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Voluntary International Mobility Lived in Laughter, Tears, and Resignification: Experiences of Brazilians Shared on YouTube Channels

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Abstract

Voluntary international mobility requires greater responsibility, given that there is no structure and organizational support for the challenge of living in another country. The aim of this study is to analyze the intercultural adaptation process of Brazilian immigrants and self-initiated expatriates in “off-axis” countries (less sought after/without a structured community of Brazilians) based on their reports and interactions on YouTube channels. The study employs a qualitative approach, with narrative research of four individuals. The data were collected between March and May of 2021 according to the following categories: intercultural adaptation; types of adaptation; structure and functioning of the channel. We confirmed the applicability of the theories of intercultural adaptation to analyze voluntary mobility, but with the need to consider specific aspects, such as advance adjustment actions, the influence of the channels on the focus and effort to adapt to the general

environment and interact with the locals, and the emergence of individual aspects and behaviors (such as flexibility to change and self-knowledge), which were shown to be relevant for the intercultural adaptation process in voluntary mobility. As a theoretical contribution, it is understood that to use the theories about intercultural adaptation with the aim of analyzing voluntary mobility it is necessary to consider some specific aspects of this type of mobility while still in the country of origin, the weight and importance of each adaptation environment for the voluntary expatriate's objective, and how much that experience is shared and exposed on different media with their respective impact on choices and (re)creation of meanings.

Keywords: international geographic mobility; voluntary mobility; self-initiated expatriate; immigrant; narrative research.

Introduction

In one of her videos, Ana comments:

I was tired of the crazy life we had there [in Brazil], of violence, pollution, of sitting in a lot of traffic..., I'm already 37 years old and my energy to struggle with São Paulo was already lower... So, we came seeking quality of life here and some things that were different in everyday life that we really liked. But of course Poland also has a lot of problems... (The World..., 2020)

She is one of many people in an international geographic mobility process, which can be classified in different ways, depending on the motives, duration, and ties to the country of origin and destination country (Andresen, Bergdolt, Dickmann, & Margenfeld, 2014; Araujo, Teixeira, Cruz, & Malini, 2012, 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Gallon, Fraga, & Antunes, 2017; Lima & Domingues, 2021). International mobility can be configured as exile, immigration, traditional expatriation, and voluntary expatriation (Andresen et al., 2014; Freitas & Dantas, 2011). The most well-known in the business environment is traditional expatriation, also called professional expatriation, which consists of taking part in an international mission to fulfill an organizational objective (Freitas, 2010; Gallon et al., 2017; Lima & Domingues, 2021), such as opening a new subsidiary, implementing a project, or managing a specific area. As it is in the interest of the organization (companies, in most cases), the latter provides support before, during, and for the professional's return to their country of origin, as well as financial incentives (Andresen et al., 2014).

Terms such as immigration and self-initiated expatriation (or voluntary expatriation), in turn, refer to initiatives of individuals, who therefore assume most of the costs and risks involved in the process (Andresen et al., 2014; Araujo et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Lima & Domingues, 2021). In the case of immigration, the aim is to obtain a form of remuneration (with a work contract or by opening one's own business) to gain access to the documentation to remain in the destination country and create a base there to build a new life (Andresen et al., 2014). Self-initiated expatriation can be understood as immigration (Scherer, Prestes, & Grisci, 2019) with specific characteristics regarding time of permanence. It is transitory in nature and the type of tie or documentation in the destination country can be a student or work visa, which expires on termination of the tie with the

teaching institution or employer (Andresen et al., 2014). In this case, the individual is in search of new experiences and skills that can be developed and leverage their career, for example, widening their possibilities for working in their country of origin or elsewhere (Araujo et al., 2012; Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021; Lima & Domingues, 2021). For that reason, some authors class voluntary expatriation together with traditional expatriation more than with immigration (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014). Even with the differentiations, it is known that communities of Brazilians in other countries serve, in many ways, as support networks to immigrants and self-initiated expatriates.

The motives for deciding to live beyond the borders of one's country of origin are numerous and complex (Zwysen, 2019), and can derive from individuals' personal objectives or from external factors related to the country of origin and destination country (Freitas, 2010; Freitas & Dantas, 2011; González & Oliveira, 2011; Oh & Jang, 2021). It may be a moment to fulfill a dream of discovering the world, to test oneself, to reinvent oneself, and to meet people from different cultures (Freitas & Dantas, 2011), or to rediscover family roots, but different studies show that external factors have a major impact on these choices, such as a stable economic context, better job and study opportunities, professional career gains, and good living conditions, among others (Lima & Domingues, 2021; Oh & Jang, 2021).

Despite recognizing the different objectives and types of international mobility, the literature in the area of administration is only abundant when traditional expatriation is concerned (Araujo et al., 2012; Gallon et al., 2017) and one of the frequent concerns is with the intercultural adaptation of the expatriate and their family (Araujo et al., 2012; Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021; Oh & Jang, 2021). The U-curve and J-curve theories of adaptation and of social learning have been widely referenced, despite the criticisms (González & Oliveira, 2011), to understand that process (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; González & Oliveira, 2011; Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021; Takeuchi & Chen, 2013).

It is questioned whether the approaches and theories are able to explain adaptation (or the lack of it) regarding other types of international mobility, besides the cases of professional expatriation in different countries, such as immigration and self-initiated expatriation, and what career (Lima & Domingues, 2021; Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021) and support alternatives these individuals have to face the challenges inherent to intercultural adaptation (Araújo et al., 2012). Despite there being studies about demographic characteristics, individual traits, and language proficiency, there are few that address the interactions of individuals in voluntary international mobility with the locals and how this can influence adaptation, since they cannot count on the support of an organization responsible for their stay in the country and they generally have few resources and little knowledge about the place of destination (Araújo et al., 2012; Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021). There is a lack of studies that explore the different factors that affect intercultural adaptation in voluntary mobility, since most focus on aspects of performance and management related to this type of mobility (Oh & Jang, 2021). In addition, there is a lack of studies that address the international experience more comprehensively, contemplating elements related to work and the dimensions of the individual's life (Takeuchi & Chen, 2013).

In order to contribute to filling that gap, this research aims to analyze the intercultural adaptation process of Brazilian immigrants and self-initiated expatriates in countries considered to be "off-axis" (less sought after and without a forming or structured community of Brazilians), based on their reports and interactions on YouTube channels, using the narrative research method. Thus,

we considered the online interaction environment of the channels as spaces for the creation and sharing of meaning regarding the experience lived, besides influencing decisions about voluntary expatriation.

We intend to contribute to the discussion about the application and reach of theories about intercultural adaptation for voluntary expatriation, as well as the need for observation of elements inherent to this type of international mobility. We seek to highlight the importance and role of online social media, such as YouTube channels, in the voluntary mobility experience as a space of interaction, stimulation, support, and a source of income for the individuals in mobility. Also, this study aims to exemplify the application of different methods and data sources to analyze experiences of international geographic mobility.

This article is structured in five sections, the first being this introduction, followed by the theoretical-empirical framework, which presents the theoretical framework of reference that forms the basis for this study. The third section presents the methodological procedures and the fourth section shows the results and discusses the research data. Finally, the fifth section presents the conclusion of this study.

Theoretical-empirical framework

Concepts and differentiations

The interconnection and interdependence of the economies of countries in a globalized and interlinked context has demanded and stimulated an intense movement of people, capital, information, organizations, merchandise, and services (Freitas, 2010). The movement, or mobility, of people occurs voluntarily or in service of organizations, with different aims and influenced by various factors and motives (Araujo et al., 2012; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Gallon et al., 2017; Scherer et al., 2019). Some authors focus on factors that are external to the individual as motivators of their international mobility, dividing them into aspects related to the destination country, such as economic and political stability, good living conditions, work and business creation opportunities, study possibilities, and professional career growth etc., and into elements related to the country of origin, which involve questions such as high rates of violence, political conflicts, unemployment, social inequality, precarious or inaccessible education, and few prospects of improved living conditions (Oh & Jang, 2021).

Just as the individual can choose mobility because of one or various factors combined, the perception of the people of the destination country regarding the role of the foreigner, the image they have regarding the foreigner's country and regarding the reasons for and conditions of their migration, as well as the privileges that will need to be shared, will determine the way the foreigner will be perceived and received by the new group. Freitas and Dantas (2011) draw attention to the differences of perceptions and interactions when the foreigner is a refugee, migrant, or expatriate. According to the authors, geographic mobility leads the individual to be seen as an integrating, mediating, collaborating, or destructive element of the established social order or existing or desired organizational arrangement. For that reason, it is necessary to differentiate the types of mobility and its forms of insertion and interaction in the new national context (Araujo et al., 2012).

Given the focus of this study, the figures of the immigrant and of the expatriate will be covered here. Immigrant is a wider term and such people are the focus of interest of different areas of study, such as administration and anthropology (Scherer et al., 2019). They can be defined as people who decide to live in another country, but who have no impediment to returning to their country of origin, and there are various reasons for this mobility (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2019). These reasons are difficult to classify, given their complexity and multiplicity (Zwysen, 2019), but they may generally be linked to the desire to go on an adventure in unknown places or due to more pragmatic reasons, such as the search for better employment opportunities and living conditions for themselves and their families (Freitas & Dantas, 2011).

Regarding expatriates, for a long time the literature on this type of international mobility, primarily in the area of administration, has treated individuals who go to live and work in another country homogeneously (Andresen et al., 2014; Araujo et al., 2012; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Gallon et al., 2017; Lima & Domingues, 2021). However, various authors have sought to differentiate them, using a number of classifications. One of the broadest is that which distinguishes the organizational (or professional) expatriate from the self-initiated expatriate or voluntary expatriate (Araujo et al., 2012; Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021; Lima & Domingues, 2021).

A professional expatriate is one who leaves their country of origin to fulfill a work mission for a specific period in another country, accomplishing objectives of the organization they are affiliated with (Andresen et al., 2014; Freitas, 2010; Gallon et al., 2017; Lima & Domingues, 2021). They enjoy organizational support in questions such as legal procedures, accommodation, family accompaniment, intercultural training, as well as benefits such as increased remuneration and benefits, special bonuses, and a guaranteed position when repatriation occurs (Andresen et al., 2014; Araujo et al., 2014; Lima & Domingues, 2021). Besides the financial advantages, this type of expatriation is seen as a career strategy, primarily when the individual returns to their place of origin (Araujo et al., 2012).

Self-initiated expatriate, in turn, is a term derived from the concept of immigration (Scherer et al., 2019), but which presents characteristics related to expatriation (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014), and it can be defined as an individual who, through their own free initiative, seeks international mobility (Doherty, 2013) to search for work or for a period of studies (Araujo et al., 2012), with a professional qualification, and who intends to return to their country of origin at some time (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014). For different reasons, the value of self-initiated expatriates has increased for organizations, primarily for multinationals. One reason is the fact that many companies cannot meet their demand with local professionals and for that reason they hire foreigners for certain roles (Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021). Another reason is that self-initiated expatriates have been considered to be professionals with more personal initiative (Andresen, Pattie, & Hippler, 2020), with global competences and presenting more flexibility (Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021). Hiring self-initiated expatriates may also be a way of increasing the diversity of talents and of transcultural knowledge.

Despite the increase in interest from organizations for self-initiated expatriates, not all self-initiated expatriates are successful in their international mobility processes. A lack of intercultural adaptation has been indicated as one of the main reasons for early termination of work contracts and returning to the country of origin, when personal and contextual characteristics do not align (Oh & Jang, 2021). Self-initiated expatriates are more exposed and vulnerable to environmental stressors (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021), along with immigrants.

As common points, immigrants and self-initiated expatriates share a number of motives that have led to geographic mobility, initiative, the lack of an organizational support structure, and greater openness to intercultural adaptation and to interacting with the locals (Andresen et al., 2014; Araujo et al., 2012). However, they differ in the type of documentation and legal procedures, in professional qualifications (greater for the self-initiated expatriate) and, consequently, in the positions occupied and remuneration received, in the willingness to be entrepreneurial (generally of the immigrant), in the time of permanence and family structure (it is common for the self-initiated expatriate to go alone and for the immigrant to go with their family), and in their intentions in relation to their professional career (Andresen et al., 2014; Lima & Domingues, 2021).

Intercultural adaptation

A commonly accepted definition regarding intercultural adaptation is that it refers to the level of ease (or difficulty) that the individual has in relation to various aspects of the international experience (Takeuchi & Chen, 2013). The academic studies have provided different theories and approaches regarding the adaptation process of organizational expatriates and its stages, with greater focus on factors that are external to the individual and little in-depth investigation regarding the psychological aspects and subjectivities involved (González & Oliveira, 2011). One of these theories that is widely mentioned and used, as well as criticized, is the U-curve theory of intercultural adaptation, based on preliminary empirical studies of authors such as Sverre Lysgaard, in 1955, and whose implications are presented and analyzed by Black and Mendenhall (1991) and Black et al. (1991), among others (Araujo et al., 2012).

The U-curve theory of intercultural adaptation foresees that adaptation will basically occur in four stages: honeymoon, culture shock, adaptation, and mastery (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). In the honeymoon stage, the individuals are fascinated with the new culture and everything around them. As the days (or weeks or months) go by, the feeling of euphoria gives way to moments of disillusionment and frustration as the foreigners deal with the new culture on a daily basis, characterizing the start of the culture shock stage (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Takeuchi & Chen, 2013). After overcoming this stage without the individual giving up on their project of a life outside their country (González & Oliveira, 2011), the intercultural adjustment or adaptation stage gradually begins, when the individual learns new frameworks for interpreting the reality around them and behaviors considered to be suited to the cultural norms of the other country. The last stage, that of mastery of the culture, is characterized by small incremental gains in each person's ability to act effectively in the new culture (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Takeuchi & Chen, 2013).

In the article of Black and Mendenhall (1991) about the U-curve theory, the authors indicate that the works of the time were unable to validate it statistically, weakening its quality and consistency as an explanatory theory of intercultural adaptation. In addition, some studies showed that adaptation also occurred in the shape of a J-curve (Calderón, Guedes, & Carvalho, 2016; Takeuchi & Chen, 2013), that is, the individual already begins their experience in the culture shock stage, without experiencing the honeymoon. With that, the authors contested the obligation of the honeymoon stage and reinforced the role of different individual and external variables in the adaptation process, which can cause the individual to face major difficulties at the start of the international mobility process (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; González & Oliveira, 2011). Another question regarding the U-curve theory and similar studies concerned the use and connotation of

the term “culture shock” as a sickness, something undesirable and negative, since this stage means a profound and complex experience of resignification and learning, which increases self-awareness and promotes change and individual growth (González & Oliveira, 2011).

Black and Mendenhall (1991) thus suggested a new beginning for that theory, associating it with social learning theory, since learning what the acceptable and unacceptable behaviors would be in a particular culture would provide a logical theoretical basis for discussing the intercultural adaptation process. Social learning theory results from the integration of cognitive and behavioral theories and assumes that individuals can learn and behave socially through their own action and experience, but also through observing the behavior of other people, the consequences of those actions, and imitation of the observed behavioral models.

Thus, Black and Mendenhall (1991) and Black et al. (1991) analyzed each one of the adaptation stages of the U-curve theory, relating them with the core elements of social learning theory: attention, retention, reproduction, and incentives (the frequency and quality of the incentives are understood to be drivers or limiters of the other elements and of social learning as a whole). Therefore, in the honeymoon stage, the individuals tend to pay attention to the elements of the new culture that are similar to those of their own culture, overlaying familiarity on something that resembles their culture of origin. For all the rest that is different from their culture of origin, the individuals tend to seek references from their culture and because of that they often engage in actions and behaviors that are considered inappropriate, with negative consequences. These situations result in the next stage, which is that of the culture shock, when there is a high proportion of negative feedbacks regarding their behaviors (considered inappropriate) in relation to the new and appropriate behaviors they have learned. The greater the difference is between the culture of origin and that of the destination, the longer-lasting and more severe the culture shock stage can be, and the greater the willingness is of the locals to interact with individuals in mobility, the quicker the foreigners will learn the new behaviors considered to be appropriate for the destination culture. For the adjustment or international adaptation phase to begin, it depends on how much the individuals are able to pay attention to the behavioral models of the locals and incorporate them into their own behavior, as well as the level of positive feedback and reinforcement they receive from the people of the host country. The more this occurs, the more the individuals will feel comfortable and assimilate the new behaviors, increasing their repertoire over time and with the receipt of feedback.

An important contribution of social learning theory to the U-curve theory of intercultural adaptation, according to Black and Mendenhall (1991), is the concept of advance adjustment, which in summary means that the individuals can anticipate their intercultural adaptation through the knowledge and observation that other people have made before they themselves undergo that experience. Two factors help in advance adjustment: the accuracy of the information used and the way that information is presented. For the authors, the greater the advance adjustment is (symbolic and participative trial before leaving – it can be done through intercultural training), the shorter the honeymoon stage will be and the lower the possibility of J-curve adaptation occurring. The more the individual exposes themselves to the host culture, the less severe the culture shock stage will be.

Black and Mendenhall (1991) also suggested that sources of advance adjustment, such as intercultural training and previous international experience, would increase attention and

retention, while shortening the honeymoon and culture shock stages. Along the same lines, Takeuchi and Chen (2013) argued about the need to relate the intercultural adjustment with the individual's previous international experience, evaluating its impact based on different elements, such as the type of prior experience being linked or not to the work environment, number of occurrences, duration, variety, level of challenge, density (intensity linked to the interaction), and impact (at which moment it occurred, its weight for the current moment, and the emotional burden involved).

We have to consider the moderating impact that individual variables can have on intercultural adaptation, according to Black and Mendenhall (1991), who mention some of them: willingness to communicate, willingness to establish relationships, tolerance of ambiguity, level of ethnocentrism, and willingness to substitute reinforcers that are also indicated in other works on adaptation and self-initiated expatriates and intercultural competency (Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021; Melo, Bueno, & Domingues, 2021). Self-efficacy, understood by Black and Mendenhall as one of the main variables that affects intercultural adaptation, is seen as the level at which individuals believe they can successfully execute the expected behaviors. If the initial level of self-efficacy is low, the greater the chance will be of the individual not persisting in their attempt to reproduce new behaviors and experiencing a more severe culture shock, which would explain some early returns. Self-efficacy is positively related with intercultural adaptation in individuals who have a high level of need for feedback (Black et al., 1991).

In addition, by incorporating elements of studies on intercultural adaptation in the national and international fields, the seminal work of Black et al. (1991) proposes that intercultural adaptation in international mobility processes is composed of three facets: general adaptation, adaptation to work, and adaptation in the interaction with people of the host country (Araujo et al., 2012; Calderón et al., 2016; González & Oliveira, 2011; Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021; Takeuchi & Chen, 2013). General adaptation (outside work) is related with the level of differences between the culture of the country of origin and that of the destination, including factors such as religion, gender relations, norms of coexistence, and traditions, among others. Adaptation in the work environment occurs based on the differences and similarities between the activities carried out in each country, on the organizational culture of each subsidiary, and on the follow-up and support for the individual in mobility. Adaptation in the interaction between the expatriate and local colleagues occurs more quickly and effectively when there is clarity of roles, demands, and discernment between the particularities of each location for the activities of the organization (Black et al., 1991; Calderón et al., 2016).

Thus, Black et al. (1991) propose that accurate expectations (related and unrelated to the work) are positively related to the advance adjustment, to the level of international adaptation, and to the intercultural training prior to mobility. These accurate expectations can derive from previous international experience (of work or not). On the other hand, there are fewer chances of failures and early return when the organization uses various selection criteria. Clarity about the role and work activities and the social support of colleagues are positively related with the facet of adaptation to this environment, and conflicts and new activities are negatively related to adaptation at work. From the perspective of interactions with the locals, the greater the differences are, the harder adaptation is, and the more the immigrant's or self-initiated expatriate's partner is adapted, the easier the individual's adaptation will be.

Studies show that in relation to both organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates, organizations have used a range of different tactics to help individuals deal with uncertainties and increase their confidence and self-efficacy, enhancing their chances of intercultural adaptation, including orientation programs, training, and support from local colleagues (Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021; Oh & Jang, 2021). The support given to the organizational expatriate differs from that of the self-initiated expatriate. While the former more easily overcomes the initial difficulties and has the opportunity to live in more privileged places, self-initiated expatriates need to resolve questions regarding legal procedures and documentation on their own and may have to live in more distant places from their work. Due to the duration of the international mission being predetermined, organizational expatriates are more inclined to seek less knowledge about the country and interact less with the locals while they are there than self-initiated expatriates and immigrants, who seek to increase their knowledge and improve their adaptation to the new environment, being more open to interaction with the people of the host country (Araujo et al., 2012).

Along this line of having more interest and initiative and in times of connectivity and online social media, immigrants and self-initiated expatriates are using different online environments to communicate with the people who remained in their country of origin, such as relatives and friends, helping those interested in living in the chosen country, but also as a form of financial income by offering services (in-person or online) focused on international mobility, such as consulting on legal procedures, tourist guide services, shopping services, and e-commerce, among others. In a report for BBC Brazil, Neves (2016) states that because of the crisis in Brazil, after 2015, there was a jump in the popularity of social media channels and profiles of Brazilians abroad, with some doubling their audience and increasing their income with the growth in interest from Brazilians in seeking an opportunity in another country. This phenomenon will be better explored in the next section.

Methodological procedures

This study uses a qualitative approach, employing narrative research as a method that enables the researcher to understand a phenomenon based on the collection of stories about a topic, with the characteristic of being collaborative between the researcher and participant. The stories are accessed in different ways, such as through interviews, autobiographies, recordings of oral narratives, and written narratives, among others (Creswell, 2014; Paiva, 2008a). Narrative research uses the (re)historization of individuals' stories, applying structural elements such as a plot, location, activities, climax, and outcome (Clandinin & Connelly cited by Creswell, 2014). For this work, they were obtained through oral narratives recorded in the format of various videos published on individual channels on the YouTube online platform, whose officially stated mission is "to give everyone a voice and show them the world" (Duque, 2020).

For its execution, some criteria were defined for including and excluding the channels to be analyzed. The inclusion criteria were: (a) the time of existence (at least two years), which is the average time indicated by different authors (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Takeuchi & Chen, 2013) for intercultural adaptation to occur; (b) being active and with recent posts (in 2021), as many people cease to publish for a long period, making it hard to analyze or infer what happened and if they are still in that country or even in international mobility; (c) the destination country being "off-axis," in the sense of being a scarcely visited destination, and there not being an already-established

community or organized group of Brazilians to serve as support to the immigrant or self-initiated expatriate.

Based on the searches on the YouTube video platform, during the months of January and March of 2021, we initially selected around fifteen channels that fulfilled the inclusion criteria. After analyzing the contents of the videos posted, we applied the exclusion criteria: (a) not presenting a high number of posted videos (below 100); (b) posting less than one video a fortnight; and (c) a low number of interactions of the channel owner with their followers (answering fewer than five comments per video, on average). With these criteria, we sought to ensure that the channels chosen presented elements that enabled the accomplishment of this study, with the elements of representativeness, continuity, and interaction in the posts.

Applying the exclusion criteria left four channels and their set of posted videos form the *corpus* of the research, presented in Table 1. It is important to mention that some attempts were made to contact the channel owners in order to schedule interviews with them to obtain more data and confirm the information available on the channels, but we received no reply up to the moment of closing the research.

Table 1
Information on the Brazilians' channels

Name of the channel	Country	Channel owner	Year of first post
<i>Noruega e eu</i> (Norway and I)	Norway	Wilqui Dias	2016
<i>O mundo não é para iniciantes</i> (The world is not for amateurs)	Poland	Ana Reczek	2017
Caique Jr	Russia	Caique Jr.	2014
<i>Brasileira no Egito</i> (Brazilian girl in Egypt)	Egypt	Lu Alves	2019

Source: data from the research.

As the aim of the research is to analyze the intercultural adaptation process of Brazilian immigrants and self-initiated expatriates, verifying the application and reach of the theories about intercultural adaptation and the role of their channels on YouTube as another environment for interaction, we elaborated a script based on the theoretical framework and on the structures of the channels. The narratives presented in the videos were then captured and analyzed based on that script, containing the following categories: **intercultural adaptation process** (honeymoon, culture shock, adaptation, mastery); **types of adaptation** (general, at work, and social); **structure and functioning of the channel** (start date, quantity of videos posted, number of followers, average number of views, motives for its creation and maintenance, interactions with followers).

Narrative analysis with interest in subjectivity, according to Moutinho and Conti (2016), considers as focuses of the study the narratives and places where the meanings are jointly constructed, in a relationship between the individual and an audience. To carry out the narrative analysis in this study, according to Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998), first it is necessary to define it based on two dimensions: whether a holistic view or focus on a specific section/categories;

and content or form. We chose so-called categorical-content, which favors the identification and analysis of specific sections and their content, according to the previously defined categories, resembling content analysis in some aspects, as the authors indicate.

After identifying the videos (by the titles, descriptions, initial sections, and comments) in which the experiences of international mobility were reported, we watched the chosen videos to analyze and interpret the data, establishing a chronology of the narrated facts related to the stages of intercultural adaptation. According to Creswell (2014), this stage is one of the steps of the narrative analysis needed to link the videos of each channel. Subsequently, we identified sections in the videos that represented the categories analyzed, as in Aragão (2008), and selected excerpts of specific speech, as in Paiva (2008b), to illustrate the adaptation process and the role of the channels.

The next section presents some information and characteristics of the four channels studied, as well as the description and discussion of the analysis categories in relation to the theoretical framework covered.

Presentation and analysis of the results

Based on the category **structure and functioning of the channel**, we observed that each one of the four channels researched presents its own objectives and trajectories, as well as time of existence, frequency of posts, and number of followers, among other data collected. To enable our understanding regarding the characteristics of each one and facilitate the comparison between them, some information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Information about the category structure and functioning of the channel

	Norway and I	The world is not for amateurs	Caique Jr	Brazilian girl in Egypt
Objective of the channel	“Brazilian living in Tromsø in northern Norway, sharing a little of everyday life here with you”	“Brazilian living in Poland. Here I show a little of where I spend my time, particularly of life and the attractions here in Poland”	“A citizen of the world currently living in Russia”	“A Brazilian who decided to live in the Middle East and share her experience with the internet... discover what it's like to live in Egypt”
First video posted	September 27th of 2016	March 6th of 2017	February 4th of 2014	March 1st of 2019
Last video posted (*)	June 2nd of 2021	May 30th of 2021	June 2nd of 2021	May 31st of 2021
Total videos (*)	205	490	674	141
Total followers (*)	More than 99,600	More than 96,800	More than 32,600	More than 259,000
Total views (*)	6,891,985	7,377,242	2,002,885	16,003,893
Other social media	Facebook Instagram	Facebook Instagram	Facebook Instagram Blog Twitter BK	Instagram Tik Tok

Source: data from the research.

(*) Data updated on June 2nd of 2021.

All of the channels initially present the aim of collaborating with other people who are seeking international mobility so that they can understand the realities of these countries, primarily since they are off-axis in relation to most chosen countries. However, in addition, there is a movement indicating that the aim of the channels also comes to be their monetization. With that, they cease to be a route for communication with close family and friends. This more intimate and family-orientated contact moves to other media and the channels become more sophisticated, both in their use of equipment and technologies employed and in their content, which is much more focused and influenced by the followers, as well as by the rules of YouTube. Other social media come to be used more intensively.

The interaction with followers provides proximity with the country of origin. In addition, there is an observed need of the channel owners to share their experiences as if they were doing so for close friends in a relationship of complicity that allows for sincerity, the exposure of doubts, of anxieties, of joy, and of conquests. On the other hand, just as not only happy moments are experienced during international mobility, the interaction with other Brazilians following the channels also shows a negative and sometimes perverse side. This primarily occurs when the channel owner takes decisions that do not correspond to what the follower considers suitable. There is a recurrent proliferation of angry comments, cursing, and value judgements that have led

to different reactions on the part of the channel owners, ranging from the suspension of that member, to a private response, or a response on the next video.

These conflicts have caused anxieties and disappointments that are not derived from international mobility, but rather from the relationships with people of the country of origin, stimulating and strengthening the decision to continue abroad and creating doubts about the willingness to proceed with the channel. On the other hand, the possibility of income derived from the monetization of the channel and the provision of services (such as consulting for legal procedures and tourist guide and shopping services) stimulates their continuity and increasingly conditions the content and interactions on social media.

Table 3 presents extracted sections that exemplify what was found in the category **intercultural adaptation process** of the immigrants and self-initiated expatriates who own the channels, as reported in the videos.

Table 3
Stages of the intercultural adaptation process

Stage	Norway and I	Caique Jr	The world is not for amateurs	Brazilian girl in Egypt
Honeymoon	<p>A vlog about the aurora borealis and reunions in Norway</p> <p>“... guys, I’m shaking from head to toes... it’s the most beautiful thing, guys, it’s enormous, it’s covering the whole center of Tromsø.”</p> <p>“... no-one can depart from this life without first seeing the aurora borealis.”</p> <p>“... I’m lucky to live in the aurora borealis capital.” (Norway and I, 2016)</p>	<p>My first month living in Russia</p> <p>“Despite the bad things I knew I’d find here, it’s been really, really cool.” (Caique Jr, 2018d)</p> <p>Hanging out with Brazilians in Vladivostok, Russia</p> <p>“Guys, I’m spacing out with this architecture here, it’s all really cool.” (Caique Jr, 2018g)</p>	<p>Sky Tower: we went up the highest skyscraper in Poland</p> <p>“... the view’s incredible on every side.”</p> <p>“... the colorful little houses, the church, the library.” (The world... 2018c)</p>	<p>My exchange in Egypt, in Damietta</p> <p>“It’s very pretty here, there’s a lot of natural and architectural beauty.”</p> <p>“It’s super interesting here, because we have contact with people all around the world.”</p> <p>“The people are welcoming” (Brazilian girl in Egypt, 2019c)</p>
Culture shock	<p>Things in Brazil I miss living in Norway</p> <p>“... the bakeries, the bakery atmosphere... I miss eating at the bakery.”</p> <p>“... I miss going to the beach and swimming in a swimmable, warm and not freezing sea.” (Norway and I, 2017)</p>	<p>First impressions of the Russian people</p> <p>“Russians are quiet, they’re very reserved, and they have a very strong character.”</p> <p>“On the buses they talk quietly and they don’t like people speaking loudly, even on the bus...”</p>	<p>3 things you should know before moving to Poland</p> <p>“... the food in Poland is different from the food in Brazil.”</p> <p>“... the Polish language is very different from Portuguese and it’s very difficult, it’s very</p>	<p>Supermarket in Egypt</p> <p>“... the most basic food products, here we’ll find rice, that packaging you see is packaging made by the supermarket itself.”</p> <p>“Here the Egyptian passion is tea.”</p> <p>“... one peculiarity of Egypt that whoever comes here always discovers is that we aren’t really used to using toilet paper in the toilet,</p>

	<p>and they give you into trouble for speaking loudly.” (Caique Jr, 2018f)</p> <p>Negative points of living in Russia “. . . “... the people here will serve you as if you weren’t paying.”</p> <p>“Get used to being addressed shouting. Come with your spirit prepared, because it’s really like that.” (Caique Jr, 2018e)</p> <p>Experiences with Russians living in Vladivostok</p> <p>“Russians are very reserved, they need their space, they need their time and it’s no use arriving wanting to make friends, wanting to talk, it won’t happen.”</p> <p>“But at the same time they’re very intense.” (Caique Jr, 2018b)</p> <p>Russians don’t know how to listen: things I hate in Russia (Part 1)</p> <p>“They’re very proud and that pride goes with egocentrism.” (Caique Jr, 2020a)</p>	<p>hard to learn the language.” (The world... 2018e)</p> <p>21 strange habits of the Polish (unlike in Brazil)</p> <p>“... you have to take your shoes off to enter the houses, they have slippers for visitors.”</p> <p>“... even people with smelly feet, or who find it disgusting to put the slippers on, you don’t know how many people have stuck their feet in them or simply don’t want to.”</p> <p>“... there are people who carry their own slippers in their bag for when they go to a friend’s house.”</p> <p>“... drinking tea with breakfast, you order some pork, fries, a normal meal and a tea.”</p> <p>“... buying absurd quantities of potatoes, it’s fifty kilos of potatoes, they fill their basements with potatoes.” (The world... 2018f)</p>	<p>normally you have to use water.”</p> <p>“... it’s a bit hard to find a sanitary towel here.”</p> <p>“Here in Egypt the foods are really spicy, so everyone ends up having natural yoghurt after their main meal.”</p> <p>“... the sausage here in Egypt is not made of pork, it’s made of beef. Egypt is a Muslim country, they don’t consume pork, hamburgers are the same.” (Brazilian girl in Egypt, 2019d)</p>
<p>Adaptation</p> <p>Important tips for whoever wants to leave Brazil</p> <p>“... when you get married to a Norwegian citizen, you have the right to see, to do a Norwegian language course here in Norway... that course gives a little introduction to the culture, it’s free.” (Norway and I, 2020)</p> <p>I got married to a Brazilian and now? And what it’s like to be married to a Norwegian – our first couple answers</p>	<p>My first month living in Russia</p> <p>“Guys, I feel at home in Russia, I’m adapting, I’m really happy.” (Caique Jr, 2018d)</p> <p>Hanging out with Brazilians in Vladivostok, Russia</p> <p>“The city is really pretty, there are some new constructions and other really old ones.” (Caique Jr, 2018g)</p>	<p>21 strange habits of the Polish (unlike in Brazil)</p> <p>“...Polish meals are organized in a way that makes much more sense than those in Brazil” (The world... 2018f)</p> <p>The fruits from my garden in Poland</p> <p>“... the Polish have the habit of, if you have a little land, plant, a fruit tree, food, plant, don’t just leave it as grass... we have a plum tree... it’s an</p>	<p>I visited my Muslim mother-in-law Brazilian in Egypt</p> <p>“... We have to take our shoes off to enter the house.”</p> <p>“... his father built a house for each child on each floor.” (Brazilian girl in Egypt, 2021)</p> <p>How to dress in Egypt</p> <p>“I adapted and I dress respecting both myself and the environment.” (Brazilian girl in Egypt,, 2020)</p>

	<p>“... My adaptation was really easy, I [her, the wife] didn’t have a culture shock, a moment of feeling down. He [the husband] gave me every financial and psychological support to get involved in the culture, it was really easy.” (Norway and I, 2019)</p>	<p>Experiences with Russians in Vladivostok</p> <p>“I’m trying to make friends and I already have some.” (Caique Jr, 2018b)</p> <p>Going to Russian preparatory school Vladivostok, Russia</p> <p>“As I previously said, my course is in Russian, I have to do a one-year preparatory course to learn the language before doing my course.” (Caique Jr, 2018c)</p>	<p>enormous tree that’s full of plums.” (The world... 2018a)</p> <p>Polish supermarkets are completely different from Brazilian ones</p> <p>“... the sausages here are wonderful, they’re not like the Brazilian ones, they’re made of all good ingredients.” (The world... 2018d)</p>	
<p>Mastery</p>	<p>I got married to a Brazilian and now? And what it’s like being married to a Norwegian – our first couple answers</p> <p>“... I’ve already been here in Norway for nine years.” (Norway and I, 2019)</p> <p>Live – chatting with subscribers about life in Norway//with no editing//life abroad</p> <p>“Regarding the series, I’m not surprised what they showed, because all of that is what I experience: Christmas, the things, anyway... the series is very true to everyday life.” (Norway and I, 2021)</p>	<p>I completed 2 years in Russia</p> <p>“I’ve changed a lot. I can say that if I went back to Brazil, I’m no longer the same person.”</p> <p>“I can say that Russia has taught me to say no. Today I can say no much more easily, that’s all thanks to living alongside the people from here.” (Caique Jr, 2020b)</p>	<p>Clothes clearance at a shopping mall in Poland</p> <p>“... with the changes of season, they need to empty the stores.” (The world..., 2018b)</p> <p>Polish supermarkets are completely different from Brazilian ones</p> <p>“... here there are various fruits we don’t have in Brazil.”</p> <p>“... 1.49 a kilo of melon, now the Autumn is beginning, so the price of fruit is going up.”</p> <p>“... look at the trust in people, no-one’s looking, they’re trusting...” (The world..., 2018d)</p>	<p>Egypt: 10 things you need to know before coming</p> <p>“Manners aren’t accepted... here manners are a service, you’ll need to pay for that.”</p> <p>“... If you really need help, first negotiate.”</p> <p>“It’s not hard living in Egypt if you’re vegetarian or vegan.” (Brazilian girl in Egypt, 2019b)</p> <p>What Christmas is like for Christians in Egypt</p> <p>“... they don’t know the true meaning of the date, but we have our Christmas.” (Brazilian girl in Egypt, 2019a)</p>

Source: data from the research.

Despite not using the terms immigrant and self-initiated expatriate, based on the contents of the narratives about her decision to live abroad and based on the literature (Andresen et al., 2014; Araujo et al., 2012; Lima & Domingues, 2021), it was possible to deduce that the owner of the *Norway and I* channel is an immigrant in the country, has lived there for more than 10 years, is

married to a local, has established residency, and has obtained a job in Norway. The other two (*Caique Jr* and *The world is not for amateurs*) can be considered self-initiated expatriates, as they went in search of study opportunities and potentially work, they have no prospect of remaining definitively in the country (for now), and they do not have a local partner. The situation of the owner of the *Brazilian girl in Egypt* channel was more complex. She went to Egypt as a self-initiated expatriate to study, but she met and got married to a local, becoming an immigrant. Due to the uncertainty about whether her husband would be released from military service or not, they decided that she should return to Brazil until the situation was resolved. She remained in Brazil until March of 2021, when she returned to Egypt.

Through their narratives, it was observed that the adaptation process occurred following the stages foreseen in the U-curve theory of cultural adaptation (as reviewed by Black and Mendenhall in 1991), but in a different way and intensity from that reported in the literature on traditional expatriates. Similarities and differences in the adaptation process were also identified between the individuals analyzed. Some factors help to explain these differences: (a) the nature of the international mobility (being an immigrant or self-initiated expatriate); (b) the objectives of the international mobility; (c) the relationship with the cultural distance/proximity of the destination country; (d) the advance adjustment actions; and (e) the channel's role in the process.

For the owner of the *Norway and I* channel, the fact of migrating to the country after already meeting her husband facilitated her adaptation process, as he acted as a bridge between her and the culture, the customs, the services, and the social norms of the country. As her aim was to settle there definitively, her effort to master the language and overcome the differences was important for the softer transition between the honeymoon, culture shock, and cultural adaptation stages. She is currently in the mastery stage, making adjustments in her life and in her interactions with locals. Her relationship with her husband, while she was still in Brazil, served as one of the forms of advance adjustment, as defined by Takeuchi and Chen (2013).

In the case of the owner of the *Caique Jr* channel, the adaptation process was facilitated by the objective of the mobility: "it was my dream to study in Russia" (Caique Jr, 2018a). Based on that, he interviewed Russians living in Brazil and Brazilians living in Russia, and he began to study the language while still in Brazil, characterizing advance adjustment actions (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Takeuchi & Chen, 2013). On the other hand, he did not have local support and did not know anyone in the city he went to live in. Despite the initial allure and prior study, the channel owner suffered with the language, with the cultural differences, and with the harsh climate, leading to various changes of address and of language classes (a pre-requisite for university). For that reason, the culture shock phase was very intense and appears to have lasted longer than that of the other cases analyzed. As already indicated by Jannesari and Sullivan (2021), self-initiated expatriates are more exposed to the stressors of the environment and at the same time have to deal with many aspects of life in another country.

The owner of the channel *The world is not for amateurs* also made an advance adjustment, but it occurred in a more natural and less intentional way, as she is a Polish descendent and had already spent vacations in the country. Her knowledge of the language, despite being basic, was enough to be able to communicate with her relatives that live there and they hosted her when she arrived in Poland. Having relatives in the country was another facilitator in her adaptation process, and they also acted as a bridge between her, the culture, and the local social norms, besides them

already having an emotional bond. The fact that the university receives a lot of foreigners and the language spoken is mostly English made her feel part of the student community, and not an isolated self-initiated expatriate.

The owner of the *Brazilian girl in Egypt* channel did not carry out advance adjustment actions and had no tie to or knowledge about Egyptian culture. As her aim with the international mobility was to seek out a study opportunity, she had the ease of being able to communicate in English most of the time at the university and outside it, since most of the population speaks that language, as did her Egyptian boyfriend at the time, with whom she communicated in English.

Other elements were observed that affected the adaptation process that are inherent to the environment, but are conditioners of social behaviors. That is easily identifiable in colder regions, where people do not bathe at the beaches due to the cold and, therefore, there is no social contact like in countries where that is possible. Another question is the inexistence of certain commercial structures such as bakeries (like those in Brazil), which enable people to eat more informally, unlike in cafés and cake shops.

The **type of adaptation** category was analyzed from the perspective of Black et al. (1991), based on social learning theory. It was observed that the dynamics of the adaptation processes (general, in the work environment, and social interaction) were developed in a continuum and were more or less facilitated according to the moment of the adaptation curve and the identified factors inherent to the adaptation. Moreover, adaptation is highly dependent on mastery of the local language, primarily for the general and interaction environments, since it is in their native language that people express their perceptions about situations and others more sincerely, emotionally, and in more detail.

Specifically, the owners of the *Norway and I* and *The world is not for amateurs* channels had an easier general adaptation and social interaction from the beginning, due to the help of local family members (husband, aunts and uncles), but with different experiences in the work/study environment. While the former reported initial difficulties and a slower adaptation process, for the latter, the fact she was a student of a university that receives a lot of foreigners and where English is spoken most of the time made her feel part of a larger group, with people who are experiencing the same situation and with whom she could share experiences. For the owner of the *Caique Jr* channel, the whole adaptation process was intense and difficult, primarily in the general and work/study environments: ranging from everyday life in Russia dealing with the cultural differences, to difficulties with the teaching system, and primarily due to the language barrier. The adaptation in the interaction with classmates and locals was easier (he lives with foreign and Russian classmates) and that contributed to him overcoming the problems inherent to the other environments. The owner of the *Brazilian girl in Egypt* channel had a less facilitated experience than the other female channel owners analyzed, but a less harsh one than that of *Caique Jr*, as she could initially communicate in English. When she began a relationship with a local, he also acted as a bridge to the general environment and to other interactions beyond the university environment. In the general environment, she felt the culture shock more intensely due to the differences with the family and religious traditions, going on to form part of an Egyptian family.

It is necessary to also consider the moderating impact of the individual aspects in the process, mentioned by Black and Mendenhall (1991), that were identified and common to the four

narratives: the willingness to communicate and establish relationships (Jannesari & Sullivan, 2021; Melo et al., 2021), flexibility for change (or work, or residence), and a certain level of self-efficacy (Black et al., 1991). Also, there was the development of self-awareness that led them to recognize the cultural distance or proximity and to undergo an identity deconstruction and reconstruction process.

Relating to the development of self-awareness, it was verified that having a public channel on YouTube resulted in yet another way of reconsidering and giving sense to the experience lived. Besides experiencing the process of adaptation to the new culture on a day-to-day basis, the YouTubers published that experience on their channels, enabling them to relive the daily situations, share them, given new meanings to them, and consolidate them in a more crystalized way. This highlights what González and Oliveira (2011) had already indicated about international mobility being an experience of transformation and resignification of meanings and identity.

Discussion

It was verified that the trajectory presented by the individuals in international mobility reflects the stages of intercultural adaptation proposed by the U-curve theory. However, specific aspects have to be considered, such as intensity, duration, actions, and reactions, which were different in each one of the stages of the process. It is noteworthy that the advance adjustment actions played a fundamental role and were responsible for minimizing and mitigating possible future difficulties while still in the country of origin. The main advance adjustment actions reported were: already having an affective relationship with people (partner or relatives) from the destination country; seeking information about different aspects with respect to the country; being exposed to the language, whether through convenience or study; and having prior contact with the country through tourist trips, reflecting actions of this nature found in other studies such as those of Black and Mendenhall (1991) and Takeuchi and Chen (2013). With regard to establishing family ties with people from the other country, this is a question that is linked more to one of the motives for voluntary expatriation, which is to seek a better place to live, in different senses, and less to fulfilling the professional perspective, as in traditional expatriation.

Regarding the types of adaptation in relation to the three environments (general, at work, and interaction with locals), it was also possible to identify them in the voluntary mobility of the four individuals. It was observed that more attention was paid to and more efforts were required for adaptation to the general environment and interaction with the locals. Studies such as those of Araujo et al. (2012), Cerdin and Selmer (2014), and Jannesari and Sullivan (2021) already reported that voluntary expatriates are more subject to the stressors of the environment outside work. However, in the cases studied, there was another factor that influenced the adaptation to the general environment and interaction with the locals: the interactions on their YouTube channels. The followers' suggestions about topics for the videos and lives led the expatriates to endeavor to familiarize themselves and understand elements of local life, such as its history, traditions, festivals and commemorations, functioning of the daily routine, transport, and visiting tourist attractions.

Other highlights, linked to the individual aspects of intercultural adaptation, were the willingness to communicate and to relate more closely with others and broaden self-knowledge, as already mentioned in previous studies by Black and Mendenhall (1991) and Jannesari and Sullivan

(2021). As an element not mentioned by the literature, reports of different moments of voluntary mobility mentioned flexibility for changes, whether in the type or place of employment, change of residence between neighborhoods, and moving to other cities or regions of the country. Besides being an effort to adapt and try to make the voluntary mobility work, the aim was also to reconcile a set of factors that contributed to a better life experience in the countries, thinking of different aspects beyond just work and career, as more commonly occurs with traditional expatriates.

It is important to mention that the creation and maintenance of the channels added another element to the intercultural adaptation, generally mobilizing more energy for the individuals' future prospects and projects. The dynamics of that interaction mechanism, the YouTube channel, promote a constant retrieval of memories and resignification of facts and situations. With that, there was reinforcement in the self-awareness process, beyond what other authors have already indicated as relevant for the expatriation experience (González & Oliveira, 2011). This is enhanced with the entry of new members in the channel, given that it is common for questions to be asked about topics addressed, provoking situations in which stories and explanations already given are repeated and, consequently, bringing about strong emotions, the retrieval of perceptions that made sense before and no longer do today, and new perspectives in relation to the situations. This constant exposure raises the number of catharses and moments of elaboration, since the repetition raises the level of understanding of the emotions, as well as anchoring certain experiences and improving the capacity to evaluate situations and emotions.

It was mentioned by the channel owners that, despite having had some bad experiences, they perceive the online space as an environment in which there are people interested in their experience, concerned with their wellbeing, and who give emotional support, creating another dimension in the intercultural adaptation process and meaning for voluntary mobility.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyze the intercultural adaptation process of Brazilian immigrants and self-initiated expatriates in countries considered to be "off-axis," based on their reports and interactions on their YouTube channels. With that intention, we verified the application and reach of the theories of intercultural adaptation, taking into account the role of the channels as an environment of interaction and influence on the paths of voluntary mobility.

Based on an analysis of the research findings, we conclude that the trajectory presented by the individuals in the other countries reflects the stages of intercultural adaptation proposed by the U-curve theory, the types of adaptation in the different environments, and the presence of individual characteristics and behaviors, showing the reach of those theories for analyzing experiences of voluntary international mobility. However, it is necessary to consider in each one of them specific aspects such as the types of advance adjustment actions that mean the stages of the U-curve begin in the country of origin, affecting their intensity and duration, as well as the focus being greater on attention to elements of the general environment and interaction with local inhabitants, reinforced by the demand and suggestions of the followers of the YouTube channels. Individual aspects such as flexibility to change and self-knowledge were shown to be relevant for these experiences of voluntary mobility and were driven by the adaptation to different environments and by the dynamics of interaction with the channels.

As a theoretical contribution, it is understood that to use the theories on intercultural adaptation with the aim of analyzing voluntary mobility it is necessary to consider some specific aspects of this type of mobility, such as the different advance adjustment actions, the weight and importance of each adaptation environment according to the voluntary expatriate's objective with the experience, and behavior that is more flexible to change than that observed in organizational expatriates. In addition, it is important to consider how much that experience is shared and exposed on different media, such as online social media, and their respective impact on the choices and (re)creation of meanings.

The use of narrative research regarding a set of videos published on channels on the YouTube platform exemplifies and reinforces the use of this type of material as yet another possibility for accessing individuals' trajectories, their reflections, and resignifications of experiences, mediated by the dialogue with the audience, which, in this case, are the followers of the channels. Watching the videos and analyzing the interactions on the channels enabled an immersion in various contexts shared by the individuals and an understanding of the importance of their experiences.

One of the limitations of this study was not having obtained a response from the channel owners in order to confirm the information and interpretations, reinforcing the analysis from the dialectic perspective recommended in narrative research. In addition, no other techniques were used to analyze the videos that could complement the information and understanding of the narratives in more depth, such as analysis of moving images and of the elements of the context, for example.

As future studies, we suggest widening the research, by including other channels of Brazilians and different social media such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Complementarily, we recommend using other data collection sources, such as interviews and focus groups, as well as different techniques for evaluating the information that can contribute to the narrative analysis, as was carried out in this study. Investigating other questions about life in another country, based on different theoretical frameworks, in order to generate distinct panoramas and perspectives regarding those experiences, is also a recommended methodological approach, as well as analyzing the interactions between the channel owner and their followers at each one of the moments of the intercultural adaptation process.

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