

The Role of Diaspora Policies, Ethnic Capital and International Education in Brazilian Migration

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SUMMARY

This article delves into the experiences of Brazilian students studying abroad, examining the factors that drive and hinder this type of international migration. Our analysis emphasises the importance of exchange programmes, transnational connections, and diasporic practices. We contend that the desire to emigrate is fostered by relative underdevelopment, but that international and local factors present structural barriers to realising those aspirations. As a result, individuals must seek alternative avenues, with educational exchanges and student mobility programmes emerging as critical resources. We also explore how ethnic and human capital can facilitate mobility for many Brazilians, enabling them to overcome structural barriers that often require them to navigate multiple nation-states. This study thus contributes to the conversation on the connections between ethnic and human capital on the one hand and multinational, stepwise migrations on the other.

KEY WORDS: Brazil, ethnic capital, international students, multiple stepwise migrations

INTRODUCTION

What makes the prospects and experiences of international migration pursued through studying different for Brazilians? This is one of the questions this article aims to shine a light on. Nowadays, one can observe that a vast number of Brazilians live and study outside Brazil. According to the Brazilian Educational & Language Travel Association, 365,000 Brazilians took part in exchange study programmes in 2019¹ as a form of student mobil-

¹ See Belta (2019).

ity. Still, being able to study, migrate internationally, and continue to live abroad is a privilege that is not equally distributed among all people of the world, and in fact, not even within each nation.

This article explores several factors that influence Brazilians' ability to be internationally mobile, as well as their subsequent studies and life abroad. It focuses on the nexus of individuals' transnational practices, ethnic capital and ties (i.e., those operating across national borders), and their skillset or human capital, in which formal education stands out as a crucial composing factor in its own right (Carling, 2002, 2008). This brings us to the two questions discussed in this article, namely (i) what roles transnationalism, diaspora policies and international education play in the lives of potential and actual migrants; and (ii) what types of interactions and capital conversions may be identified in the transnational trajectories of Brazilian international students.

This article is divided into three interrelated parts. The first part presents the international and national frameworks that structure the mobility of Brazilian students. Furthermore, it discusses key characteristics of Brazil that relate to development and international mobility, as well as other macro factors, such as states' policies and attitudes around migration, education and student mobility. The second part delves into transnationalism and diaspora, discussing how they can impact international mobility, both for students and in general. The third part presents several illustrative cases of "stepwise migrations" and the interrelated conversion of "ethnic capital" (Kim, 2019). Here, the concept of ethnic capital refers to "the ways in which ethnicity functions as a powerful migration-facilitating resource, distinct from human and social capital" (Kim, 2019: 361). In line with previous studies on ethnic capital, the article argues that many Brazilian international students convert their European ancestry into migration capital that enables them to resettle and study abroad. However, these conversions of "ancestry into opportunities" (Harpaz, 2015) do not necessarily result in permanent resettlement in the countries of their ancestors (Kim, 2019; Mateos and Durand, 2012; Paul, 2011). The Brazilians we selected and interviewed for this research often engaged in complicated stepwise migration, where migration as an international student seemed to be just one among several phases in their migrant trajectories.

RELEVANT PERSPECTIVES AND CONCEPTS

This article explores experiences of migration and international student mobility in relation to three interconnected concepts: ethnic capital, transnationalism and diaspora. By transnationalism we mean various non-exceptional ties, behaviours, activities and practices that link institutions, individuals or groups of people across the borders of nation-states (Tedeschi, Vorobeva and Jauhiainen, 2022). Examples of manifestations of transnationalism can appear in economic, psychological, social, political and other terms represented by circulation of information, skills, practices, remittances, investments and various forms of social and political organisations that link migrants and non-migrants in sending and receiving countries. Transnationalism, thus, has the potential to modify people's citizenship, identity, aspirations, and everyday life decisions (Levitt, 1998; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller, 2003; Vertovec, 2009; Tedeschi, Vorobeva and Jauhiainen, 2022).

Theories and concepts of multinational migration are closely related to the notion of transnationalism. Researchers have tried to conceptualise multinational migration using various terms, such as repeated, secondary, serial, onward and stepwise migration (Valenta, 2022a). As will be demonstrated below, the most relevant term for this article is stepwise migration, which suggests that migrants engage in multistage trajectories where each migratory step is meant to result in better living conditions, but also requires more resources and capital. Migrants who are successful in upward stepwise migration have acquired migration capital during their intermediary migratory steps. They will thus move from country to country before they manage to migrate to one of the most desirable countries (Paul, 2011; Valenta, 2022a).

When it comes to the concept of diaspora, its precise definition is still a somewhat contentious subject. Some authors argue that it should exclusively denote an ethnic group that has been driven from its (imagined or real) homeland in a traumatic manner, and therefore maintains mutual connections based on memory or longing for such a place. This stricter definition is often accompanied by the notion that the ethnic group in question suffers a suppression of its identity by the authorities of the host state where it now resides (Faist, 2000, 2010; Reis, 2004). On the other hand, diaspora can alternatively be understood as a polycentric group of individuals whose ties, kept between different nuclei and the homeland, derive principally from a shared affiliation, which is often of an ethnic nature, underpinned by a shared nationality, various rights and state policies – in which the homeland

still tends to play a pivotal role, in one way or another (Reis, 2004; Valenta and Ramet, 2011; Kim 2019; Cohen, 2022). In this paper, we base our discussion on this relatively more comprehensive definition of diaspora. As will soon become clear, diaspora policies are of major relevance to our analysis. In particular, the analysis focuses on those policies that award members of diasporic communities with certain rights and ethnic capital. Accordingly, special attention will be paid to the conversion of ethnic capital into migration capital, international student mobility and human capital (Kim 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on several sources of data. The first is a desk study of relevant previous research, newspaper articles and policy documents on international and national trends, as well as policy developments in the fields of international education and migrations. Here, special attention was paid to the Brazilian diaspora and the relevant developments in Brazilian education policy. Based on these sources, the first two parts of the article provide a systematic overview of coercive and enabling structures relevant to the above research questions.

The second source of data are twenty semi-structured interviews with Brazilian nationals who have lived and studied in a variety of foreign countries. Interviews included informants representing people in some of the largest recipient states, in numerical terms, for the global Brazilian diaspora, such as the USA, Japan, and European countries like Portugal, Italy, Norway and Germany, among others. We selected those people to be able to explore, compare and illustrate practices and lived experiences in such key locations for this nationality.

All interviews in our study were performed in two stages. The first ten interviews were conducted between November 2018 and March 2019, and the last ten between January and March 2022. In the first stage, we focused primarily on Brazilian student exchange programmes and ethnic capital conversions. The last ten interviews, conducted in 2022, focused primarily on the informants' experiences with multiple migrations.

We have chosen to present four of these cases in more detail in the latter part of this article. They were chosen because of their greater relevance to the nexus of education, mobility and ethnic capital, as well as their power to illustrate relevant migratory trajectories and strategies, for example, step-wise migration (Paul, 2011; Kim, 2019). The selected cases featured in the ar-

ticle include Italian Brazilians. They represent both one of the largest ethnic groups² in Brazil and one whose characteristics enable many of its members to use ethnic capital in their strategies to be internationally mobile.

Data analysis already started at an early stage of data gathering when the first interviews were being conducted and transcribed – and continued through the coding process. Several categories pertinent to the article emerged during the initial coding, such as “context of exit” in Brazil and “context of reception” in various host countries. Later, during the theoretical coding, more specific categories (such as “ethnic capital”, “diaspora policies” and the concept of “stepwise migration”) were linked with the initial categories. At that stage, we primarily focused on narratives that featured strategies for mobility, the pursuit of formal education, and examples of various transnational practices.

When it comes to positionality, since one of the authors is of the same nationality as the interviewees while the other is not, we could count on both an insider’s and an outsider’s viewpoints in handling the research in question. This combination offered advantages, such as facilitating communication with informants, while at the same time, the presence of another perspective could counterbalance potential insider biases during data analysis.

INTERNATIONAL FRAMES: IMMIGRATION INTERFACES AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

States not only help shape migratory currents indirectly through policies of nationality; they also design legislation with the aim of explicitly dictating the procedures for legal entry and stay within their national borders. In this sense, immigration policies and discourses about them – particularly, but not exclusively by leaders and policymakers – contribute to the construction of “immigration interfaces”. These are defined as a “structural frame of opportunities and barriers within which potential migrants can move” (Carling, 2002: 26) and vary for individual countries and contexts. It is important to consider that the immigration interfaces of Global North countries generally remain more restrictive to citizens from the Global South. That situation, moreover, appears to be on a worsening trajectory (Carling, 2002; Valenta, 2022b). A relevant aspect of this trend is represented by the negative tone prevailing in the public discourse on immigration in the United States and Europe (Andersen and Bergmann, 2019). This, in turn, is related

² The term *ethnic group* in this paper denotes a group of people who share Italian ancestry.

to the rise of neo-nationalist ideologies that focus a lot of attention on the topic, while presenting it as a pressing threat, thus pushing for increased restrictive measures against immigration (Eger and Valdez, 2014, 2019).³ For potential Brazilian international students, mobility-restrictive policies from the core economies make a lot of difference since they are the most sought-after places to study, not least because the best-ranked universities are disproportionately concentrated in those countries (ShanghaiRanking, 2019; THE, 2019).

It is important to acknowledge that the most popular destinations for international students are in the Global North, in countries that are among the wealthiest and most developed in the world. These countries attract not only international students, but all categories of migrants from the Global South who hope that migrating to these countries will improve their life circumstances. In view of the difficult conditions that people in Brazil recurrently face, the great uncertainty that seems to follow the country perennially and the continuous institutional instability, many Brazilian students abroad consider migrating permanently or simply attempting to secure the continuation of their stay overseas. A study conducted by an employment and career training company (Cia de Talentos), as well as the Brazilian student association BRASA, found that 18% do not wish to return to their home country and 34% are unsure if they are going to return (Moraes, 2018).

Furthermore, having to return home after a period of study does not mean the student would not emigrate again if the opportunity arose. The Brazilian migrants in our study have indicated such trajectories and attempts to cope with the above-mentioned restrictions imposed on international mobility. As is explained below, they also stated that attempts to obtain human capital and social mobility through international education were interconnected with aspirations to resettle permanently outside Brazil.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

We now turn to presenting the circumstances in Brazil as of late, and in particular the challenges that limit Brazilian students or prospective students considering acquiring a formal education in another country. The argument

³ Among such mobility-restrictive policies, one can cite a decision that was set to affect citizens of fifteen Latin American countries, including Brazil, which posits the implementation of additional bureaucracy for their entry into the Schengen area as of 2021, namely by having to apply beforehand in the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) (BBC, 2019).

is that there are significant macro-level limitations for Brazilian citizens that foster mobility aspirations yet at the same time induce student immobility. However, in order to understand the specifics of the situation faced by Brazilian nationals in general, particularly those pursuing education, one ought to be familiar with the current macroeconomic and political context in the country and the main occurrences that have led to this point.

Brazil ended a 21-year period of military dictatorship in 1985 and proclaimed a new democratic constitution in 1988. Then it finally put an end to more than a decade of hyperinflation in 1994, when the currency the country uses to this day was created (Baer, 2001; Giambiagi et al., 2011). The period from 1995 to 2013 was marked by relative political stability, in which the two main parties took turns leading the federal government. This period also coincided with economic growth and important advancements in the quality of life in Brazil, including some level of success in battling extreme socio-economic inequalities, which nevertheless remained a marked societal trait in Brazil (Assouad, Chancel and Morgan, 2018).

Many social programmes were enacted, implemented, or otherwise consolidated during these years. Perhaps the most symbolic example is the *Bolsa Família*, an initiative that became internationally renowned, consisting of transferring funds directly into the hands of the poorest families, provided that parents sent their children to school. This programme was found to achieve positive results, which, however, were not homogeneous, but disparate among different groups of individuals (De Brauw et al., 2015). Another educational area the Brazilian government of the period wanted to have an impact on was boosting the internationalisation of higher education, a goal in line with the tendency present elsewhere in Latin America (De Wit et al., 2005). Thus, as part of that main goal, the programme *Ciência sem Fronteiras* (CsF, Science without Borders) was established in 2011, during the government of Dilma Rousseff from the Workers' Party (PT), aiming to foster student mobility by means of publicly funded scholarships. This programme represents the most ambitious and celebrated effort by the Brazilian state to try and directly impact mobility opportunities for students (Aveiro, 2014).

The political situation in Brazil started changing rapidly in 2013 in what became known locally as *jornadas de junho* (meaning June journeys), the largest public protests to take place across the country in almost two decades. In that less favourable political and economic context, the CsF programme also became the target of many critics for its lack of accountability and for

symbolising excessive public spending in the higher education sector to the detriment of the primary phases of schooling, which were still underfunded in Brazil and achieved less-than-ideal results. In this context, the topic of English became a source of major criticism since most students lacked enough knowledge of the language to be able to enjoy the opportunity to study abroad. The government responded by establishing the *Inglês sem Fronteiras* programme (IsF, or English without Borders) in order to train tertiary students in this foreign language and thus advance internationalisation (Archanjo, 2015).

The issue of mastering English symbolises a fundamental impediment to greater mobility prospects from the point of view of Brazilian students, as well as to the successful and solid internationalisation of Brazilian education. This policy aimed to improve access to this educational level, especially in certain, less-developed regions of the country, where it was particularly lacking. However, many saw it as one of the factors that aggravated the fiscal situation of the country and contributed to its economic hardships (Nascimento and Verhine, 2017).⁴ After suffering various restrictions, CsF's publicly funded exchange scholarships were terminated for first-degree (i.e., bachelor's) graduate students in 2016, causing a dramatic drop in the number of exchange schemes undertaken by this demographic group that year (Toledo, Palhares and Strazzer, 2017). In 2019, Brazilian tertiary education and scientific production deteriorated further when the authorities announced that the Ministry of Education would provide no further grants. Therefore, only projects financed by the agency that were already in progress were allowed to continue (Ferraro, 2019; Saldaña, 2019).

ETHNIC CAPITAL, MOBILITY OPPORTUNITIES AND ASPIRATIONS

We have hitherto focused on the obstacles and diminishing possibilities for international mobility. Yet, within the discussed constraining forces, it is possible to identify various enabling transnational structures and mobility opportunities. In order to comprehend Brazilian emigration today and the implications that education and transnationalism have for mobility, it is necessary to be aware of several key points that make up the country's profile and account for relevant aspects of its formative process and recent

⁴ Incidentally, these shortcomings experienced by CsF correlate to what the PT administration denounced as a policy of hurriedly and poorly planned expansion of public institutions of tertiary education.

history. The major defining traits that will be highlighted are, firstly, ethnic diversity and transnational communities, which are both products and drivers of international migration, and secondly, the developmental conditions and structural challenges the country has faced.

In migration and diaspora studies, Brazil is a case that evidences path dependence and lasting effects of migratory movements as fundamental features for the future of human mobility in the form of flows, sometimes called “return migration” (Tsuda, 2003). Simply put, the historical events that have shaped Brazil’s population in the twenty-first century have also made the country an especially relevant case for studying the juxtaposition of transnationalism and international mobility. Indeed, the first key characteristic to highlight is that Brazil can be defined as one of the quintessential examples of a *nation of immigrants*, along with other places in the Americas and Australasia. This terminology denotes countries in which a large proportion of the population can at least partially trace their ancestry to other nations. In other words, these are places where the autochthonous or indigenous inhabitants were largely replaced ethnically after the advent of colonialism. However, unlike the United States or Australia, Brazil is not situated at the core of the world economy but is instead part of the Global South. More precisely, Brazil is a middle-income country, which means that despite being the largest economy in Latin America, at the international level, it ranks significantly lower in human development indicators than Global North countries (The World Bank Group, 2019; UNDP, 2018). Furthermore, during the past half-century or so, Brazil has lagged behind other Global South nations in advancing important indicators of development, most notably compared to countries from East Asia, but also fellow Latin American countries (Ito, 2001; OECD, 2016).

Development has been defined as “the process of expanding the substantive freedoms that people enjoy” (Sen, 1999). This definition suggests that the level of development of each country is an important criterion when analysing mobility and education – especially in relative terms – since it represents various sets of structural incentives and challenges to which states and their populations are subject. These, in turn, influence people’s spatial aspirations and capabilities, which ultimately determine migratory flows (Carling, 2014).

Indeed, the lack of development in Brazil and perceived opportunities for social mobility elsewhere were important motivational factors for international students in our study. The general impression is that the motivation

to study abroad was in most cases combined with the motivation to migrate to more developed countries. Yet, they also acknowledged that Brazilian citizens have few opportunities to study and resettle permanently in preferred developed countries. In this context, their accounts indicate the relative importance of ancestry that may be used as “ethnic capital” to enable migration. Yet, we need to stress that such ethnic capital conversions are not unique to Brazil. The conversion of ethnic capital into international mobility and human development have enabled sizable migration from several countries in Latin America and elsewhere (Harpaz, 2015; Kim, 2019). As Kim points out:

This type of migration is driven largely by state policies that categorically grant coethnics abroad preferential treatment in immigration and citizenship. Examples include the migration of diasporic Jews to Israel, ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union to Germany, second generation Japanese emigrants from Brazil or Peru to Japan, and the ethnic Korean minority from China to South Korea. Some states in Southeastern Europe grant citizenship to coethnics abroad even without requiring immigration or renunciation of extant citizenship (Kim, 2019: 360).

A consequence of being a *nation of immigrants* is that Brazil hosts sizable communities of descendants from several nations. They include many from Portugal – as expected given the former relations of political dominion – but also from Italy, Germany, Japan and the Levant (Syrians and Lebanese), along with those who were forcibly brought as slaves from various regions of Africa (Lesser, 2013). The presence of diasporic communities matters in Brazil because many Brazilian citizens today are entitled to a second citizenship – or at least permanent residence – in one or more of these countries precisely because of the migratory flows from the past. For example, Italy and Portugal both allow naturalisation and acquisition of dual citizenship to members of their diasporas on familial grounds, or *jus sanguinis* principle. The rise in demand for these citizenships by Brazilian nationals with ethnic ancestral ties to these and other nations in Europe and elsewhere has been remarkable (ANSA, 2019a), and has consolidated them into a valuable commodity.

DIASPORAS AND STUDENT MOBILITY

Brazilian citizens who aspire to move abroad to study or for any other purpose, be it temporarily or as a first step in a larger migratory journey, often have to overcome a number of hurdles first. To succeed, they may employ

various strategies and resources, transnational ties and practices being a crucial example (Kim, 2019; Mateos and Durand, 2012; Paul, 2017). Thus, this section aims to delve deeper into how ethnic capital and diasporic ties enable international mobility for Brazilians.

As already noted, the historical processes that formed the population of Brazil in its diversity have also left a perceptible mark on the disposition of the contemporary Brazilian diaspora. In studying diasporas, one must acknowledge three main actors since they are the most central figures with the power to dictate the dynamics of shaping the diaspora in question. Specifically, these are the home country, the various nuclei that together form the overall diaspora, and thirdly, the host countries (Shuval, 2000). In this sense, factors like international agreements between states, governmental or ideological shifts as well as the robustness of contact between co-ethnics across various locales are all potentially relevant. According to the latest published estimates compiled by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all the country's nationals living outside its borders today amount to approximately three million (MRE, 2016). The global Brazilian diaspora is unevenly distributed, with almost half located in the United States. North America is thus the world region to host the largest number of Brazilian emigrants, followed by Europe, which hosts one-fourth of the total diaspora (MRE, 2016).

This large-scale succinct description makes clear that central economies are well represented as destinations, which means that patterns of emigration from Brazil generally fit the trends of south-north migratory flows. However, looking a little closer, one can see clear signs of the role of past ties in shaping the distribution of the Brazilian diaspora today. A first good example is Japan since Brazil has the largest overseas Japanese community, formed by thousands of Japanese who migrated there during the twentieth century (Lesser, 2013: 4). This island nation, in turn, is home to 88.6% of the country's residents in Asia (excluding the Middle East), hosting over 170 thousand Brazilians. However, relatively few Brazilians of Japanese origin study in Japan, which may be partly explained by the language barrier, since mastering Japanese presents a real challenge to them.⁵

A second illustrative case is Portugal, which shares long-lasting cultural traits with Brazil due to centuries of colonialism. Despite not being among

⁵ According to Ishikawa, the majority of Brazilians in Japan fail to complete high school. Those who enter a Japanese university are a rare exception considered to be exceptionally successful (Ishikawa, 2014).

the richest European nations, Portugal is the fifth largest recipient of Brazilians abroad – with 116,271 people in 2016⁶ – ahead of Germany or France, for example (MRE, 2016). Yet, Portugal is especially fitting for a discussion on student migration of Brazilians, since the two countries have put forward a series of initiatives in the recent past to facilitate student mobility for tertiary education institutions. In 2014, Portuguese legislation implemented a statute on international students in the country, making it easier for Portuguese institutions to accept the Brazilian National Secondary School Exam (ENEM), and consequently for Brazilians to access higher education in Portugal. In addition to bachelor's studies, a great number of Brazilians seek to enrol in postgraduate studies, meaning master's degrees and doctorates, in Portugal (Ferraro, 2019). Indeed, Brazilian students are by far the most common foreign nationals in Portugal, totalling 13.2 thousand in the academic year 2018/2019 – counting all levels of tertiary education – which is nearly the same number as the next five nationalities combined, according to data from the Portuguese state agency DGEEC (Silva, 2019).⁷ It appears safe to assume that the linguistic ties shared between Brazil and Portugal are an encouraging factor for student migration to the European country.

The third case is Italy, which was historically one of the top countries of origin for immigrants to Brazil, including when the inflow peaked (Levy, 1974). Because of this, Italian Brazilians constitute one of the largest ethnic groups in the country. Although it is intrinsically impracticable to determine their number with certainty, estimates have ranged from 22 to around 30 million individuals (Pelusi, 2013; Schwartzman, 1999). Therefore, the number of people entitled to Italian citizenship on ancestry grounds is also very large, so much so that the continuous increase in the demand for recognition of Italian citizenship in Brazil has led to queues with waiting times of up to twelve years. In the Italian consulate in São Paulo, for instance, there was a reported increase of 45% in finalised procedures in 2018 compared to the year before, when it issued 17 thousand passports (ANSA, 2019b). In this sense, it is not surprising that the presence of Brazilian students in Italy nowadays has been steadily rising to become one of

⁶ According to the Portuguese Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF), in 2020, the number of Brazilian immigrants in a legal situation was 183,993 (Miranda, 2021).

⁷ However, the increased enrolment of Brazilian students in Portugal and the changes that allowed it were pointed out in the justification behind the most infamous of the xenophobic acts against Brazilians in the country, in which students at the University of Lisbon were offered stones to be thrown at their Brazilian colleagues (Orenstein, Fraga and Cor-salette, 2019). Apart from this case, unusually higher discrimination suffered by Brazilians in Portugal has been documented elsewhere in the literature (Siqueira et al., 2017).

the largest in that country.⁸ In January 2020, the total number of Brazilians living in Italy amounted to 51,790 according to the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT, 2021).

THE NEXUS OF STEPWISE MIGRATION, ETHNIC CAPITAL AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

Millions of Brazilians live in other states, with obstacles and support in various forms and degrees. Still, the question of international mobility/immobility is enormously delicate for many. The unequal restriction of freedom of movement across countries with regard to nationality negatively affects the mobility capacity of citizens of poorer countries. As already noted, in this context, many Brazilians who aspire to move abroad use various strategies. Here, important facilitators of migration are the aforementioned scholarships and state-sponsored programmes aimed at advancing internationalisation and student mobility. Other facilitators of migration include transnational connections and ethnic capital. These two are often used in combination to increase one's mobility and resettlement opportunities.

Brazil's multinational formation and the ensuing cross-generational and transnational ties sustained by members of ethnic communities in the country become an asset available to these citizens. These resources, however, remain categorically constrained, which means that although such ties have a real impact in increasing mobility capital, they are available only insofar as one can attest to a direct filial line from a country that applies the relevant legislation. The value of such a connection is especially high if we take into account the opening of opportunities that a second citizenship in a European Union/Schengen country provides. More precisely, European ancestry not only makes it much easier for its holder to seek education or work in the country issuing the document (e.g., Italy or Portugal) as well as other European countries that allow common freedom of movement, but also positively reduces the costs of travelling or moving to third countries on other continents, such as North America or Oceania, for both long- and short-term stays.

Indeed, several studies from countries other than Brazil also indicate that second citizenship does not necessarily result in migration and resettlement in the countries of second citizenship. Ancestral ties are in many cases rath-

⁸ For example, Brazil jumped from eighth place in 2006 to fourth place in 2009 in the ranking of countries receiving an Italian National Visa for educational reasons, where it remained until 2011, according to data produced by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMN, 2013).

er used as a stepping-stone to third countries. As an overview of relevant research, Kim points out:

Spanish consulates in Argentina, for example, reportedly received more than 400,000 requests for Spanish passports from those claiming Spanish origin after Argentina's financial crisis in 2001... Over 855,000 Latin Americans acquired Italian citizenship between 1998 and 2008, without ever having resided in Italy... 3.5 million non-EU citizens obtained a second citizenship from an EU country based on co-ethnicity... The prospect of stepwise migration to third countries is key to understanding such an enthusiastic reaction (Kim, 2019: 361).

We have also come across several cases in our research that illustrate the ways in which Brazilians of Italian ancestry used their ethnic capital as an opportunity to study abroad and migrate. Furthermore, their stories imply that international studies are used as one among many stages of multiple, stepwise migrations with the goal of permanent resettlement in preferred destination countries. In some cases, international student migration and international student programmes were used as initial steps, while in others, international education and ethnic capital were obtained in later phases of stepwise migration in order to improve their life circumstances in receiving countries. Some of these experiences are illustrated below.

The first case that depicts the power of being mobile in a third country with a second citizenship is a Brazilian woman who had been living in Australia for three years by the time we interviewed her. At first, she moved to Australia to study English for six months. However, after three months, she was able to land a job in her area of expertise, and has since finished her master's degree in Australia. She spoke about her dream of moving overseas and that, at first, she had aspired to move to Canada. This wish was a major driving force for her to seek recognition of her Italian citizenship. She was encouraged to do so by her cousin, who was the first in the family to acquire a second citizenship and has been living in Italy ever since.

I have always wanted to live abroad, since I have known myself, I have always wanted to live abroad. So, I began to go after my Italian citizenship, and it took 9 years just to be called [by the consulate]... And, when I decided to come to Australia, they asked me which passport I was going to use. So, coming here would be much easier being a European than a Brazilian. (Participant living in Australia)

This research participant told us that being able to use Italian documents was important for her to pursue her migration ambitions since Australian

work visa immigration laws take nationality into account, as well as other information, such as the individual's profession. The second case that illustrates the nexus of stepwise migration, ethnic capital and international educational mobility was described by a woman from southern Brazil, who migrated to Italy and then to Germany. She lived in Germany for eight years with her husband, then moved back to her homeland for five and a half years. At the time of our contact, she was already preparing to return to Europe to study.

The couple moved to Italy soon after marrying in order to obtain that country's citizenship documents on ancestry grounds before relocating to Europe's largest economy. Their stated goal in targeting Germany as a destination was the financial opportunities offered there. Although this interviewee had previous experience working in the health sector, due to her lack of a higher education diploma, her opportunities were limited to other less-skilled jobs. Her idea of going to study in Italy was then only feasible because of her transnational ties to that country, based on her family having migrated from there to Brazil in the past, coupled with her Italian language skills she had while living in Europe. As she puts it:

And German, I know how to speak it, but I did not go to school, so I am semi-illiterate [in that language], I can read and write something, but very little. It is not enough for me to enter a university. But I already know Italian, so... by the ease of the language, we opted [for] Italy for me to go to college and then I do not know, we will see. Perhaps we get used to it and stay in Italy. But at first, we are going to go to Italy. (Participant who lived in Germany)

Another similar case is represented by a Brazilian woman who migrated to Peru, Sweden (twice) and finally, to Norway. All these stays overseas had been primarily motivated and enabled by the prospect of studying, either as an exchange student or by completing a full degree. When asked about what enabled her to move, she highlighted some economic factors. Her statements also corroborated the importance of external funding as well as relative purchasing power for student mobility:

After Peru and Sweden, it was... in Sweden I had a scholarship. In Peru it was free. I mean, you only needed to pay for the tickets, and as it is cheaper for us Brazilians... It is cheaper than living in Brazil. That made it easier. (Participant living in Norway)

In line with several other cases encountered in our study, this informant engaged in stepwise migrations, changing several countries before migrat-

ing to Norway. According to perspectives on stepwise migration, migrants would first enter countries that do not require substantial resources. Later, they would move to countries that offer better living conditions, where they will try to settle permanently. However, this usually requires more resources. In this case, the resource was the migrant's ethnic ancestry. When she was about to finish her master's degree in Norway, the validity period of her residence permit as a student became a source of concern since she intended to continue living in the country. However, as she was entitled to obtain Italian citizenship under the *jus sanguinis* principle, she planned to invest some time and resources in securing Italian documents to remain in Norway.

The fourth and final case we have chosen to present in this article diverges from the others. It reminds us that not all international students engage in stepwise migration that leads to permanent resettlement in the Global North. This informant, contrary to the other interviewees, nurtured unusually close ties with the local Italian community, as well as the country's culture, from a very young age. He also learned Italian while still living in Brazil. On that topic, he stated:

But I have had an advantage, you see. I had a lot of old Italian folks in my neighbourhood with whom I talked. And I spoke, I would go there and talk, and they loved it, because most kids did not care at all, right. So, when they could speak Italian, they liked it, they would even come after me (...) So then I had the opportunity to practise. For nowadays in the same neighbourhood today, I could not name anybody there who is able to speak Italian fluently, because everybody, all, absolutely everyone died. Precisely because at that time I met the last wave of immigrants who really spoke Italian. (Participant who lived in Italy)

In 1999, already having obtained dual citizenship, this informant moved to a town in northern Italy to study for a bachelor's degree. However, at that time, he was only able to stay abroad for a year and has not lived in Italy again ever since. Nonetheless, he has actively used his Italian ethnic capital and transnational ties in Brazil. *Inter alia*, he has been heavily involved in the Italian community in Brazil and even ran for the Italian parliament as a representative of the Italian Diaspora in Brazil.⁹

⁹ According to Italian legislation (Minniti and Alfano, 2017), the nation's citizens residing abroad enjoy the right to direct representation in both houses of the country's legislative body. I.e., members of the Italian diaspora elect their own senators and deputies to the parliament. This worldwide overseas constituency consists of four electoral zones, which are granted a proportional number of seats according to how many Italian citizens are registered as residents in each of them.

The presented cases depict different migration trajectories. Yet, they all illustrate how transnational practices, exchange study programmes, ethnic capital and connections coexist with the aspiration to migrate, regardless of which comes first. They also show that trajectories of geographic and social mobility are intertwined. Furthermore, they all seem to corroborate the idea that ethnic capital, transnational ties, and migration aspirations and opportunities tend to reinforce each other. Moreover, they are frequently intertwined with study and social mobility aspirations, and thus form many people's toolkits for pursuing their goals. An additional and final characteristic these cases show is the fragmented nature of migratory journeys, which are oftentimes built one step at a time and filled with uncertainty.

CONCLUSION

This article focused on the international mobility of Brazilian students in order to understand the specific prospects and experiences of this group when it comes to international and local obstacles to student mobility, their aspiration and the actual realisation of the desire to study and resettle abroad. It has also discussed the role of transnational ties, ethnic capital and education for migration journeys. Several factors are considered to have a significant impact on student mobility, with three appearing as particularly salient. First, there are the country's socio-economic conditions. Brazil is ranked as a middle-income country and grouped together with other underprivileged nations of the Global South, with all the ensuing institutional and structural drawbacks facing its citizens in terms of reducing their mobility capacity. Second, Brazil has for years had ambitious publicly funded student programmes and scholarships that facilitate international student mobility. These programmes have shrunk in recent years, but a significant number of Brazilians still participate in them.

Relative underdevelopment fosters aspirations to emigrate among students and the general population, while international and local factors erect structural barriers to the realisation of those aspirations. Therefore, people are obligated to seek alternative paths, in which educational exchange and student mobility programmes emerge as crucial resources used to resettle in their preferred countries. Brazilians form a profoundly multi-ethnic nationality and this, as the third salient characteristic, means that members of some ethnic groups in Brazil can make use of cross-generational transnational ties with other countries to increase educational opportunities and in-

ternational mobility. It is worth noting that this does not necessarily imply a desire to resettle in the countries of their ancestors. Rather, these individuals utilise their ethnic capital and international studies to facilitate stepwise migration to other countries.

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Uloga politike o dijaspori, etničkog kapitala i međunarodnog obrazovanja u brazilskim migracijama

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SAŽETAK

U članku se istražuju iskustva brazilskih studenata koji studiraju u inozemstvu, analizirajući faktore koji potiču i ometaju tu vrstu međunarodne migracije. Ova analiza naglašava važnost međunarodnih studentskih programa, transnacionalnih veza i dijasporskih praksi. Relativna nerazvijenost Brazila potiče mnoge Brazilce na emigraciju, ali različiti međunarodni i lokalni faktori predstavljaju strukturne prepreke ostvarenju tih aspiracija. Kao rezultat toga pojedinci moraju tražiti alternativne pristupe, pri čemu programi mobilnosti studenata postaju ključnim resursima. Također se istražuje kako etnički i ljudski kapital mogu olakšati mobilnost za mnoge Brazilce, omogućavajući im da prevladaju strukturne prepreke koje ih često potiču da se kreću kroz više država. Ovo istraživanje stoga također pridonosi raspravama o vezi između etničkog i ljudskog kapitala i multinacionalnih, višestrukih migracija.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Brazil, etnički kapital, međunarodni studenti, višestruke migracije