

Lifestyle migration from the Global South to the Global North: individualism, social class, and freedom in a centre of “superdiversity”

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Abstract

Lifestyle migration is a growing field of interest. Traditionally, research into lifestyle migration has focused on either 'North to North' or 'North to South' migration. This article analyses middle class Brazilian migration to London together with examples from the lifestyle migration literature, to argue that there are instances of movement from the Global South to the Global North which should be classified as lifestyle migration according to how the term is used in the literature. This is important since there is a tendency in migration studies to implicitly classify all voluntary migration from South to North as 'economic'. The article compares the similarities in terms of motivations to migrate and identity as a migrant, between 'lifestyle migrants' as characterised in the literature and many Brazilian middle class migrants to London. Rather than economic gain, individualist ideals of anonymity and mobility are often central in the discourse. Mobility is not only conceived as mobility across space but also in terms of mobility of identity, specifically as a disavowal of a transnational identity in favour of a more individualistic ideological stance. The article goes on to examine how the dichotomy between lifestyle and economic migrants is operationalised within the discourse of middle-class Brazilian migrants to demarcate their situation from their 'transnational' compatriots who they view as 'other'. This act of distancing themselves from the 'typical migrant' and often, from Brazilian 'culture' more generally is often stratified by class and race. Distancing becomes especially important in cases when differences may not be so apparent to an outside observer. The article ultimately argues for an understanding of lifestyle migration that incorporates movements from South to North and thus for a greater emphasis on social class, which in the context of Brazil, is bound up with issues of racial and ethnic identity.

Lifestyle migration from the Global South to the Global North: individualism, social class and freedom in a centre of ‘super- diversity’

Introduction

In this article I draw on qualitative research with Brazilians living in London to argue that certain migration streams from the Global South to the Global North are best described as ‘lifestyle migration’. I aim to challenge the trend within migration studies that tends to view, ‘migrating for lifestyle reasons... as a distinct feature of ‘Global North migration [while], Global South migration’ is still (implicitly) generically mapped as dependent upon ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors’ (Martins Jr. 2017, p.52). My argument for middle class Brazilians migrating to London as an example of lifestyle migration also underlines the point made by scholars such as Gay y Blasco (2010) that cosmopolitanism, read as ‘an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity’ (Hannerz 1990, p. 239) should not be assumed to be limited to ‘Westerners’(Gay y Blasco 2010b).

Although economic motivations overshadow all migration decisions to some extent (Clark & Maas 2015), a shared trait between the Brazilian migrants in my research and ‘lifestyle migrants’ in the literature is an explicit denial that economic motivation is behind their decision to migrate. Further, both groups share a similar individualistic ideological outlook. They may disavow a transnational identity and instead frame their migration in cosmopolitan, ‘anational’ terms, as an exercise in ‘world citizenship’. This distancing from an identity as a ‘typical’ transnational Brazilian migrant should not be taken as dichotomous though since migrant identity is often discursive and multidimensional (Krzyzanowski & Wodak 2008). Indeed, this article is not intended to be a direct, binary comparison between middle class migrants and lower middle class ‘economic’ migrants but rather to examine how the dichotomy between ‘economic transnational migrants’ and ‘lifestyle migrants’ operates

within the discourse of my interviewees. This is done not only to show that the term ‘lifestyle migrant’ is applicable to certain streams of migration from Brazil to London but also to examine the ‘work’ that identification with this term (and the resulting denial or distancing from other terms) does. These positionings raise questions about the meaning of ‘Brazilian’ identity itself, especially in terms of how such an identity ‘translates’ and is interpreted by others in the context of London’s social milieu. This discourse of distancing forms part of a process by which migrants distinguish their identity as an individual from a collective identity associated with the perceived lower middle class, ‘transnational’ compatriots who have also migrated. This article thus takes social class as a lens through which to explore Brazilian migration to London as a category of lifestyle migration. Section one begins by exploring the meaning of social class in Brazil and how class differences are affected by changes to social status upon migrating. It then examines the concept of ‘lifestyle migration’, how it relates to individualism and class status in its privileging of ‘quality of life’ as a motivation to migrate even at the potential cost of loss in ‘material comforts’ (Benson 2011, p.224). Section two reviews some key lifestyle migration and Brazilian migration literature. The aim here is to show the commonalities in motivations and discourse between lifestyle migrants and Brazilian middle class migrants as both appear in the literature. It shows that rather than financial accumulation, ‘experience’ ‘quality of life’ and, of course, ‘lifestyle’ are persistent themes in the discourse of the two groups. Further, these themes are linked to a strongly individualist ideological outlook. This outlook is often expressed as a desire for ‘freedom’ as ideological value, a process of individualisation and a tendency towards an ‘anational’ distancing towards their status as transnationals as defining characteristics of this type of migration. This practice of distancing becomes complicated in the context of Brazilian migration due to its intersection with racial and ethnic disparities. It raises the issue of what aspects of social status matter in the ‘success’ of a lifestyle migration from the Global South

to the Global North. Section three uses empirical research to show how the themes of lifestyle, individualism, class and race appear in the discourse of the Brazilian immigrants I interviewed. I argue that an individualist privileging of ‘freedom’, read as anonymity and mobility, is a value which often defines how lifestyle migrants measure their success. Mobility in turn takes on multiple interpretations all of which relate to the interviewees’ status as lifestyle migrants. The ultimate aim is not to show that the Brazilian interviewees are unique in the way they describe their experience of migration but precisely that the similarities between their and other groups of middle class migrants’ discourse is evidence that we should expand our understanding of lifestyle migration beyond a Global North centred focus to include certain instances of movement from the Global South to the Global North. Rather than fall into a ‘methodological nationalism’ that Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2003) have cautioned against, we should take social class over nationality as a more productive mode of analysis. This empirical research also provides an opportunity to critically explore the way Brazil’s race, culture and class disparities operate in the context of international migration. Against the background of class tensions in Brazil and the rise in UK media and public concern over the figure of the ‘economic migrant’, the question is raised of how middle-class Brazilian migrants’ practice of distancing themselves from the transnational Brazilian ‘community’ (Martins Junior 2017) should be interpreted.

Contested meanings of ‘middle class’ in Brazil

‘Class’ and moreover, ‘middle class’ has a diverse number of meanings which are dependent on context and the perspective of the word users (Gibson-Graham & Ruccio 2001). In Brazil specifically, as Centner writes, ‘[t]he definition of “middle class” is imprecise and malleable’ (p.260). In Brazil the most popular method of categorising the population by class is into five

tiers from highest to lowest: A – E (Kamakura & Mazzon 2017). In the context of migration to London, migrants hail predominantly from the ‘B’ and ‘C’ classes (Dias 2009).

The ‘C’ class was named by Neri (2008; 2011) as the ‘new middle class’. This is the statistical middle class, those with an above average income. They will typically not be able to afford to live in a neighbourhood in a major city such as São Paulo, whose infrastructure and safety levels are on a par with a city in the Global North. Still, they have sufficient income levels and consumption power to allow them to be defined and to self-define (McCallum 1996; Neri 2014) as middle class.

Regarding members of the ‘B’ class, these are those with income and education levels and lifestyles that would be closer to what is considered middle class by the standards of the Global North. Statistically speaking, they are the upper middle class but will often refer to themselves as middle class because they are using as a reference point the standards of countries such as the UK. They are sometimes referred to as the ‘old middle class’ (Klein et al. 2018). However, dividing class by ‘objective’ measures such as income tells only part of the story. As Olwig reminds us, ‘[c]lass is also a cultural category that concerns social as well as economic aspects of the livelihoods deemed proper within the middle layers of society’ (2007, p.87). In fact, with the recent narrowing of the economic and educational gap between these two groups, cultural and behavioural markers of difference are more strongly emphasised by members of the ‘B’ class in order to preserve what they see as an intrusion into their social and economic space (Klein et al. 2018).

As this article shows, this emphasis on social and cultural difference takes on greater significance in the context of migration to London. Although it is rarely made explicit, the emphasis on difference can have racial connotations too. Class divisions regularly converge with regional and racial divisions in Brazil. Therefore, although it is not always the case, when one speaks of ‘middle class’ Brazilians living in London, one is often (although it is

important to note, not always) referring to Brazilians from the wealthier Southern and South-Eastern states in Brazil and who are of predominantly European ancestry. Migrants from the 'B' class are typically documented (usually via ancestral EU passports). The second, from the 'C class' in Brazil are often 'semi-documented': arriving on tourist or student visas and often continuing to stay and work once these visas have expired. This class divide is often reinforced by a regional divide in that the first group (B) usually hail from the South and South-East. The second group (C) usually hail from Central and North-Eastern states.

Lifestyle migration, privileged migration and individualism

As DellaPergola writes, 'free migration tends to draw from relatively small, selected and at times even elitist social strata' (1984, p.312). Although most international migrants to developed countries are from the middle classes of their countries (Torresan 2007), a common theme is that 'lifestyle' migrants, when compared to their peers tend to be more affluent still. Benson and O'Reilly have defined lifestyle migration as, 'relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that, for various reasons, signify, for the migrant, a better quality of life' (2009, p.609). Benson and O'Reilly's (2018) recent work in Panama and Malaysia focuses on such privileged lifestyle migrants. They reveal how lifestyle migrants to these countries, acting as 'neoliberal subjects' reproduce historical and structural inequalities, a theme that is mirrored in the case of Brazilian migration but, as we shall see, with important differences. In a similar vein, Kunz (2016) observes that 'expatriates', a term that, shares some overlap with 'lifestyle migrant', often applies to those who are, 'privileged by citizenship, class or race' (p.89). She thus writes of a need, 'to turn the construction of the category itself into the object of analysis' (p.96). To this end she argues for treating the term 'expatriate' as a 'category of practice' as opposed to a 'category of analysis' (p.89). Employing such an approach, she argues, will help us research

the term, 'while resisting a reified understanding of it' (ibid.). So too then, should we treat the term 'lifestyle migrant'. Rather than directly comparing Brazilian 'lifestyle' migrants with Brazilian 'economic' migrants, it would be more productive to analyse how identification with the term 'lifestyle migrant' is operationalised as a 'category of practice' by middle class Brazilians. This is especially pertinent since, unlike Kunz's work on expatriates, the need amongst many middle class Brazilian migrants to distinguish their situation from 'labour migrants', a practice that Kunz shows expatriates also often engage in, takes on a different dimension when, to an outside observer, the differences between those who have moved for 'economic' reasons and those who have done so for 'lifestyle' ones, may not be as obvious. This is because London's Brazilians tend to come from a relatively thin cross-section of society, drawing most frequently from the 'B' and 'C' classes. However, the line between these two is becoming thinner in Brazil (Klein et al. 2018). Further, as Kearney and Beserra (2004) observe, as a result of migration, 'the borders between class identities are typically blurred or even non-existent' (p.4). This is compounded by Margolis' observation that, although many middle-class Brazilian migrants may benefit from a 'colonial privilege' (Benson & Reilly 2018), this 'privilege' is tempered by the fact that they are citizens of, rather than migrants to, a former colony and, as Margolis' (2013) observes, are often viewed as such by others. From the other side, the distance between the two class groups is further reduced by the elevation in social status that members of 'C' class may enjoy by migrating to London. She explains,

[T]he simple fact of living in England... connotes middle class independent status regardless of the type of jobs Brazilians hold there. Then, too, Brazilians in London – middle class and otherwise – are seen as part of an undifferentiated mass of immigrants from Latin America (2013).

London thus has the effect of flattening out class distinctions that were perhaps more obvious back in Brazil. This is especially the case considering members of the B and C classes will often, in the beginning at least, work side by side in the same jobs. As Torresan (2007) notes, this differentiates Brazilians who migrate to London over those who chose Portugal who often maintained a middle class lifestyle at the destination and thus did not experience any kind of downward social mobility. Where Brazilians in Portugal were viewed as ‘middle-class skilled migrants’ (p.108), those who Torresan researched in London, ‘associated their middle-class identity almost exclusively with their previous status in Brazil’ (ibid.). So too, where establishing middle class status in Portugal, ‘relied on the intensive exchange of perceptions and stereotypes between the host population and the immigrants (ibid.), in London, middle-class status, ‘was recognised only by fellow Brazilians’ and that they are normally ‘[i]nvisible to most English’ (ibid.). A consequence to this sudden muddling of class borders in London then is that the migrants from a higher-class position will often emphasise their distinctiveness from the group they see as ‘economic’ lower class migrants. As Martins Junior (2014) writes, 'the greatest differentiation occurs among Brazilians themselves' (p.15).

It may appear that Brazilian migrants, working in identical jobs, are an undifferentiated and homogenous group, but we should pay attention to the divisions within what may appear from the outside as unified (Martins Junior 2017). As Stephens et al. observe, ‘[a]lthough the “same” action in different contexts may appear identical to an observer, the meaning of a given action derives from the ideas, practices, and material conditions of the context in which that action takes place (2007, p.827). Although it may appear that Brazilian migrants are all motivated by the same economic concerns, may often appear homogenous in terms of their employment in London, the professed values that drive

their desire for employment often differ. As Olwig (2007) reminds us, '[m]igrants' narratives should not be treated as simply factual accounts of moves... to achieve well defined goals. They are also modes of accounting for lives within social and cultural frameworks that give meaning and purpose to the individuals involved' (p.99).

Lifestyle migration and ideology

Hofstede (1980) found that a key corollary of the emergence of individualism is affluence since affluence leads to financial independence and thus allows for the possibility of independence from in-groups. However, as Triandis (1995) points out, it is amongst the middle classes that individualism is most prevalent. He argues that elites have an interest in maintaining collectivist traditions which preserve their status, since collectivism privileges hierarchy over equality (Dumont 1970). At the same time, he asserts that those from lower classes do not have the means to seriously challenge these traditions either. Therefore, 'individualism is maximal in the middle class' (Bellah et al. *seen in* Triandis 1995, p.30). As Igarashi and Saito (2014) also argue, individualist cosmopolitanism is often tied to higher economic cultural and social capital. This connection between individualism and middle class status has often been noted by lifestyle migration researchers (Eimermann 2015; Korpela 2014). Lifestyle migration has also been linked to the related concept of 'ideological migration' (Zaban 2015; 2016). The problem here is that all migration is 'ideological' so the question is, which ideology is it being motivated by? What do we mean when we refer to 'economic' migration over 'lifestyle' migration? Giddens (1991) defines 'lifestyle' as 'a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity' (p.81). The implication for migration studies then is that people can move not only because they experience 'material alienation' (Portes & DeWind 2004) but 'societal

alienation' (Dashefsky & Lazerwitz 1983). The role of globalisation in motivating lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly 2009) is key here. Mediascapes (Appadurai 1996) have the power to not only offer those in the Global South idealised images of life in the Global North in terms of the material but the immaterial, 'societal' idealisations. Therefore, it is not just the imagining of material benefits that can make migration destinations attractive but the immaterial, 'quality of life' aspects too. In fact, for some lifestyle migrants there may actually be a reduction in material comfort in exchange for an increase in 'quality of life' (Benson 2011; Carling & Jolivet 2016). It is important to make it clear that, strictly in terms of economic goals (ie. financial gain), many of those I interviewed had a higher *material* quality of life in Brazil, but they were willing to sacrifice this for the 'lifestyle' they experience in London. This is reflected in Carling and Jolivet's quantitative findings that, in contrast to the other nationalities they researched, the Brazilians they interviewed 'tend[ed] to be more satisfied with the quality-of-life impacts of migration than with the financial benefit' (2016, p.39). Halfacree (2004) cautions against setting up a dualism of economic and non-economic drivers for migration since the non-economic factors will usually be considered of secondary importance. However, what is noticeable about how lifestyle migration is characterised in the literature is that 'economic hardship' is not emphasised as a key motivation to migrate. In her study of Northern European lifestyle migration to the Algarve, Torkington (2010) notes that, '[t]his type of migration is clearly not motivated by economic hardship or the search for work or some form of financial security (p.102). There are questions then about the role of employment in lifestyle migration projects.

Clearly there are many lifestyle migrants who move to the Algarve as a retirement project and so occupy a different, less active role within the country's economy (Benson 2012). But, there are also many who move well before retirement age and continue to work once they have migrated. Benson's work mentions many businesses in rural France which

were set up and run by British migrants. Torkington describes these lifestyle migrants as using work as simply, 'a means to an end'. For Benson, the aim of the migration project is often to return to, 'something of a life 'lost' in Britain' (2012a, p.1687). Employment is only how they achieve this. This is also developed in the Brazilian migration literature. Torresan (2012) points out that it is how financial capital is spent that reveals the true motivations behind the desire to earn it. As one of her interviewees frames the issue, 'when you ask me if I think I'm an economic immigrant, the idea of economic migration is directly related to my ideal of life' (p.120). Torresan describes this 'ideal of life' as a, 'middle-class ideology that included notions of individualism, citizenship, modernity, and democracy' (2012, p.117). A key difference in the case of Brazilian migration to London is that it is closer to an ideal of life 'imagined' than an ideal of 'life lost'.

Individualism as freedom and anonymity

One of the most salient aspects of lifestyle migration then is the strongly individualist ideology which it is characterised by. This individualism often manifests as a privileging of individual freedom. O'Reilly (2014), identifies the 'imaginaries... that shape lifestyle migration' as, 'the search for self- realisation, for escape and freedom from prior constraints' (p.220). Here though, a key way that middle class Brazilian migrants are distinct from those in the bulk of the lifestyle migration literature emerges. Unlike most forms of lifestyle migration which tends to be urban to rural (Benson & O'Reilly 2009), theirs is urban to urban in nature. Although the ideal of freedom remains pertinent, the way they envisage and relate to the particular freedom that migrating to a 'global city' (Sassen 1991) can provide makes them most similar to Griffiths and Maile's (2014) work on British lifestyle migrants to Berlin. They explain how one interviewee 'Andy, felt, 'Berlin's history and its reputation as a 'rebellious' city represented freedom from constraint and the ability 'to be who you are'

(p.150). Perhaps though, the most thorough investigation into freedom as an ideological value amongst lifestyle migrants comes from Korpela's (2014) study of Westerners living in India. Korpela found that many of her interviewees articulated their entire migration project from a radically individualistic perspective, centred on notions of 'self-realisation' and 'freedom of choice', '[t]he goal of lifestyle migration is happiness and individual satisfaction' (p.41), and, 'the aim is to improve one's personal life, not the conditions within wider society' (p.34). Related to freedom is the experience of anonymity, or rather freedom through anonymity. As Conradson and Lathan note in their work on lifestyle migration from New Zealand to London, 'blending in', achieving anonymity in London forms part of the way in which their interviewees articulated the 'affective possibilities' for freedom that London offered (2007). This is by no means a new phenomenon. As Florida (2012) writes, as far back as the 1920s, Carolyn Ware had observed that the residents of New York's Greenwich Village had come, 'to seek escape from their community, their families, or themselves'. Further, they were, 'intensely individualistic in both their social relations and their point of view'. They had disdain for, 'the joining habit' and instead took, 'full advantage of both the selectiveness and anonymity the city offered'. Instead of a traditional life, 'they maintained individual ties with friends scattered all over the city' (1935, pp.5, 37 *seen in* Florida 2012, p.200). Florida describes this reliance on individualistic 'weak ties', rather than strong interdependent social networks as the freedom of 'quasi-anonymity' and asserts that many viewed this as a driver to migrate to large cities. Florida of course envisioned this as a characteristic of what he termed the 'creative class'. What makes lifestyle migrants noteworthy is that they display similar values despite no necessary involvement in creative professions. In the case of many Brazilian migrants in London, although they typically will work in service jobs (at least in the beginning), the drivers that influence their decision to

migrate are closer to those which motivate Florida's 'creative class'. It is as if the values of the 'creative class' have now been internalised more widely.

Following Ware's observations, the desire for freedom can also be read as freedom from collective identity; the desire for mobility of identity through individualisation. For many lifestyle migrants, this can form part of a strategy of distinguishing one's situation from one's compatriots. Benson's work on British lifestyle migrants in the Dordogne provides a good example of individualisation at work within migrant discourse. She writes of the phenomenon of othering one's peers to assert one's individuality as a migrant. She writes that her subjects, 'expressed their continued attempts to distinguish themselves from others, emphasizing that their new lives in the Lot were significantly different from their compatriots' (2009, p.122). One of her subjects explains:

We all come out here and like to pretend that we're the only people here; we all like to say, 'I hope the British invasion stops soon.' I certainly wouldn't want to live in areas that I've heard talked about in the Dordogne, for example ... it's like a British colony (p.121)

For many British migrants in France, it is the British migrants in Spain who serve as the 'other' from whom they distinguish their own situation and practices as a migrant. Benson points out that there is an element of class elitism in the way that British migrants in France refer to their Spanish counterparts. '[M]any of the migrants also emphasised how easy it was to migrate to Spain and how little effort incomers had to invest in order to establish their lives there' (2012, p.124). More generally, lifestyle migrants are often keen to demarcate themselves from 'tourists' (Benson & O'Reilly 2009). And here too we can find parallels in the wider literature on Brazilian migrants in London, many of whom are keen to demarcate themselves from 'those other Brazilians' who do not mix with the 'host' society (Horst et al. 2014). Many of Horst et al.'s (2016) interviewees emphasised the role that their social class

played in their migration project and saw a class divide between themselves and their peers (p.102). Thus, in the case of both groups, they seek to distinguish themselves from the ‘other Brazilians’ or the ‘other British expats’ who they insist are completely unrelated to in their attitude to their migratory project and in their practices and experiences once they have migrated.

Identification with ‘world citizenship’ and distancing from the ‘transnational’ other.

Korpela (2014) observes, ‘lifestyle migrants seem to be a perfect empirical example of what sociologists of individualism have been theorising about’ (p.34). It is not surprising that ‘world citizenship’ (Heater 2004) would appear in the discourse of lifestyle migrants, uprooted as they are, both literally and in terms of self-identification, from the culture they were born into. In fact, Williams et al. (2018) have found evidence that those who identify as a ‘world citizen’ are more likely to migrate than their compatriots in the first place. What I wish to draw out is how an identity as ‘world citizen’ is often used by lifestyle migrants to contrast their situation with a ‘transnational identity’. Here ‘world citizenship’ can be linked to an individualist, anational stance towards forms of collective identity based around place of origin. Bookchin connects the concept to inhabitants of the *cosmopolis*: the ancient proto-‘world city’ and sets it against the citizens of the *polis*, the traditional city-state (1982, p.157).

Within Korpela’s work we find an Israeli woman who, refusing to raise her children with any sense of collectivist identity, instead allowed them total freedom of choice in this respect. She explained, ‘We are global players, we don’t want any identification of religion, nothing. We don’t want any traditional mark’ (p.32). A cosmopolitan identification with ‘world citizenship’, often combined with a distancing with national identity is a trait that can be found across borders (almost by definition), and yet it is still largely the preserve of those with the means to realise it in terms of access to the necessary mobility and cultural capital.

As Heater observes, 'world citizens, in a full sense, are something of an elite' (Heater 2004, p.67). Of course, some scholars have pointed out that cosmopolitanism is a flexible concept and can be adopted by those from other classes. This has led Werbner (1999) to write of 'working class cosmopolitanism'. Still, as Igarashi and Saito (2014) remind us, cosmopolitanism is often tied to possession of economic as well as particular kinds of cultural and social capital. Unlike semi-documented Brazilian migrants (Dias 2009), the privilege of possessing an EU passport for example, allows many middle class Brazilians to realise a cosmopolitan identity in terms of 'world citizenship' in a way that is not available to those without. This speaks to Kunz's (2016) earlier observation that 'citizenship' can be a key enabler of privileged forms of migration.

Brazilians in London

In terms of research gaps then, as noted there has been a lack of attention to flows of privileged migration from the Global South to the Global North. Further, within these migration streams, the work that 'lifestyle migrant' does as a 'category of practice' (Kunz 2016) has likewise been neglected, especially in terms of what identification with the terms shows about the ways in which it reflects various forms of social, racial and regional inequalities in Brazil and how these inequalities are reinterpreted at the migration destination. To this end, this section draws on my qualitative empirical work with middle class Brazilian migrants to argue that many of them should be classified as an example of 'South to North' lifestyle migration. In turn, it is an opportunity to explore the underlying race and identity issues that surround lifestyle migration in the context of Brazilian racial, ethnic and class identities. It examines how, in common with lifestyle migrants as characterised in the literature, freedom through both anonymity (Conradson & Latham 2007; Florida 2012) and mobility (Benson 2011) are central

values. As the quantitative evidence also suggests (Evans et al. 2011; Evans et al. 2015; Carling & Jolivet 2016), there are a considerable number of Brazilian migrants in the UK who do not frame their motivation to migrate in economic terms (*see also* Martins Junior & Dias 2013). Indeed, many of my respondents came from privileged economic backgrounds in Brazil. Their desire to migrate to London was not, they stated, due to better employment prospects and similarly, the work they undertook, especially in the early years of their migration project was always viewed as a ‘means to an end’, the end often being to experience the lifestyle that London had to offer rather than straight forward financial accumulation. When probed about the motivations for their migration, attraction to London and desire to live and work there, the most salient theme that emerged from their discourse was a desire for freedom which they interpreted in two key ways. The first was freedom as the feeling of anonymity living in a new city can generate (Conradson & Latham 2007; Florida 2012) The second was freedom via mobility: both as freedom of movement and as freedom from (or mobility of) collective identity (Benson 2011; Ware 1935).

Yet, at the same time, while there are class differences, ‘one should be careful not to exaggerate these differences and give the impression that there are two entirely different types of migrants’ (Olwig 2007, p.89). The emphasis on difference in the discourse of the interviewees can be read as in part a reaction to the fact that many may occupy a liminal position between the two categories of ‘lifestyle’ and ‘economic’. Rather than try to divide them into neat categories of economic and non-economic migrants it is perhaps more productive to investigate the liminal space between these two categories and question what is meant by an ‘economic’ and a ‘lifestyle’ migrant and how these categories are operationalised by my interviewees in order to preserve and recreate class, and often by implication, racial, distance.

Methodology

My data is drawn from a total of thirty-three in depth qualitative interviews in London conducted in either English or Portuguese between April and September 2017. Some interviewees were interviewed twice whereby I used the second interviewee to provide feedback and more detail on the answers they gave in the first. Although exact figures are difficult to come by, the Brazilian population in the UK is estimated to be around 250,000 with the majority based in London (Evans et al. 2015). This was the rationale for choosing London as the field site. Ages ranged from 24 to 59 with an average age of 37. Interviewees hailed mainly from the South and South-East of Brazil with Sao Paulo the most common state and most were from middle-class (B class) backgrounds in Brazil in that at least one parent had had a skilled profession and most had attended university. Although the majority of my interviewees were from relatively privileged backgrounds, a small number could be said to be from the lower middle or 'C' (Neri 2014) class (although only one, 'Bernardo' appears in this empirical section). As mentioned, this article does not set out to directly compare these two groups as a kind of dichotomy. Indeed, like many dichotomies there are cases that do not fit, and the reality is always more complex. Rather this article, uses this dichotomy, as it appears in the discourse of the interviewees, to examine wider social issues. Interviewees worked in a wide variety of occupations from unskilled (cleaner) to skilled (dentist). The most common occupations were in sectors such as catering. Many were long term residents of London and had 'moved up the ladder' in terms of their employment status. Others were new arrivals who had either managed to transfer horizontally from their job in Brazil to an equivalent job in London, or who were starting out in unskilled work. There were also longer-term interviewees who had not managed to progress in their employment and were still working unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. Interviewees were recruited via 'snowball' sampling (Margolis 2009): a method that uses those already interviewed to refer new potential interviewees. Initial

interviewees were recruited via social media, social networks and, ‘on site recruitment’ (Krueger & Casey 2008) at a language school in central London. The language school proved a useful location to find newcomers since learning English is often prioritised and is frequently given as a main motivation for migrating (Evans et al. 2015). A total of three newcomers were interviewed from the school and a further three ‘snowballed’ from them. Most interviewees had been living in London on a long-term basis. Very few were receptive towards the idea of ever returning to live in Brazil regardless of how long they had spent in London.

Individualism, freedom and anonymity

Individualist freedom as anonymity was prompted by the fact that they were removed both literally in space and psychologically from ties and responsibilities associated with their family back in Brazil. There can be constraining effects of living as a known and interdependently connected person within an established community (Prado 1995). This theme of freedom as escape from constraint is one that featured heavily in the discourse of many interviewees. Take ‘Ariana’, a yoga teacher, from Bahia. Ariana’s upbringing was upper middle class and at the time of her decision to migrate she was also independently wealthy due to her previous career in Brazil as a concert promoter:

Interviewer: What did you like about London that made you decide to stay?

Ariana: First of all I was by myself more or less... I was by myself without family for the first time so that was great, the feeling of freedom. I like to feel free... I felt I was kind of more free to feel myself as independent.

Another interviewee, ‘Alessandro’ from Mato Grosso do Sul described the sense of freedom via anonymity thus:

I think everything's allowed and that's the good thing about London, you're kind of invisible, you know? It doesn't matter which clothing you go out in, doesn't matter if you have money or a car. It doesn't really matter.

'Vitor' from Rio Grande do Sul not only illustrates the importance of freedom within the interviewees discourse but is also a good example of how many interviewees experienced a reduction in material standards of living in exchange for 'freedom' as they imagined it. At a young age Vitor was made the director of a regional branch of his family's business. Despite the wealth and independence, he enjoyed as a result, he decided to move to London, 'as a kind of adventure' and spent the next few years working as a bartender and other low skilled catering jobs. His reasons for wanting to live in London were exclusively tied to individualist values based around freedom and anonymity. He summed up his attitude thus:

I love London... It's a completely different culture from Brazil. As people don't really care what you have. That's my feeling. Maybe I'm wrong but I feel here, people don't worry about who you are. In Brazil if you have a nice car or house or expensive clothes. It makes a huge difference as to how they will treat you but I don't feel that here. As a joke since I bet my friend, I will go to work wearing pyjamas. And I did. And nobody even cared! I was in the tube wearing pyjamas and he was filming 'oh look V is wearing pyjamas going to his work' and I did that intentionally to prove nobody cared. And that for me... I was looking for my freedom when I moved from Porto Alegre to São Paulo. Well I have to say I found the freedom here.

It is worth noting that this idea of not being judged as a known person but rather treated as a free individual (DaMatta 1991) is largely imagined in the sense that it is dependent on the subjective perspective of the lifestyle migrant and their lack of social ties (or use of 'weak ties, as Florida calls them). A similar discourse can be found in the lifestyle migration

literature. For example, Oliver finds that many of her interviewees, British migrants to Spain, expressed a similar feeling. One explains his reasons to leave England:

‘I got sick of the whole treadmill... all the people talked about how much they had, what cars they drive. Whereas here nobody cares. No one gives a shit who you are... You can have fifty million pesetas or nothing at all (Oliver 2007, p.132).

‘Objectively’ speaking it is hard to say that London or Spain is less materialistic or superficial than the places of origin of these migrants. Instead, what seems to have changed is the migrant’s imagined relationship to the space they now live in.

Anonymity interrupted

Although an (imagined) sense of anonymity, of ‘blending in’, was often cited as a key attraction of living in London. There were times when this would be interrupted by their perceived identity as a ‘Brazilian’ which would be projected onto them in their encounters with others. Sometimes this was conveyed in a negative sense. Ariana, remarked:

But, we also have a life before we come here, we have universities, we have good education, we're not like in the jungle and the people treat us as if we are coming from a favela.

Another interviewee, Tara, 28, from Sao Paulo, who was unemployed, felt that her status as an ‘immigrant’ had precluded her from finding an equivalent job in her previous profession:

I sent my CV to so many places. Barely an answer...I'm starting to get the feeling that I'll never get a proper job here. I'm seen as an immigrant that can only work in a cafe or reception. I'm not good enough to do anything else.

Others reported encounters whereby stereotypes of an ‘exotic’ other would be projected onto them. Julia, 30, from Sao Paulo, who was one of the few who claimed to have migrated for

economic reasons, who worked as a waiter in a restaurant in the City of London described how the customers would often react to her:

They often ask where I'm from and every time I tell them I'm Brazilian they usually do a little dance with their hands and say, 'oooh Brazil!'. It's so silly.

Another interviewee, Fred, from Minas Gerais who worked as a research consultant, described his encounters:

Fred: a lot of peoples' first reaction is something along the lines of, "Wow, I would have never guessed. Your English is so good." That tends to be a lot of peoples' reaction. I mean initially, I used to take that as, "Oh seriously? I can't be Brazilian with my English being good?" At this point, I just take it in stride, because I get where they're coming from... you can tend to tell that they're like, "Oh, wow. That is so exotic. That is so cool. You're so different and stuff."

Interviewer: So it's generally quite positive?

Fred: No, yeah. It's a positive. It's like, how do I put this? It's sort of like there's an othering going on, but that othering isn't so much in a negative sense. There's very much a kind of curiosity behind it. It's not like, "Oh my God, ew, you're different to me. Get away from me." It's more along the lines of, "Oh wow, you're different from me. Tell me more."

Fred's comments show that this process of 'othering' can work both ways and, in fact, many reported positive experiences. It has been noted that Brazilians do generally enjoy a good reputation abroad (Margolis 1994) and in London this is no exception. Bernardo, 38, a personal trainer from Minas Gerais stated:

They, well, I never had like problems with, because I'm Brazilian, actually when they noticed I was Brazilian they'd be happy they were like 'oh nice you're Brazilian!'

Regardless of whether the stereotypes that Brazilians encounter in London are taken positively or negatively, they never the less persist and can thus interrupt the sense of anonymity that London can create. What these kinds of encounters perhaps help to reveal, is why so many Brazilians feel it is important to differentiate their motivations and experiences from those of the 'typical Brazilian migrant'. As the above vignettes reveal they are often faced with a stereotype of Brazil as an 'exotic' and underdeveloped place. Considering these kinds of stereotypes, it is perhaps understandable why so many rely on a discourse of identity mobility which sets them apart from the 'typical transnational' Brazilian as 'other'.

Individualism, freedom and mobility: individualisation and 'world citizenship'

This section will discuss the importance of mobility, particularly mobility of identity and the ways it is articulated. For them mobility, or freedom of movement, is realised both literally and as an ideological value. This type of mobility is often articulated in post-nationalist terms such as 'world citizenship'. It is often dependent on social class, and, more specifically, educational, financial and symbolic capital, and constructed via a process of individualisation where by the migrants differentiate their experience of migration as an exercise in individual discovery and self-fulfilment. In keeping with Korpela's (2014) observations, many interviewees would describe themselves as 'citizens of the world' or 'global citizens', a trait which seems to be common amongst many young middle class people independent of nationality. Take, 'Tissi', 36, from Sao Paulo who worked as a catering manager and was a long-time resident of London who described her motivation to migrate thus:

But the most important for me in terms of freedom is just being independent and not relying on parents or husband, boss because I'm also self-employed but also being a

citizen of the world... As an immigrant, freedom is the most important for me and I always try to conquer my space in the world because I want to be a world citizen. I want to be anywhere. Wherever I want.

This is best expressed perhaps by 'Franco', a chef from Minas Gerais who was also a long-term resident. He declared, 'I've never felt like I'm Brazilian. I'm not from anywhere, I'm a nomad'. Another interviewee, 'Caio', who had first left Brazil over twenty years ago describes his relationship to his Brazilian identity:

Caio: I find that my blood, actually, is very European. I don't have Brazilian blood. My family is Italian on one side and my other side is Portuguese. Mixed a little with Brazilian. My great-great grandmother... was Indian [indigenous]

Interviewer: So, you don't feel Brazilian?

Caio: No, I don't feel Brazilian. No, Brazilian culture, I remain totally alienated from it. I stay out of it. I don't adapt well to Brazilian culture [translation mine].

Here we see that mobility takes on two senses. First, is the mobility that access to economic, social and cultural capital affords in their ability to obtain an ancestral EU passport and thus cross borders with much greater ease than those Brazilians who must first obtain visas.

Possession of an EU passport helps Caio to identify as 'European' able to cross national borders and construct a more cosmopolitan identity. Second is the related concept that this freedom of movement is tied to and perhaps even allows for a greater mobility in terms of stance towards national identity, which could explain why it is important for Caio to feel 'European' as opposed to 'Brazilian'. As we have seen, many Brazilians face a certain kind of tension between their identity as an individual and their identity as a 'Brazilian migrant'.

The fact that an alignment with an individualist ideological outlook has the potential to be interrupted by projected stereotypes of 'Brazilian migrants' who are typically imagined by mainstream as 'exotic', uneducated and, often, 'non-white', makes it even more important to

reinforce an identity as an individual. As a free ‘world citizen’ who, in Franco’s words, is not from ‘anywhere’. It is perhaps no surprise then that a key way that this individualist, cosmopolitan identity is articulated was via, typically unfavourable, comparisons to those ‘other Brazilians’ who, they asserted, had moved to London for more straight forward economic reasons and who made active use of the transnational Brazilian networks in the city for work, residence and leisure. The emphasised divide between these two classes of Brazilian migrants speaks to Cohen et al.’s observation that, ‘issues of social exclusion and class still have resonance’ (2015, p.157) within lifestyle migration and mobility since a key differentiator is that these lower middle class migrants typically will not have the privilege of being able to secure an ancestral EU passport and so will often live and work undocumented or ‘semi-documented’ instead. My interviewees would often take pains to underline that they did not fall into this category. Take ‘Leandro’, 40, from Sao Paulo. On arrival he worked in a cafe but quickly progressed up the social ladder and at the time of interview had recently moved to Switzerland where he worked as an analyst. He answered the following question thus:

Interviewer: Why did you choose London?

Leandro: Just to differentiate the sort of immigrations. Most of the people I met at first... I realised the reasons why they left was pretty much the same, economic reasons. Mine were not purely economic, I was just fed up with being in the same place, nothing to do with money... Most of the people I met when I first arrived they wanted to go to London, save money and move back. I didn’t have this intention. My goal was not saving money, perhaps learning.

Many interviewees were disparaging of these ‘other Brazilians’. As ‘Gilberto’ from São Paulo state puts it:

I mean everyone's free to do whatever they want but in my view you miss so much. If you get just enclosed in your small community, you don't learn, you don't interact with British people so you miss a lot of opportunities... It's not ideal is it? ... I don't see it with good eyes to be honest. This thing.

My interviewees would draw a distinction then by asserting that, instead of viewing a 'super-diverse' London as a threat or obstacle to fulfilling their migration goals they saw these aspects as drivers to migrate. Instead of retreating into a transnational identity, they displayed a more cosmopolitan attitude in their desire for, 'unfamiliar cultural encounters' (Ley 2004). There is good evidence to suggest that many Brazilian migrants feel this way about migrating to a multicultural centre of 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007). The quantitative findings of Evans et al. (2015) demonstrate that there are sizeable numbers for whom a more individualistic framing of their migration experience is called for. Although social networks may often help Brazilian migrants find initial employment (Evans et al. 2015, p.29), many respondents in their survey stated that it was unimportant for them to socialise with Brazilians (46%) while many avoided socialising with Brazilians altogether (34%). Similarly, when questioned on their leisure activities, the majority chose non-Brazilian venues and consumed non-Brazilian entertainment media. As one of my interviewees explained when asked about her attitude towards the transnational Brazilian culture which existed in London, 'To be honest, all the Brazilians I know moved to London to escape Brazilian culture!'.

Race and contested meanings of Brazilian identity

It is worth returning to Caio's comments about not 'feeling' Brazilian. What is the 'Brazilian culture' that Caio does not identify with? It is well documented that European Brazilians from the South are in some ways not considered to be 'real' Brazilians. As Schommer (2012) mentions in many parts of the South, 'the descendants of Italian immigrants self-denominate

themselves and are denominated by non-descendants as "gringos", or simply "Italians."
[translation mine]' (p.110). There is a tendency to think of 'real' Brazilians as *mestiço* (mixed Portuguese and Indigenous) or *mulatto* (mixed Portuguese and Black), as reflected in Freyre's (1945;1968) concept of Brazilian identity being based around *mestiçagem* (mixing). Schommer claims that for this reason Brazil is intercultural rather than multicultural (2012). The implication can be that those who are not mixed (either entirely White, entirely Black or entirely Indigenous) are in some way less Brazilian than those who are. Consider Caio's description of the town he grew up in:

Londrina is a European city ... The people are all European ... Italian, Spanish ... You know, the culture is different. If you go to the Northeast, the culture is very different. There are then clear racial connotations and practices of racial distancing in the discourse of some of migrants even though it may not necessarily be made explicit. The closest my interviewees came to talking about this social divide in terms of race came from Laura, 30, who remarked that she did not often go to Brazilian clubs or parties. When I asked her why not she replied:

I don't like, I'm gonna be a bit race, not racist but most of the Brazilians here are not really my type of Brazilian... if you go to a Brazilian party for example it's like people that come here without articles without things and they come to try to support family so it's a different reality to mine.

It seems then that the discourse around distancing often has an implicit (and occasionally, explicit) racial element to it. Thus, for some, denying a Brazilian identity, becomes a way to distance themselves from a racialised idea of the typical Brazilian migrant as poor, undocumented, dark skinned and subaltern. There are certainly some white Brazilians who do deny their Brazilian identity to 'pass' as European. On more than one occasion interviewees

would inform me they would use their EU passports as a means to ‘hide’ the fact they were Brazilian when applying for jobs or in certain social encounters. This may be because some Brazilians feel that their nationality may be a barrier to achieving higher social status in London as was reported earlier by Tara.

Lifestyle researchers such as Lundström (2017) have written of the concept of ‘white capital’ in the context of migration, but it is worth noting that she claims that white South Americans do not benefit from this (p.84). Further, although there is a stereotype that the B class are ‘white’ and the C class ‘non-white’, as Caldeira (2000) points out these stereotypes are often not reflected in reality. Her research on crime in Sao Paulo showed that although her interviewees were quick to associate ‘Nordistas’ (people from the North) as dark skinned, poor and prone to criminality, many of them reported that their experiences of crime had frequently been at the hands of whites.

It seems then that the reason for this emphasis on social (and by implication racial and regional) divisions is often precisely because the divisions in social status become blurred in London since many Brazilians, regardless of race or region often end up working side by side in unskilled job sectors and, as previously noted by Margolis, are often seen by others as an ‘undifferentiated mass’ (2013). Caio occupies a liminal space in this sense. Although he emphasised the cultural reasons for his migration, it is worth noting that he was not proficient enough to conduct the interview in English and he worked in an unskilled occupation of cleaner (alongside Brazilians from other states) despite coming from a middle-class background in Brazil. It is perhaps because of these factors that he was so keen to emphasise the differences between his own outlook and motivations to migrate over the ‘typical’ Brazilian migrant. Further, Laura’s occupation, a fashion stylist, did not rely on a high level of proficiency in English and did not require any formal qualifications meaning she was able to maintain her career and thus more effectively preserve social status across borders with

less trouble than Caio. However, it is also worth noting that another interviewee, Catarina, 33, a digital marketer, who reported she had always felt alienated from Brazilian culture was from Sao Paulo and of *mestiço* ancestry. Unlike Caio, but like Laura, there had been no ‘downward shift’ in her social status, having managed to secure a job of equivalent seniority in the same field as she had worked in Sao Paulo. It was her pre-existing English language ability that perhaps secured this.

Conclusion

This article ultimately argued for middle class Brazilian migration to London as an example of ‘South to North’ lifestyle migration, a migration stream category that has been neglected within the lifestyle migration literature. It is important to expand the category of lifestyle migration to allow for cases from North to South. Restricting the definition to movement from developed to the developing countries risks a kind of ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer & Schiller 2003). The emergence of a global class division extends across borders and the status and migration motivations of the middle class of those countries requires an understanding of their mobilities which does not restrict the classification of their movement based solely on the status of their country of origin. There is a tendency to frame all free migration streams from the Global South to the Global North as being economically motivated. Instead, this article proposed that social class, over national origin could be a more fundamental determinant of what should be categorised as lifestyle migration. It argued that some middle-class Brazilian migrants to be considered as ‘lifestyle migrants’ as this term is used in the literature, based on shared traits between the two in terms of motivations to migrate, identity as a migrant and ideological outlook. Specifically, an ideology of individualism is often emphasised in the lifestyle migration literature. This is important since we find that an individualist ideological outlook is also prevalent amongst many middle-class

Brazilian migrants to London thus bolstering the case for counting them as an example of lifestyle migration. Further, it explored the underlying themes which help to illuminate how the category of 'lifestyle migrant' as 'practice' (Kunz 2016) is used by Brazilians living in London. In the process it revealed how their situation differs to Global North lifestyle migrants. Popular discourse around the term 'economic migrant', with its associated negative media images, combined with the presence of a Brazilian migrants who may have moved for more tangible economic reasons mean that those Brazilians who see themselves as lifestyle migrants must seek to differentiate themselves from these negative stereotypes. It explored the idea that an individualist desire for 'quasi-anonymity' and 'mobility' not only in terms of freedom of movement but also mobility of identity was often confronted with exoticised stereotypes of 'otherness' from encounters with other inhabitants of the city. Therefore, the disavowal of a collective identity in favour of a more cosmopolitan individualism is mobilised by many middle-class Brazilian migrants to distinguish their situation from their 'transnational' compatriots which can be interpreted as a means by which many seek to distance themselves from wider identifications with the 'typical economic migrant' and thus subalternity. Within the social reality as perceived by Brazilian middle class migrants, that is, within the reality of their discourse, they contrast their cosmopolitan attitude to their migration experience with what they frame as lower class 'transnational' Brazilian others. Once in London, it is not necessarily possible to tell social background by occupation since many will work side by side in the beginning at least. Thus, cultural tastes and practices come to the fore in the discourse of many Brazilian self-professed 'lifestyle' migrants. This is especially the case for those who may occupy a liminal position in terms of how their social status may be viewed by 'others' in London. As we have seen, this discourse of othering is often racialised. Demographically speaking, there is a clear correlation between social class and race in Brazil. Yet, it is also not so easy as to make a clear case for lifestyle migration as

equivocal to 'white' migration. Indeed, we should be careful not to too closely associate lifestyle migration with 'whiteness'. Otherwise we are faced with the uneasy conclusion that any, privileged, middle-class migration from other 'Global South' countries such as India or China would not be 'lifestyle' migration. Martes (2011) asserts that social class is more important than national origin when it comes to issues of identity, motivations for migration and immigrant behaviour. It seems she may have a point, since the most notable feature of the various groups of migrants discussed in this article is not whether they are from or moving to developed or developing countries but rather that they are all members of a broadly similar global socio-economic class. This speaks to a concept of globalisation creating a class divide that extends beyond national boundaries; of an interior and exterior to Capital that is bounded by class. In terms of the limitations of the research, this paper was not intended as a direct comparison between different 'classes' of Brazilian migrants in London. However, a research agenda aiming to do this may prove useful in uncovering how terms such as 'economic' and 'lifestyle' migrant are negotiated from both sides of the social divide. Another important limitation is that the interviewees were all interviewed after they had migrated. This may lead to post hoc rationalisations for their motivations to do so. It would then be useful to interview those who had not yet migrated to compare their responses. This is partly the basis for recent fieldwork I have conducted in Brazil, the results of which will soon be published.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge one's positionality as a researcher. It is possible that some interviewees' responses were affected by the fact that they were being interviewed a British researcher. This may have led to some over emphasising their distancing from an identity as part of a 'transnational community' of Brazilians in London and instead framing themselves more closely to have they perceived the researcher's position within the social structure of London. Indeed, this relates to the fact that their position as lifestyle migrants in London distinguishes them from other types of lifestyle migrants as they

appear in the literature. To return to Benson and O'Reilly's (2018) work on lifestyle migrants in Panama and Malaysia, here the researchers emphasise that it is their interviewees' status as Western beneficiaries of a colonial past who adopt a neoliberal logic to experience their migration identity and trajectory as heavily individualised. This in turn affects how they are perceived by members of the destination countries. This both links Brazilian migration to Benson and O'Reilly's subjects and simultaneously sets it apart. Historical structural inequalities are reproduced through their migration to London, but the difference is that it is the structural inequalities of the migrants' own country of origin. This contrasts with the inequalities explored by Benson and O'Reilly between countries which colonised and those which were colonised.

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