LUMEN ET VIRTUS

Old and new friendships of Latin American immigrants

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ABSTRACT

In view of the growth of international migration, including in Latin America, the present investigation aimed to analyze the history of old and new friendships of Latin American immigrants throughout their lives in the new country (Brazil, other Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal). More specifically, it was intended to investigate how recent migration affects existing friendships and the formation of new ones, with people of any nationality and culture. 40 immigrants participated in this descriptive-qualitative study (70% women and 50% between 30 and 39 years old), divided into four groups: A) 20 Latin Americans who lived in Brazil; B) three Brazilians who lived in another Latin American country; C) 12 Brazilians who lived in Spain; and D) five Brazilians who lived in Portugal. The instrument used was a questionnaire with open questions, sent and received by e-mail, producing written reports. In total, direct contacts were made by e-mail with national and international universities and educational institutions, as well as by messages on social networks with approximately 1,000 people, between August 2014 and January 2016. A detailed analysis of the data was conducted with a coding process (interpretation of the statements), and subsequent organization of the material into categories, based on qualitative content analysis. The main results of the study pointed out that most of the close friends are of the same gender and of the same nationality, and most of them reside in the country of origin of the immigrant. The ties in the immigrant's country of origin are close friendships, of many years, whose main means of contact are Facebook, Skype, WhatsApp, telephone, e-mail, internet and in person, and the frequency of contacts varies from daily to monthly. According to the participants, it is very good to see friends from their home country, with the most common shared activities being eating or going to restaurants, drinking or going to bars and staying at home. Both old (compatriots) and new friends (usually natives of the new country or other immigrants) are important in the process of migration from one culture to another. The beginning of friendships in the new country happens, for the most part, in the academic environment, through other friends and through relatives. Finally, Latin American immigrants in Brazil and Brazilians in other Latin American countries demonstrated a mostly positive view of natives before establishing friendships with them; and Brazilian immigrants in Spain and Portugal a negative view.

Keywords: Friendship, Immigrants, Latin Americans, Cultural Differences.

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INTRODUCTION

International migration has been growing in recent decades. According to the United Nations, there were more than 230 million people living outside their country in 2013. In reference to Latin America, it is estimated that about 30 million Latin Americans lived outside their country in 2010, with the significant increase in intra-regional migration, that is, Latin Americans starting to live in another Latin American country, whose number has already reached four million migrants.

In view of this growth in international migration, including in Latin America, the present investigation seeks to contribute to the knowledge of the friendships of Latin American immigrants who are living in contact with other peoples in Brazil (Brazilians or other immigrants) and of Brazilian emigrants (who are also Latin Americans) who are living in contact with other peoples in other Latin American countries. Spain and Portugal (natives or other immigrants), regions that currently receive a high number of immigrants (ECLAC, 2013; Gois, Marques, Padila & Peixoto, 2009; Hierro, 2013; Peixoto & Egreja, 2012).

One of the immediate effects of migration is exposure to new living conditions, with changes in social life and, consequently, in the friendships of those who migrate. In contemporary society, friendship relationships, whether in dyads or groups, have become increasingly important due to factors such as the growth of the human population, in terms of mobility and communicability, making human encounters and relationships more frequent and intense (Garcia & Miranda, 2008). Economic and cultural globalization has allowed greater contact between people of different nationalities and cultures, and the way in which these people establish and maintain friendships is an important research topic for understanding the peaceful and cooperative social coexistence between individuals, and even more so between social, cultural and scientific groups in these countries (Garcia, 2012a).

Some historical, cultural and technological transformations may be at the origin of new patterns of friendship. Among the most significant historical and social changes is the historical reduction in family size, urbanization, technological advances, with the growing use of the world wide web (the internet), advances in mobile phone services, increasingly early access of the child to school, the increasingly longer time in the school system, the growth of groups for the elderly, among others (Garcia, 2005). However, the theme of friendship relations in line with the migratory process still lacks investigative studies, especially with regard to the Latin American region. These studies would involve

intercultural, international, inter-ethnic and interracial friendships, according to Garcia and Miranda (2012).

International or intercultural friendships are marked by differences between the cultures of individuals (Sias et al., 2007) and may result from the cultural diversity of the country itself, as in the case of South Africa (Collier & Bornman, 1999) or from recent immigration (DeBruin-Parecki & Klein, 2003). Cultural identity is defined as a process historically constructed on the basis of the systems of symbols, meanings, and norms shared by a group of people in a specific context (Collier & Bornman, 1999).

Kao and Joyner (2004) examined differences in activities in the interracial and interethnic friendships of white, black, Hispanic, and Asian youth. According to the authors, best friends are more likely to be from the same ethnic group. In general, interracial friends reported fewer shared activities than intraracial ones. White, Asian, and Hispanic youth reported fewer activities with black friends. They suggest that even when young people break racial boundaries in friend selection, these friendships face greater challenges than those between individuals of the same race.

Britton (2011) investigated the effects of residential integration on inter-ethnic friendships in Houston, USA. The results obtained indicated inter-ethnic integration and friendship ranging between Anglos, whites and Latinos. According to the authors, more intense forms of intergroup contact are only positively associated with inter-ethnic friendships when integration allows exposure to groups that occupy privileged positions in the broader society.

Kouvo and Lockmer (2013) analysed the impact of the ethnic composition of the place of residence on inter-ethnic contacts and attitudes by comparing four Nordic countries. Compared with ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods, interethnic relationships are more common in ethnically mixed neighborhoods with ethnic minorities. Having friends of other ethnicities in combination with living in an ethnically mixed neighborhood is associated with the likelihood of having more tolerant attitudes toward immigrants.

The literature on immigrant friendships in Brazil, in general, is quite restricted, being practically non-existent when referring to Latin American immigrants. Souza and Sediyama (2012) carried out a qualitative research that had as one of its objectives to present a descriptive study on the perception of friendship in adults of foreign nationality residing in Brazil and to compare it with Brazilians. The main results of the study pointed out that same-sex friendships ended up prevailing; a higher average of friendships living in the same city was observed for the Brazilian participants; foreigners probably had close

friendships in their home countries; and no foreign participants indicated a previous relationship from school, work or neighborhood.

Merizio, Garcia and Pontes (2008) investigated the memories of Lebanese immigrants living in Brazil about their friendships and games in their childhood, lived in Lebanon, and the friendships and games of their children's childhood, in Brazil. The authors concluded that, despite the similarities in some aspects of friendships and games, cultural differences are present in the structure of the network of friends and in the content of relationships. In addition, they concluded that play and friendship were directly affected by the environmental and sociocultural context, including religious factors and cultural practices linked to play behavior and friendship relationships.

Focusing on the native's view, Garcia, Bitencourt-Neto, Moura and Pepino (2010) conducted a qualitative study with the objective of investigating the nature of the international friendships of Brazilian university students, based on the remarkable episodes of these friendships, in the light of Robert Hinde's (1997) proposals. Three factors stood out in the answers given: relationships, social groups and culture. The episodes experienced in general were positive. Cultural differences were also seen as predominantly positive, linked to curiosity about the different. The study showed that friendships can remain even after separation. Cultural differences were not mentioned as insurmountable obstacles to communication and friendship, usually being circumvented and leaving positive memories.

Within an international context, several investigations published in the last ten years, mainly developed in Spain, have sought to address Latin American immigration to the country, including the study of social networks. According to Ávila-Molero (2008), the nationality of origin of the members of the social network of Latin American immigrants (Argentines, Spaniards and other nationalities) shows a multiethnic network, especially in its developed scope in Spain.

Although there is much discussion about cultural proximity, due to the common religion and language between Spain and Latin America (except Brazil), the distance between Spaniards and Latin American immigrants persists. Ecuadorians, for example, have dense, hermetic personal networks that are very dependent on strong ties, while the composition and structure are less compact and homogeneous for other groups of Latin American immigrants. Argentines, for example, have the largest number of Spaniards in their networks (Aparicio & Tornos, 2005; Domínguez & Maya-Jariego, 2008; Sans, Miguel-Luken & Solana-Solana, 2007).

Despite several investigations on Latin American immigration to Spain, there is little information about the friendships of these migrants, either in relation to what happens with

previous friendships as well as in relation to the formation of new friendships, with Spaniards, people from the same country or other immigrants, Latin American or not. Miguel-Luken and Tranmer (2010) point out the need for further research on the social networks of Latin American immigrants in Spain, involving, for example, the differences between immigrants from different countries and their friendships.

With regard to Portugal, as many Brazilians seek it for the possibility of employment, unfortunately some friendship relationships of immigrants are considered ephemeral ties, born as a result of work relations or proximity to residence, without consolidating lasting ties of sociability and/or solidarity (Bógus, 2007). Even in the not very dense social networks, but with several contacts, composed of non-intimate friends and acquaintances, Peixoto and Egreja (2012) argue that information about the labor market circulates better.

In Padilla's (2007) study on the immigration of Brazilians to Portugal, the social networks of Brazilians included friends, acquaintances and family members who provided help in leaving the country (loans, moral support, etc.), in arriving in the new country (accommodation, resources of different kinds) and insertion in the labor market (help in finding employment, references, etc.). However, there was a difference among Brazilian immigrants in relation to gender: families were the most important support in migratory processes for women, while friends were the most important social support for men.

However, no studies were found that focused on and deepened the theme of friendship relations of Brazilian immigrants in Portugal. Therefore, this research aimed to analyze the history of old and new friendships of Latin American immigrants throughout their lives in the new country (Brazil, other Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal). More specifically, it was intended to investigate how recent migration affects existing friendships and the formation of new ones, with people of any nationality and culture.

The scientific relevance of the work lies in the expansion of knowledge on the theme of intercultural friendships or in the originality of producing studies in the area of friendly relationships focusing on Latin American immigrants in Brazil, as well as Brazilian emigrants in other Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal. It is understood that friendships between people from different cultures can promote greater integration between them. According to Adams and Bliezsner (1994), studies on friendships deal mostly with Caucasian, middle-class, adult university students living in the USA. This work would contribute, therefore, to the advancement of the Latin American literature on friendship relationships.

METHOD

40 immigrants participated in this descriptive-qualitative study (70% women and 50% between 30 and 39 years old), divided into four groups: A) 20 Latin Americans who lived in Brazil; B) three Brazilians who lived in another Latin American country; C) 12 Brazilians who lived in Spain; and D) five Brazilians who lived in Portugal.

Each participant was identified by the letter of the group to which he belonged (A, B, C, or D) and by a number, and their characterization was described as follows: Group A: Latin Americans in Brazil: A1, male, 40 years old, Colombia (country of origin), seven siblings, black, Colombian wife and Brazilian son, Catholic; A2, male, 30 years old, Peru, one brother, non-practicing Catholic; A3, male, 75 years old, Argentinean, married, one child from previous marriage, no religion; A4, female, 52 years old, Bolivia, two brothers, six-month-old son; A5, female, 40 years old, Argentinean, only child; A6, female, 30 years old, Peruvian, non-practicing Catholic; A7, male, 33 years old, Colombia, two brothers, lives with girlfriend, Catholic; A8, female, 37 years old, Colombia, one brother, non-practicing Catholic; A9, male, 32 years old, Colombia, divorced, one daughter; A10, female, 32 years old, Colombia, four siblings, childless, Christian; A11, female, 25 years old, Mexico, three siblings, single, evangelical; A12, male, 27 years old, Chile, four siblings, one son, own beliefs; A13, female, 26 years old, Colombia, two sisters, Catholic; A14, female, 32 years old, Colombia, one brother, married, six-month-old daughter born in Brazil, non-practicing Catholic; A15, female, 55 years old, Argentine, one Argentine daughter, Catholic; A16, female, 36 years old, Mexico, four siblings, married, one Mexican son, atheist; A17, female, 29 years old, Cuban, one brother, Catholic; A18, male, 30 years old, Peru, two brothers, Seventh-day Adventist; A19, female, 65 years old, Panama, five siblings, married, two children (one Brazilian and one American) and three grandchildren; A20, female, 40 years old, Peruvian, married, one Brazilian son, Catholic. Group B: Brazilians in Other Latin American Countries: B1, female, 33 years old, lives in Chile, lives with a partner, has no children, has no religion; B2, female, 28 years old, resides in Mexico, married to a Mexican, one Mexican son, non-practicing Catholic; B3, female, 33 years old, lives in Mexico, a sister, married for the second time, has no children, agnostic. Group C: Brazilians in Spain: C1, female, 35 years old, seven siblings, divorced, two daughters, practicing Catholic; C2, female, 28 years old, only child, has no children, has no religion; C3, female, 33 years old, one sister, married, without children; C4, female, 30 years old, married, Catholic; C5, female, 37 years old, three siblings, single, childless, does not practice the Catholic religion; C6, female, 27 years old, only child, evangelical parents, doctrine with which she disagrees; C7, male, 28 years old, non-practicing Catholic; C8, male, 33 years old, only child,

Protestant Christian; C9, male, 28 years old, lives with a friend, has no children, has no religion; C10, male, 36 years old, one brother, married, one Spanish son, no religion; C11, female, 41 years old, two sisters, Catholic, but identifies more with the Spiritist Doctrine, without children; C12, male, 54 years old, Brazilian children, agnostic. Group D: Brazilians in Portugal: D1, female, 36 years old, no religion; D2, female, 41 years old, no children, non-practicing Catholic; D3, female, 34 years old, one brother, divorced, childless, practicing Catholic; D4, female, 29 years old, married, without children, without religion, but does not consider herself an atheist; D5, female, 32 years old, one sister, single, no religion.

The instrument used was a questionnaire with open questions, sent and received by e-mail, producing written reports. In total, direct contacts were made by e-mail with national and international universities and educational institutions, as well as by messages on social networks with approximately 1,000 people, between August 2014 and January 2016. In all direct contacts made, the "snowball" technique was used, i.e., each potential participant was asked to indicate others, who, in turn, would indicate others, and so on (Alves-Mazzoti and Gewandsznajder, 1999). A detailed analysis of the data was conducted with a coding process (interpretation of the speeches), and subsequent organization of the material into categories, based on qualitative content analysis (Flick, 2004; Flick, 2009).

The research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Espírito Santo – Goiabeiras Campus, under the CAAE (Certificate of Presentation of Ethical Appreciation) number 34551714.5.0000.5542 on 08/29/2014.

RESULTS

HISTORY IN THE NEW COUNTRY

Regarding the length of stay, the vast majority of participants have been in their current country for less than 10 years. The main reason for going to the new country presented by groups A, C and D was to pursue stricto sensu graduate studies. Only for group B the most cited reason was relatives. When it comes to the opinion about the current country, most of the participants in groups A, C and D like, respectively, Brazil, Spain and Portugal. Most of the participants in group B did not mention their opinion.

Comparing the positive characteristics pointed out by participants from the four groups, it was found that immigrants from groups A, B and C like people from the destination country. A common aspect pointed out by groups A, C and D was the nature and beauty of the place, that is, of Brazil, Spain and Portugal. Cultural diversity was mentioned by participants from groups A and C.

Groups C and D highlighted that the destination countries, Spain and Portugal, have good organization and infrastructure, quality public services, cleanliness, safety and quality of life. As aspects that appeared separately in the groups, there are: quality higher education in Brazil; excellent food and pleasant weather in Spain; little economic disparity and low cost of living in Portugal.

In terms of unfavorable aspects found in the destination country, Brazil was considered a violent, disorganized country with precarious infrastructure and public services. Government problems in Brazil, such as corruption, were also pointed out by group B, specifically in Mexico.

Group A mentioned little interaction between Brazil and other Latin American countries. On the other hand, group D pointed out strong cultural links between Portugal and Brazil. Also, group A pointed out the bureaucracy for the legal procedures of immigrants and group C reported that in Spain there is a certain hostility to foreigners; on the contrary, in Portugal there are policies for immigrants, as pointed out by group D.

Prejudice, especially against women, was a common point mentioned by groups C and D. According to Padilla (2007), the difficulty of Brazilian women in making friends in Portugal is real due to the stereotype of prostitution that exists. Also in Spain, immigrant women in general still have the stereotype that includes, in addition to prostitution, poverty, passivity, victimization and vulnerability (Lirola, 2015).

RETURN TO THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Most of the participants of all groups have already returned to their country of origin to visit it. In groups A and B, more positive than negative aspects were pointed out about the return. In group C there was the same number of positive and negative scores on return and in group D the participants pointed out more negative than positive factors in returning to Brazil.

A positive point placed by the four groups in relation to the return to the country of origin was to see family and friends again; in addition, groups A, C and D also mentioned killing the nostalgia for the culture of the country of origin. Among the negative aspects, groups B and C were shocked by the abusive prices of products in Brazil; on the other hand, groups C and D perceived poverty in Brazil and the poor quality of the supply of products and services in relation to Spain and Portugal.

The fact that Brazilian participants in Portugal indicate more negative than positive factors in returning to Brazil diverges from the literature, which points to a significant propensity for the return of Brazilian immigrants living in Portugal, due to the unfavorable

Portuguese economic situation (Nunan & Peixoto, 2012). A possible explanation for this fact is the reason why most of the participants went to do a doctorate. This condition of university student is much less vulnerable than the situation of an immigrant who goes to Portugal in search of a job, for example.

CONTACT WITH RELATIVES

All study participants maintain contact with relatives in their country of origin, with the most cited being mother, father, siblings and uncles. The most used means of contact are via the internet, which facilitates contact between people who are physically distant. As participant A12 pointed out: "... Today this whole system of globalization allows us to keep in touch frequently."

Friendships until the end of the twentieth century did not use technology as much as they do today. Among the most used technologies today is the world wide web, or internet, which offers a range of social contact networks and may be interfering with friendship patterns. For example, contacts made virtually appear to be more susceptible to prejudice than in-person contacts (Crossman & Bordia, 2011). However, it is indisputable that the ease of access to physically distant people through the internet favors relationships.

CLOSEST FRIENDS

In the four groups, most of the closest friends are of the same sex, which converges with the literature (Souza & Sediyama, 2012). In addition, the four groups had a greater number of close friends of the same nationality, as in the study by Garcia and Rangel (2011), and most of these live in the participant's country of origin, and not in the current country. This data suggests that despite the physical distance, friendship lasts over time. In addition, as pointed out by the literature (Kao & Joyner, 2004; Kao & Vaquera, 2006), best friends are more likely to be from the same ethnic and racial group, due to the greater identification between them.

All groups also mentioned closer friendships with natives of the new country, and groups A, B, and C reported close friendships with other Latin Americans, most of whom lived in the current country. In this case, physical proximity and conviviality seem to favor the establishment and maintenance of friendships.

A study by Garcia (2016), which analyzed the friendships of five Portuguese and Spanish immigrants living in Brazil, brings data that reveal that the participants' network of friends includes compatriots living in Brazil, in the country of origin and in a third country.

They also mentioned Brazilian and foreign friends, residing in their country of origin or in Brazil.

FRIENDSHIPS IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

All participants maintain bonds of friendship in their country of origin. When it comes to what these friendships look like, most pointed out positive aspects, such as close and strong friendships and best friends. The four groups also pointed out the duration of many years of these friendships, and groups A, B and C mentioned friends from various stages of life, such as childhood, adolescence, high school, college, graduate school, etc. The most cited means of contact with friends in the country of origin were, in this order, Facebook, Skype, WhatsApp, telephone, e-mail, internet and in person. Regarding the frequency of contacts, most groups (A, B and C) reported daily to monthly contact with friends in the country of origin.

The most cited means of contact between friends in the studies by Garcia (2012b) and Garcia, Dettogni, Costa and Togatlian (2010) was also the internet, but both conclude that contact through computers does not replace personal contact. In the study by Garcia (2016), contact with friends who lived in the country of origin also occurred through virtual social networks and internet communication sources (such as Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, emails) and in person when they traveled.

According to Tajra (2015), from 1994 onwards, the internet went beyond academic boundaries in Brazil and was born as a new form of communication, which would connect, through computers, millions of people on a planetary scale. Considering the most current virtual social networks, the use of Facebook is notorious, which has been the focus of some studies on social interactions. According to Cáceres (2011) this network promotes new relationships and reinforces existing ones, but the most intimate relationships do not exceed 30 or 40 people. In another study (Park, Lee & Kim, 2012) the variables friend network density and race heterogeneity were positively correlated with time spent on Facebook. Also, according to Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Tolan and Marrington (2013), social interaction through Facebook is correlated with greater subjective well-being and lower levels of depression and anxiety.

MEETINGS WITH FRIENDS FROM THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

About what it is like when the participant meets their friends from their home country in their own country of origin, participants from the four groups mentioned that it is very

good to see them again. For participants in groups C and D, friendship does not change, it is as if time has not passed and there is no physical distance.

Regarding shared activities, the four groups mentioned that when they are with friends in their country of origin, they usually eat or go to restaurants, drink or go to bars and stay at home. Two activities reported by groups A, B and C were going to parties or concerts and traveling. Groups A and C had several activities in common, suggesting a possible cultural approximation between other Latin American countries and Brazil: talking, dancing, watching movies or going to the movies, going to an event, such as birthdays, weddings, among others. Groups A and D mentioned leaving; and groups C and D mentioned drinking coffee.

Activities mentioned only by group A were: laughing, visiting friends, cooking, remembering the past, walking and listening to music, characterizing Latin American cultures well. Activities mentioned only by group C were: going to the beach, to church, taking courses, participating in scientific events, playing sports, drinking mate, going to the park, the mall and samba, making a secret friend and sunbathing, characteristically Brazilian activities.

The literature on activities shared between friends of different nationalities points to activities related to leisure, studies, scientific or cultural activities, sports, work, and religion (Garcia, 2012a; Garcia & Goes, 2010; Garcia & Rangel, 2011). Comparing these activities with those described in this subchapter, which involves friends of the same nationality, only those related to work were not mentioned by the participants, and shared leisure activities were highlighted.

NEW FRIENDSHIPS

The vast majority of the participants in the four groups made friends in the new country, with friendships with native people being more frequent. Then came friends from their home country for groups A and C. Group B mentioned only one Brazilian friend, and group D did not mention the number of Brazilian friends.

Still in descending order of frequency, foreign friends were mentioned by the four groups, and finally friends of another Latin American nationality, mentioned only by groups A and C. In the study by Souza and Hutz (2008), attributes of friendship reported in the international literature were identified, such as affective exchanges, help, companionship and fun in certain activities, intimacy and self-validation. Probably these attributes of friendship are independent of the nationality or culture of the friends.

BEGINNING OF NEW FRIENDSHIPS

Regarding how the new friendships began, in descending order of citations, the academic environment appears in all groups and as a highlight in groups A, C and D. Another reason for the beginning of friendships often pointed out by groups A, C and D was the intermediation of other friends, suggesting a chain in friendships. According to a participant in group C: "... I have many Brazilian friends and usually the friendship starts because one introduces the other and we are all in the same group." (C3).

Neighbors and co-workers appeared as motivators for the initiation of friendships in the four groups, especially in groups A and D, suggesting that physical proximity and contact favor the initiation of friendships. According to a Colombian participant in group A: "... Everyday life makes us create bonds." (A7).

The four groups also mentioned the beginning of friendships through relatives. There were many environments and factors cited for the beginning of friendships, and the others that stood out were: during courses (A, B and C); through the internet (A, C and D); and already know the country of origin (in groups A and C). At a lower frequency and with the same number of citations, the following were mentioned: beginning of friendships in gyms (B and D); in bars or parties (A and C); and because they have cultural proximity (A and C). In the same sense, in the study by Garcia (2016), Brazilian friendships began in the workplace, in social activities and are relatives of the spouse.

VIEW OF THE NATIVES

Doing a macro analysis of the data in this subchapter, the groups were divided into two: the participants in groups A and B had a mostly positive view of the natives before weaving friendships with them: that Brazilians and other Latin Americans would be cheerful, welcoming, pleasant, etc. On the other hand, the participants in groups C and D, for the most part, had a negative view of the natives before establishing friendships with them, that Spaniards and Portuguese would be cold, closed, distant, among others.

For most participants in group A, there was no change in conception after friendships were established. For the majority of group B, there was a change, with the natives being considered distant. There was also a change for most of the participants in groups C and D, that the Spaniards and the Portuguese are not as closed and distant as imagined. This data on the Portuguese is in line with the study by Silva and Schiltz (2007), with Brazilian immigrants in Portugal, in which 87% of Brazilian immigrants say they have a Portuguese friend and 74.7% of Brazilians have already been invited to go to the home of a Portuguese.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the analytical phases that the author Hinde (1997) proposes is the specification of the principles involved in the dynamics of friendship relationships. In this study, which aimed to analyze the history of old and new friendships of Latin American immigrants throughout their lives in the new country, it can first be concluded that most of the close friends are of the same gender and of the same nationality, and most of them live in the country of origin of the immigrant. In several passages that concerned physical distance, there was no consensus among the participants of this study: while some claimed that it does not interfere with friendship relationships, other participants said that distance hinders friendships. Literature (Bógus, 2007; Garcia, 2012a; 2012b; Garcia, Brandão, Costa & Togatlian, 2010; Garcia, Dettogni et al, 2010; Garcia & Rangel, 2011) suggests that physical distance makes it difficult to establish and maintain friendships. However, as previously pointed out, if most of the close friends are of the same nationality and reside in the immigrant's country of origin, it can be assumed that physical distance is not an impediment to maintaining friendship, as mentioned in the study by Garcia, Bitencourt-Neto et al (2010).

Corroborating this analysis, another principle was that the ties in the immigrant's country of origin are close friendships, of many years, whose main means of contact are Facebook, Skype, WhatsApp, telephone, e-mail, internet and in person, and the frequency of contacts varies from daily to monthly. In other words, the consequences of physical distance can be mitigated or at least minimized by the means of contact and social networks that the internet currently offers.

A third guiding principle of friendship relationships identified in this investigation was that it is very good to see friends from your country of origin again, with the most common shared activities being eating or going to restaurants, drinking or going to bars, and staying at home. But the vast majority of immigrants also have friendships in the new country, with friendships with natives being more frequent. Then they see friends from their country of origin, foreign friends and friends of another Latin American nationality. Therefore, it is assumed that both old (compatriots) and new friends (usually natives of the new country or other immigrants) are important in the process of migration from one culture to another. Friends of the same nationality are likely to be more intimate, offer emotional support or support, and maintain important contact with their culture of origin. Native friends or other immigrants in the new country can offer help, information about housing, transportation, safety, cultural habits, among others, and mediate access to the new culture in a more functional way.

Another important principle concerns the beginning of friendships in the new country, which happens, for the most part, in the academic environment, through other friends and through relatives. Taking advantage of this information, universities, for example, which receive many foreign students, could better plan their research and work environments, in order to bring colleagues closer together and favor the establishment and maintenance of friendly relationships.

Finally, Latin American immigrants in Brazil and Brazilians in other Latin American countries demonstrated a mostly positive view of natives before establishing friendships with them; and Brazilian immigrants in Spain and Portugal a negative view. For the majority of Latin American immigrants in Brazil, there is no change in conception after friendships have been established, continuing to perceive Brazilians as cheerful, welcoming, pleasant people, etc. For most Brazilian immigrants in other Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal, there is a change. Latin Americans were considered distant by group B, and the Spanish and Portuguese were not as closed and distant as imagined by groups C and D. In this sense, it was evident that stereotypes about cultures exist and, above all, that it is important to get in touch with the new culture and its natives in order to be able to make an analysis closer to reality. preferably devoid of prejudice.

Despite the amount of information brought by this study, it was developed with a specific population of Brazilians and other Latin Americans, in the following contexts: Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Spain and Portugal. In addition, the methodology was a field research, of a qualitative nature, with descriptive characteristics, which used as an instrument a questionnaire with open questions, answered by e-mail. In this sense, several other studies, with varied methodologies, can be conducted on international migration, including through partnerships between countries, which would generate greater approximation between cultures. When it comes to the cultural approximation of Latin American countries, for Garcia, Acevedo-Triana and López-López (2015), the meaning of a partnership between these cultures involves its importance, its functionality and its results. Thus, the importance is associated with the advantages of Latin American scientific cooperation. Functionality involves cultural exchanges and the formation and expansion of work networks, the sharing of information and sources, as well as the comparison of research results, the diversity of data, its validation and theories. Its significance goes beyond research, involving collaboration at the graduate level and scientific events. The results include its scientific impact in terms of knowledge dissemination and visibility, as well as national, regional and international political and social impact.

In terms of social relevance, perhaps the most important thing about this scientific cooperation was the applicability of the knowledge generated to immigrants, to their nations, continents, cultures, since "... Human mobility brings endless challenges and difficulties experienced by all migrants and, in one way or another, commonly shared characteristics." (Simai & Beaninger, 2012, p. 02).

Although this investigation did not collect sociodemographic data from the participants, it was clear that this is an economically privileged population, which is in the new country in a legal situation (for example, most went to graduate school). Access to a population of immigrants in situations of greater vulnerability, such as refugees from countries at war, for example, would be much more difficult, but it would be a population that is no less important to be investigated.

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