework, as parents are always very busy and end up not paying enough attention to their children's education, and bullying because they are foreign. They

face hard obstacles that make adaptation hard, resulting in large numbers of students dropping out of school.

Organization 2 's activities, argues Mitie, in addition to promoting education also aim to entertain and encourage a sense of belonging among children. The three main activities related to education offered are the “Free School”, the “After School”, and seminars and workshops for high school students related to university entrance, aiming to give them necessary abilities, such as language proficiency, one of the main variables of sociocultural adaptation.

The Free School is a program that started to support Brazilian students entering high school in Kanagawa Prefecture. However, given the demand for Chinese, Peruvian, Filipino, and Vietnamese immigrants, the program now embraces students of any nationality.

The program is aimed at newly arrived immigrant teenagers and those who already live in Japan but have not studied in Japanese schools or have dropped out, having difficulty with the language. In addition to learning and improving the Japanese language, the classes teach content related to society, culture, and rules of behavior in schools. To pre-introduce students to Japanese schools, cultural exchange activities where they visit Japanese schools and interact with the students are also carried out. Mitie says that in addition to the educational objective, the Free School also seeks to create a friendly environment among students, where they can form bonds of friendship and socialize, combating the loneliness that they feel after arriving in Japan, and enhancing their psychological adaptation. In Mitie's words, “as parents cannot miss work, we are the ones who take the children to visit the schools and participate in meetings. So, we keep up with everything as if they were our children, as if we were mentors”.

Another important service by Organization 2 is the After School, also aimed at immigrant children. After School is a weekly class that aims to reinforce the knowledge acquired in Japanese schools and help with homework, considering that the parents do not have time to help their children or may be not knowledgeable of certain subjects such as *kanji* (Chinese and Japanese characters). In class, children can train their math and writing skills, as well as answer exercises. According to Mitie, because of After School, the number of Brazilian children who do homework has increased. This program works year-round, including during vacations when students accumulate homework. In addition to school-related classes, students also participate in cultural activities and extracurricular classes.

Similar to After School, Organization 2 also offers a private service called Juku (Juku, in Japan, is known as schools, attended in addition to one's regular school) that offers tutoring for elementary, middle, and high school students who are struggling in a certain subject, such as math, Japanese, or chemistry.

Another activity by Organization 2 is events such as seminars, lectures, and workshops. These events have, most of the time, themes related to career and university entrance. At these events, Organization 2 provides valuable information to students and their parents regarding the requirements and step-by-step instructions for entering a Japanese university. Also, Brazilian students who are already at Japanese universities are invited to share their experiences and inspire younger students to continue their studies. At these events, Japanese as well as Brazilian universities, which offer distance learning, also present themselves and offer their courses.

As can be seen, in addition to support for university admission, Organization 2 is also concerned with the professional future of the students. For this reason, these events also have the presence of professionals who can guide them to choose a career. This initiative, according to Mitie, is important, as it puts students in contact with professionals from different areas, with which they are unfamiliar and may become interested.

To facilitate access to relevant information regarding Japanese elementary, middle, and high school education, and admission to Japanese universities, Organization 2 has also developed a guidebook series for parents and students. Mitie explains that the purpose of these guidebooks is to help children feel good and safe in schools. Also, the organization produced a guidebook bringing relevant information about different professions, to guide students to choose their professional future. In this way, students and parents who were unable to attend the events can still have access to relevant information about education and career.

Lastly, Organization 2 also offers courses aiming to preserve Brazilian culture and the Portuguese language. Because several Brazilians in Japan were born there or immigrated at an early age, they end up losing or never developing a connection with Brazil. According to Mitie, this can trigger negative effects on the children's relationship with their parents, as well as feelings of insecurity and the lack of sense of belonging, affecting their mental health. Thus, Organization 2 strives to strengthen the Brazilian identity of these children with the Workshop on Portuguese as a Language of Heritage, which promotes activities about Brazil, and a Portuguese language course.

Although Organization 2's focus is on children and teenagers' education, the organization also offers some educational activities for adults. Currently, the main educational activities for adults are Japanese language courses and vocational courses for electricians. The Japanese course, available on-site and online, is mainly sought after by Brazilian newcomers and aims to help in areas such as education of children, work, medical care, and daily life. In addition, with such course, Organization 2 aims to contribute to the professional future of the immigrants, as the language is considered an important resource to achieve better job opportunities. This

course also prepares immigrants for the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) required by educational institutions and companies.

The electrician course is offered by Organization 2 due to the great interest of Brazilians in this profession and aims to prepare the immigrant for a difficult test to obtain a license as an electrician. This course not only teaches basic electrical installation lessons, but it also trains the student for the test, which is conducted in Japanese. This is another way, according to Mitie, to promote Brazilians' access to other sectors of the economy. In addition to these courses, the organization also offers lectures and workshops to teach relevant issues related to daily life in Japan, such as, for instance, traffic laws and cycling, which positively affect their sociocultural adaptation outcomes. In this way, Mitie believes that the Brazilian community, which has been showing signs of permanence, can learn and improve their skills and deal more efficiently with daily life in Japan, improving their quality of life.

5.1.2.2 Integration Services

Realizing the importance of long-established immigrants' knowledge in Japan, the organization also promotes opportunities for them to share their experiences with Brazilians who have recently arrived and often do not know whom to turn to for help in times of need. In these meetings, newly arrived immigrants can expose their concerns and difficulties and receive advice and instructions from immigrants who have been living in Japan for a longer time, demonstrating the importance of social support from the Brazilian community, considered one of the main variables of adaptation. These meetings are aimed at both the adult population, as well as children and adolescents.

Furthermore, concerned with the integration between Brazilian immigrants and Japanese society, another focus of Organization 2 is to promote multicultural exchange activities between these two populations. To create bonds between Brazilians and Japanese, and alleviate friction between them, the organization understands that it is necessary for them to have knowledge about each other's culture. For this reason, Organization B Japan conducts workshops, visits Japanese schools, and participates in local events organized by the Japanese to promote multicultural exchange.

One of the workshops routinely held by the organization, called "What is it like to be a foreigner?" aimed to show Japanese people what the reality of an immigrant is like, highlighting issues such as discrimination, xenophobia, and difficulties with the local language. This workshop is held at Japanese schools, universities, and events in Kanagawa Prefecture. In

addition to this workshop, Organization 2 also visits Japanese institutions to promote fun cultural activities such as dancing, cooking, and Brazilian games, so that Japanese people can become familiar with the Brazilian community, which can positively impact immigrants' adaptation, as social support from the host society is also an important source of skills learning.

5.1.2.3 Medical Care-Related Services

Another area of activity by Organization 2 is related to physical and mental health. Starting in 2020, this service aimed to help immigrants who have difficulty visiting a Japanese doctor, as well as those who need psychological assistance. According to Mitie, the idea of setting up a medical assistance program was due to the population's frequent demand.

The medical assistance service began in 2020, during the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus, which raised many questions in the population. To assist Brazilian immigrants, Organization 2 has set up an exclusive telephone number to answer questions related to this topic. Subsequently, verifying the need to continue this service to clarify questions related to health in general, the service became permanent. According to Mitie, health care is a major concern within the Brazilian community, as immigrants end up not being treated properly because they are unable to access Japanese medical institutions. In these cases, Organization 2 tries to help by seeking out doctors who are experts in the immigrant's need and referring them to the appropriate hospitals.

Interviewed for this work, Eliana, who is a psychologist at Organization 2 and has already received training in suicide prevention by Organization 3, says that after realizing the difficulty Brazilians have in accessing the Japanese medical system, she set up her own non-governmental organization, with the goal to help Brazilians HIV positive coming to or already living in Japan. According to her, when she started this service in 1994, the situation was very complex, because the amount of HIV-positive people in Japan was small, so the treatment offered by hospitals was precarious.

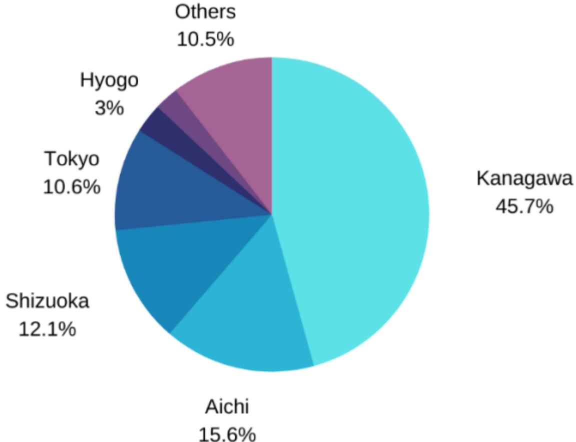
Currently, Eliana says that accessing the Japanese medical system is still challenging for most people, and it is a long process before one can obtain the drugs to continue the treatment against HIV in Japan. For this reason, support starts even before the departure from Brazil, for example, detailing the documents needed to be taken to Japan. Once in Japan, Eliana contacts the city hall and hospitals close to where the immigrant will reside, accompany them on their first appointment at the doctor, and give all kinds of social and clinical assistance necessary. In her words, "at this [first] stage the person really needs a lot of support. In 1 month, we need to organize everything [...] because

people need the medication”. In this way, Eliana helps those immigrants to get more familiar with Japan’s medical system and provides them with the necessary skills to be able to continue their treatment in Japan, resulting in better levels of sociocultural adaptation.

The psychological assistance service also started during the pandemic, in 2020, due to an increase in demand by the population. The goal, according to Mitie, is to alleviate the anguish and treat possible mental disorders suffered by immigrants, helping them to resume their lives.

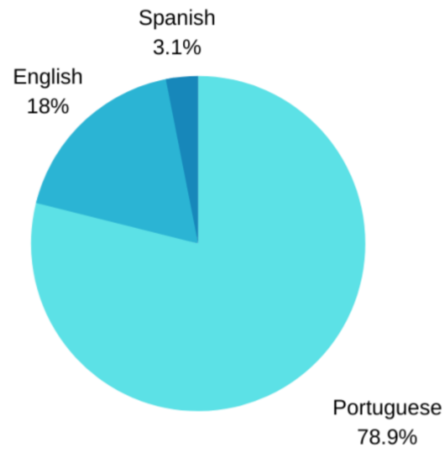
As with Organization 1, the service is offered online and in person, however, the majority of the Organization 2 's audience is concentrated in the Kanagawa Prefecture, according to data from the organization's annual report, made available by Mitie to the author of this dissertation. This service, according to Mitie, represents only 10% of their activities, but it has been intensified during the pandemic. As the organization also extends its services to immigrants of other nationalities, its psychologists are also trained to provide services in English and Spanish.

Graph 5 – 7 – Patients by Location



Source: Organization 2 Japan Activity Report, 2020.

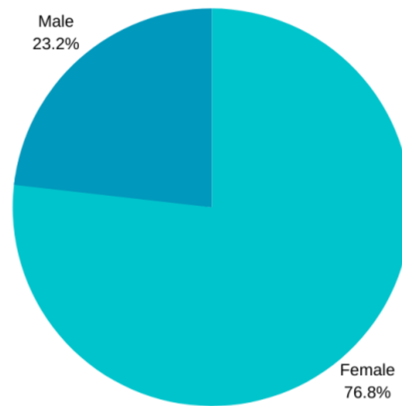
Graph 5 – 8 – Patients by Language



Source: Organization 2 Japan Activity Report, 2020.

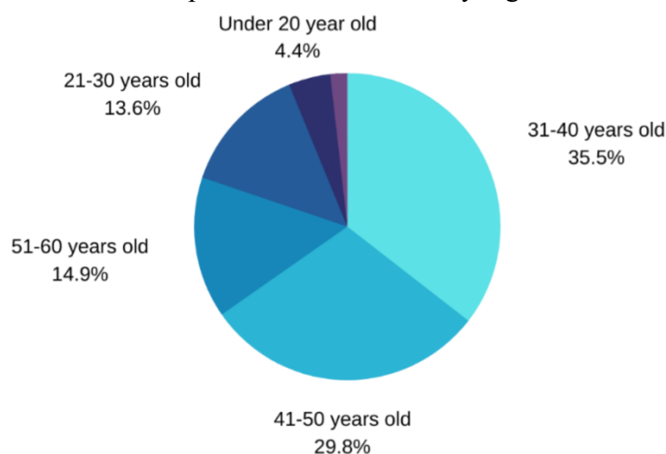
Furthermore, in line with the results released by Organization 1, in Organization 2, a larger part of the patients are also women and between 31 and 40 years of age, as can be seen in the graphs below.

Graph 5 – 9 – Patients by Gender



Source: Organization 2 Japan Activity Report, 2020.

Graph 5 – 10 – Patients by Age



Source: Organization 2 Japan Activity Report, 2020.

5.1.3 Small Non-governmental Organizations

5.1.3.1 Organization 3

Based in Yokohama city, Organization 3 is a small non-governmental organization founded in 1994 and works as a hotline where Brazilian immigrants can call in absolute secrecy when facing a personal and/or emotional problem and need to talk to someone, with the aim of preventing suicide. Due to the difficulties faced in Japan, as previously explained, immigrants not rarely develop mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, and due to their difficulty in navigating life in Japan, find it hard to look for appropriate treatment. Furthermore, because of their lack of proficiency in Japanese, it is hard for them to see psychological counseling. According to Organization 3, the number of calls from Brazilians related to suicide has been facing an alarming increase in recent years, jumping from 2.6% in the 1990s to 18.2% today. Organization 3 has a staff of volunteers of more than 10 nationalities, Portuguese, or Spanish speakers, who, due to the organization's policies, must have their identities preserved in order to maintain the absolute secrecy of calls. For this reason, they could not be interviewed for this research. In addition to donations from the community itself, Organization 3 also has funding from the Kanagawa Prefecture and Yokohama City Governments, due to the importance of its work, which has helped thousands of people to attain higher levels of mental well-being and prevented suicide.

Organization 3 also offers training courses to enable members of other institutions to provide emotional support over the phone to immigrants and prevent suicide. The consulate general of Brazil is one of Organization 3's main clients, from whom it receives training to enable its

personnel to offer psychological support, as, according to the consul, although the consulates count on Organization 1 psychologists, consulate staff frequently receive calls from people who are both desperate and on the brink of suicide, needing to talk and be heard in their native languages. Organization 3 empowers its personnel through long training courses that last 1 year. According to the consul, currently, all five employees of the consulate in Tokyo who work with customer service have undergone training in dealing with people in crisis. These calls, explains the consul, are very sensitive and demand an immediate and accurate reaction, and consulate officials, having received Organization 3's training, try to help these people. If necessary, when consulate staff is unable to help, they refer these people in need to Organization 3, which has more experienced and well-trained staff, or to an appointment with one of the Organization 1 psychologists to start a treatment.

5.1.3.2 Organization 4 and the Toyohashi International Association

Another important small organization to be addressed by this work is Organization 4 which works allied to the Toyohashi International Association of the Toyohashi City Hall. Organization 4 has a local presence, focused only on Brazilians residing in Toyohashi city, home to the second-largest Brazilian population in Japan located in Aichi prefecture where, as seen previously, the largest number of Brazilians in the country is concentrated. According to the president of Organization 4, Gisele, who was interviewed for this work, around 8,300 Brazilians currently live in Toyohashi city, being the largest local foreign population there.

An employee of the Toyohashi International Association who was also interviewed for this work, Lara explains that Toyohashi can be considered a model city in terms of welcoming foreign migrants. According to her, Toyohashi currently employs approximately 30 interpreters, being more than half of them in schools, 4 in the municipal hospital, and the rest in other public facilities, such as police stations and public employment service centers, with the goal of making it easier for immigrants to be able to cope daily life in the city, enhancing their adaptation levels. Founded in 1989, the Toyohashi International Association reflects the city's effort to integrate foreign residents. The association's objective is to internationalize the city, promoting inclusion, integration and exchange between immigrants and locals.

To achieve this goal, the association promotes various services and activities, such as Japanese language classes for foreigners, summer school to help foreign children with their homework and Japanese language during holidays, training and natural disaster survival guides in 5 languages with information such as evacuation and shelters, and the consultation desk called where

Lara works, to clarify questions, in several languages, as to issues related, but not limited to, daily difficulties, work, medical assistance and education of children, as seen in the images below.

Figure 5 – 1 – Consultation Desk

General Consultation for Foreigners (Infopia)
Multilingual Consultation is available !
English

Problems regarding Daily life, Work, Medical, Education and Childcare, Consultation is available over the counter or by phone.

Consultation time: 9:00am ~ 5:00pm
Holidays: Public holidays (but if Saturday or Sunday falls on a holiday, consultation available). New year (Dec.29~Jan 3), Due to other circumstances the office will be closed.
Languages: Portuguese, English, Tagalog, Chinese, Spanish, Indonesian, Korean, Vietnamese, Nepali, and Thai.

*Some interpretation or translation may be done by an Electronic Translator

Contact Number: 090-1860-0783

Source: Toyohashi International Association Webpage, 2021.[10]

Figure 5 – 2 – Disaster Preparedness Guidebook

Disaster preparedness card 防災カード

Disaster Preparedness Guidebook
防災チェックガイド
公益財団法人豊橋市国際交流協会
Toyohashi International Association

Source: Toyohashi International Association Webpage, 2021.[11]

To meet the specific needs of Toyohashi's largest foreign community, Organization 4 was born from a suggestion by the city's mayor, explains Gisele. According to her, with the increase of Brazilian immigrants, the mayor felt the need to create a group or organization where the community

[10] Available at <http://www.toyohashi-tia.or.jp/pdf-chirashi/2019-infopia.pdf> Accessed on November 25th, 2021.

[11] Available at <http://www.toyohashi-tia.or.jp/bousai-guide/bousai-guide-english.pdf> Accessed on November 25th, 2021.

could rely on. Initially, Gisele says that Organization 4 functioned as an informal arm of the consultation desk, where Brazilians in difficulty called for help and guidance in various fields.

Currently, Organization 4, in addition to clarifying questions, mediates bureaucratic processes between Brazilians and the city hall, helping, for example, to fill out forms, issue documents, and activate social insurance. In this way, the city hall "outsources" some of its services. "There are several works that the city hall, instead of doing them, passes on to Organization 4" explains Gisele. Also, together with the city hall and the Toyohashi International Association, Organization 4 participates as co-organizer of activities such as the Japanese course and the summer school. Gisele adds that the city hall is the main sponsor of Organization 4, as "we are always working together. [...] we calculate the projects that we are going to do and request them to the city hall. They evaluate and give us the funds to carry out our activities". With this partnership with the public sector, Organization 4 gains strength to better support immigrants in their adaptation processes.

In addition, Organization 4 offers telephone translation services, advertises employment opportunities, and has a psychologist for mental assistance. Organization 4 is also notable for donations of food, supplies, and school uniforms, helping immigrants in their basic needs. In the words of the president, requests for food baskets have increased considerably, as "due to the coronavirus crisis many people lost their jobs, or their incomes dropped and are experiencing difficulties and full of debts". In order to gather food, Organization 4 relies on the support of Toyohashi City Hall, other larger organizations such as Organization 2, churches, and the population.

5.1.4 Consulates General and Embassy of Brazil in Japan

The government of Brazil has three consulates general in Japan in addition to the embassy, being the largest one in Nagoya city, due to the large concentration of Brazilians there, the second in Hamamatsu city, and the third in Tokyo. The embassy is also located in Tokyo, and has a sector of communities, which, according to the consul general of Brazil in Tokyo, Leonardo, treats the Brazilian community as a significant element in the bilateral relationship between Brazil and Japan. According to the consul, the Brazilian embassy in Tokyo has some specific tasks for the community, such as mediating communication between the Ministry of Education in Brazil and Brazilian schools in Japan and carrying out any other actions that should be done on behalf of the community for their benefit with the Japanese Central Government. In this way, the embassy is responsible for all matters that need to be dealt with by Japanese authorities such as the central government or with immigration.

On the other hand, consulates generally have a relationship with the government of provinces and municipalities, not having a direct relationship with federal agencies. According to the consul general, services provided by the consulates can be divided into two levels, first- and second-generation consular assistance. The first-generation is the classic consular work, such as notarial acts and issuing passports, being the bridge of access for the Brazilian community abroad to the bureaucratic services of Brazilian bodies. Second-generation consular assistance is about supporting the immigrant community in order to achieve their well-being and their integration into the local society. According to the consul general, this so-called "community support sector" that they have in the consulates in Japan is a relatively new service and is not present in all Brazilian consulates around the world, therefore, it is still limited in terms of resources and personnel. Currently, the consulate is still in a phase of exploring ways to support the communities.

According to the consul general, the 3 consulates-general of Brazil in Japan established education and entrepreneurship, two areas that are very important for immigrants' social and economic adaptation, as their main areas to focus on, after an exploratory study with communities, which relied heavily on the support of non-governmental organizations, such as the Organization 1. For the consul, a central concern of the Brazilian government is the upward economic mobility of the community, and two central paths to achieve this objective are education and entrepreneurship. Therefore, in his understanding,

> young people have to study mainly the Japanese language, try to follow an academic path here in Japan, and reach jobs different from those of the first generation of immigrants who are mainly in factories, which are heavier, harder, and not they are the ones that pay the best within the Japanese economy.

Besides, regarding entrepreneurship, he says that "it is important for people to develop their entrepreneurial skills and we try to help with that". According to Ambassador Viana, "the best way to integrate into Japanese society is through entrepreneurship". In addition, counselor Rafaela emphasizes that when it comes to integration, it is also important to raise awareness in Japanese society. For this, the Brazilian embassy counts on the support of newspapers, for instance, to publish important information for the Japanese to understand more about the Brazilian community and improve the image of Brazilians and of Brazil in Japan. In this way, the embassy hopes to get the Brazilian community closer to the Japanese society, which can trigger to better access to relevant skills learning to cope with life in Japan.

Within the community support section, there is a specific area of community assistance work aimed at immediate problems, such as cases of violence, imprisonment, visits to hospitals, and

immigration-related problems. Within this area of assistance, psychological and legal services are also offered. In the words of the consul, "in times of crisis or difficulty, we have this community support department related to helping, well-being and integration". For him, the existence of this service is extremely important and has a high demand, considering the difficulty of the Brazilian community in accessing psychological care in Japan, for not having enough financial resources, or not knowing how to speak Japanese. Through this work, the consulate helps to promote immigrants' well-being, resulting in better adaptation. Psychological assistance at consulates performed by Organization 1 psychologists is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and has a budget to serve up to 60 patients per month.

Also, on tours of itinerant consulates caravans, the consulate seeks to understand the environmental problems that affect immigrants in Japan and provide access to mental and physical health services, as, says the consul general, studies show that immigrants have far more psychological problems such as depression and schizophrenia than the hosts for a variety of reasons, such as isolation due to communication difficulties and the absence of a support group.

Regarding legal issues, the consulate has a contract with a law firm that answers questions and clarifies inquiries that people may have regarding issues such as employment, rental contracts, and divorce with a Japanese citizen.

In terms of education, the consulate has held an education fair for the past four years aiming to invite institutions that have some relationship with education to exhibit and offer their services and opportunities to interested people. Although the audience is mainly young students, the consulate also seeks to bring different courses and training opportunities to adults, such as technical courses. This fair is usually held in the city of Oizumi city, in Gunma prefecture, which is in an area where there is a large concentration of Brazilians. In addition to the booths, several lectures and workshops are organized, dealing with educational topics. Among the participating institutions, there are Japanese universities and Brazilian universities that offer distance education. In this way, the consulate attempts to provide the immigrants necessary skills so they can advance socially and professionally, promoting the community's adaptation and economic mobility. In addition, language schools and cultural exchange agencies abroad also participate. According to the consul,

> we realized that there is a huge interest [in opportunities for cultural exchange] because many Brazilian students think that their Japanese language is deficient and that they will never be able to access a Japanese university in Japanese. So, these exchange English course programs are important because they open other possibilities for these students [...] to access Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand universities.

In addition to educational institutions, some of the NGOs dealing with student-related issues also participate, being Organization 1 and Organization 2 the two main ones. These NGOs seek to provide relevant information to parents from basic education to higher education in Japan. According to the consul general, this is a great challenge, as the student's adaptation to the school does not depend only on the student but depends on the participation and involvement of parents. However, several parents are unable to get involved, and schools do not have the resources to promote equality. At these events, key information such as student loans to pay tuitions of Japanese Universities, and scholarship opportunities are also made available.

The consul points out that Brazilian schools in Japan are concerning. For him, Brazilian schools have a fundamental role within the community, as there are parents who really need or want their children to follow the Brazilian curriculum. However, these Brazilian schools also end up being a source of problems since not all of them have a great emphasis on teaching Japanese, causing students not to learn the language. In the consul's view, "a part of these children intends to study in Brazil and will return to Brazil, but the point is that the vast majority of them will stay in Japan [...] without mastering the local language, which generates a huge integration problem".

The consul adds that, normally, within any immigrant community, second-generation immigrants, by attending local schools, end up learning the local language and becoming well integrated. However, among Brazilians in Japan, that are already in their third generation, this has not been happening, as they live in a bubble that offers everything, such as services and education in Portuguese. As a result, in his words, the community "ends up living in a somewhat marginal way within Japanese society. In an ideal universe, all students of Brazilian origin [residents of Japan] would be in Japanese schools. This would be the situation that would lead to better integration". For Brazilian students studying in Japanese schools, counselor Rafaela explains that the Brazilian embassy in partnership with a famous Brazilian writer Maurício Souza, author of a popular Brazilian comic book series (also known as "*manga*", in Japanese) called "Turma da Monica", produced and distributes a booklet that teaches children how to behave in Japanese schools, and parents how to guide their children, so they can be better able to adapt in Japanese schools. These booklets, which can be seen in the image below, are also available online.

Figure 5 – 3 – Guidebooks for Brazilian Kids in Japanese Schools

Source: The Consulate General of Brazil in Tokyo Facebook Profile, 2019.[12]

In times of crisis, the consulate general and embassy also strive to alleviate the community's difficulties. For example, during the covid-19 pandemic in 2020, thousands of Brazilian families lost their jobs or had a drastic reduction in hours worked, which caused a decrease in family income. In order to prevent students that go to private Brazilian schools from dropping out, the consulate provided financial assistance for up to 6 months. In the words of the consul,

> we offered partial scholarships to help students who were in a more critical situation. It was a help for students, for parents, and for schools also to keep their maintenance. [Without this aid] The fate of some students would likely be to drop out of school and enter the labor market without even a high school diploma.

When it comes to entrepreneurship, the consulate works on two levels. There is the Brazil-Japan Chamber of Commerce, which brings together large Brazilian companies present in Japan, such as Petrobras and Vale Brasil, and Japanese companies operating in Brazil. Within this chamber, there is an association called Brazilian Business Group, born in the United States and which currently also has representation in Japan. This group brings together small and medium-sized Brazilian entrepreneurs, who normally offer services/products to the community. In general, they are relatively small companies, made up of people who work with importing Brazilian products, travel agencies,

[12] Available at < https://www.facebook.com/ConsuladoemToquio/photos/a.716090865111091/2397591230294371/ > Accessed on November 28th, 2021

or moving agencies. According to the consul, the Brazilian Business Group was created with the support of the consulate, so there is a very strong connection with this association.

Among the most important activities aimed at entrepreneurship, there is an Entrepreneur Support Center in the cities of Hamamatsu and Tokyo, where the consulate provides community consultancy, mainly aimed at longer-established immigrants, who have a more stable life in Japan and are considering setting up a business. This center also produces several manuals that teach Brazilians how to start a business, with information such as labor laws and rules that need to be complied with. In addition, the consulate's legal consultancy service also offers advice for entrepreneurs to clarify questions.

Another relevant activity aimed at entrepreneurship are round tables/meetings with entrepreneurs and aspirants. These meetings are also broadcast online via the consulate's social networks so that the content remains available to as many people as possible. According to ambassador Viana, who conceived and currently promotes these meetings, the objective is that “the stories of Brazilian businessmen of difficulties and overcoming will inspire other people to follow the same path. There are several examples of people whose creativity ended up creating beautiful businesses here in Japan”. According to the ambassador, after over 30 years of Brazilian immigration to Japan, several people have created big national-level companies. In the ambassador's view,

> it is possible to open a business here and be successful. The fact that foreigners do not master the language 100% is not an impediment to opening a business here, being successful, earning money and achieving better integration than they would if they were working at a factory.

All services and assistance offered by the consulate to the Brazilian population in Japan currently has, according to the consul, the support of NGOs. According to him, several NGOs are the result of efforts made by the community, which organized itself to support its members when government bodies such as consulates, embassies and local governments did not play such role. In his words, “these NGOs are very important for the consulate because they end up providing a series of services that we are not able to provide many times, or they complement what the consulate does”. In agreement, counselor Rafaela adds that "social support comes a lot from NGOs. NGOs have been doing a very important job of trying to get people adapted in Japan”.

However, ambassador Viana clarifies that, the assistance provided by the consulates is limited, mainly for budgetary reasons. According to him, requests for financial help by immigrants are frequent, usually to buy a ticket back to Brazil. However, only in extremely specific and critical cases the consulate can bear this type of expense. On the other hand, the consulate does its best to

provide help in other ways, such as helping to get in touch with family members in Brazil who can help financially, or even, with the help of NGOs, trying to raise the necessary amount through donations. According to him, "NGO's have helped us many times to take someone to a shelter until they recover or get out of the situation they are in, and to find a temporary home until they can get back to their feet."

Organization 1 is currently the main partner of the consulate. In the words of the consul, “Organization 1 helps us in everything, but they work, above all, in psychological assistance”. According to him, psychological care at consulates is currently only possible due to the affordable prices charged by Organization 1. They also help the consulate in matters such as placing people in shelters and finding jobs. Meanwhile, Organization 2, the consulate's second-largest partner, is more active in educational support, such as adult training programs. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, these organizations are always present at events organized by consulates such as education fairs and citizens council meetings, created to give voice to community members. Lastly, Organization 3, as seen before, is an important ally for offering training to consulate staff enabling them to offer emotional support and prevent suicides through telephone calls. According to ambassador Viana, the consulate’s customer service sector is always on call, in addition to its social media networks through which people can also easily get in touch with the consulate’s personnel for whatever they need.

5.2 Non-governmental Organizations in the United States

5.2.1 Organization A

Organization A was designed to support Portuguese-speaking immigrants, such as Brazilians, Portuguese, and those from African countries such as Angola, Mozambique, and Cape Verde. Created in 1993, Organization A has services aimed at different sectors relevant to the lives of immigrants related to health, education, work, as well as legal, cultural, and social issues, with the objective of reducing difficulties and barriers along the way, promoting the development of these communities, and better sociocultural, psychological, and economic adaptation levels. Its main objective is to develop the community socially and economically and help it to achieve its “American dream” while maintaining its Brazilian roots and strengthening its sense of community.

Organization A originated from two other organizations in Massachusetts that have served the Portuguese-speaking community since the 1970s. Both organizations were the first to provide services to support immigrants on social, legal, and cultural issues. In addition, they also offered medical assistance services, mainly focused on the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS, after

the outbreak of this disease in the 1980s. To integrate the personnel and expand their services, the two organizations merged, forming Organization A.

According to the annual report made available by one of the Organization A employees in one of the Author's visits to the organization, 2.6% of the population of the state of Massachusetts is Portuguese speaking, second only to English and Spanish. However, considering the number of people who do not respond to the American government's census, for fear of exposure due to their undocumented status, the organization believes that a considerably greater number of people speak Portuguese in the state. Furthermore, according to unofficial data from the organization, approximately 67,000 Brazilian citizens reside in the state, second only to the Portuguese community among Portuguese speakers.

Organization A opened its first official city office in Boston. Currently, the organization has a total of 6 branches throughout the state of Massachusetts, in the cities of Cambridge, Lowell, Brighton, Somerville, Dorchester, and Framingham. The Framingham branch, founded in 2006, was the focus of this research, given the large concentration of Brazilians in that city, and the staff also made up only of Brazilians.

Given the importance of Organization A's work, several institutions currently work in partnership with it and fund the organization. Marta, an employee at Organization A in Framingham, says that the organization's main source of funding comes from state and local government agencies, such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants. Donations and fundraising events held by the organization, such as an annual gala dinner, also count significantly towards its budget. In addition, Organization has partnered with several other organizations, some of which will also be covered in this chapter, to expand its services.

Data from the organization's annual report shows that in the year 2021, approximately 14,500 people received some type of support from Organization A, which according to Marta is a low number, due to the pandemic, compared to other years that reached around 20,000 people. Marta argues that in 2020, there was an increase in the number of requests for financial support to cover basic needs, such as paying rent and donating food, as undocumented immigrants have no social security. That year, Marta reveals that approximately $150,000 was donated to families so they could buy basic items. The reason is due to the pandemic that has led thousands of immigrants to lose their jobs or have a considered lower income, and the increase in the number of Brazilians arriving in the state fleeing economic difficulties in Brazil.

Marta argues that the Brazilians mistakenly believe that currently, with the Biden administration, immigration laws have been relaxed. Marta fears that Organization A resources may not be able to meet the demand if the number of newcomers continues to increase with the easing of borders after the pandemic ends. According to her, "now they will open the border to tourists and

the movement of people arriving and staying will increase. It is very worrying how people are arriving in such numbers at the same time every day."

During the coronavirus pandemic, Organization A has also stepped-up support in terms of access to medical care and especially vaccination against the virus, as will be discussed in more depth below. In addition, among other traditional services offered by the organization are social integration programs, support in the naturalization process, assistance for the elderly, medical care, including assistance for people living with HIV, and help for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence. The figure below, taken from the Organization A 2015-2020 Strategic Plan provided by Marta, during a visit to the organization, it is possible to identify in detail the main services offered.

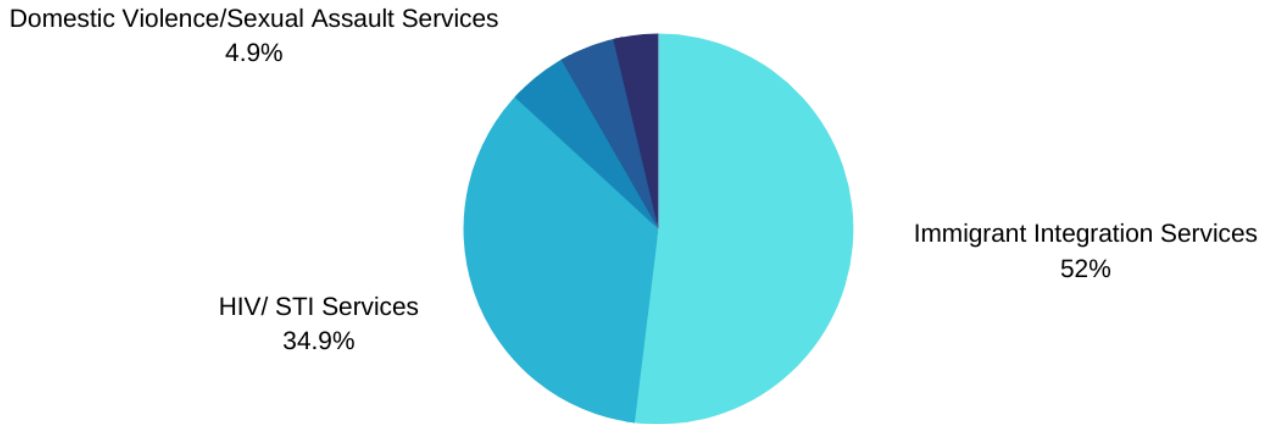
Figure 5 – 4 –Services Offered by Organization A in 2014

Program	Description
HIV/AIDS/STI Prevention & Screening *Initiated: 1988*	▪ Provides outreach, education, prevention, counseling, testing, and referrals to HIV/AIDS/STI services helping Portuguese speakers, high-risk minority women and men and their partners
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault *Initiated: 1996*	▪ Assists and supports victims / survivors, helping them deal with emotional, physical, and sexual abuse ▪ Increases awareness and knowledge among Portuguese speakers
Immigrant Integration	▪ Services that improve Portuguese speakers' access to economic opportunity, housing, heath care, and social services
Family Support Services	▪ Comprehensive support services to stabilize, strengthen, and unify children and families referred to MAPS by the state Department of Children & Families ▪ Also provides in-home therapy via MBHP
Elder Services / Cambridge Senior Center	▪ Offers Portuguese-speaking seniors socialization, support, social / recreational activities, and vital information ▪ Serves as essential link to other MAPS programs and other community service providers

Source: Organization A 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, 2015.

In the graph below, produced from data from the annual report, it is possible to identify which were the main services sought by the Brazilian community in the year 2021.

Graph 5 – 11 – Organization A Client Services Overview in 2021



Source: Organization A Annual Report, 2021.

It is possible to note that the greatest demand refers to general needs related to the daily life of immigrants (such as translation, housing, employment, and access to public benefits) followed by assistance to HIV-positive people (such as prevention, testing, access to medication) and, third, assistance for domestic violence and sexual abuse (such as support groups and legal assistance). In much smaller numbers are services such as elder services, family support services, mental health services, advocacy services, and, lastly, emergency services (such as food donation and eviction).

5.2.1.1 Health Care Services

Medical care is a major focus of Organization A and one of the most demanded areas by the community and reflects both immigrants' lack of skills to navigate the American medical system, and their difficulties to access health care for being undocumented, as lack of documentation makes it hard for them to apply for private health insurance. Organization A currently offers healthcare in different fields. For example, detox treatment and therapy for drug addicts are offered completely in Portuguese, breast cancer awareness campaigns, HPV vaccination, and MassHealth membership (Massachusetts government-subsidized limited health insurance for low-income families, which undocumented immigrants can also apply for).

Notwithstanding, when it comes to health, Organization A pays special attention to HIV-positive immigrants, given the great difficulty faced by most of them, especially among newcomers, to continue treatment in the United States. Services related to HIV/AIDS started in 2006, aiming to prevent, educate, test, and treat risk groups, free of charge and in Portuguese. These services, which originated after the creation of a clinic at the Framingham branch, are now present throughout Massachusetts and are funded by the state's Department of Public Health. In addition, Organization

A also assists with other types of sexually transmitted infections, such as syphilis and hepatitis C, and channels access to medications such as PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (Post-exposure prophylaxis) to contain the spread of HIV, also free of charge. Adriano, a nurse at the Organization A clinic interviewed for this research, says that all treatment is offered for free, such as HIV drugs that cost around $3,000 a month. Similar to Eliana's work in Japan, this service also gives access to Brazilian immigrants in the United States to the local health system and teaches them the necessary skills to continue the treatment. As undocumented immigrants can hardly apply for private health insurance, seeking treatment privately would be extremely expensive, and out of budget for most immigrants. In Adriano's words,

> our job is to identify the person with HIV in the community and put them on treatment. If a person is HIV positive, we put that person on treatment. Once in treatment, they start taking medicine and will no longer transmit this virus to other people.

In 2020 and 2021, Organization A also began to pay special attention to the prevention of covid-19 among immigrants. The organization used its social networks to make the immigrant population aware, in Portuguese, about sanitary measures to prevent infection by the virus and to encourage vaccination, created a hotline to answer questions related to the virus, and, with the support of the government, turned its branches into vaccination centers and distributed vaccines to facilities such as churches to immunize as many community members as possible. Many immigrants, due to their undocumented status, were afraid to visit official public vaccination centers, because they were afraid of exposing themselves.

In addition to physical health, Organization A also recently started offering mental health services. The Organization A psychological assistance program, explains Marta, started in February 2021, with the aim of mitigating the damage to mental health that intensified during the pandemic. According to Marta, isolation, job loss, and the loss of loved ones triggered anxiety and depression in immigrants. For this reason, noticing an increase in the number of people asking for help, Organization A began to offer remote, temporary psychological counseling for those in need, and connects them, if necessary, with other psychologists or psychiatrists. The objective of the program is to encourage people to ask for help and take care of their mental health. As it is a recent program, little data could be collected regarding its results.

5.2.1.2 Elder Services

Another priority of Organization A is support for senior immigrants. According to Marta, the Brazilian community in the United States is slowly getting older, and there are people who do not intend to or can no longer return to Brazil, being a very vulnerable part of the community. Among the main challenges within the elderly population are their difficulty in continuing to work, low wages, social isolation, physical and mental illnesses, and not having access to retirement, because they are undocumented. To alleviate these difficulties, Organization A currently runs a home for seniors located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Although this center does not have a structure that allows the elderly to live there, it is open throughout the day and offers several services in Portuguese and free of charge, making their lives more active and enjoyable.

Marta explains that there are immigrants who refuse to go to American senior facilities, as they want to remain close to other Brazilians who have similar culture and customs to theirs and receive treatment in their native language. In addition, these seniors find it difficult to access American senior facilities, as most of them charge high fees for their services.

Among the services offered by the Organization A Seniors Center are meal preparation, entertainment and socializing activities, and classes and workshops. In addition, they provide health care services, connecting the elderly, if necessary, with other senior facilities, organizations, or hospitals. During the covid-19 pandemic, to prevent the spread of the virus, the center temporarily closed its activities, returning in late 2020 when the vaccine against the virus became available in the United States, to immunize the elderly. With the relaxation of the rules of social distancing, the center has partially resumed its activities, following all health and safety measures, and is vaccinating the elderly with a booster dose.

With regard to Brazilian seniors, Lucia, a worker in the Somerville city hall interviewed for this research, says that there is a big difference when comparing immigrant seniors and American seniors. In her words,

> for American seniors who have American Social Security, the prognosis is very different because whatever resource they need, the resource exists. If they need some government funding or financial benefit, the United States has a social safety net for seniors that is reasonable. Undocumented immigrants do not have any of that.

5.2.1.3 Integration-Related Services

Services aimed at the social integration of immigrants are also an important focus of Organization A. Aiming to help immigrants adjust to life in the United States, Organization A offers support in diverse fields such as employment, housing, English learning, medical and legal services, document translation, access to government services such as insurance, and general daily life as how to deal with the harsh Massachusetts winter, giving immigrants necessary capacities so they can deal with daily life in the United States, and improve their sociocultural adaptation outcomes.

Nevertheless, Organization A believes that the main channel of immigrant integration into American society is through professional and economic development, despite the fact that professional growth is considerably limited since it is impossible to gain access to a formal work system as undocumented workers. For this reason, Marta considers that the most important integration-related activity offered by the organization is its career and employment assistance program, which has already supported more than 200 people. The objective of this program is to qualify, educate and introduce ways in which immigrants, including the undocumented, can develop professionally. Some of the services offered by the program are assistance in accessing employment opportunities, mediation between employers and potential employees, vocational courses and training, access to universities, and curriculum vitae preparation. Through these resources, the program, individually, molded to the particularities of each individual, tries to configure a career plan for immigrants.

5.2.1.4 Advocacy Services

Finally, legal services are a significant part of Organization A' activities. These services are mainly related to legalization, green card, naturalization, and, more recently, defense in cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Undocumented immigrants are considered easy targets because they are easily exploited, and assaulted, but afraid to look for their rights. Therefore, in this organization, immigrants can receive free legal counseling and support in filling out documents to become regular in the United States. The organization also holds events, such as lectures, a few times during the year to prepare immigrants to achieve legal status in the country.

Regarding domestic violence and sexual abuse, Aline, an employee of Organization A in Framingham, argues that during the coronavirus pandemic, cases jumped to staggering numbers. According to her, for several women the social isolation imposed by the pandemic represented a serious risk to their safety. The Organization A program against domestic and sexual violence aims to restore the physical and mental integrity of victims, offering shelter, information, legal, medical,

and psychological support, in a personalized and confidential way. Another important Organization A activity is an educational campaign to raise awareness within the community against domestic violence. This campaign, together with several other non-governmental organizations, in addition to publishing relevant information online through social networking services on how to deal with cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse, offers certain professionals in the third sector such as merchants, hairdressers, bartenders, and religious leaders training to identify and provide first aid to victims visiting their facilities.

5.2.2 Organization B

Organization B is a non-governmental organization located in the city of Framingham, Massachusetts, where there is one of the largest concentrations of Brazilians in the United States. It was founded in 2012 by a Catholic religious leader called Father Gilmar and aims to support the adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the city. According to Lilian, one of the interviewees, currently executive director of the organization, in addition to offering support, the Organization B objective is to educate immigrants so that they can become independent and take care of themselves and attain better adaptation outcomes.

Father Gilmar, the founder, also interviewed for this work, explains that the Organization was born from a Catholic church project called “Congregation of Scalabrinian Missionaries”, which is focused on supporting immigrants and refugees, especially those in vulnerable situations. Father Gilmar, who has once worked side by side with Pope Francis, began his work as a Scalabrinian missionary in 1998 and began his mission in the United States in 2002 with the Brazilian community residing in the state of Florida, and in 2012 he was transferred to Framingham where he set up Organization B, with the aim of providing support in fields such as legal, education, housing, and physical and mental health. Currently, Organization B works with donations and public and private funds. Among Organization B's main funders are the Massachusetts state government, the Framingham City Council, and foundations such as the Rotary Club of Framingham.

5.2.2.1 Health Care Services

Organization B is one of the most active non-governmental organizations targeting Brazilians today and has activities in different fields. However, currently, according to Lilian, Organization B has paid special attention to mental health care. The focus on mental health began in 2018 with a program called “Enhancing the Mental Health of Latin American Adolescents and their Families”, along with several other organizations that have joined forces to expand their mental

health services to alleviate difficulties suffered by immigrant families. According to Lilian, immigrants experience significant difficulties living in the United States, such as discrimination, learning English, and vulnerability at work, insecurity due to being undocumented, which have serious consequences on the mental health of both children and adults. One of the main resources offered by the program is a mental health guide, available in Portuguese, English, and Spanish, outlining the main existing psychological diseases and resources to deal with and treat them.

Aiming to extend the information in the mental health guide, Organization B also periodically holds workshops aimed at training and empowering people on how to help others suffering from depression and psychological illnesses. Organization B has a group of people trained to support the population in cases of depression, aiming to prevent suicide, as well as a group trained to deal with cases of trauma resulting from domestic violence.

Meanwhile, the Teens Workshop is another Organization B program that, through discussion groups, aims to explore more deeply the problems faced by Brazilian teenagers and try to enhance their mental health, which is important for their psychological adaptation. In addition, Organization B offers a service to connect people in need with appropriate institutions, which offer services in Portuguese, to start treatment.

Since 2018, with the increase in requests for psychological support, Organization B has launched a new online psychological consultation program, made by psychologists based in Brazil, as explained by Lilian below. In her words,

> We offer mental health care, which is done online by two Brazilian psychologists who live in Brazil, as we are short of licensed professionals here, at a much more affordable price. There is a lot of depression and a lot of suicide in the community. Immigrating does that. Because when they immigrate, they leave a place where they were somebody, and they had all their reference points like friends, family, church, school. Arriving here, they are no longer somebody and become nobody somewhere else where they don't speak the language, they don't know the culture, and that messes with their mental health.

5.2.2.2 Educational and Cultural Services

In addition to mental health services, Organization B offers a number of other services, such as cultural activities, educational classes, events and donation campaigns. One of the main cultural programs offered is the Summer Program aimed at children and teenagers during the schools' summer vacations. Lilian explains that this program, in addition to being an entertainment opportunity for children during vacation, helps parents who continue to work and cannot watch their

children. The objectives of this program are to offer activities that reinforce what was learned at school, encourage learning and reading, as well as sports and cultural activities. Some of the activities are theater, football, music, dance, cooking, and crafts.

In addition to the Summer Program, Organization B also offers soccer and capoeira classes, a typical Brazilian martial art. Regarding educational activities, Organization B offers classes in ESL (English as a Second Language) and Portuguese. Lilian explains that English classes are mainly aimed at adults, as children and teenagers tend to learn English quickly in schools. The Portuguese classes are aimed at children and adolescents, since, according to Lilian, as they spend most of the day in school, they end up getting used to communicating only in English and, in some cases, end up forgetting how to speak Portuguese. Lilian explains that in addition to the classes teaching writing, reading, and speaking, they also teach content about Brazilian culture to keep children connected to their roots.

A series of events are also held annually by Organization B for different purposes. *Festa Junina*, a typical Brazilian party held in June to celebrate rural life, is very popular in Brazil and the biggest event organized by Organization B, and, according to Lilian, attracts over 5,000 people annually. With these events, Organization B attempts to build a sense of community and belongingness, which is positively associated with feelings of well-being, especially within undocumented communities.

5.2.2.3 Health Care and Advocacy Services

Another popular annual Organization B event is the Health and Immigration Fair. At this fair, Organization B meets with other institutions in order to provide information on various immigration-related matters, and also offers a number of medical services free of charge. Among the health services offered are vaccinations, diabetes tests, cancer tests, mammograms, blood pressure tests, and an application for the Massachusetts public health insurance called MassHealth. In addition, regarding life as immigrants, services and information are offered on education, laws, naturalization processes, technical courses, financial education, employment opportunities, and access to social security, so they can become better capable of coping with life in the United States.

Lilian explains that several Brazilians are afraid to visit doctors and seek legal services and even medical care in the United States, as they fear exposure due to being undocumented. During the pandemic due to Covid-19, a major concern of Organization B was regarding immunization against the virus of immigrants. For this reason, Organization B, in partnership with the city of Framingham, became a vaccination center where immigrants could visit, clear all their questions, receive guidance in Portuguese and receive the vaccine for free. According to Lilian, because

Organization B is run by Brazilians, immigrants feel confident in visiting and providing their information to receive the vaccine. According to her, to receive the vaccine it is mandatory to present an identity document, and for this reason, Brazilians were afraid to look for a hospital to take the vaccine. In this way, Organization B became the main destination of the Brazilian community and was an important strategy to guarantee the immunization of this community and protect society in general. Lilian states that around 3,000 vaccines have already been administered at Organization B, being the majority of the recipients being Brazilian and some Hispanic, mainly from Guatemala and Honduras.

Regarding immigration services, Organization B also offers seminars and lectures for the community. For example, the Migration Seminar is an event that features several experts on migration issues such as lawyers, researchers, and diplomats to discuss relevant community issues such as integration with American society, economic development, and community contributions to the country. In addition, periodically, Organization B offers lectures on subjects such as the lecture on the rights of immigrants crossing the border from Mexico, led by lawyer Miranda, which is usually very demanded by the community who wish to seek a path to legalization, mainly through asylum applications, which was attended by the author of this work for observation purposes, followed by an interview with the lawyer.

5.2.2.4 Basic Needs Services

The provision of immigrants' basic needs is imperative for their psychological adaptation and especially necessary for undocumented immigrants. Therefore, donations are a big part of Organization B's activities. Massachusetts, being a state located in the northeast of the country, has harsh winters that Latinos are not used to and are not prepared with appropriate clothing. Therefore, especially among newcomers, the need for donations is considerable. In Lilian's words,

> a lot of people are coming. About 10 families a week arrive through Mexico. They [immigration agents] take everything from them on the crossing [at the border with Mexico] and they arrive here with nothing. Many people already leave Brazil knowing about the existence of Organization B, and when they arrive in Framingham, the first thing they do is visit us.

For this reason, every year Organization B seeks donations of warm clothing to donate to needy families, especially newcomers. The photo below was taken on one of the visits to Organization B, the sign reads "If you need one, get it. If you can help, donate it".

Figure 5 – 5 – Coat Donation Campaign by Organization B

Source: Author’s picture.

In addition to food donation, Organization B also offers financial assistance and food donation in critical situations, such as during the pandemic. Lilian explains that the immigrants saw their incomes drop dramatically, while many lost their jobs. Without any access to social security due to being undocumented, they experienced significant financial difficulties, without money to buy food, and pay utilities and rent. To raise funds, Organization B relied on donations from American foundations, schools, churches, and society. Between 2020 and 2021, says Lilian, more than 1500 families were helped and almost 1000 basic food baskets were donated.

5.2.2.5 Partnership with the Catholic Church and the Consulate of Brazil

A peculiar trait of Organization B is its alignment with the Catholic Church. As explained earlier, this organization was founded by a priest, and its location is right next to Church A, where Father Gilmar worked. This church, now led by Father Marcos, another interviewee, is considered an arm of Organization B and operates in practically all the organization's activities. Father Gilmar states “the church has a very important role both in the spiritual and social aspects. People go there to socialize, meet friends, receive guidance, ask about work, documents”. In agreement, Father Marcos adds that

> it is in religious faith where they find the strength to follow their paths and overcome their challenging moments. But we also help them in the civil part and make sure they integrate and become autonomous in the community. At church, they find a new family. The church becomes a new home.

In addition, Church A conducts creative activities to reach immigrants, such as web radio shows. This radio program airs weekly and is attended by the executive director of Organization B, Lilian, and several guests, and aims to discuss and provide relevant information to immigrants in Portuguese, such as documentation, traffic laws, and the rights of immigrants. Lilian says that one of the great difficulties nowadays is fake news and that radio program strives to verify the veracity of information and deny information that is known to be false. In addition, as a Catholic radio, it also brings religious guidance to listeners. For Father Marcos, radio is also a tool to bring the gospel to the homes of immigrants, because, as seen previously, religious faith is an important resource to Latin communities.

Julia, the host of this radio show is a counselor in domestic violence, and always discusses this issue on the radio in order to educate people on how to act in these situations and protect women, providing telephone numbers and reporting channels. In addition, Julia addresses issues related to feminism, aiming to promote equality between men and women within the community. Given the importance of her work, Julia was one of the interviewees for this work.

Father Marco argues that the objective of the radio is to be, in addition to being educational, the voice of immigrants. Through radio, Church A seeks to channel the voice of the Brazilian community, echoing its thoughts on various topics. For example, after the election of Donald Trump, with the adoption of the zero-tolerance policy, immigrants, regardless of having committed crimes or not, became targets of persecution and deportation. Faced with this, the radio show used its reach, since the radio is open to the whole society, to demonstrate its disapproval of this new policy.

Another institution that works in line with Organization B is the Consulate General of Brazil in Boston. Given the high concentration of Brazilians in the city of Framingham, the Brazilian consulate relies on Organization B's partnership to make its services reach the community more quickly and easily. If a Brazilian immigrant wishes to issue any document, *e.g.*, a marriage certificate or a passport, the forms can be completed at Organization B, and they are later forwarded to the consulate, where they will be processed, issued, and sent back to Organization B. In this way, the organization serves as an informal office for the Brazilian consulate in the city of Framingham.

5.2.3 Organization C

Organization C was established in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1995 to assist immigrants in work-related fields such as labor rights, a field in which undocumented immigrants are particularly deprotected. Organization C was one of the first non-governmental organizations set up by Brazilians in the state of Massachusetts to support workers, and expand its services, benefiting as many people as possible, set up another branch in the south of the state and one in the state of Connecticut, in 2012. In addition, Organization C is aligned with several other state and public organizations such as the Greater Boston Labor Council and the United States Department of Labor.

Among the organization's activities are education, qualification, advocacy, and worker protection services. Organization C's mission is to make the voices of immigrants heard, promote the professional, economic, and social development of immigrants, raise them from a marginalized condition due to undocumented status so that they feel they belong to the United States, promoting their sociocultural, psychological and economic adaptation.

To achieve its goals, Organization C, in addition to providing services directly to immigrants, also performs relevant tasks such as research, organizing political campaigns, and partnering with government agencies to establish communication between the government and immigrants. Helena, an employee of Organization C, explains that the organization works on three axes, which are community services offered in Portuguese, community organization, and political mobility.

Unlike other non-governmental organizations, Organization C is very focused on policy change and its engagement has brought solid results. For example, the organization has already contributed to the enactment of laws protecting domestic workers, a law that guarantees protection in cases of sexual harassment and discrimination. In addition, according to Helena, the political engagement of the population is very important to promote the necessary changes, and that is why they encourage immigrants to learn and actively participate in politics, in search of conquering more space, security, and rights not only as workers but as immigrants in general. Lucia, previously introduced as a Brazilian employed by the Somerville city hall, says that

> Organization C was instrumental in passing a law that regulated domestic work in Massachusetts. Their focus is on labor issues, and they achieve results, such as compensation for accidents, and regularizing those who worked and did not receive. They show the immigrant that, in Massachusetts, if they work, they must be paid for it, it doesn't matter if they have legal documentation or not. Many immigrants are afraid, intimidated, and frightened, and end up not looking for places that can help them in their rights. So,

this is the role of the NGO, to serve and advocate on behalf of people who are afraid to seek an official agency.

Organization C's teachings include leadership skills, legislation, public policy, critical thinking, labor rights, access to healthcare, English, and research methods. In this way, the organization believes it is building a strong community capable of protecting itself and promoting changes in the system, despite the limitations of living undocumented.

When it comes to staff, Organization C is governed by a board of female directors, who pay special attention to the injustices and challenges faced by female immigrants, most of whom, as noted earlier, are domestic workers, easy targets of labor, and sexual abuse. As for the other employees, Helena says that it is formed only by immigrants from the Brazilian community itself, making Organization C an organization from immigrants to immigrants. According to her, this conveys a feeling to immigrants that Organization C is a safe place to ask for help, as they fear exposing themselves and usually seek the organization in moments of vulnerability, when they are being exploited by an employer, or have suffered an accident at work, are having their rights violated, or are being harassed by the police or immigration agents, which profoundly affects their well-being. In such cases, Organization C tries not only to help immigrants with their immediate needs but also to educate them so that they can learn to deal with their problems and become independent and able to take care of themselves.

As stressed earlier, Organization C has several immigrant worker protection programs that go beyond just assistance but seek to empower and make them politically active. Some of these programs will be detailed below.

5.2.3.1 Leadership Services

Leadership training for immigrant workers is one of Organization C's core programs and has a significant impact on sociocultural adaptation. This program offers different types of training, such as learning about labor law and safety, access to healthcare, and public speaking. The objective of this program is to increase community involvement in political affairs and to form leaders capable of promoting change. In addition, this training provides the knowledge necessary for immigrants to understand their rights and duties, gaining more power over their lives. The training starts with an introductory workshop followed by 6 weekly classes on topics such as labor rights applied to immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, leadership, organization, participation and political transformation, and teamwork.

Nathalia, an employee of Organization C, reported that a major deadlock in the political engagement of the population is the undocumented status. However, she points out that participation is still possible by learning about relevant topics, influencing other immigrants to do the same, participating in debates and demonstrations, and making their voices heard. Nathalia explains that often when an immigrant seeks Organization C in search of some support, most of the time in matters related to labor exploitation, the organization integrates this immigrant into the training. In this way, she explains that these people end up becoming Organization C volunteers, becoming able to help others who are struggling. In addition, she emphasizes that all Organization C affiliates are or have been workers in sectors such as construction and cleaning, which triggers sensitivity and empathy among them.

5.2.3.2 Worker Protection Services

Another relevant Organization C program is legal support. According to data provided by the organization, the free legal support offered by Organization C has already helped dozens of people and obtained more than 3 million American dollars in compensation for its clients. Helena explains that the motivation for this service began due to the vulnerability of the undocumented immigrant worker who is constantly exploited, for example, being forced to expose himself to risks and not having his wages paid by employers. Also, this service started due to the organization's perception that workers did not have the necessary knowledge to defend and protect themselves, putting them in an even more unfavorable position.

The big difference at Organization C is that this is not just a service provided to the community, but a program that combines immediate support, from filling out forms to defending in court, with the education of immigrants. In this way, the legal service complements the previous program of immigrant empowerment, making the community more aware and stronger.

In addition to labor issues, Organization C's legal service also offers support on other matters, such as immigration. They assist qualified immigrants with the Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program that grants work permits to young people brought to the United States as children and helps Brazilian families find relatives who have been arrested by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Another case in which Organization C frequently interferes is in cases of arrest for driving without a driver's license. Helena explains that even though Massachusetts is home to a large immigrant community, they are not allowed to have a driver's license there like in states such as California and Texas, severely limiting their capacities to cope with life in the United States. However, especially in smaller cities such as Framingham, public transport is inefficient, which

makes it mandatory to have a car, or it is difficult for one to get a job. Consequently, she argues, it is not uncommon for Brazilian drivers to be stopped and detained for not having a valid driver's license. For this reason, one of Organization C's most important struggles today is the state's recognition of driver's licenses for qualified persons, regardless of immigration status.

Another important achievement of Organization C is the Manual of Domestic Worker Law, in Portuguese, created to bring understanding to workers and employers about their rights and duties about issues such as contracts, payment, rest, food, housing, indemnities, maternity leave, harassment, and discrimination.

In addition to the manual, the Organization C, in partnership with the American agency Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), also produced an educational video on safety, focused on the most frequent accidents, such as preventing falls within the professions performed by Brazilians, at work, aiming at health and physical well-being of immigrants.

Along with OSHA, Organization C also offers courses on security for immigrants. These courses aim to train people not only to protect themselves but also to teach other workers about rules and important behaviors to prevent accidents at work. As explained earlier, several immigrants do not know or prefer not to seek medical help in the United States. For this reason, enabling them to stay safe is a very important task. To expand this resource to as many people as possible, Organization C makes the course available to other organizations.

5.2.3.3 Basic Needs Services

Finally, despite Organization C being focused on the labor level, recently, the organization has divided its attention to some urgencies that have emerged in the Brazilian community. As a result of the pandemic that started in 2020, Organization C realized that immigrants were severely penalized by a drastic decrease in income since they work in the third sector, and by unemployment, without access to social security due to being undocumented. Helena explains that with the low demand for work-related services, the organization can pay more attention to other problems. Aiming to cushion the impacts brought by the pandemic, Organization C started a food donation program for immigrants in need. Data from the organization indicate that so far almost 100,000 people (approximately 2,000 per day) have already been helped with food donations, including not only Brazilian immigrants, but the entire society in need.

In addition to food, this donation campaign also provided items such as toilet paper, masks, and hand sanitizer, which are basic items necessary to meet immigrants' physiological needs, and essential for psychological adaptation. Also, to alleviate the difficulties faced by people in need, Organization C was able to offer monetary support to buy medicine, and to families who could not

pay utility bills and rent, thus preventing these people from being evicted. To expand the project's reach and increase funding, Organization C has partnered with several other organizations such as churches, and non-governmental organizations such as the Organization D. Helena explains that this type of service is extremely important for the immigrant community because, as the majority is out of status, they are not eligible to receive the federal government-issued emergency stimulus check in the amount of $1,400.

Helena adds that in addition to donating food and money, Organization C also served as an emotional support center for immigrants, who during their visits shared their difficulties with the staff. On these occasions, Organization C took advantage of it to educate immigrants to better deal with their problems, which most often were related to work and money, teach sanitary measures to prevent contamination by covid-19, and indicate other organizations that could better meet their specific needs.

5.2.4 Organization D

Organization D is a non-governmental organization set up in 1995 in the city of Brighton in the state of Massachusetts. Unlike the other organizations already discussed, Organization D is focused on female immigrants. Among the goals of the organization are the empowerment of women, support in health, education, and legal issues, promoting their financial independence, representing the voice of women, and creating an environment where women can be respected and feel safe, enhancing their adaptation levels.

One of the interviewees, Olivia, founder, and president of Organization D created the organization after realizing the vulnerability to which women, especially undocumented ones, are exposed, suffering from employer exploitation, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and poverty. With this organization, Olivia hoped to be able to promote political and social transformations that would change the lack of protection of immigrant women. The entire board of employees is composed of women who already work or have worked in jobs such as housecleaners, nannies, and waitresses, the main professions occupied by Brazilian women in the United States.

To promote the changes desired by Olivia, the organization engages in several actions that target mutual respect, integration with other organizations, integration with American society, combating racism and xenophobia, and political awareness and mobilization. In this way, the organization intends to find short-term solutions to immediate needs, support Brazilian immigrant women, make their lives easier, and promote long-term changes. Given the relevance of the services provided by the organization, Organization D has already received several awards, including from

the Brazilian federal government. Among the main activities of Organization D, there is a housecleaners cooperative, an immigration clinic, training, lectures, and workshops.

5.2.4.1 Immigration Services

The immigration clinic is a program offered by Organization D whose purpose is to clarify information and provide services related to immigration. Often in partnership with Organization A, the services offered include free legal consulting and lectures on immigrant rights in Portuguese. In addition, a relevant resource offered by this program is a guide for families affected by immigration laws. This guide contains relevant information about immigration laws as well as reliable law firms, and alternatives and possibilities for various situations that immigrants may find themselves in. The purpose of this guide is, according to Lia, labor rights organizer for Organization D, to provide information that may be useful to immigrants, especially women and undocumented, in their defense in court, as they are particularly vulnerable. Tânia, an interviewee, says that women are also traditionally victims of labor exploitation. According to her,

> they are afraid to denounce their bosses because they are undocumented, and their superiors know this they know that there is a fear and they feed that fear through threats. So, it is very difficult for them to make the decision to denounce the exploiters. So, we do this education work confirming that regardless of immigration status, everyone has rights.

As the guide is focused on women, it provides relevant information for mothers to learn how to deal with their children in cases of arrest and deportation, as well as the rights of children as immigrants in the United States. Lia says that for undocumented mothers, one of the greatest anguishes is the fate of their children if they are detained. Therefore, this guide is important for them to be aware of the possibilities. Lia cites as an example the extremely vulnerable situation of women who have been abandoned by their husbands. In her words, "There are many women who arrive and want to know what to do, after having been abandoned by their partners, to raise their children considering that they cannot work and have no relatives".

5.2.4.2 Worker Protection Services

The Viva Verde women's cooperative is one of the most relevant programs of the Brazilian Women's Group today. This cooperative emerged from Olivia's concern about the health of Brazilian

women who work as housecleaners, and who clean several houses daily using chemicals that can be harmful to health. In Tania's words,

> most immigrant women work as house cleaners and many of them are exploited, have a long working day, are not paid enough, and also have to work using chemical products that are harmful to the health and environment of the clients themselves.

To preserve the health of these women, the cooperative holds lectures and workshops on the long-term dangers of using toxic products and teaches how to produce tested and equally efficient natural products and cleaning methods that are healthy for both the body and the environment. This cooperative also works as an employment agency for women valuing their safety and fighting against labor exploitation. Hence, it is an important project to provide them with the necessary skills so they will be better able to cope with life.

In addition to Viva Verde, Organization D offers lectures and workshops on several other topics relevant to immigrant women in the United States, to decrease their vulnerability as undocumented immigrant women, such as female empowerment, to discuss the daily difficulties they face; labor rights, to make immigrants aware of exploitation and violation at work and what their rights are; sexual harassment, to inform women about what to do and whom to ask for help; for mothers, lectures on education in American schools and bilingualism among children. In addition, the organization also offers lectures such as citizenship classes for immigrants who are eligible to apply for American citizenship, which includes an English course and instructions for filling out forms; and after-school for children, focused on helping children to do their homework, given that the parents usually do not know English or cannot help their children with their schoolwork.

5.2.4.3 Cultural Activities

Organization D also holds a series of community-oriented events, the most important being the “Brazilian Independence Festival”, on September 7th every year. The first festival took place in 1995, to celebrate Brazil's independence, as well as promoting Brazilian culture, and is currently the largest festival organized by and for the Brazilian community in the United States. Although initially aimed at the Brazilian community, over the years, the festival has gained great proportions and attracted the attention of people of several nationalities, interested in knowing more about Brazil. The festival features a program about culture (such as a music show and film screenings) and Brazilian history and the Portuguese language, as well as recreational activities, stalls with products and typical foods from Brazil, and services for the community. With this event,

Organization D aims to bring the host society closer to Brazilians and promote integration, which can be beneficial for sociocultural adaptation.

5.2.4.4 Health Care and Informational Services

Like other non-governmental organizations, Organization D also served as an important channel for information about covid-19 and became a vaccination center. To facilitate the scheduling of vaccines, Organization D provided a telephone number with an attendant in Portuguese so that everyone could have easy access to the service. In addition, when receiving the vaccine, the entire explanation about the vaccine and the filling out of forms could be carried out in Portuguese, with the help of volunteers. In addition to vaccination, Organization D also provided rapid tests to be able to track cases of covid-19 among Brazilians and aid receive medical care and hospitalization, helping especially undocumented immigrants that have more limited skills and means to access the American medical care system.

Finally, similar to Organization B, Organization D also has a small radio program in Portuguese, aimed at immigrant Brazilian women, where various topics relevant to this population are discussed. In addition to the radio, due to social distancing because of the pandemic, Organization D has become very active on social media, where it performs lives almost daily with several guests invited to discuss topics of interest to immigrants.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION

In its first step, this study started by outlining the profile and main characteristics of Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan. After doing that, this study followed its second step, to investigate the concepts and variables of psychological and sociocultural adaptation, as well as the interaction between them. After having learned the concepts of psychological and sociocultural adaptation, as its third and fourth step, a review of the literature performed in this work sought to conceptualize non-governmental organizations and understand their role in immigrants' adaptation and led to identifying several variables that influence the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan. In addition, fieldwork conducted in Japan, and in the state of Massachusetts, United States, found and investigated non-governmental organizations targeting Brazilian communities and the services offered by them. Utilizing the data gathered from the previous steps taken by this work, this chapter proposes to discuss how, from a qualitative approach, the services offered by non-governmental organizations influence the psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes of Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan, *i.e.*, the role of non-governmental organizations in the adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in these countries, addressing the main research question of this research.

6.1 Psychological Adaptation of Brazilian Immigrants in the United States and Japan: Analysis of Key Variables

This study found that adaptation, in its broadest concept, consists of "the process through which persons reorganize or rebuild their lives after relocating to a new sociocultural context (Ryan, Dooley & Benson 2008:2). Search for variables, also known as predictors, that influence this process is an indispensable step in adaptation studies. Therefore, in order to comprehend the phenomenon of adaptation in its fullest sense, shedding light on a wider spectrum of relevant variables, this work approached adaptation from psychological and sociocultural perspectives. The variables of psychological and sociocultural adaptation approached in this study are keywords for analytical descriptions, as by acknowledging such variables it is possible to analyze on what psychological and sociocultural adaption outcomes are based.

Psychological adaptation, as detailed in the third chapter, is considered a phenomenon that occurs on a personal level that can be analyzed within a stress-coping framework "and refers to feelings of well-being or satisfaction with transitions, although it is commonly evaluated through negative effect, using measures of depression or mood disturbance" (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis &

Sabatier 2010: 2). Therefore, "psychological adaptation refers to affective responses including a sense of well-being and self-esteem, as well as physical well-being" (Hui, Chen, Leung & Berry 2015:3).

The psychological adaptation follows a curvilinear outline similar to a U-curve, suggesting that it presents good levels at the beginning, decreases, and tends to improve again over time (Searle & Ward 1990). This dynamic is due to the comfort often found by immigrants in the very beginning, followed by a cultural shock when faced with sociocultural differences. At such stage, the "cultural context exceeds the individual's capacity to cope, because of the magnitude, speed, or some other aspect of the change, leading to serious psychological disturbances, such as clinical depression, and incapacitating anxiety" (Berry 1997:8). Nonetheless, as immigrants get used to life in the host country, psychological adaptation levels rise again.

Among the main variables of psychological adaptation found in this work, there are "personality variables, life change events, and social support, and are usually predicted by the successful pursuit of the integration acculturation strategy, and by minimal cultural distance" (Berry 1997:16). In addition, sociocultural adaptation, *i.e.*, the capacity to cope with daily life in the host country, is related to psychological outcomes, since not being able to deal with life can lead to stress and jeopardize well-being. Nevertheless, several other indicators are also explored, such as

> moderating factors before migration (*e.g.*, age, gender, personality, cultural distance from host society), coping strategies employed by the acculturating individual, experiences of prejudice and discrimination, social support, and contextual factors like demography, immigration policy, and ethnic attitudes of the receiving society. (Tsuda 1996: 9)

In the cases of the psychological adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan, several variables could be identified. In the United States, it was found that Brazilians usually decide to immigrate based on illusory information sold by *coyotes* (people smugglers) or even by friends and relatives residing in that country, but they are faced with a harsh reality even before arriving, while crossing the desert from the Mexican border, facing stress and psychological traumas.

After arriving in the United States, documentation status has been shown to be by far the main variable that predicts psychological well-being, since the absence of legal documentation to stay, access public services, and work in the country exposes them to a constant state of vulnerability and anxiety. In addition, variables such as "racial and anti-immigrant discrimination [...], experiencing a downgrade in social status" (Joseph 2011:171), and heavy work routines, have also been shown to be associated with low levels of psychological well-being. On the other hand,

variables such as religious faith and support from the Brazilian community appeared to significantly contribute to good levels of psychological adaptation.

Considering the economic motivation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States, despite “living in constant fear and with anxiety [...] enduring [...] fear of deportation, isolation from loved ones at home, and depression” (Joseph 2011: 176), the bigger purchasing power and the possibility of reaching the objective of achieving a better life upon returning to Brazil seems to counterbalance the difficulties faced in the United States and alleviate psychological stress.

In Japan, it was found that some variables of psychological adaptation contrast with those of Brazilian immigrants in the United States. As seen in the third chapter, while in the state of Massachusetts, undocumented Brazilian immigrants exceed 7 times the number of regular immigrants, in Japan, almost all Brazilians have a regular documentation status, leading to at several levels a different reality from that experienced in the United States.

When it comes to the psychological adaptation of Brazilians in Japan, the main variable found in the literature was overwork. Due to the arduous work routine in factories, known as the 5k, “emotional imbalances are very frequent” (Rossini 2002: 10). Although they receive in Japan considerably higher salaries compared to what they earned in Brazil, long working hours and pressure for productivity are major triggers of stress.

The long hours spent in factories cause the social isolation of Brazilians. These workers are constantly socially isolated, including from the Brazilian community, suffering silently because they do not have the time or resources to deal with their pain, which negatively affects not only their social lives but also their mental health (Osawa 2006). As a result, family breakdowns are not uncommon, since many spouses work different shifts and end up getting divorced, and the parents do not have time for their children, neglecting attention and education support for them, which triggers “depression and other mental disorders” (Osawa 2006: 4).

A remarkable trait of the Brazilian community in Japan is cultural differences and integration difficulty with Japanese society. The difficulty of integration due to cultural differences, language barriers, and lack of openness on both parts, in addition to accentuating the feeling of social isolation, also triggers existential and identity problems, since the majority of them are descendants of Japanese (Quintana 2013).

> Such problems arise not only from the relative impermeability to foreigners present in Japanese society but also from more intimate, psychological, individual self-identification issues, especially among the *Nikkei*, who, despite leaving for the land of their ancestors with a feeling of belonging, are often harassed by reactions of prejudice and discrimination. (Costa 2007: 96)

As a result, in order to preserve their psychological well-being, Brazilian immigrants tend to seek refuge within Brazilian communities, having little to no contact with Japanese society, a strategy known as "ethnic persistence" (Tsuda 1996: 386). Seeking refuge in the Brazilian community and receiving social and emotional support from it is another important and widely mentioned variable that has been shown to contribute to good levels of well-being and to learning relevant skills to cope with life.

Other key variables of psychological adaptation among Brazilian immigrants in Japan found are "low social status as immigrant workers, [...] an uncertain economic future back home, loneliness and homesickness, family separation (for some), and the physical difficulties of manual labor" (Tsuda 1996: 375).

6.2 Sociocultural Adaptation of Brazilian Immigrants in the United States and Japan: Analysis of Key Variables

Another central theoretical concept of this research, sociocultural adaptation, as detailed in chapter 3, refers to the ability to cope with life within a new sociocultural context. Therefore, sociocultural adaptation can be analyzed through a skills-learning framework and "refers to how well an acculturating individual is able to manage day-to-day life in the new cultural context" (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis & Sabatier 2010: 2).

In the host country, immigrants are faced and compelled to interact with a reality with which they are not familiar, therefore, they need to acquire the necessary skills to survive there. This process, "requires effortful learning of new ways of living and consolidating them with one's habitual ways of being and identity and can thus be stressful" (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 3). Sociocultural adaptation outcomes are based on learning the skills and knowledge necessary to reduce difficulties from the "foreignness" of a different culture" (Savicki (010: 1). Such skills "affect the ease with which an individual navigates surrounding sociocultural environment and accomplishes goals, such as performing tasks, making friends, participating in social activities, and understanding and communicating with others" (Newman, Hartman & Taber 2012: 4).

Unlike psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation appears to follow an ascending line, meaning that levels of adaptation are lower at the beginning and rise over time as immigrants learn to live in the host country (Ward, Okura, Kennedy & Kojima 1998). Furthermore, while in psychological adaptation the variables that influence the process are personal, in sociocultural adaptation they are situational. Among the main variables of sociocultural adaptation found by this work, there are factors such as cultural distance "(*i.e.*, the overall difference in assumptions,

values/beliefs, norms, and institutions between host and home countries)" (Kong 2017: 1), language fluency, interactions with host nationals (which also depends on the level of tolerance of the hosting society) and social support from the conational community. Furthermore, factors such as "length of residence in the new culture, immigration status (having resident permits or being 'illegal'), and perceived discrimination were the most powerful predictors of sociocultural adjustment of immigrants" (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez & Furnham 2006: 1).

In the Brazilian community in the United States, one more time the variable "documentation status" comes up in first place, having significant weight in the levels of sociocultural adaptation. Undocumented immigrants have limited access to several services (*e.g.,* health insurance and social security), legal rights, and the formal work sector, considerably restricting their ability to navigate autonomously day-to-day life. For this reason, immigrants end up being exploited by employers who do not provide safety equipment, force them to go through abusive shifts, and pay below-average wages or, not rarely, don't pay at all. In fear, immigrants do not report their employers because they believe that the same system that could protect them (the government) can also deport them back to Brazil.

Not having legal status also leads many immigrants to socially isolate themselves, for fear of exposing and risking getting arrested or deported. As a result, little contact is established with the host society, depriving them of learning certain new skills, such as the native language. In the case of immigrant students, not having documents can prevent them from entering a university and growing professionally, even if they are as qualified as their American classmates. Data indicated that in an average of 6 months Brazilian children learn English and become able to follow classes normally in American schools. In addition, variables such as "racial and anti-immigrant discrimination […], English language proficiency, […] length of time in the United States […], experiencing a downgrade in social status" (Joseph 2011: 171), lack of knowledge of "legislation and other local political, economic and cultural characteristics" (Ribeiro 1998: 18) also showed to be associated with low levels of sociocultural adaptation of Brazilians in that country.

On the other hand, this research found that lower levels of violence, access to good quality public education for children, presence of Brazilian commercial facilities (*e.g.*, supermarkets and restaurants), agencies such as non-governmental organizations, and bigger purchasing power compared to that in Brazil are variables that enhance the ability to cope with daily life in the United States, resulting in higher levels of sociocultural adaptation.

Support from the conational community was stressed as one of the main variables for sociocultural adaptation since even before immigrating, it is through long-established Brazilians in the United States that many prospective immigrants in Brazil acquire the necessary information to start the immigration process. After arriving in the United States, it is within the Brazilian

communities where they find initial support in relation to housing and their first job, considering that due to their undocumented status, they would hardly be able to get those through formal means. Therefore, the Brazilian community is not only a major source of emotional support, influencing psychological adaptation, but also of social support, helping immigrants to learn how to better cope with life, and influencing sociocultural adaptation outcomes.

When it comes to the Brazilian community in Japan, the main variables found are support from conational peers, language proficiency, knowledge of local culture, presence of the family, relations with host nationals, quality of life, independence, and discrimination (Yoshida 2019). In addition, previous studies show that although there are Brazilians who declare to be used to living in Japan, they feel dissatisfied, *i.e.*, as much as they can cope with life in Japan that doesn't necessarily trigger a sense of satisfaction and well-being, signaling a dissociation between the levels of psychological adaptation and the levels sociocultural adaptation.

When compared to the United States, some contrasts were found in relation to sociocultural adaptation. Contractors are agencies that take care of the entire process of prospective Brazilian immigrants from before departure to Japan, offering full assistance in terms of visa, housing, and employment. After arriving in Japan, these contractors help on several levels of immigrants' lives, such as access to public services (*e.g.*, health insurance and social security), visits to doctors, translations, and even offer recreational activities. This support from contractors is only possible because Brazilians in Japan are regular immigrants, which allows access to formal means.

A strong emphasis is given to the variable sociocultural distance, such as cultural differences and language barriers. The big cultural distance between Brazil and Japan imposes a considerable need for learning new skills, which can cause stress. The lower sociocultural proximity between Japan and Brazil indicated a greater need to learn new skills and, consequently, slower adaptation, compared to the Brazilian community in the United States, including among children. Due to the objective of making money and returning to Brazil as soon as possible, Brazilians feel often discouraged from learning new skills and learning the Japanese language. Thus, the long hours spent inside the factories is one of the factors that restrict their possibilities to dedicate to these learnings. Consequently, immigrants find it difficult to perform tasks such as visiting a doctor. Moreover, lack of knowledge of the language and of sociocultural aspects, in issues of daily life such as garbage disposal, is pointed out by the literature as a frequent source of friction between Japanese society and Brazilian immigrants.

Lack of knowledge has also a very negative impact on the lives of Brazilian children in Japan who have substantial difficulty in following classes in Japanese schools. Due to such difficulty, currently, there are numerous Brazilian schools created by community members as an alternative for children who were unable to adapt to Japanese schools. In turn, these schools, detached from the

Japanese school's curriculum, despite serving as a palliative solution, end up making it difficult for students to access Japanese universities and the job market.

Nevertheless, the difficulty of interacting with Japanese society contrasts with the strong ties that are established with their conational community, identified as the main source of not only mental but also social support for Brazilians in Japan, as well as in the United States. According to previous studies, it is within the conational community where Brazilians usually learn the necessary knowledge to navigate life in Japan. Therefore, social support is an important variable towards good levels of sociocultural adaptation.

6.3 Brazilian Immigrants' Adaptation in the U.S. and Japan: Comparisons and Contrasts

In summary, several variables present in the lives of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan, influencing their adaptation process, could be identified. Variables such as cultural differences, overwork, discrimination, professional downgrade, homesickness, language, and sociocultural barriers, lack of social life, family problems, and support from the community were strongly present in the literature of both countries. Similarities in the profile between the two communities, such as mostly economic motivation, were also evident.

Notwithstanding, some distinct different variables of psychological and sociocultural adaptation could be noticed. As will be discussed later in this chapter, analyzing the differences in key variables among Brazilians in the United States and Japan is an important step to understanding the focus of non-governmental organizations in each country and how they operate.

As a result of the comparison, the main difference found between both Brazilian communities was the "documentation status" variable, which negatively impacts on several levels the lives of Brazilians in the United States but does not apply in the Japanese case. On the other hand, the variable cultural distance has been shown to have considerably heavier effects in Japan. Also, the variable "identity" among Brazilian immigrants in Japan, considering that the majority is of Japanese descent, has been shown to affect interaction with society in Japan.

Issues such as children's education, social isolation, access to public services, and professional and economic growth are hampered mainly by the variable "documentation status", in the United States, but by "cultural differences", in Japan. Vulnerability at work was also observed in both cases, however, although in the United States the vulnerability is due to the documentation status, in Japan it is because of the fragile bond between employees and employers, as Brazilians are outsourced labor. Therefore, while in the United States, vulnerability is part of every undocumented immigrant's daily life, in Japan, it is felt only in an eventual economic crisis.

Other variables, although present in both cases, showed different characteristics. For instance, the role of the social support of the conational community was in both countries heavily stressed for both psychological and sociocultural adaptation. However, in the United States, the conational communities proved to be more crucial and indispensable throughout the entire immigration process. Unlike Japan, where there are contractors, in the United States, it is the community that guides prospective immigrants who are in Brazil and wish to immigrate and welcomes them, helping them to find housing and their first job after arriving. Therefore, it could be noted that while in Japan there is a need for support, in the United States there is not only a need but a dependency on the community, in order to survive.

6.4 Services Provided by Non-governmental Organizations to Brazilian Immigrants in the United States and Japan: An Overview

Following the study of the main variables of psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in Japan and the United States, as the fifth step, a field study consisting of in-depth interviews and observations was conducted with the intention to identify and investigate selected non-governmental organizations and how their work addresses the key variables of psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilians immigrants in both countries.

In the United States, fieldwork was carried out with 4 non-governmental organizations in the State of Massachusetts, which is, as seen earlier, home to one of the largest Brazilian communities in the United States. The participating organizations were Organization A, Organization B, Organization C, and Organization D. In addition, services offered by the Catholic Church A, located in Framingham, that works in conjunction with Organization B, were included. Among these organizations, 21 services could be identified. This study found that the main areas of activity are concentrated on basic needs, education, advocacy, and medical care. Thus, the identified services will be shown below divided between the categories "providing basic services", "developing capacities" and "giving voice", following the model of Figure 2-1.

In the "providing basic services" category the following services were found:

1. Money donation to buy basic items (by Organizations A, B, and C);
2. Food donation (by Organizations A, B, C, and Church A),
3. Assistance for newcomers related to first work and housing (by Organizations A, B, D, and Church A);
4. Medical care such as assistance for HIV+ people, vaccination against the covid-19 virus, and intermediation with medical institutions (by Organizations A, B, and D);

5. Psychological Assistance (by Organizations A and B)
6. Elder care (by Organization A);
7. Clothing Donation (by Organization A and Church A).

In the "developing capacities" category the following services were found:

8. Manuals/Guides (by Organization A, B, C, D, and Church A);
9. Intermediation with public agencies such as the Brazilian consulate and city halls (by Organization A, B, and C);
10. Career and employment assistance, such as professional qualification and job security courses (by Organization A, C, and D);
11. Classes for adults, such as English as a second language (by Organization B, C, and D);
12. Lectures on relevant issues relating to life as an immigrant (by Organizations B, C, D, and Church A);
13. General assistance for everyday life (by Organization B, C, D, and Church A);
14. Access to public benefits, such as health insurance (by Organization A, B, and C);
15. Cultural and recreational events (by Organization A, D, and Church A);
16. Classes and activities for children, such as after-school and summer camp (by Organization B, and D);
17. Naturalization support (by Organization A, and D);
18. Social integration-related activities (by Organization A).

In the "Giving voice" category the following services were found:

19. Advocacy in cases of labor abuse, sexual abuse, discrimination, and domestic violence (by Organization A, B, C, and D);
20. Radio where communities can discuss relevant community issues (by Organization B, D, and Church A);
21. Engagement in political acts, such as DACA, and legalization of the driver's license (by Organization C).

In Japan, four non-governmental organizations were studied: Organization 1, considered the largest in the country with a national scope, Organization 2, also large but focused on the Kanagawa prefecture, Organization 3 of smaller size focused on Toyohashi City, and Organization

4. In addition, the consulate of Brazil and the city hall of Toyohashi were also investigated, due to their important partnership with the non-governmental organizations. In total, 15 services were found.

Also following the previous classification model, in the "providing basic services" category, were found:

1. Psychological assistance (by Organization 1, 2, 3, and the Consulate);
2. Food donation (by Organizations 1, 2, and 4);
3. Medical care such as assistance for HIV+ people, intermediation with medical institutions, transfer of critically ill patients to Brazil (by Organizations 1 and 2);
4. Assistance in cases of natural disasters such as earthquakes and *tsunami* (by Organizations 1, and 4).
5. Money donation (the Consulate).

In the "developing capacities" category, were found:

5. Intermediation with public agencies such as the Brazilian Consulate and city halls (by Organizations 1, 2, and 4);
6. Classes for adults, such as Japanese language (by Organization 1, 2, and 4);
7. Classes for children, such as Japanese language classes, preparation for entering Japanese schools, after school and summer school (by Organization 1, 2, and 4);
8. Manuals/Guides (by Organization 1, 2, 4, and the Consulate);
9. General assistance for everyday life (by Organization 1, 2, 4, and the Consulate);
10. Lectures on relevant issues relating to life as an immigrant (by Organizations 1, and 2);
11. Cultural and recreational events (by Organization 1);
12. Visits to Japanese schools to assist Brazilian children (by Organization 1);
13. Career and employment assistance, such as professional qualification and job security courses (by Organization 2, and the Consulate);
14. Social integration-related activities (by Organization 2).

In the "Giving voice" category, there were:

15. legal advice, aimed at clearing up questions related to legal issues. (Organization 1 and the Consulate).

Analyzing the data collected, it was noted that the main field of action of the selected non-governmental organizations aimed at Brazilian communities is "developing capacities", with 11 services being offered in the United States, and 10 in Japan. Secondly, "providing basic needs" has 7 services available in the United States and 5 in Japan. Finally, "giving voice" ranks third, with 3 services in the United States, and only 1 in Japan.

6.5 Skills Building for Immigrants: An Analysis of the Services Provided by Non-governmental Organizations and Their Impact on Adaptation Outcomes

"Developing capacities" appears as the main concern of non-governmental organizations, both in Japan and in the United States, focused on empowering Brazilians to deal with daily life challenges, and on promoting their professional and educational growth. To achieve these goals, among the wide range of services available, the activities most endorsed by them are educational ones (such as classes, lectures, workshops, seminars, and guides) for adults and children, and mediation with public bodies. Successful adaptation of immigrants is known to be directly related to gaining new relevant skills such as the local language and professional training (Garkisch *et al.* 2017), which can also enhance feelings of satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, services aimed at enhancing their capabilities are an important resource and play a significant role in good adaptation outcomes.

A common factor among all non-governmental organizations investigated, both in the United States and Japan, is the importance they place on training immigrants professionally. In the United States, the majority of the Brazilian community is undocumented, which represents a major deadlock to professional growth, given the impossibility of access to the formal work sector. Such condition, in addition to hampering the economic mobility of the community, puts workers in a vulnerable position, where they can be easily exploited and forced into working in conditions that pose a danger to their physical and psychological health.

Meanwhile, in Japan, for Brazilians, legality is not synonymous with stability, since they are outsourced workers by the contractors, also positioning them in a vulnerable position, especially in times of economic crisis, as in 2008. Because "most of these workers are temporarily hired by intermediary companies and are not considered official employees of the companies [they can] be fired at any time" (Tsuda 2009: 9), which "goes beyond unemployment since a large part of contractors provides workers with housing and assists in services related to the education of their children" (Suzuki 2013: 69). In addition to the bad effects on economic adaptation, in both cases, the professional downgrade and limited professional mobility faced by them are pointed out as

triggers for low self-esteem, causing "risk for various disorders, such as depression" (Berry, 1996: 18), negatively affecting levels of psychological adaptation.

In order to alleviate the vulnerability faced by Brazilian immigrants as workers, non-governmental organizations have played a major role in their professional qualifications. The Brazilian consul in Tokyo Leandro argues that entrepreneurship is a powerful tool for integrating the Brazilian community into Japanese society. Similarly, Organization A in the United States believes that professional growth is an important channel for community development. To achieve this goal, the Brazilian consulate in Tokyo, together with Organization 1, makes available several resources, such as organizing a roundtable with Brazilian entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs to share their experiences and answer questions. In addition, with its "Entrepreneur Support Center", the consulate offers guidance on labor laws, rules, and requirements, as well as legal counseling for Brazilians who wish to open a business. Similarly, Organization A, with its career and employment assistance program, offers professional counseling, which teaches Brazilians, even those who are undocumented, step-by-step how to get better jobs or start a business, ranging from writing a resume to professional training.

Organization 4 and Organization 2, in Japan, and Organization C and Organization D, in the United States, are also putting efforts into the professional growth of Brazilians. While Organization 4 offers a training program for bus and taxi drivers, Organization 2 has an electrician course, both of which require passing a test to obtain a professional license. Meanwhile, Organization D, concerned about the health of women who work as domestic workers who are constantly exposed to chemicals, launched a program where they make women aware of the dangers of their profession, and teach them how to produce natural and sustainable cleaning products. In addition, the program empowers them against exploitative practices. Organization 3, in addition to the heavy focus on the fight against exploitation, which will be better discussed later in "giving voice", also offers professional and safety training at work, considering that many men work in the construction field and are exposed to risks that can cause "occupational diseases and work accidents caused by the use of toxic substances without proper biosafety care in cleaning activities and by the absence of protective equipment in civil construction, in addition to mental stress" (Siqueira & Lourenço 2006: 368). Therefore, non-governmental organizations appear as an essential agent not only in developing immigrants' professional capacities but in promoting a safe environment where they can work free of exploitation and safe from accidents and effects of long-term use of chemical products. By doing so, non-governmental organizations enhance not only immigrants' capacities to cope with life as workers in the host country, but also help to minimize potential triggers of physical and mental illnesses, contributing to better levels of sociocultural and psychological adaptation.

Another effort by the organizations is access to education, such as Organization 1's education fair with the Brazilian consulate in Tokyo, which showcases course opportunities at Brazilian and Japanese universities accessible to immigrants. Furthermore, organizations, such as Organization 2 and Organization C, have been found to focus on learning a skill essential not only for professional development, but for the daily life of adult immigrants: the local language, "posited as a recurrent and core component of sociocultural competence, and communication barriers, [which] in turn, comprise an important basis for the erosion of one's sense of sociocultural competence" (Newman, Hartman & Taber 2012: 4).

In the professional field, Mr. Mori, from Organization 1, says that language is the "basic of the basics", being essential to self-develop. As previously seen, knowing the local language is a key variable for sociocultural adaptation. Also, since knowing how to speak the language has the potential of making daily life easier, it can reduce stressful situations, contributing to psychological adaptation levels. However, due to the low fluency level of Brazilians in Japan, the language becomes a major barrier. In his words, "Japan offers many opportunities and Brazilians cannot see these opportunities. It has a lot to do with the language." Sharing the same thought, Father Gilmar, from Church A, in Framingham, says that in the United States, language, in addition, to opening doors to better job opportunities, is an important tool against exploitation, and "has an ever-present effect on their health and safety at work" (Siqueira & Jansen 2012: 486). Thus, language teaching is seen as an essential service, as "proficiency in the host language enables immigrants to get involved in the labor market and to attain a decent socioeconomic status" (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2008: 3), leading the better economic adaptation outcomes and over-all economic mobility of the community.

Poor language skills are known to "create more difficulties in day-to-day functioning" (Sümer 2009: 54), limiting the performance of tasks such as accessing public services. Mr. Mori says that much of Organization 1's work is to provide information that Brazilians cannot obtain directly from Japanese public agencies concerning, for example, benefits and insurance. According to Ms. Tanaka, also from Organization 1, "Japan has many services for those who are in situations of vulnerability, but if the person does not speak Japanese, does not look for an NGO or does not hire a translator, they cannot get information because almost everything is in Japanese".

Nevertheless, in Massachusetts, Lilian, from Organization B, states that although understanding English is an advantage, it is possible to live in cities like Framingham speaking only Portuguese, since practically every place, public and private, there are always Brazilians working. In her words, in Framingham

> we have Brazilians in the police, firefighters, city hall, gas, and the internet companies. When there are no [Brazilians] there is always a translator. [...] In schools, there are

> Brazilians working. From the very first contact that Brazilians have with the school system, they are welcomed by Brazilians.

In agreement, Lucia, from Organization D, reveals that in the city hall of Sommerville there is a sector only for Portuguese speakers, so "not speaking the language will limit their lives [Brazilians] very little". In Japan, in Toyohashi City, where there is a high concentration of Brazilians, translation is one of the most demanded services of the organization. Gisele, from Organization 4, says that requests for translators (to clarify questions, intermediate bureaucratic processes, fill in forms, issue documents, and activate social security) are frequent. Hence, non-governmental organizations have been performing an important task of enabling immigrants to cope with hassles, which, without such support, could be not manageable by immigrants alone. One of the said goals of the selected organizations is to enable immigrants to be independent, and teaching the language is an important step to achieving such a goal. However, after perceiving those immigrants generally don't feel motivated to learn the language, non-governmental organizations fill the communication gap, by offering translation services. Although not how idealized by the non-governmental organizations, by providing translation services, they still manage to help immigrants to cope with life, contributing to their sociocultural adaptation outcomes, and they can reduce potential stress, enhancing psychological adaptation levels as well. Through this support, immigrants can access several services and gather important information in several fields, such as education, work, medical care, and public benefits.

In organizations in the United States, in addition to English classes, courses are offered to prepare immigrants for the naturalization test. One of the most important roles of non-governmental organizations in the United States is to buffer the negative impacts that being undocumented brings to the lives of Brazilians. Therefore, helping immigrants to achieve legalization and naturalization is a big goal of the organizations. Becoming an American citizen would enable them to develop in various spheres, such as professionally, being a channel for enhancing capabilities. Non-governmental organizations play a key role in this process, as they "help individuals and families [...] become legal permanent residents or citizens [...] which are crucial to empowering newcomers to secure their place in American society" (Leon, Maronick, Vita & Boris 2009: 18). Also, by becoming citizens, Brazilian immigrants can leave behind all the fear and anxiety due to the social and professional vulnerability in which they live, and that is known to heavily affect their mental health. By boosting their self-esteem, mental and social well-being, and opening doors to formal job opportunities, and naturalization, which is a major area of concern, non-governmental organizations in the United States can positively influence psychological, sociocultural, and economic adaptation of Brazilian immigrants.

6.5.1 The Importance of NGOs in Fostering the Development of Immigrant Children

Within building capacities, when it comes to services targeting immigrant children, there is a considerable difference between NGOs in Japan and the United States. As seen earlier, in Japan, Brazilian children experience significant difficulties in adapting to Japanese schools, which results in a high dropout rate. This fact can be explained by the significant sociocultural differences between Brazil and Japan, which exceeds the children's capacity "to cope, because of the magnitude, speed, or some other aspect of the change" (Berry 1996: 8). Not being able to adjust leads to episodes of mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, contradicting the assumption that Brazilians in Japan, due to their common ethnical heritage with the Japanese, would share also common values and customs with them.

To keep the children studying, the community created Brazilian schools in Japan. The difficulty of adapting to Japanese schools and the low quality of Brazilian schools are reasons of concern for NGOs. According to Mr. Mori, from Organization 1, in addition to not emphasizing teaching the Japanese language, "many Brazilian schools here in Japan, instead of opening doors, they close them. The children, when they graduate, discover that they are not qualified to attend a university because they do not have a sufficient curriculum", resulting in little chance of professional development for children and, consequently, for the Brazilian community, keeping them in a marginal position within society.

On the other hand, it was found that several Brazilian children in Japanese schools also end up being harmed by the lack of skills of those schools in dealing with the sociocultural differences of foreign students, as well as by the lack of time and knowledge of their parents to help them with homework According to Gisele, from Organization 4, "parents are not prepared to be parents here [in Japan]".

To assist in the education of children in Japan, various services are offered. In addition to the events and lectures where Universities expose their courses and careers, NGOs such as Organization 2 have a diverse range of programs. For example, the Free School is a course for children newly arrived in Japan, which teaches subjects such as Japanese, English, and math and interview skills for entry into Japanese high schools. Meanwhile, After School is a weekly class that helps children do their homework, as parents are often unable to do so. In addition, Organization 2 teaches content related to Japanese society and culture, and rules of behavior in schools so that integration occurs smoothly.

Organization 1, while not offering classes like Organization 2, also plays an important role in education. Due to the difficulty of integrating Brazilian children into Japanese schools,

Organization 1 developed an educational support project where they visit schools and carry out a pre-diagnosis of children who have learning and integration difficulties to define whether they have a mental disorder or if it is only due to sociocultural differences alone. This project started after Organization 1 became aware that Japanese schools were misdiagnosing Brazilian children with mental disorders due to learning and integration difficulties.

Those data confirm that non-governmental organizations play a crucial part not only in alleviating but also in preventing the negative effects of cultural shock Brazilian children face in Japanese Schools, through courses on the Japanese language, integration, and preparation for entrance examinations. Considering that Brazilian parents are often not knowledgeable about the Japanese educational system, without such support from non-governmental organizations, children would end up unattended, going through traumatic experiences at school, and dropping out even more frequently. Also, by visiting Japanese schools, non-governmental organizations contribute to creating a more hospitable environment where Brazilian children will feel welcome and be properly treated. By doing so, those organizations help to boost the feeling of well-being and self-satisfaction, as well as enable children to cope better with life as students in Japanese schools, facilitating their integration processes, and promoting better sociocultural and psychological adaptation outcomes.

In the United States, fewer activities were found among organized agencies aimed at immigrant children. The main services offered were the after-school program by Organization D, which aimed at helping children with their homework, and the summer program by Organization B, which in addition to having recreational purposes, aims to support children in their homework during the summer vacation. These two activities reflect the reality of Brazilian children in the United States whose parents, similarly to Japan, live a life focused on work and have little time for their kids, functioning in practice, more as a place where the children can stay until their parents return from work, then having actual educational purposes.

Unlike Japan, it was found that in the United States no focus is given to the teaching of English, and preparation and integration in American schools, which again can be explained by the smaller sociocultural difference between Brazil and the United States, since the smaller the cultural distance, the easier the process of psychological and sociocultural adaptation tend to be (Berry, 1996). Father Marcos explains that in no more than 6 months Brazilian children can speak English fluently. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that adaptation occurs more organically in the United States among children, without the need for interference from non-governmental organizations.

In Massachusetts, it was noticed that there is an effort of non-governmental organizations to make Brazilian children keep their Brazilian roots, since they quickly integrate into American society, validating that "immigrant nonprofit organizations engage in the dual role of cultural

preservation and immigrant integration" (Wilson 2011: 3). The dual role of NGOs has positive effects on mental health, as enhancing "strong 'co-national identity' [...] was associated with lower levels of psychological distress, whereas strong 'host-national identification' [...] was related with lower levels of social difficulty" (Creed 2006: 54). Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the relative ease of integration among Brazilian children in American society does not necessarily mean economic and professional ascension, considering that their undocumented status makes it difficult to access American universities and makes it impossible to apply for formal jobs, resulting, similarly to the case of Japan, in halting the economic adaptation of the community across generations. Therefore, when it comes to Brazilian children's academic and professional prospects, in the United States, they are affected by documentation status, and in Japan, by lack of integration due to sociocultural distance, which in both cases affects their self-esteem and economic mobility, threatening good adaptation outcomes.

6.6 The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in Meeting Immigrants' Basic Needs: An Analysis of Their Relevance to Adaptation Outcomes

Another notable difference in the activities of non-governmental organizations in the United States and Japan is about meeting immigrants' basic needs. Data from the field study revealed that in the United States the focus on basic needs (*e.g.*, donation of food, clothing, and assistance with housing and work) is considerably bigger than in Japan, particularly in the first few weeks after immigrants arrive and during economic downturns. This fact can be explained by the bigger difficulty of access to basic services that Brazilian immigrants face in the United States due to the absence of a formal source of support (such as the contractors in Japan), because immigrants arrive through the Mexican border (which makes it impossible for them to carrying suitcases with them), and due to their undocumented status (that makes it difficult to access other assistance, such as insurances offered by the state). "There are many people in the community who need a lot of help, but help will not reach them for a very simple reason, which is the [lack of legal] documents", argues Lucia, from Organization D. For this reason, "as predicted, having attained legal immigration status was one of the most important predictors of sociocultural adaptation […] [as it] facilitated access to services and assistance" (Zoblina *et al*. 2006: 12).

In the United States, all the organizations selected dedicate a large part of their work to meeting basic needs and alleviating the vulnerability caused by the lack of documentation. Marta, from Organization A, reveals that despite the coronavirus pandemic that has imposed significant international mobility restrictions, the number of Brazilians crossing the border with Mexico has increased substantially since 2020, after the election of John Biden as President of the United States.

According to her, people believe, based on false pieces of information, that with the Democratic president, the entry regulation became more flexible, which motivates them to try the crossing. While before 2020, Organization A received requests for food donations an average of 4 times a week, currently it's 4 times a day. Lilian, from Organization B, who also felt the increase in requests, says that on top of immigrants arriving through Mexico, the pandemic severely affected the income of the families, who could no longer meet their basic needs and because they could not seek help from the government, they turned to NGOs to ask for donations.

In addition, there is a concern about the winter, as immigrants usually do not have appropriate clothing for the low temperatures of Massachusetts. According to the director, Lilian, "a lot of people are arriving, an average of 10 families a week arriving through Mexico. People have been arriving here at night without a sweatshirt and it's already getting cold".

In addition to the lack of basic items, Father Marcos points out that "they arrive here unstructured and with traumas they had at the border, without clothes. The initial stage is difficult because they arrive with debt, and without any documents". Finding housing for newly arrived undocumented immigrants is also a challenge, as in most cases a guarantor and 3-6 months' rent in advance are required. As a result, on some occasions, without any other accommodation option, Father Marcos has used Church A's rooms as a shelter, showing that especially in the beginning, immigrants in the United States tend to be heavily dependent on others to meet their basic needs.

For this reason, much of the energy of non-governmental organizations in the United States is focused on alleviating the typical initial vulnerability faced by Brazilian immigrants, equating to the focus given to building capacities. As explained by psychologist Maria, from Organization 1, in order to achieve well-being, immigrants "need to satisfy their basic needs, such as eating, sleeping, safety, and work", so "they [NGOs] have a role of providing for a need that the person is having". Unless basic needs are addressed, "it will not be possible to develop settlement as a process of true social inclusion in which immigrants and refugees realize full and equal participation in their new country" (Shields 2005:516). Thus, helping immigrants to meet their basic physiological (and, consequently, psychological) needs first is an urgent matter, which once done opens the way for other activities to be developed focused on other fields, such as human development.

Often unable to meet their basic needs, the mental and even physical health of these immigrants are critically affected. Furthermore, with the "decline in income with an increase in the cost of living, the result is invariably a high level of stress and the development of mental health disorders", adds Lucia, from the Organization D. For being undocumented, immigrants have no one to turn to, and non-governmental organizations are the only place where they can seek help to alleviate their immediate needs. Therefore, here it becomes visible how non-governmental

organizations play an important role in providing immigrants to meet their basic needs to continue living, filling a gap left by the state that does cannot provide any kind of security to undocumented immigrants.

In Japan, assistance with basic needs is also offered by non-governmental organizations, but on a much smaller scale. Unlike the United States, in Japan, this type of support is usually requested only when the relative economic stability of this community is broken by an economic crisis, in which Brazilians, as outsourced workers, end up losing their jobs, as happened in 2008, and to a lesser extent during the pandemic in 2020. In addition to being outsourced, Rafaela, from the Brazilian embassy in Japan, says that the concentration of Brazilian workers in a single sector (the factories) "makes them very vulnerable because whenever there is any crisis in this sector or a structural change, this population may lose their jobs".

According to Mr. Mori, from Organization 1, in 2020, "people expected to have a very big crisis within the community with many Brazilians losing their jobs, so we created a food campaign inside the consulate in Tokyo". Organization 2 and Organization 4 have also started food campaigns, after realizing that thousands of Brazilians have lost their jobs or household income has dropped significantly. Furthermore, in Japan, as immigrants are regulars, Organization 1 helped them apply for government-provided benefits such as unemployment insurance, food donation, rent aid, and a stimulus check worth 100,000 Japanese Yen that became available to all regular residents of Japan in 2020 during the pandemic. Notwithstanding, Ms. Tanaka complains that large numbers of Brazilians still refuse to pay social security, which puts "a large proportion of Brazilian workers in Japan in an unstable and vulnerable situation about labor and social security issues" (Tashima & Torres, 2016: 9). In her words, these Brazilians consequently end up with "depression, financial difficulties, and illness, without having any kind of insurance and no financial resources", significantly impacting their psychological adaptation outcomes.

Unlike the United States, in Japan, there were no clothing donation programs. Assistance services for finding housing and first employment were also not found, as this role is normally performed by the contractors. Furthermore, a peculiarity found in the services offered by non-governmental organizations in Japan within basic needs, not present in the United States, was assistance in cases of natural disasters, specifically earthquakes and *tsunami*. On these occasions, Organization 1 and Organization 2 Japan played an important role in providing food, shelter, and mediating contact with the Brazilian embassy and consulates, promoting greater security and the well-being of the affected community. Hence, in Japan, despite providing basic needs does not take much of the time and energy of the non-governmental organizations, they still serve as a buffer in times of economic crisis and natural disasters, by helping them to access services, such as social

security, which frequently they do not know how to apply for, due to language barriers, and donating food, contributing to their overall well-being.

6.6.1 The Importance of NGOs for Immigrants' Physical and Mental Health

Within basic needs, services related to physical and mental health, and learning relevant skills related to medical care, have been identified in both the United States and Japan, which reflects a difficulty or lack of necessary skills to access the host country's medical system. However, it was noted that while in Japan there is a greater focus on mental health, in the United States the emphasis is on physical health. In the United States, often "NGOs became the primary healthcare provision for migrants" (Dimitriadis 2019: 10).

In physical health services, a common point found between the non-governmental organizations of the two countries is that both aid HIV-positive Brazilians and risk groups. In Japan, through her own NGO, Eliana offers free support in Portuguese to Brazilians even before they leave for Japan. When they are still in Brazil, she contacts HIV-positive coming immigrants to obtain information about where they will live in Japan and research all the necessary information so that they can continue receiving adequate treatment immediately after arriving in Japan. According to Eliana, "they arrive in Japan and know nothing, for example, about the Japanese language or the health system, and they have a concrete need. So, we need to do everything from contacting the hospital and organizing everything". Her ultimate goal is to provide the immigrant with the necessary information and resources so that they can proceed with their treatment independently in Japan. Through this work, the non-governmental organization plays an important role in supplying the initial basic needs of the immigrant and teaching them the necessary skills to take care of themselves from then on, contributing to their levels of physical and mental well-being, and enhancing their levels of psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

Similarly, Organization A has a small office at its Framingham headquarters, where it serves HIV-positive and at-risk groups. In this office, they perform tests for HIV and various other sexually transmitted infections, provide information on prevention, access to medicines such as PEP and PREP, and offer all the assistance needed to put HIV-positive people on treatment. Dr. Adriano says that a major problem among undocumented immigrants is the impossibility of accessing private health insurance. However, he points out that the state of Massachusetts offers limited health insurance called MassHealth, which offers medical services, including HIV treatment, free of charge in community clinics with Brazilian translators, helping to overcome both difficulties related to lack of documents and not excelling English. Such services play an important role not only in promoting

physical well-being but in providing the necessary knowledge so that immigrants can take care of themselves.

He explains that putting HIV-positive people on treatment is in the government's own interest to avoid contagion, so in addition to offering free treatment through MassHealth, it also funds this Organization A's initiative. It shows how governments acknowledge the importance, reach, and penetration of the work by non-governmental organizations in the community, in such a way that the public sector alone would not be able to promote, given the fact that Brazilian immigrants, for being undocumented, tend to avoid at all costs contact with state agencies, even when it comes to health issues.

A peculiar activity found in Japan was the transfer of terminally ill Brazilian patients to Brazil. This service is performed by Organization 1, which counts on the support of a Brazilian medical doctor, Dr. Olaf, who speaks Japanese and goes to Japan on demand. Dr. Olaf says that a big problem for the Brazilian community in Japan is not being able to communicate in Japanese, which leads people to neglect their health, since translators are often not readily available. Furthermore, he repeats that Brazilians, despite having the right, choose not to pay for health insurance to save money. "The consequence of this lack of medical coverage is that they seek medical services only in more serious cases, such as accidents or urgent surgeries" (Tashima & Torres 2016: 21). The service by Dr. Olaf, despite not being focused on solving the patients' health problems, boosts their well-being by allowing them to return to Brazil to spend their last moments with their families, given that variables such as "*saudade*" are major mental health villains among immigrants, especially the elderly. By taking them back to Brazil, this service by Organization 1 enhances the patient's well-being, resulting in better psychological adaptation.

In the United States, for the good of the physical and mental health of the elderly, Organization A offers a center for Brazilian seniors who are in a vulnerable situation because they won't qualify for retirement in the United States, for being undocumented, are no longer able to work, and need basic care. Marta, from Organization 1, explains that although "the United States has a social protection network for the elderly that is reasonable, the undocumented immigrant does not" have access to it. In addition, in these centers, the elderly can stay together with other Brazilians and receive treatment in the language Portuguese, which has "an important role against the effects of stress in psychological well-being as it relieves one of the main sources of distress within some populations of immigrants: loneliness" (Motti-Stefanidi 2018: 9).

Here, it becomes one more time notable to the role of non-governmental organizations in alleviating the consequences of the gap left by the state, that cannot provide social security for undocumented immigrants. Although Organization A does not have sufficient financial resources to provide cash donations to address the lack of a pension, it alleviates the economic stress of senior

immigrants by providing food and medical services, helping them cope with life's challenges. Furthermore, by providing a comfortable space to socialize with other Brazilians, it contributes to the mental well-being of the seniors. In this way, it positively influences their psychological and sociocultural adaptation levels.

Since 2020, a focal health activity among organizations in the United States has been the prevention of covid-19. All four selected organizations offered some kind of support regarding the coronavirus, with some partnering with the government to become vaccination centers. For instance, Organization B, after having recognized that Brazilians failed to seek vaccination for fear of exposing themselves and not knowing how to schedule an appointment online, became a vaccination center. To get around the fact that immigrants usually work all day, Organization B's vaccination campaigns were open until late at night. In addition to vaccination support, NGOs such as Organization A and Organization D became an important information channel, where people could call to make questions, learn prevention tips, how to fill in forms, and receive assistance related to medical care, including hospitalization. Another important form of communication with the community was social networks, which, in addition to informing, helped to attract more people to the campaign, given the wide reach of its audiences.

Becoming vaccination centers and providing information was a way found by non-governmental organizations and the public sector to reach Brazilian immigrants, who believed they did not have the right to get vaccinated or were afraid to show up to receive a vaccine, as they do not have a regular identification card or health insurance because they are undocumented. Similar to what to the HIV-prevention service, one more time the government partnered with the non-governmental organizations, offering all the necessary resources so immigrants could feel safe looking for health care regardless of documentation status, validating the great potential of cross-sector partnerships in aligning forces toward the well-being not only of the immigrants but, by preventing contamination, of the overall society.

In Japan, a similar service was found only in Organization 2, which created an exclusive telephone line to answer questions about covid-19, as information released by the Japanese media could not be easily absorbed by Brazilians, due to language barriers. Given the high volume of requests for help, Organization 2 decided to make this service permanent to answer general health questions and refer them to appropriate hospitals.

While medical services were mostly present among organizations in the United States, in Japan psychological services became the number one focus of some organizations like Organization 1, especially after the pandemic. In the words of Mr. Mori, since 2020 “there has been a big increase in requests for psychological care because of the insecurity of being at risk of dying [out of covid-19]”. Also in Japan, Organization 2, Organization 3, and the Brazilian consulate offer mental health

care services. In the United States, although to a lesser extent, this service was found in Organization B, which offers online psychological care with psychologists who are in Brazil, in addition to having prepared a complete guide where people can learn about different mental disorders, as well as where to go to ask for help. Recently, Organization A also started its psychological assistance program after noticing an increase in cases of depression and anxiety during the pandemic.

Mental health has gained a lot of attention in recent years in immigrant communities. Psychologist Maria, from Organization 1, says that although "migration in itself is not a pathologizing process, immigrants are so socially vulnerable that they end up getting sick". In agreement, Lilian from Organization B adds that "when someone immigrates, they are no longer somebody and become nobody, they arrive here and don't speak the language and don't know the culture. The simple fact of immigrating already affects your mental health a lot and there are people who cannot stand that".

Several factors were pointed out both by the literature and by the interviewees as reasons that negatively affect mental health. In addition to the pandemic, factors such as loneliness, overwork, discrimination, and social and professional vulnerability appear to intensify depression and anxiety. Psychologist Lineu, from Organization 1, says that "'*saudade'* affects people a lot and makes people psychologically weak". According to him, because immigrants want to make money at any cost, "their body normally cannot handle it, what triggers stress, that can develop into depression or anxiety". NGOs have shown to play a substantial role in alleviating the distress of immigrants, helping them not only to achieve greater levels of well-being but to get them back to living their lives normally. Psychologist Maria says that these services play "a role not only of offering empathic listening but of helping and enabling people to resume their lives. There are people in a very significant pathological condition where they can't even leave the house, have friends, or work". Thus, one of the main goals is to provide patients with skills so that they can also take care of themselves after treatment. By providing "possibilities and capacities […] to buffer the impacts caused by stress situations […] and access to resources that moderate their impact" (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 3), these services offered by non-governmental organizations serve as an important tool for achieving good levels of psychological adaptation.

In many cases, such services also end up replacing social support from friends and family, when there is a lack thereof. According to Psychologist Maria, "I have clients that the only person they talk to is me. They don't have anyone else". Furthermore, since many immigrants do not excel in the language of the host country, access to psychological care becomes unfeasible. Thus, psychologist Lineu says that NGOs are important because this type of service, where treatment is done in the patient's language, is not found anywhere else. In agreement, Lilian, from Organization B, adds that in "mental health, the main barrier is the language because there is no way for someone

to do therapy in a language that is not their mother tongue. As much as they speak English very well, they will not be able to express themselves in English in therapy the way it would be in Portuguese".

In the case of the United States, the documentation status factor once again appeared to have severe effects on the psychological well-being of immigrants, as the "basic psychological needs include a sense of living in a safe and stable environment" (Ryan, Dooley & Benson, 2018: 8). The psychological traumas begin while crossing the border with Mexico, where many were arrested, and persist during their lives in the United States. Lilian, from Organization B, argues that "children and adults are arriving traumatized because they are arrested at the border and taken to a prison". Father Gilmar adds that immigrants always "leave [home] early in the morning in fear and return at night in fear", being in a constant state of anxiety, which often triggers depression. In this way, these services also serve as a buffer against the negative impacts caused by the lack of documentation, that haunts them at all times in their lives.

6.7 Non-governmental Organizations' Advocacy, Protection, and Political Representation of Immigrants: Analyzing Their Significance to Adaptation Outcomes

Another area where organizations also play an important role is in "giving voice". Among the participant organizations, services related to advocacy, public sector representation, lectures, awareness, and political engagement were found. However, some differences between the American and Japanese organizations were identified. For example, when it comes to advocacy, it was noted that in Japan the services are only for answering questions, while in the United States, NGOs offer end-to-end support to clients who need defense in court. In addition, when it comes to political participation, it was noted that, although in Japan NGOs play an important role in facilitating communication between the community and the government, there are no training programs and political engagement activities for immigrants.

In Japan, Organization 1 has a partnership with an association of lawyers in Tokyo that provides free assistance to anyone who has questions regarding Japanese law of any kind. In addition, the consulate general of Brazil in Tokyo has a partnership with a legal company that answers questions about laws. Meanwhile, in the United States, legal support, that goes beyond answering questions, was found in all organizations. For example, Organization C has a long history of defending Brazilian workers in court and securing their rights, and Organization A has a department dedicated to defending women victims of domestic violence in court.

According to the leaders of the NGOs interviewed, the main complaints of immigrants regarding legal rights are related to work, and domestic violence. In addition, in the United States, legalization, and naturalization are also major issues. Mr. Mori, from Organization 1, explains that

in Japan, some Brazilians seek help after being fired from the factories where they worked. In the United States, at Organization C, the most active one in labor issues from all the participating organizations, defense requests are common in cases of work accidents, labor exploitation, and workers who did not receive their payments. Tânia, from Organization D, says that immigrants because they are undocumented, think they have absolutely no rights and are afraid to seek help or report their employers. However, she states that in Massachusetts "if you worked you have to be paid. It doesn't matter if you have documentation or not. So, this is a role for the NGO: to serve as an advocate on behalf of people who are afraid to seek an official body", validating the importance of non-governmental organizations in supporting immigrants in areas where most of the time state agencies cannot reach, and immigrants are not familiar with. To guarantee the rights of immigrants, who don't know how to defend themselves, these organizations in the United States offer support throughout the whole process, from filling in forms to defending them in court, which can be significant to their mental well-being and help them to deal with life challenges.

In addition to defense, Organization C and Organization D are concerned with empowering immigrants to be able to defend themselves by making them aware of their rights. One of the resources used is the Domestic Worker Law Manual, which provides important information on contracts, payments, compensation, exploitation, and harassment. Furthermore, they produced educational videos about safety at work to prevent accidents, considering that there are jobs performed by Brazilians that pose risks to them. By doing so, those organizations attempt to restore the mental and material damage suffered by undocumented immigrants, improving well-being and overall adaptation levels.

Second to labor rights, in the United States and Japan, domestic violence is a latent problem within the Brazilian community. Mr. Mori, from Organization 1, says that cases of physical violence against women are frequent. In Japan, NGOs do not have a service to defend these women in court, but they offer guidance for them to file a complaint with the police and take refuge in a safe place, in addition to psychological assistance. In the United States, cases of domestic violence are also frequent. According to Tânia, in some cases, the aggressors threaten to report the women to immigration if they report the aggression to the police. Organization A has a department dedicated to the protection of these women, offering legal, medical, and psychological support, in addition to offering shelter. Organization D is also active in promoting lectures and workshops aimed at Brazilian women, aiming to reduce the vulnerability and abuse that they may suffer at home and work, teaching them about their rights and how to ask for help. Through this work, organizations hope, in addition to treating victims psychologically, defending their rights, and teaching them how to deal with this kind of situation, to reduce the number of cases of sexual and domestic abuse within

the community by raising awareness, as many victims are afraid or don't know how to seek help, which contributes to their psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes.

Another field of law where there is demand is immigration. In Japan, Ms. Tanaka, from Organization 1, explains that, although not frequent, there are people who seek clarification on visa renewal and obtaining a permanent visa. In the United States, this demand is considerably higher and is mainly related to legalization, obtaining a Green Card, and naturalization. In addition to offering legal services related to immigration, organizations A and Organization D hold lectures where people can learn about their rights and possibilities to regularize their status. With these services, organizations aim to transform the lives of immigrants, through legalization, considering that undocumented status limits them on several levels, severely harming their psychological, sociocultural, and economic adaptation. In addition, by becoming American citizens, they acquire the right to vote, contributing to the political future of the country.

Representation and political engagement are other important spheres within "giving voice". "NGOs play a crucial role. These groups are more integrated into communities, [they] can lend a voice to the vulnerable populations and can identify key issues that can be passed on to the government" (Miller 2017: 8). In Japan, a statement that was present in many of the interviewees' speeches was that NGOs serve as a bridge between immigrants and the government. According to Mr. Mori, Organization 1 has close contact with the Japanese public sector, which seeks them out to consult about the Brazilian community. Therefore, non-government organizations work as a two-way channel, contributing not only to immigrants but also to the state. He explains that the government has realized that thousands of immigrants are staying in Japan indefinitely and that it needs to act. For him, NGOs are on the front line and are the voice of the community, representing its interests, needs, and demands, and are the main channel through which the Japanese government accesses it. In his words, "the Japanese government is interested in helping but it doesn't know how. This is where NGOs play a role, to show the directions and possibilities", "thus improving efficiency and satisfaction levels" (Shields 2016: 16), validating that "immigrant nonprofit organizations today are still the central torchbearers in the push for piecemeal forms of immigration legislation" (Wilson 2011: 15), serving as an important agent in "the facilitation of the protection of their [immigrants'] rights" (Valentinov *et al*. 2017: 652).

In the United States, in addition to representing the voices of the community to the government, some organizations strive for immigrants to be able to directly advocate for their rights. Lia, from Organization D, says that raising awareness of immigrants about their important role in politics is a challenge, but a necessary move to pressure lawmakers to pass laws that favor them that will open doors for new possibilities for them to navigate life in the host country, triggering higher feelings of well-being and self-satisfaction.

One of the main objectives of Organization C is to train community members to become political leaders by enabling them to "increase [their] sense of efficacy, provide them with political information, imbue them with political skills, develop their civic virtues, and teach them to be critical" (Leon *et al*. 2009: 19), in order to become "important players in various progressive movements fighting for the advancement of civil rights" (Vazquez 2008: 23). Organization C's latest political battle is approving driver's licenses for everyone, regardless of documentation status, in the state of Massachusetts. According to the organization, legalizing the driver's license for everyone, in addition to representing an emotional relief for immigrants, would help foster integration, both important variables of adaptation. Hence, such political achievement could trigger better sociocultural and psychological adaptation among immigrants.

At last, Organization B and Organization D have radio shows where immigrants can discuss topics relevant to the Brazilian community, make their voices heard, and claim their space. According to Lilian, from Organization B, radio is the "voice of immigrants", stressing their existence, and valuing their work, which is "relevant to immigrants' feelings of self-worth and enhances their satisfaction" (Hui *et al*. 2015: 12), which are "a measure of psychological well-being and an indicator of mental-health status" (Sam 2000: 6). The radio also has the mission of bringing American society closer to the Brazilian community, which on top of being "a salient aspect of the life satisfaction of immigrants" (Wu 2012: 4), promotes the learning of skills relevant to coping with life in the United States, enhancing sociocultural adaptation.

6.8 Churches and the Public Sector as Supporting Actors: An Analysis of the Importance of Partnerships for Combining Efforts

Although consulates and churches were not the focus of this work, their fundamental role as supporting agencies for non-governmental organizations makes it necessary to address them. When it comes to the consulates, it was noted that specifically in Japan there is an active effort to enhance the adaptation of the Brazilian community. As explained earlier, the services offered by consulates can be classified into first-generation (consular services, such as passport issuance) and second-generation (community support).

Brazilian consulates in Japan routinely hold activities aimed at education and entrepreneurship, such as fairs, seminars, workshops, and guides in partnership with NGOs. It was also seen that the consulate used the services of Organization 3, to train its staff to offer psychological counseling over the phone. In addition, face-to-face psychological counseling is offered in the Tokyo unit, in partnership with Organization 1. Such services combined are an important resource for the community's well-being, abilities to cope with life, and economic mobility,

enhancing the psychological, sociocultural, and economic adaptation outcomes of Brazilians in Japan.

According to Ms. Tanaka, from Organization 1, Brazilian consulates in Japan are different from those in the rest of the world, given the importance they give to second-generation services, being, in her words, the only ones "in the whole world that have an assistance sector for the community, because the Brazilian community here is very specific, numerous and very unique". In agreement, Consul Leandro stresses that "most consulates do not have a structure dedicated to this. I believe it is because the Brazilian community in the United States has fewer integration difficulties than the Brazilians here, because the adaptation there, as in any immigration country, is easier [...] so the adaptation is more fluid". In other words, immigration countries are expected to be naturally more diverse and offer better structure and resources for the immigrant to adapt. In the United States, given the fact that the majority of Brazilians are undocumented, those resources and structures are mostly found within the Brazilian community and in associations such as non-governmental organizations, which try to compensate for the deprivations and to balance the unbalanced life of the undocumented immigrants.

In addition to the consulates and non-governmental organizations, within Brazilian communities, one of the main available resources that have been shown to play an important role in the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of immigrants is the churches. Although in Japan churches are less mentioned in the literature, in the United States they seem to have much greater space. A possible explanation is a fact that Brazilian immigrants in Japan are mostly from the state of São Paulo and Paraná, states not known for their tradition of religious faith, while in the United States, they are mostly from the state of Minas Gerais, known for being a strongly Christian state. Furthermore, while in Japan churches are mentioned for their psychological contributions, in the United States their role in the sociocultural adaptation of immigrants is also stressed.

When it comes to psychological adaptation, Father Marcos emphasizes that in churches immigrants find the security and strength to overcome their challenges and move on. In his words, "in the church, a new family is built, and a great deal of spiritual and psychological support is found", and "among the variables that determine psychological adaptation, none is more emphasized than social and emotional support establishment of social networks or, as named in some studies, relatedness" (Güngör & Perdu 2017: 6). Also, it was found that churches play a key role in basic services, such as food donation, and even shelter. Furthermore, in the United States, churches are an important source of relevant teachings for learning to cope with life as an immigrant. In the words of Father Gilmar, in churches, immigrants find friends who speak the same language, as someone who can "guide them and ask about work and documentation", being an important resource for achieving better psychological and sociocultural adaptation levels.

6.9 Concluding Remarks

The investigation of non-governmental organizations revealed that, through their services in the fields of providing basic needs, developing capacities, and giving voice, they play a significant role in addressing, in an integrated way, Brazilian Immigrants' main variables of psychological adaptation, enhancing well-being, and in sociocultural adaptation, providing relevant resources for coping with life in the host countries, the United States and Japan, then alleviating difficulties caused by key variables such as sociocultural distance and irregular documentation status, improving overall adaptation outcomes.

The comparison established through the case study of the United States and Japan showed that, although they share the same home country, in each host country, the Brazilian communities have profoundly different characteristics (*e.g.*, the fact that the Brazilian community in the United States is mostly composed of undocumented immigrants, while in Japan the majority, if not the totality, is known for being in regular immigration status), and rely on distinct variables of adaptation, which shape differently the content of the services delivered by non-governmental organizations in each country, showing not only the diversity of adaptation phenomena but also the versatility of non-governmental organizations, validating that "the nonprofit sector offers services tailored to meet the specific needs and circumstances" (Shields (2016: 16) of immigrants.

In addition to the differences between the United States and Japan, organizations also had different focuses in the same country, which changed over time according to the specific needs of a given moment. For example, with the advent of the covid-19 pandemic that hit the world in 2020, the organizations started to dedicate themselves to prevention and vaccination campaigns against the virus. Because of the flexibility of non-governmental organizations, Lucia, from the city hall of Somerville calls them "no barrier resources". However, regardless of country, focus, and means, the non-governmental organizations have played an essential role in facilitating the lives of immigrants.

In line with the statement of many of the respondents, non-governmental organizations can be considered "bridges" or "facilitators" that connect immigrants with important actors such as the host country's government, and the Brazilian government (through consulates and embassies), and the host society. They have proved to be significant not only for immigrants but an important tool for the public sector, which uses them to learn more about immigrant communities, in order to fund programs or design public policies that will benefit not only the immigrants but the society as a whole. In the words of Consul Leandro, non-governmental organizations "are very important because they end up providing a series of services that we [the consulates] are not able to provide", so without them "the work would not be done and these people [immigrants] would be unassisted because there are areas that the state is not reaching, but NGOs are helping".

Furthermore, especially in communities where the majority is undocumented, non-governmental organizations represent, according to Gisele, from Organization 4, a "safe haven", "providing an institutional venue where trust is fostered between the client" (Wilson 2011: 5), where they don't feel afraid to ask for help. Therefore, this research validates the role of the non-governmental

> sector has indeed been crucial. […] Nonprofits have been offering food, medical aid, living space, legal advice, translation work, administrative support, and a broad array of further services that have been extremely valuable not only to immigrants themselves but also to […] public agencies and citizens in general. (Valentinov 2017: 652).

Furthermore, in addition to simply facilitating the lives of immigrants, non-governmental organizations also showed to have an important role in enabling immigrants to become autonomous and independent in their lives in the long run, fueling the community's social and economic mobility, triggering feelings of well-being and self-satisfaction, and providing them with the necessary skills to cope with everyday life. To achieve this goal, they invest heavily in the education of immigrants, for example, through language courses, given that excelling in the language, as previously seen, is not "just a tool of communication, but [...] of power" (Ueno 2010: 9), and is known for being beneficial for both psychological and sociocultural adaptation levels. Thus, Eliana, from Organization 4, argues that a paternalistic attitude should be avoided, as it would "take away this power, and hinder the individual's own growth. Hence, an important role of organizations is to enable people to live by themselves and no longer need them as an intermediary".

Nevertheless, it is evident in both cases, Japan and the United States, that non-governmental organizations have been struggling to abandon paternalistic behaviors. For example, in the United States, due to the vulnerability of Brazilians without documentation, particularly newcomers, non-governmental organizations play a significant role in assisting immigrants with settling down, donating money, food, furniture, and clothing, and aiding with finding housing and employment. Meanwhile, it is common to find services in Japan such as translating and filling in forms, as well as food donations during times of crisis such as the Lehman Brothers crisis, in 2008.

Also, in the United States, it is notable the existence of a culture of protection that aims to counterbalance the negative effects of being an undocumented immigrant. Brazilians who recently arrived in the United States are a particularly vulnerable group that requires help with their most basic needs such as food, shelter, and employment. After having been established in the United States, vulnerability persists and appears in many spheres of Brazilians' lives, including professional, social, and personal. The lack of regular immigration status severely restricts Brazilians' access to many

rights, including the right to unemployment insurance and retirement. Moreover, being undocumented makes them susceptible to being exploited in the workplace, to domestic violence, and sexual abuse. Therefore, in addition to pursuing capacity-building activities similar to those in Japan, non-governmental organizations in the United States have an essential role to play in safeguarding immigrants. This includes (1) facilitating their access to rights they have, but do not utilize due to lack of skills or fear of exposure (including certain labor rights, covid-19 vaccinations, and insurance coverage from the state of Massachusetts), (2) filling in the gaps left by rights they lack access to, that the state fails to address, and without which they would be destitute (such as a facility for undocumented elderly Brazilians who don't have a pension and donations aimed at workers who do not have unemployment insurance), and (3) expanding undocumented immigrants' rights (providing legal support, fighting for more rights, such as a driver's license and DACA, and providing them with the skills to defend themselves and become politically active).

Given the severe limitations that this group faces in the United States, it is unlikely that undocumented Brazilians could achieve a level of integration that would set them on the same level as their American counterparts, in the future, unless they achieve legalization. Nevertheless, with the support of non-governmental organizations, gaps overlooked by the public sector can be better addressed, existing rights can be accessed more easily, certain rights that were previously nonexistent have been achieved, and others are being fought for, thereby contributing to an overall adaptation of the Brazilian community. Nevertheless, for Brazilian children born in the United States with American citizenship, prospects can be promising since, in addition to being fully integrated into American society, they have access to resources such as university scholarships and job opportunities within the formal sector of the American economy, representing a significant avenue through which the Brazilian community can achieve considerable overall adaptation, integration, socioeconomic mobility through generations within the American society.

In Japan, organizations emphasize the development of capacities and have tried to cultivate a culture of independence in immigrants. However, it is notable that there are substantial difficulties in terms of, for instance, improving Japanese language proficiency among both adults and children. Adult immigrants, since they always expect to move back to Brazil soon, do not feel motivated to learn the language, while children continue to study in Brazilian schools where teaching Japanese is not emphasized. Their prospects of returning to Brazil or staying in Japan profoundly influence their attitude toward the host country, with immigrants who intend to return experiencing little interest in learning about sociocultural matters and new skills, such as the Japanese language, while those who intend to stay demonstrating a greater level of embeddedness and a greater ability to cope with life independently. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the variable "stay or return prospects" have a significant impact on the future of the Brazilian community in Japan.

The increasing number of Brazilians applying for a permanent resident visa could indicate that in recent years the Brazilian community has become more interested in settling permanently in Japan, signaling that the community can gradually become more adapted and integrated with Japanese society. As a result, more Brazilians are likely to occupy different sectors of the economy, abandoning the factories and their status as "*dekasegi*". Also, as this trend continues, it can be expected that more and more Brazilian children will leave Brazilian schools to study in Japanese schools, and on to Japanese universities, thus contributing to the community's economic mobility across generations. In the United States and Japan, as long as this level of development is not achieved, non-governmental organizations will continue to play a crucial role in developing capacities, meeting the immediate needs of Brazilians, and representing their political interests, especially in the case of undocumented immigrants, contributing to their psychological and sociocultural adaptation, as well as their economic mobility.

At last, in line with Father Marcos's statement, it became evident that the role of non-governmental organizations, together with other supporting agencies such as churches and consulates, is to "welcome and promote", *i.e.*, to offer the basic resources so that they feel welcome and protected in the community, and then provide "conditions and possibilities for them to have autonomy and independence throughout their lives" and advance their rights, reaching their overall goal of triggering immigrant's good overall adaptation outcomes, finally, "characterized by low levels of distress and high positive affect (*i.e.*, psychological adaptation) as well as by a sense of intercultural competence and comfort (*i.e.*, sociocultural adaptation)" (Güngör & Perdu 2016: 3).

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION

Throughout this work, several efforts were made to understand the role of non-governmental organizations and how they can enhance the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in the United States and Japan.

The first step of this research was, through a bibliographic review, to outline the profile of the Brazilian communities in the United States and Japan, highlighting their main characteristics, such as origin in Brazil, the destination in the host country, age, gender, occupation, reasons that led to immigrate, and objectives.

It was found that the United States is the main destination for Brazilian immigrants abroad. The beginning of immigration flow to that country began in the 1980s, especially to the state of Florida, later spreading to states such as Massachusetts and California. At that time, the motivation of Brazilians to immigrate was generally the search for better wages due to economic stagnation, marked by hyperinflation and high levels of unemployment, which severely affected the purchasing power of the Brazilian population. Currently, given the ongoing economic crisis in Brazil, the migratory flow is maintained.

Apart from wealthy Brazilians who have been recently immigrating to the United States with investor visas, most Brazilians receive no incentive from the American government to immigrate. Hence, they often turn to irregular means of entering and staying in the United States, such as entering on a tourist visa and overstaying, or crossing the border from Mexico with the help of *coyotes* (human smugglers). Therefore, one of the main characteristics identified among Brazilians in this community is their undocumented status which has shown to negatively influence their lives and overall adaptation.

One of the main negative impacts of living out of status is vulnerability, not only as citizens but as workers. Due to the impossibility of accessing formal job positions in the United States, the majority of immigrants work irregularly as employees for other Brazilians already long-established in that country, performing tasks such as housecleaning (in the case of women) and painters and bricklayers (in the case of men).

In Japan, the reason that led thousands of Brazilians to immigrate from the 1980s, was also the economic difficulties encountered in Brazil. However, a peculiar feature of this migratory flow is that, in this case, there is an incentive from the Japanese government to attract Brazilian immigrants. However, this incentive is only applied to Brazilians of Japanese descent.

The incentive began in 1990, when Japan, going through an accelerated economic and industrial growth, but with a lack of workers, reformed its immigration laws allowing Japanese descendants, up to the third generation, as well as their spouses (regardless of being of Japanese descent) and children to immigrate to Japan as long-term residents to live and work. These immigrants received the name "*dekasegi*", which means immigrant workers who move temporarily to another place in order to make money.

This immigration reform led to the emergence of contractors to recruit Brazilians for Japanese electronics and automobile factories. These contractors take care of the entire process, from visa applications and plane tickets to housing and job in Japan, facilitating for those who wish to immigrate. On the other hand, a negative side of the contractors is that the Brazilians recruited by them are outsourced to the factories, meaning that they have a weak employment bond with the employers. Consequently, in a possible economic crisis, Brazilians can easily be fired, showing that they are still vulnerable, even with regular immigration status. Furthermore, the work performed by them, as factory workers, is often referred to in the bibliography as the 5k, referring to the Japanese words *Kirai* (hateful), *Kibishii* (tough), *Kitanai* (dirty), *Kiken* (unsafe), and *Kitsui* (heavy).

Similar to the Brazilian community in the United States, in Japan, the community was also initially composed of men but is currently diverse in terms of gender and age. It was found that the presence of Brazilian children in Japan brought a huge challenge to the community since those children show a lot of difficulty in adapting to Japanese schools, which led the community to form Brazilian schools, considered a unique phenomenon in this community.

After outlining the profile of the communities, the next step was, through a literature review, to compose the theoretical foundation of the research. It was found that within immigration studies, adaptation, in its broadest sense, is understood as a process of rebuilding life in a host country of different sociocultural patterns and that this phenomenon can be analyzed from different models. This work chose to approach adaptation from sociocultural and psychological standpoints, in addition to superficially touching on the economic aspects of it, regarded as the main pillars of this phenomenon. In this way, it was possible to investigate and identify key variables that influence the adaptation of immigrants, and to understand this process in a fuller sense.

Psychological adaptation was found to be a subjective process resulting from good levels of well-being and self-satisfaction while settling in the host country. This phenomenon can be analyzed using a stress-coping framework, *i.e.*, conditions to deal with difficulties arising from situations considered stressful. Psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety can be triggered when stress exceeds immigrants' conditions of dealing with them.

Psychological adaptation has been shown to follow a U-curve, meaning that levels of well-being and self-satisfaction are higher initially, decrease as difficulties hit, and increase later as

immigrants learn to overcome them. Among the main variables that influence this process, social support from the conational community, sociocultural distance, homesickness, discrimination, immigration status, personality, and age were identified.

Social support from the conational community was the main variable highlighted in the literature, identified as an important resource for emotional and informational support. Such source of support appeared to heavily influence immigrants' levels of well-being, as well as alleviate negative feelings such as loneliness and homesickness. On the other hand, factors such as discrimination and irregular documentation status have been shown to negatively affect the psychological adaptation of immigrants, since it puts them in a constant state of fear and anxiety, in addition to impairing their self-esteem.

Furthermore, it was found that sociocultural features play an important role in levels of well-being, as they can influence the way of dealing with everyday life stressors. For example, it was found that among Latino communities, female immigrants are more likely to turn to religious faith for emotional and psychological support. Thus, religious centers, such as churches, can play an important role in their well-being.

The other theoretical pillar of this work, sociocultural adaptation, was pointed out as the ability of immigrants to deal with daily life in the host country. Therefore, levels of sociocultural adaptation are associated with the immigrants' skills to manage life and alleviate difficulties. Sociocultural adaptation can be understood within a skills-learning model, where the more relevant skills to dealing with life in the host country one has, the better the outcomes of sociocultural adaptation tend to be. Unlike psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation levels seem to follow an ascending line, indicating that they are lower at the beginning and increase over time, as immigrants learn to deal with daily life.

Among key variables found for this phenomenon, relational resources (with both the national community and host society), language proficiency, and length of residence seemed to be associated with good levels of adaptation. Meanwhile, barriers like discrimination and xenophobia appeared to decrease their levels. Nevertheless, sociocultural distance and immigration status are frequently emphasized as the main predictors. Sociocultural distance is proportional to the need to learn new skills to deal with difficulties. Meanwhile, irregular immigration status, in addition to psychological harm, significantly restricts immigrants' lives socially and professionally, making it difficult for them to access public benefits, medical care, and regular employment positions. Furthermore, irregular status affects the economic mobility of the community, preventing them from growing professionally, even across generations.

The third step of this work aimed to define non-governmental organizations and investigate how their work can influence immigrants' adaptation outcomes. This research

comprehended non-governmental organizations as “all types of […] associations in which individuals work collectively, without a profit motive, for a cause or objective that benefits a certain group of individuals” (Rehill 2012: 23). In addition, it found that non-governmental organizations vary in terms of size, have different objectives, and missions, and use different resources to promote their activities. Non-governmental organizations targeting immigrant communities are generally focused on fields such as education, politics, health, labor, documentation status, and other general issues of life as an immigrant. The literature points out that these entities have a relevant role, especially in addressing immigrants' needs where the public sector fails to act, and when aligning with the public sector to enhance services offered to this population.

To promote the adaptation of immigrants, non-governmental organizations frequently provide services in three main areas: providing basic needs, developing capacities, and giving voice. When it comes to basic needs, these organizations aim to provide primary resources such as food, clothing, hygiene items, medical aid, and housing. In developing capacities, these organizations strive to promote educational activities, such as language and vocational courses, to provide immigrants with the necessary skills to cope with life in the host country and achieve better professional positions. Lastly, in giving voice, organizations aim to raise immigrants’ voices politically, seeking to increase their space within society and guarantee their rights, as well as protect their rights in court.

The fourth step of this work was, also through a literature review, to investigate the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of Brazilian immigrants in Japan and the United States, highlighting key variables that influence these phenomena.

In the Brazilian community in the United States, among the main predictors found were language proficiency, knowledge about sociocultural aspects, discrimination, length of residence, sociocultural distance, and professional downgrade. Nevertheless, no variable was more stressed in the literature than immigration status. The difficulties led by lack of legal documentation begin even before entering the United States when Brazilians risk their lives crossing the border from Mexico, which leaves them with significant psychological traumas.

Irregular immigration status represents a social and professional vulnerability for Brazilians, who do not have the same rights and protections as regular immigrants. Due to the lack of documentation, immigrants may end up being abused psychologically, physically, and materially by employers who take advantage of the immigrants' fear of seeking help from authorities. In addition, the heavy workload is known to affect the physical and mental health of immigrants.

Being undocumented also prevents them from seeking better job positions, making it difficult for them to ascend professionally, and affecting their self-esteem. When it comes to

immigrant students, being undocumented hinders access to university, as they can't compete for a scholarship, affecting their levels of self-esteem and satisfaction.

One of the main resources among Brazilians in the United States for good outcomes of psychological and sociocultural adaptation is the support found within the conational community. Data used in this research showed that almost 100% of Brazilians got their housing and their first job through the help of another Brazilian. In addition, institutions such as Brazilian religious centers proved to be an important source of emotional support and information. Similarly, non-governmental organizations are also mentioned in the literature as an important resource for obtaining information and facilitating access to services such as medical care and English classes.

When it comes to the Brazilian immigrants in Japan, despite their regular immigration status, various challenges are also encountered in their adaptation. Variables such as discrimination, overwork, professional downgrade, lack of Japanese proficiency, and homesickness have been shown to negatively affect the adaptation of Brazilians in Japan, while sociocultural distance was mentioned by previous authors as their main difficulty. Meanwhile, similar to the United States, support from the Brazilian community was shown to be associated with better levels of well-being, self-satisfaction, and skills learning to deal with day-to-day difficulties.

Since Brazilians in Japan spend most of their time inside factories, a lot is discussed in the literature about the difficulties encountered in the workplace. Sociocultural differences, combined with the exhausting work routine, in addition to tiring immigrants physically and emotionally, deprive them of social life, limiting their time to spend with family and to dedicate to learning new skills, such as the Japanese language. Furthermore, the fact that they are outsourced workers, prevents them from growing professionally, in addition to signifying vulnerability, as they can be fired at any time, as happened in 2008, due to the economic crisis triggered by the Lehman Brothers shock, when almost 40% of Brazilian factory workers lost their jobs.

In addition to vulnerability at work, Brazilian immigrants are also socially vulnerable. As they want to make money as fast as possible, they don't pay social security, being left unprotected. In addition, because many of them can't speak Japanese and lack the skills to navigate life in Japan, they find face difficulties trying to access medical services.

Sociocultural distance also has a negative impact on Brazilian children, in Japan. Due to the difficulty in communicating, writing, reading, and interacting with Japanese classmates, it was found that the dropout rates among Brazilian children are high, which led the community to set up schools with a Brazilian curriculum to palliatively solve the problem. However, such schools are often pointed out as a factor that can hinder these children's access to Japanese universities and the job market, since they do not emphasize teaching the Japanese language.

The Brazilian community in Japan, although not mentioned as a source of support for issues such as housing and employment, since this role is played by contractors, is indicated as an important source of social and emotional support. In addition, services provided by institutions such as churches, non-governmental organizations, and the consulate of Brazil were mentioned in the literature given their role in promoting professional qualification, children's education, mental health care, and translation, alleviating the difficulties faced by Brazilians in Japan.

The fifth step of this work consisted of a field study that took place in Japan and in the United States, focused on the state of Massachusetts. In Japan, this fieldwork focused on 4 organizations: Organization 1, Organization 2, Organization 3, and Organization 4. In addition, services provided by the consulate general of Brazil in Tokyo, and the Toyohashi International Association, in partnership with the non-governmental organizations were explored.

The pandemic triggered by covid-19 between the years 2020 and 2021 imposed significant barriers to conducting the fieldwork proposed by this work. The initial project was to conduct interviews with a proportional number of servers and users of non-governmental organizations, aiming to comprehend the contributions of their services from a multilateral perspective. However, social distancing led by the pandemic forced most activities of non-governmental organizations to be restricted or discontinued, severely reducing the opportunities to carry out observation, which was the main means by which the author planned to contact users. For this reason, a limitation of this work is the low participation of users, which may have, at some level, transmitted a one-sided view. However, to avoid bias, this work endeavored to rely on other perspectives, such as from public sector employees, such as city hall, and members of Brazilian consulates. Therefore, to complement the findings of this work and advance the understanding of non-governmental organizations' role in psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes, the author recommends that future studies put effort into capturing users' testimonials, which was limited in this work due to the pandemic.

Organization 1 is a Tokyo-based non-governmental organization with a national scope. The organization offers services related to, but not limited to, mental and medical care, education, entrepreneurship, social and legal issues, public benefits, and translation. Among the activities offered by Organization 1, currently, the main one is psychological care, which became the most demanded during the 2020 pandemic. In addition, it also promotes visits to Japanese schools, seminars, lectures, workshops, food donations, emergency aid in natural disasters, and the transfer of terminally ill Brazilians to Brazil.

Organization 2, based in Kanagawa Prefecture, focuses on educational, informational, and professional activities. Among the main services provided are classes for Brazilian children, such as an After School program, to help children with homework and reinforce content learned in schools, and a Free school program, to prepare Brazilian children to enter Japanese high-school schools. In

addition, for adults, Organization 2 offers vocational courses. Similar to Organization 1, Organization 2 also offers consultations with psychologists. During the 2020 pandemic, the organization made a telephone number available to the public to answer questions about prevention against the coronavirus. Due to high demand, the number has been maintained in order to answer general questions about health care. In addition, Eliana, one of Organization 2's employees, has her own NGO, dedicated to the treatment of HIV-positive Brazilians so that they have access to medicines immediately after arriving in Japan. Also, Organization 2 offers food donations to families in need.

Organization 3 focuses solely on mental health. This organization offers a telephone number where Brazilians can call and receive psychological counseling in Portuguese. In addition, organization 3 offers training courses to enable people to receive calls and listen to people in need, helping to prevent suicide. One important entity that has received training from Organization 3 is the Brazilian consulate in Tokyo.

The last organization investigated in Japan was Organization 4 located in the city of Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture, where there is a high concentration of Brazilians. This organization works closely in contact with Toyohashi city hall. Among the activities promoted by them are Japanese classes, summer school to assist Brazilian children with their homework during the holidays, survival manuals during natural disasters, assistance in fields such as medical care and access to public benefits, and food donation.

The consulate general of Brazil in Tokyo was also a target of this research given the relevant support it offers to the community. Being unique in the world, the Brazilian consulates in Japan have a community support department that offers various services such as psychological support (in partnership with Organization 1), lectures and fairs on education and entrepreneurship, and guidance manuals for children who are about to start studying in Japanese schools.

In the United States, 4 non-governmental organizations were studied: Organization A, Organization B, Organization C, and Organization D. All of them are based in the state of Massachusetts, home to one of the largest Brazilian communities in the United States. In addition, one church, Church A, was explored, due to its importance in the community.

Organization A is a non-governmental organization that works in areas such as food donations, physical and mental health, education, labor, and advocacy. Food donations are an important part of Organization A's work that has intensified during the pandemic and due to the high influx of Brazilians arriving across the Mexican border from 2020. The organization also plays an important role in health, aiding HIV-positive people. Due to restrictions imposed by the lack of documentation, the majority of Brazilians do not have access to private health insurance. Organization A guides these people to enroll in public health insurance offered by the state of

Massachusetts, known as the MassHealth, and offers full support for them to continue with treatment in the United States. In addition, Organization A provides legal assistance services to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, runs a home for elderly Brazilians where they can spend the day and receive medical aid, and during the pandemic has become an important channel of guidance in the prevention and vaccine against the covid-19 virus.

Organization B is a non-governmental organization located in the city of Framingham, which has one of the highest densities of Brazilian residents in the United States. Organization B has relevance in mental health, offering psychological counseling (conducted online with psychologists who are in Brazil), and a manual with information about mental disorders, treatments, and clinics in the region. In addition, the organization also promotes clothing and food donation activities, seminars, and workshops related to advocacy, work, mental health, and immigration. Recently, during the 2020 pandemic, Organization B, in partnership with Framingham city hall, became a vaccination center. In this center, in addition to the vaccine, relevant information on prevention against the virus was offered in Portuguese. Organization B works together with Church A, which also promotes activities such as donations and cultural events for the community. The Brazilian consulate in Boston is a major Organization B partner, which uses the organization to provide the Brazilian community in Framingham with easier access to consular services.

Organization C is primarily focused on labor-related activities. Among the services offered are qualification, advocacy, education, protection, and political training for Brazilian workers. One peculiar feature of Organization C is its political participation, having already achieved important rights for the immigrant community, such as protection for domestic workers, and protection in cases of sexual abuse and discrimination. One of the organization's goals is to train community leaders, teaching them lessons related to leadership, politics, labor rights, and law. In addition, Organization C offers English courses and occupational accident protection courses. Given the vulnerability of undocumented workers, Organization C also offers legal services that assist its clients from start to finish, in cases, for example, where the employer has not paid the employee. In addition to the field of labor, Organization C also provides food and hygiene donations to immigrants in need.

The last organization addressed was Organization D, which is focused on immigrant Brazilian women. Women are an especially vulnerable group, as in addition to being undocumented, they are also the main targets of domestic violence and sexual abuse. To protect this group, Organization D promotes activities in support of health, education, immigration, advocacy, and training. The immigration clinic is an activity carried out by the organization to provide relevant information on immigration and offer free consultations on workers' rights.

Organization D also offers manuals for Brazilian women and mothers with important information about their rights in the United States. Another important activity offered by them is the Viva Verde Women's cooperative. Brazilian women usually work as house cleaners and are exposed daily to toxic cleaning products. The Viva Verde Women's cooperative, in addition to offering training, developed natural cleaning products to be used by housecleaners, that offer no risk to their health. Organization D also educates women to defend themselves against exploitation at work, sexual exploitation, and domestic violence. Similar to Organization B, during the 2020 pandemic, Organization D served as a vaccination center, where immigrants could, in addition to receiving the vaccine, receive guidance in Portuguese on prevention against the covid-19 virus.

The sixth and last step of this research was dedicated to discussing the role of non-governmental organizations in the sociocultural and psychological adaptation outcomes of Brazilian immigrants in Japan and the United States, combining the theoretical and empirical data gathered in the previous chapters.

When it comes to the sociocultural and psychological adaptation of Brazilians in the United States and Japan, distinct variables could be identified, and interesting comparisons could be made. For instance, documentation status, despite being extremely relevant in the lives of Brazilians in the United States, and affecting their lives in several spheres, was not stressed in the case of Brazilians in Japan. On the other hand, sociocultural distance appeared to be significantly heavier in adaptation outcomes, in Japan. Meanwhile, social support from the Brazilian community has been shown to be a relevant variable in both countries. However, in the United States, Brazilians are strongly dependent on the structure and resources found in the community to survive. Meanwhile, in Japan, the Brazilian community is known to be an important source of emotional and social support, providing a space where immigrants can socialize and seek information.

While issues such as social isolation, access to public services, professional and economic growth, and children's education are widely affected by immigration status in the United States, in Japan they are primarily impacted by sociocultural distance. Also, while in the United States Brazilians are constantly vulnerable socially and professionally, in Japan, there is more stability, and vulnerability is usually felt only in an eventual economic crisis because they are outsourced workers.

Among the organizations investigated, 21 services were identified in the United States, and 15 in Japan. It was noted that in both countries, these organizations focus primarily on developing immigrants' capacities, with 11 services in the United States and 10 in Japan. In the second place, 7 services in the United States and 4 in Japan were intended for providing basic needs. Lastly, 3 services in the United States and 1 in Japan were aimed at giving immigrants voices.

Activities focused on developing capacities have been shown to have a significant role in promoting good levels of sociocultural adaptation, considering that sociocultural adaptation

outcomes are associated with learning relevant abilities to cope with life in the host country. Among the activities within this category, most of them had educational purposes, such as classes, lectures, workshops, seminars, and guides, for adults and children. In addition to non-governmental organizations, churches, and consulates have also emerged as an important resource for learning relevant skills. In the case of churches in the United States, they are considered important relational resources, where immigrants gather relevant pieces of information, such as those related to work, that help them to cope with life. Meanwhile, consulates in Japan have a community-oriented sector that offers entrepreneurship support, aimed at encouraging immigrants to set up new businesses. In addition to the positive impacts that these activities have on sociocultural adaptation outcomes, by considerably enhancing immigrants' capacities to deal with daily life challenges, they also contribute to Brazilians' economic adaptation, promoting economic mobility.

When it comes to providing basic needs, it was noticeable that there is a much greater effort in organizations in the United States than in those in Japan, because of the vulnerability faced by Brazilians in the United States due to the lack of documentation. Being undocumented deprives them of access to important sources of support, such as unemployment insurance and pension. Meanwhile, in Japan, in addition to having access to those sources of support, Brazilians rely on assistance from contractors to facilitate their lives in matters such as housing and employment. Among the main services within this category were donations of food and clothing, medical and mental care, and shelter. Furthermore, within this category, it was identified that while in the United States there is a greater focus on physical health, in Japan the focus is on mental health. In Japan, assistance related to medical care is mostly informational, or translation services. Meanwhile, in the United States, access to medical services is hampered due to the impossibility of undocumented immigrants to subscribe to private health insurance. During the pandemic in 2020, immigrants thought that they were not entitled to get a vaccine or were afraid to look for public centers to receive the inoculation. Therefore, to facilitate the immunization of Brazilians against the coronavirus, some organizations functioned as vaccination centers. Those organizations, by promoting access to basic services, cushioning the vulnerability of immigrants, and allowing them to meet their primary needs, have performed a significant role in enhancing immigrants' mental and physical well-being, contributing to their psychological adaptation outcomes.

When it comes to giving voice, it could be verified a higher engagement among organizations in the United States. Due to a lack of documentation, Brazilians in the United States are easily exploited by employers and are afraid to report them to official authorities. Therefore, non-governmental organizations play an essential role in defending Brazilians, serving as a place that they know they can trust, and functioning as a safe haven. In order to protect immigrants, those organizations offer legal support from start to finish, from filling out forms to defending themselves

in court. In addition, organizations such as the Organization 3 and organization 4 play an important role in fighting for immigrant rights in the political sphere. Advocating for immigrants and fighting for their rights has been shown to have positive effects both on psychological adaptation, by giving them greater levels of security, and on sociocultural adaptation, by achieving rights that will allow them to better cope with life in the United States, such as through the legalization of driver's license for undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, through their activities, non-governmental organizations play a major role in serving as a "bridge" or "facilitators" that connect and mediate immigrant communities with the public sector, which through partnerships, can contribute to building programs or designing public policies that will benefit not only the immigrants but the society as a whole.

Comparing case studies of Brazilian communities in Japan and the United States offered new perspectives and advanced the understanding of adaptation phenomena and the role of NGOs in them, thereby supporting NGOs' significance in addressing determinants of adaptation, such as alleviating difficulties caused by lack of documentation in the United States, and cultural distance in Japan. Despite sharing the same homeland and having immigrated with similar economic goals, these communities have completely different realities and have peculiar needs, which are challenging to address. It is also possible to notice that the two groups share a common trait: vulnerability. Nevertheless, their causes of vulnerability are very different and require different coping mechanisms. Also, the analysis of factors and comparison made between the two communities led to the conclusion that assumptions that may initially seem obvious and were previously strongly raised, such as the supposed association between legality and higher levels of well-being, satisfaction, and ability to cope with life, as well as the association between social support from the host society and higher levels of sociocultural adaptation, are more complex than imagined and may be misleading.

In addition, the case studies showed that the non-governmental organizations, despite sharing the goal of facilitating the lives of immigrants, may adopt different strategies to meet the specific demands of immigrants. According to this study, even though in both cases developing capacities came first, followed by basic needs, and giving voice, in the United States a lot of importance was given to the provision of basic needs, almost equaling the importance given to developing capacities, due to the difficulties immigrants face in settling in the country, especially in their first moments. Therefore, the provision of basic needs to immigrants in that country is a critical part of the work of non-governmental organizations, validating the argument that, because of their versatility, non-governmental organizations can be considered no-barrier resources. Furthermore, in the United States, non-governmental organizations foster a culture of protection, aiming to cushion the negative impacts of the lack of regular immigration status, helping immigrants access the rights

they have, covering the gaps left by the rights they don't have, and fighting to expand their rights further. Meanwhile, in Japan, a culture of making immigrants independent is cultivated, aiming for the point where they would no longer need non-governmental organizations as intermediaries. Until this level of development is not reached, non-governmental organizations have shown to play a vital role, and function as an important resource where immigrants can find information, training, education, relief of basic physical and psychological needs, legal protection, and political engagement, contributing to enhancing their levels of well-being and providing them with relevant capacities to cope with life in the host country, resulting in better outcomes of psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List with Details Interviewees Narratives Were Used to this Study

Name	Organization	Type of Affiliation	Prefecture/State	Date
Harumi	Organization 2	User	Kanagawa	Aug 8, 2019
Guilherme	Organization 2	User	Kanagawa	Aug 8, 2019
Maria	Organization 1	Employee	Tokyo	Feb 12, 2021
Larissa	Organization 2	Employee	Kanagawa	Feb 12, 2021
Tanaka	Organization 1	Employee	Tokyo	Feb 19, 2021
Mori	Organization 1	Employee	Tokyo	Feb 26, 2021
Viana	Embassy	Ambassador	Tokyo	Feb 28, 2021
Leandro	Consulate	Consul	Tokyo	Mar 5, 2021
Rafaela	Embassy	Counselor	Tokyo	Mar 10, 2021
Olaf	Organization 1	Employee	Tokyo	Mar 27, 2021
Sabrina	Organization 1	User	Tokyo	April 12, 2021
Hideki	Organization 1	User	Tokyo	April 12, 2021
Isabel	Organization 1	User	Tokyo	April 12, 2021
Lineu	Organization 1	Employee	Tokyo	May 13, 2021
Gisele	Organization 3	Employee	Toyohashi	May 17, 2021
Lara	Toyohashi City Hall	Employee	Toyohashi	May 17, 2021
Mitie	Organization 2	Employee	Kanagawa	Jun 28, 2021
Caroline	Organization 2	Employee	Kanagawa	Jun 28, 2021
Milena	Organization 1	Employee	Tokyo	Aug 29, 2021
Eliana	Organization 2	Employee	Kanagawa	Aug 29, 2021
Julia	Organization A	Employee	Massachusetts	Oct 8, 2021
Gilmar	Church A	Priest	Massachusetts	Oct 8, 2021
Lilian	Organization A	Employee	Massachusetts	Oct 18, 2021
Marta	Organization B	Employee	Massachusetts	Oct 18, 2021
Adriano	Organization B	Employee	Massachusetts	Oct 18, 201
Olivia	Organization C	Employee	Massachusetts	Oct 19, 2021
Lia	Organization C	Employee	Massachusetts	Oct 19, 2021

Tania	Organization C	Employee	Massachusetts	Oct 22, 2021
Marcos	Church A	Priest	Massachusetts	Oct 28, 2021
Viana	Organization A	Employee	Massachusetts	Nov 2, 2021
Lucia	Organization C	Employee	Massachusetts	Nov 5, 2021
Sara	Somerville City Hall	Employee	Massachusetts	Nov 5, 2021
Rachel	Organization A	Employee	Massachusetts	Nov 18, 2021
Aline	Organization C	Employee	Massachusetts	Nov 29, 2021
Lena	Organization C	Employee	Massachusetts	Nov 29, 2021
Carlos	Organization C	Employee	Massachusetts	Nov 29, 2021
Helena	Organization D	Employee	Massachusetts	Jan 20, 2022
Natalia	Organization D	Employee	Massachusetts	Jan 20, 2022

Source: Fieldwork carried out by the author.