



GT2: CIDADANIA E CULTURA

CONTEMPORARY MIGRATIONS: PANORAMA REGARDING CULTURAL SHOCK

Amanda Thalia Miranda (UEPG); Email: amandayamada13@gmail.com
Augusto Agueiras Duarte (UEPG); Email: agostoagueiras@hotmail.com

TEMÁTICA: CHOQUE CULTURAL E MIGRAÇÕES CONTEMPORÂNEAS

ABSTRACT: Ever since the dawn of human history, migration is an everyday fact. Following the evolutionist bias we all are directly tied to the first migrants originary from Africa. Today, in the globalized world, we have witnessed one of the greatest migratory fluxes after the Second World War. Since in 2015 around 244 million people migrated around the world according to UN data, there was a 41% increase in relation to the year 2000.

This article's objective is to render a brief panorama regarding culture shock in contemporary migrations, comparing those to the migrations made in previous centuries. The article includes four interviews made with people who have migrated to Brazil in distinct periods and have different points of view about the country, culture shock and the difficulties of living in a different country.

Keywords: Contemporary Migrations, Culture, Culture Shock.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Wenden (2005), around 200 million people, or 2,8% of the world population, is constituted of immigrants. This migration flow is motivated by many factors, such as wars, search for betterment in life quality, the dream of living in another country, cultural exchange, study, work (expatriation). The 2006 UN data shows that 90% of the migrations are concentrated in 55 countries, a little over ¼ of the world's total number of countries.

As an example, we have the immigrations made by the Syrian people fleeing from the civil war, amongst other conflicts in the Middle East that are a match for migrations, causing tensions and raising the number of refugees in Europe; The many controversies regarding Australia's migration policies; the USA, with Trump's controversial election and his speeches about deporting immigrants that inhabit the country.

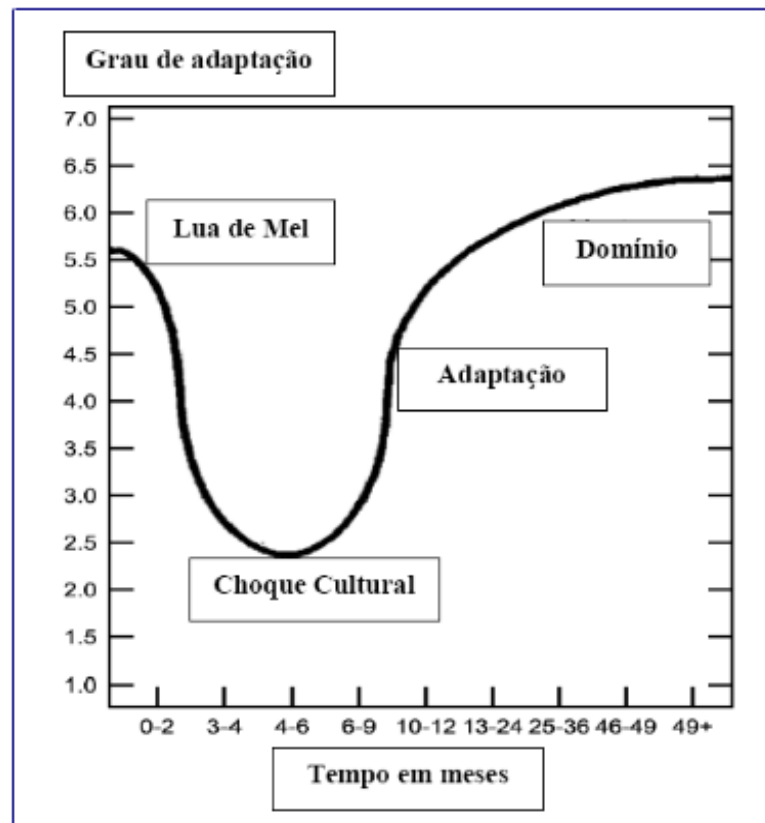
An article from the website "Metrocosm" entitled "Global Immigration Map" brings data about the migration in these countries - between 2010 and 2015, around 4.5 million people left Syria and moved to countries such as the USA, Sweden, Brazil and other countries, including neighbouring ones; Australia received around 800.000 immigrants, in greater number from New Zealand, China, India and United Kingdom;



the USA received around 3 million immigrants from Mexico, Central America and Asia.

Considering all the cultural differences between these countries, it is not seldom to see use of the term “culture shock”. According to the “Dicionário inFormal” (non-formal dictionary), culture shock is “a state of anxiety and confusion that someone that has been exposed to an unknown cultural environment goes through”. Black and Mendenhall, 1991 (apud. Gonzáles, Oliveira 2011) point that “the majority of studies about the adaptation processes of the expatriated are based on the U-Curve theory, initially described by Lysgaard (1951)”. The U-Curve theory refers to a chart that relates time (in months) lived outside a country and the degree of adaptation that the migrant feels in relation to the country that he or she is located on.

Figure 1: The U-Curve in adaptation of the expatriated



Source: Black and Mendenhall. 1991, p. 227 apud González and Oliveira.

Starting from the interviews made with immigrants living in Brazil and data collected from articles, books and researches, the objective of this article is to render a panorama about the contemporary migrations and the culture shock lived by the migrants.

2. METODOLOGY

The research involved activities done in three distinct moments, being those:



Bibliographic and theoretical revision, when books, articles, researches and data from institutions and the media were consulted and related to the theme;

Elaboration and application of the questionnaires, which consisted in the confection and application of eleven basic questions that regard Brazilian culture and the adaptation process, based on the bibliographical and theoretical revision. The application of the questionnaire was via Google Forms, shared in social networks and online immigrants groups;

Analysis and interpretation of the obtained data, done in a qualitative manner with interpretation based on the theoretical bases.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Lately it has been common to observe in social medias the disconnection created between the contemporary migrations with the migrations in the latter centuries, where the image of a prosperous state-nation with golden lands to attract European immigrants with the intention to acquire more labour for the country after the abolition of slavery. At that time, the cultural shock was due to the obligation of the immigrants to use the country's *lingua franca*, Portuguese. Since they lived in communities with members coming from the same countries, in many aspects their culture was preserved. We have as an example the Russian-German colonies in Brazil that still today preserve their culture from their origin country through their language. Today, we have greater migration flows between peripheral countries - it's no longer the white Europeans who come, but Syrians, Mozambicans, Haitians, Latinos, among others.

The contemporary migrations make themselves evident as some of the greatest migrations ever since the Second Great War - As they migrated from their origin country to a new one, the migrants seek to introduce themselves to the job market and to the culture of the new country, which led to the migrants to go through what is described by Lysgaard, 1951 (apud. Black and Mendenhall, 1991) as culture shock. Of all changes that may occur in an individual's life the most complex one would be migration, since the changes that occur during the process of migration involves everything that surrounds the person, aspects that go from social relations to climate, diet, social status and language.

Four interviews¹ were applied with two Syrians, a Dutchman and a Mozambican. When the interviewed were questioned regarding the difficulty to adapt themselves to the country's culture, three of them affirmed they have gone through a few difficult times in the beginning of their residence.

"M", Dutchman, one of the interviewed, has been in Brazil for 27 years, e affirmed he has had difficulties in the first two years, specially with the language, but also affirms that "he has adapted himself very well to the point where he identified with many aspects of the culture". "M" also mentions that his country's culture is "more organized, there is less space for a person's own initiatives, the communication is more direct and objective". He criticizes the bureaucracy that

¹The full names of the interviewed were omitted for privacy reasons. In order to mention them, their initials were used instead.



immigrants have to go through and the passivity that the Brazilian people have towards political decisions and the lack of attendance to all sorts of commitments. Beyond that, he affirmed that he does not participate in any groups for Dutch immigrants, stating that it is necessary to live “as the people from the country, to enculturate yourself and not to segregate”.

“A”, Mozambican, has been in Brazil for six months, and affirmed he had difficulties with the cuisine, language, manners and the routine, saying that the adaptation process was “very difficult in all aspects”. Relating his statements and time of residence to the U-Curve theory, he is now most likely currently going through the period of adaptation to the new culture. “A” says he enjoys the country’s music, and answered a question referring to the sensation of belonging to the country’s culture with his taste for the music. He also is part of a group for Mozambicans in Brazil and that the Brazilian people’s reception was very hearty.

“N” and “O” are a couple of brother and sister that come from Syria. They both have been in Brazil for three years. They came as a means to escape the civil war. “N” said she had difficulties to adapt to the culture, but that she and her family have the support of a church. “O”, on the other hand, said that he quickly grew accustomed to the differences, stating that “he likes the freedom that people have”. “O” affirmed that the greatest difficulty was found in his parents, that suffered greatly from the culture shock. “In Brazil there are parties and carnival, but I did not have difficulties”. He works in a barber shop, and “N” is trying to ingress in a university, despite having troubles with the language.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the interviewed not mentioning any kinds of prejudices or xenophobia towards them, we have frequently observed in social media cases in which Brazilian people repudiate immigrants in the pretext that the immigrants will occupy their job vacancies, schools, hospitals, supposedly “taking the spot native Brazilians would occupy”. In the context that our interviewed were inserted in, they have stated that they have been well received and they had the support from Brazilians.

From the answers, it is possible to affirm that all of them have presented culture shock in some manner, with a special mention to “O”, that affirmed not having problems to adapt to the culture himself but had to help his parents with the adaptation process. Despite affirming he did not suffer from the adaptation, “O” also states it took him around a year for him to be able to speak the language.

The growing number of international immigrants in Brazil and the world are steadily becoming an important part of our economy and society. With their ascriptions of their adaptation process, it is possible to notice these immigrants had a good reception in the country, and despite the cultural shock’s being big as, as the Syrians stated, there was great support for each one of them, be it from work, friends, or an organized community.

We conclude that a well administered migration cultivates benefits for the migration groups, as well as the receiving and emitting countries.



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