

5-2023

A Narrative Research Study on How Brazilian Women Executives Build a Sense of Community and Belonging When Transferred to the United States

Silvia Regina Siqueira
University of Arkansas-Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd>



Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Commons](#), and the [Cultural Resource Management and Policy Analysis Commons](#)

Citation

Siqueira, S. R. (2023). A Narrative Research Study on How Brazilian Women Executives Build a Sense of Community and Belonging When Transferred to the United States. *Graduate Theses and Dissertations* Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/5087>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact scholar@uark.edu.

A Narrative Research Study on How Brazilian Women Executives Build a Sense of Community
and Belonging When Transferred to the United States

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Adult and Lifelong Learning

by

Silvia Regina Siqueira
Hillsdale College
Bachelor of Arts in International Business and French Literature, 1993
Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing
Master of Business in Marketing, 1997

May 2023
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

Kit Kacirek, Ed.D.
Dissertation Director

Jim Maddox, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Jules Beck, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Abstract

According to the American Immigration Council (2021), 14 percent of the United States population is foreign-born. Immigrants have enriched American culture and enhanced our influence in the world. People feel a need to belong and have an inherent desire for deep, lasting, and meaningful connections (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Research suggests that humans are fundamentally and pervasively motivated by a need to belong and the desire to form and maintain enduring interpersonal attachments (Allen, Kern, Rozek, McInerney & George, 2021). These authors also define immigrants' sense of belonging in terms of how they make sense of their social identification with people from their country of origin and their host society. As a psychological construct, the sense of belonging is understood as the extent to which an individual feels respected, valued, accepted, included, and connected to a social group or community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The purpose of this narrative case study is to create new knowledge by exploring how Brazilian women executives develop a sense of community and belonging while experiencing assimilation as they transition from Brazil to the United States. While abundant literature explores the assimilation of marginalized groups, few studies have investigated the experiences of executive women who have navigated the cultural abyss. The purpose of conducting this study is to understand how female Brazilian marketing and sales executives describe their experiences in developing a sense of community and belonging, and of membership, while experiencing assimilation. Specifically, the study explores these experiences through personal stories that participants tell about their journeys. It is the researcher's hope to bring understanding to how immigrants develop their sense of community and belonging when arriving with language proficiency, economic power, and access to resources to help support assimilation in the local community and organizations.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to:

- My review committee: Dr. Kit Kacirek, Dr. Jim Maddox, Dr. Jules Beck, and for their encouragement and honest feedback throughout this process.
- My family for their continued support to stay the course and not quit. Especially my husband, Kelly, who always found ways to give me time to focus and seek more knowledge.
- The outstanding Brazilian female executives who encouraged me to continue the research and provided important feedback throughout the process.
- I would like to dedicate this work to my mother, Silvia Maria Siqueira, who always believed in my potential and served as my role model in this process. She is the pioneer Silvia Siqueira to receive a Doctoral Degree in Education and now I follow her steps.

I will interview Brazilian women who are being transferred to USA on an international assignment as part of a career development opportunity. These women are highly educated and qualify for an L-1 (intercompany) VISA because of their executive or managerial level or specialized knowledge. These women are international assignees and high potential employees. These assignments are given for executives to have a deeper understanding of business strategy in the USA for implementation and adaptation to local culture when returning to Brazil. The length of time an L-1 visa holder can remain employed in the USA is limited. This visa is initially valid for assignments of up to three years and can be extended for two-year increments for a total period of five or seven years, depending upon the nature of the US job duties. Executive and managerial-level employees can hold L-1A status for up to seven years, whereas employees working in a capacity involving specialized knowledge have a maximum stay of five years.

Through a series of semi-structured interviews (in-person or virtual), participants will share their experiences integrating into a new society. The interview will focus on how participants define community to understand how they develop a sense of belonging in a new environment, the American culture. By focusing on respondents' actions and behaviors, this research will not only support local community efforts in support of immigrant's assimilation but also enhance organizational programs designed to support the development of a sense of community and belonging. The findings will support Brazilian women integrating into a new society, positively impacting their personal well-being and their workplace environment experience.

Table of Content

Chapter 1	1
Introduction	1
Background and Context	2
Problem statement	4
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions	5
Overview of Research Design	5
Rationale and Significance	7
Role of the Researcher	7
Researcher’s Lived Experiences	9
Researchers Assumptions	11
Definition of Key Terminology Used in the Study	11
Chapter 2	13
Introduction	13
Literature Review	13
Summary	13
Sociological Theories	15
Psychological Theories	19
Sense of Community	20
McMillan and Chavis’ Theory of Sense of Community	21
Cultural Assimilation	23
Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework	28
Chapter 3	31

Introduction	31
Research Question	32
Narrative Research	32
Research Sample	33
Data Collection Methods	34
Data Analysis	36
Ethical Considerations	38
Trustworthiness	39
Credibility	39
Dependability and confirmability	39
Delimitations	40
Summary	40
References	42
Appendix A	57
Appendix B	59

Chapter 1

Introduction

“What was still truth? What was still credible? And what would remain when I also learned about myself, about my own character and history from the knowledge stored in these archives?” -
Hermann Hesse

Immigrants have enriched American culture and enhanced our influence in the world. People feel a need to belong and have an inherent desire for deep, lasting, and meaningful connections (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The need to belong is a powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The sense of belonging has been investigated extensively among diverse social groups. According to Baumeister & Leary (1995), there is abundant evidence that social bonds form easily and Mann (1980) states that people in every society on earth belong to small primary groups that involve face-to-face, personal interactions.

The purpose of this narrative case study is to create new knowledge by exploring how Brazilian women executives develop a sense of community and belonging while experiencing assimilation as they transition from Brazil to the United States.

The findings from this study will offer guidance for a better understanding of highly qualified professional immigrant population and offer local communities and organizations a new perspective about how women from underrepresented groups (URGs) develop a sense of belonging.

Background and Context

According to the American Immigration Council (2021), 14 percent of the United States population is foreign-born. That represents 44.7 million immigrants, more than any other nation. Immigrant business owners have created millions of American jobs through major corporations and countless small businesses. In the most recent analysis, nearly 45 percent of firms on the Fortune 500 list were founded by immigrants or their children. According to George Will, “immigration is the entrepreneurial act of taking the risk of uprooting oneself and plunging into uncertainty” (Will, 2014). Immigrants have also enriched American culture and enhanced our influence in the world. The CATO Institute (2002) highlights that immigrants are integral to the American experiment. Successive waves of immigrants have kept our country demographically young, enriched our culture, and increased our productive capacity as a nation.

The sense of belonging is a psychological construct that has been investigated extensively among diverse social groups across various contexts (Hou, Schellenberg & Berry, 2018; Ahn, Davis, 2020; Rainey, Dancy, Mickelson, Stearns, & Moller, 2018). Various terms such as sense of community, sense of relatedness, sense of connectedness, sense of membership, and sense of belonging are used interchangeably to describe this construct. Research suggests that humans are fundamentally and pervasively motivated by a need to belong and the desire to form and maintain enduring interpersonal attachments (Allen, Kern, Rozek, McInerney & George, 2021). These authors also define immigrants’ sense of belonging in terms of how they make sense of their social identification with people from their country of origin and their host society. As a psychological construct, the sense of belonging is understood as the extent to which an individual feels respected, valued, accepted, included, and connected to a social group or community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

All individuals living in a plural society experience some form of acculturation (Berry et al., 2011). Acculturation research suggests that a strong sense of belonging is critical to the adaptation and well-being of immigrants in their society of settlement (Turner & Tajfel, 1986; Kayama & Yamakawa, 2020; Berry & Hou, 2017). For Berry (1990, p. 235), acculturation represents more accurately what immigrants experience: “The process by which individuals change, both by being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes underway in their own culture”.

Assimilation, on the other hand, is a process in which formerly distinct and separate groups come to share a common culture and merge socially. As society undergoes assimilation, differences among groups decrease. (Healey & Stepnick, 2022). The sociologist Milton Gordon (1964) made major contributions to the assimilation theories and defined acculturation as a step in the assimilation process (Healey & Stepnick, 2022). Although both terms are often used interchangeably, this study will use the term assimilation when referring to immigrant’s experiences.

This study will focus on career-driven Brazilian women who are highly educated and qualify for an L-1 (intercompany) VISA. Most professionals transferring to the United States do so under an intercompany transfer process known as the L-1 Visa. This process allows a foreign company to transfer certain individuals to its subsidiary (or controlled affiliate) in the USA if the person being transferred has been continuously employed for at least 12 consecutive months by the foreign organization. To qualify for the L-1 Visa, the individual being transferred must be an “executive” or “managerial” level employee or an employee having “specialized knowledge” that would not be available within the USA. Executive and managerial-level employment is generally shown through the management of subordinate employees or through the management

of an essential function within the organization. The participants will be from sales and marketing functions in global organizations and are coming to USA to understand headquarter culture and strategy before going back to Brazil. Employment in a specialized knowledge capacity requires proof that the employee holds special knowledge of the organization's products, services, research, equipment, techniques, management, or an advanced level of expertise in the organization's processes and procedures. L-1 visas require approval from the United States government.

The length of time an L-1 visa holder can remain employed in the USA is limited. This visa is initially valid for assignments of up to three years and can be extended for two-year increments for a total period of five or seven years, depending upon the nature of the US job duties. The limited duration of the visa stay presents challenges to the transferring professional. Since the stay will be limited to a maximum of 5 -7 years (depending on the type of position), the professional will need to quickly integrate into the new USA employer, which may have a much different culture (and even prevailing language) than the previous non-USA employer. Further, the professional will need to integrate into the local community, arrange financial matters (housing, banking, insurance), and other normal "living" needs (including, if applicable, needs for the family such as schools, child care, etc.). Understanding the actions and behaviors used by professional Brazilian women to assimilate into American society and create a sense of belonging adds value to organizations, communities, and academic knowledge.

Problem Statement

American culture has been greatly enhanced by immigrants, and proponents of diversity maintain that different opinions provided by culturally diverse groups make for better-quality decisions (Cox, 1994; McLeod et al., 1996). While abundant literature explores the assimilation

of marginalized groups, few studies have investigated the experiences of executive women who have navigated the cultural abyss.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of conducting this study is to understand how female Brazilian marketing and sales executives describe their experiences in developing a sense of community and belonging, and of membership, while experiencing assimilation. Specifically, the study explores these experiences through personal stories that participants tell about their journeys.

The following research questions will guide this study:

RQ1. What are the experiences of female Brazilian executives in developing a sense of belonging and identification while pursuing their professional careers?

SQ1. What resources or interventions supported their development of a sense of community?

SQ2. What practices or activities supported their sense of belonging?

SQ3. How has their identity evolved since immigrating?

Overview of Research Design

Narrative research design is the most appropriate methodology for understanding how Brazilian women executives develop their sense of community as they transition from Brazilian to American culture, bringing their life experiences and feelings about community and belonging as they experience assimilation to a new culture. The narrative approach provides qualitative research that captures the subjects' individual experiences through storytelling, accounts for their actual experiences, and analyzes the meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2012). Narrative research design can bring awareness to a study based on the participants' experiences through

realistic and detailed accounts in a literary form of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

Through narrative analysis, stories and narratives construct cultural and social meanings (Patton, 2015). Narrative research investigates the experiences of a small sample size of subjects to comprehend their experiences and analyze them (Creswell, 2012).

Narrative research design is grounded in hermeneutics and phenomenology.

Hermeneutics is the philosophy of text interpretation (Creswell, 2013) and originated in the study of written texts (Patton, 2015). Phenomenology's emphasis on understanding also influences narrative studies' lived experience and perception of experience (Patton, 2015).

Phenomenological studies come from philosophy and psychology and aim to describe individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The narrative research design is focused on inquiry from the humanities in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives (Riessman, 2008). The researcher restores the information into a narrative chronology.

The use of narrative is a long-accepted qualitative research method (Bruner, 1996). The contribution of a narrative inquiry is that it reveals cultural and social patterns through the lens of individual experiences (Patton, 2015). Narrative inquiry is "sensitive to...subtle textures of thought and feeling" (Mertova & Webster, 2019, p.7) at play in an account of lived experiences and allows for the events that have been of most significance to be brought forth in the stories participants tell. Narrative inquiry focuses on the individual's lived experiences but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which an individual's experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Narrative was chosen in

order to provide the flexibility for participants to tell stories about their experiences assimilating into American society.

Rationale and Significance

The rationale for this case study comes from the researcher's personal experience as a Brazilian executive transferring to the USA as an international assignee, working in the development of cultures of belonging in organizations, and identifying that there is a need for research on this population's cultural assimilation experience. There is an abundance of literature about marginalized groups' assimilation experience, an experience where language barriers, economic privilege, and access to resources are intrinsic to the assimilation process. There are not many studies focused on the executive immigrant experience. Understanding how immigrants develop their sense of community and belonging when arriving with language proficiency, economic power, and access to resources will help support assimilation in the local community and organizations.

Role of the Researcher

My primary role in the research is to document participants' narratives and identify resources or actions taken by professional Brazilian women that supported their sense of belonging and community. The "narrative turn" in qualitative inquiry (Marvasti & Faircloth, 2013) honors people's stories as data that can stand on their own as a pure description of experiences.

As a researcher, I will attempt to capture the thoughts and feelings of study participants. My role is to provide an in-depth understanding of how Brazilian women executives come to understand, act and manage their experiences acculturating to American society to develop a sense of community and belonging. Interviews will be the primary data collection method for

this study. As participants share their stories, I will take an active listening role and focus on guided questions so my biases do not influence participant responses. I will interpret the themes from these stories to create a new narrative summarizing the participant's experiences. These experiences may or may not mirror those found in the literature review or conceptual framework.

I am a naturalized US Citizen who experienced my formative years in the big metropolis of Sao Paulo, Brazil. I have held various corporate roles in international organizations and achieved professional success in finance, sales and as a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practitioner. I have lived in Brazil, USA and Panama and speak both Portuguese and English. All these experiences allow me to share lived experiences with the study participants. All my experiences, coupled with my professional background as DEI practitioner focused on building community and belonging in organizations position me to conduct this study as insider research. This label captures the researcher's position in relation to the group, society, community, or organization under study. Insider research is called such if the researcher has prior intimate knowledge of the group under study or if the researcher is a member of the same group having the same characteristics (Merton, 1972; Chavez, 2008; Greene, 2014; Taylor, 2011).

A researcher must reject the idea that the insider positioning is fixed and certain, given the constantly changing social positions of community members (as cited in Chavez, 2008). An insider researcher as well as a community member's position and identity position should be expected to shift over time. Reflexivity in the research process is a tool to address and keep track of a researcher's shifting position with respect to the community under study (Chavez, 2008). Self-awareness and reflexivity will be practiced as the researcher shifts from insider to outsider positioning.

The benefits of insider research are summarized here from the literature review of Chavez (2008). An insider researcher has previous knowledge of the research context, environment, and participants. This includes engaging in social settings without standing out, disturbing them, or being shocked by them. This knowledge also permits the researcher to recognize non-verbal cues and meaningful elements. Participants can perceive insider researchers to have a better, truer understanding of the culture being researched than researchers who do not have previous familiarity with the community or culture. Insider researchers have the benefit of natural interaction with the participants, and their familiarity allows them the knowledge of how to approach individuals. The benefit of previous interaction also lessens an insider researcher's likelihood of stereotyping or judging participants. Insider researchers also have the benefit of more expedient access to and acceptance by the group or culture under study.

Researcher's Lived Experiences

I grew up being the "first" or part of "the few" in various important moments that matter. I am the youngest of three children and the only girl. I was the first competitive athlete in my family and the only tennis player. I am the only of my women cousins to go be an exchange student overseas. I was one of the few Hispanics on my college campus and the first Brazilian. I was the first female finance director and the first Hispanic CFO for Latin America who did not have to spend time at HQ to get the job. I was one of two women on the Latin American executive team. I was the first to start a DEI program in my organization. These are a few examples that highlight the path which enriched my life. It is also important to mention that I am also privileged to have strong role models in my family. My maternal grandmother was an independent professional woman who retired as a principal in Sao Paulo. My mother also was an exchange student, has a JD degree, and earned a Doctor of Educational degree. She has a

successful career in education as director of the Brazilian Program in various international schools in Brazil and is finally in the process of slowing down!!

These experiences heightened my understanding of the importance of inclusion and a sense of belonging. My perspectives are enriched by a deep and personal understanding that developing a sense of community is a process that takes place for the development of belonging. The semi-formal interviews structured under McMillan & Chaves's sense of community framework will develop themes that will enrich my own self-awareness on how each of my lived experiences served to shape how I also developed my communities as I transitioned through various experiences of being the outsider seeking understanding, meaning, and belonging in a new environment.

I am a Brazilian woman who came to America as a teenager to play tennis and attended college here, before returning to Brazil. I returned to the United States as a successful executive and experienced acculturation in many unique ways. It is important to say that I attended an international high school in Sao Paulo, prior to coming as a teenager, so none of my acculturation experiences are typical of immigrants. The second time coming back to America happened while being a successful professional and I believe that immigrating as a professional offers language, status, and organizational community impacts that put me in an advantage to quickly appreciate the new culture and feel a sense of community and belonging.

I am a DIB practitioner, so this work is closely related to my professional and personal areas of interest. Following a semi-structured interview approach is chosen to mitigate a deeper personal connection to the topic and possibly influence the conversation.

Researcher Assumptions

My primary assumption is that Brazilian women's development of a sense of community and belonging when experiencing assimilation mirrors McMillan & Chavis' framework. This research will also add DIB knowledge by identifying behavioral attributes and how they can be duplicated in work.

Definition of Key Terminology Used in the Study

Cultural diversity – is taken to mean the representation, in one social system, of people with different group affiliations of cultural significance (Cox, 1994).

Dominant group – The group that controls the major elements of a society's norms and values. The dominant group is often but not always the majority.

Minority group – any group or member of a group whose social identity is underrepresented in the workplace, especially relative to its general population (Brown, 2016)

Underrepresented group (URG) - This term refers to groups who have been denied access and/or suffered past institutional discrimination in the United States and, according to the Census and other federal measuring tools, includes African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics or Chicanos/Latinos, and Native Americans.

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) - internal change agents for inclusion.

Acculturation – cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture; a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact (Merriam-Webster)

Assimilation - is a process in which formerly distinct and separate groups come to share a common culture and merge together socially. As a society undergoes assimilation, differences among groups decrease (Healey & Stepnick, 2022).

Sense of community - McMillan and Chavis (1986) define Sense of Community as “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together.”

Chapter 2

Introduction

This qualitative study explores how Brazilian executive women develop a sense of community and belonging while experiencing assimilation as they transition from Brazil to the United States. The aim of this study is to understand what resources or interventions are used by immigrants to support the development of a sense of community and belonging. To further clarify the background and need for this study, chapter two will provide an overview of relevant literature followed by the framework guiding the study.

Literature Review

The following research databases were utilized to find journal articles, dissertations, and theses related to the development of a sense of community in the immigrant population: University of Arkansas Libraries, Science Direct, JSTOR, SAGE, Wiley Online Library, ResearchGate, and Google Scholar. Keywords used in the initial search included: the sense of community, belonging, immigrant identity, Latino immigration, immigrant identity, and ethnic assimilation. Search results were used to provide the background for developing the sociological theories leading to the various perspectives on the meaning of community. The search then narrowed to the individual interpretation of community by focusing on the psychological sense of community. Further research narrowed to the psychological sense of community theories that gave rise to McMillan and Chavis' framework and definition of the components of the development of the individual sense of community

Summary

To better understand experiences of immigrants assimilating into a new society, the literature review is founded on sociological theories. These theories are important to ground the

understanding of interactions between the individual and society. The literature review starts with Ferdinand Tonnies (1887). He describes how individuals develop personal bonds while society is a more transactional experience. Durkeim (1895) further develops the concept of society and laid the groundwork for modern sociology. Luhmann (1995) approaches community as a complex system and establishes the conception of the nature of social systems. He argues that individuals communicate within a subsystem community and society operates independently of individual interactions. Common bonds and traditions support this subsystem defined as community.

After establishing an understanding of the development of sociological theories, the literature review focused on the individual's connection with society by researching reading on psychological theories. This section focuses on how the individual interacts with society and is anchored on Sarason's (1974) argument that for a true understanding of the individual, it is important to bring social context into the individual's experiences. With this view, he developed the psychological sense of community.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) built on existing knowledge of sense of community to develop their framework consisting of four dimensions: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. Because the sense of community is bound to share experiences and culture, it was important to understand how immigrants experience cultural assimilation. While doing this research, it became apparent that there are not many articles on assimilation of executives, making this research a welcome addition to existing knowledge.

Sociological Theories

“The concept of community has been the concern of sociologists for more than 200 years, yet a satisfactory definition of it in sociological terms appears as remote as ever” (Bell & Newby 1972, p. 21).

With the publication of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (usually translated as *Community and Society*) in 1887, Ferdinand Tönnies' is regarded as having begun the field of community studies (Bell & Newby, 1972). “The concept of community has been the concern of sociologists for more than 200 years, yet a satisfactory definition of it in sociological terms appears as remote as ever” (Bell & Newby 1972, p. 21). Tönnies' conception of the nature of social systems is based on the distinction between the *Gemeinschaft* (communal society) and the *Gesellschaft* (associational society). For Tönnies, a community can be defined as a group of people that share common bonds around traditions, beliefs handed down by generations, or common objectives. For a community to develop, that group of people works actively together to maintain their bond and further their goals. This sense of support, resulting from personal interactions, develops an environment that fosters a feeling of togetherness and belonging. On the other hand, society has more transactional and rational bonds, influenced by rational self-interest, where discussion and deliberation weaken the traditional bonds of family, traditions, and beliefs governing the community. For Tönnies, the sense of belonging comes from working within a community, and society's rationalization works against this sense of belonging. This way, supported by Tönnies' emphasis on the sense of belonging coming from community, this study will provide a deeper understanding of the development of sense of belonging.

Durkheim's conception of the scientific study of society laid the groundwork for modern sociology. He formally established the academic discipline of sociology and is commonly cited as one of the principal architects of modern social science. His seminal monograph, *Le Suicide*

(1897), a study of suicide rates in Catholic and Protestant populations, especially pioneered modern social research, serving to distinguish social science from psychology and political philosophy. For Durkheim, sociology was the science of institutions, understanding the term in its broader meaning as the “beliefs and modes of behavior instituted by the collectivity” (Durkheim, 1901), with its aim being to discover structural social facts. Similar to Tonnies, he believed that individuals are part of a bigger system, and that system is the one that should be studied. In his view, sociology should study phenomena attributed to society at large rather than be limited to the specific actions of individuals. Through the lenses of the importance of the collective over the individual, Durkheim coined the term collective consciousness. Collective consciousness is the set of shared beliefs, ideas, and moral attitudes which operate as a unifying force within society. (Jary & Jary, 1991). Schmaus (1994) makes clear that collective is the sense that is common to many individuals. The author goes on to argue that Durkheim’s sociology is more than a collection of general observations about society; it reflects a constructed theory of the meanings and causes of social life. For Durkheim, “The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or common consciousness” (Allan, 2005, p. 108). Combs and Krippner (2008) position collective consciousness as a shared sense of being together with others in a single or unified experience. The study of collective consciousness gives an important foundation to the understanding of how communities collectively share values and experiences during collective rituals. Societies have organic solidarity and go through gradual changes as communities evolve (Aldous, Durkheim & Tonnies (1972). The authors connect the individual to the community by elevating the social interactions as part of the community.

German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1995) approaches community as a complex system of communications based on spheres of influence which are interconnected through self-governing communication systems. He states that each of these systems reproduces itself on the basis of its own, system-specific operations rather than by individual human action. Luhmann explicitly stressed that he does not refer to a "society without humans", but to the fact that communication is autopoietic. Communication is made possible by human bodies and consciousness (Luhmann, 2012). Systems must continually construct themselves and their perspective of reality through processing the distinction between system and environment and self-reproduce themselves as the product of their own elements. Social systems are defined by Luhmann not as action but as recursive communication. Modern society is defined as a world system consisting of the sum of all communication happening at once and individual function systems (such as the economy, politics, science, love, art, the media, etc.) are described as social subsystems which have "out differentiated" from the social system and achieved their own operational closure and autopoiesis (Luhmann, 2012). In his view, individuals interact with society as bystanders, and their relationships with each other are what constitute the subsystems supporting the framework. When comparing this definition to the immigrant experience, it can be argued that the immigrant population brings the components to the subsystem (economy, politics, science, love, art, the media, etc.) as a group shared experience. This way, as we learn how immigrants develop their sense of community and belonging, focusing on their shared experiences becomes a solid foundation for understanding how one system supports the social system, the outer system in Luhmann's view.

Luhmann argues that communicative events rather than actions or individual human beings constitute society's basic units or elements. To "participate" in communication, one must

be able to render one's thoughts and perceptions into elements of communication. This can only ever occur as a communicative operation (thoughts and perceptions cannot be directly transmitted) and must therefore satisfy internal system conditions that are specific to communication: intelligibility, reaching an addressee and gaining acceptance (Luhmann, 1995). He proposes that semantics and social structures co-evolve, providing the basis for community and its meaning. Through his theory, sociology can explain how people can change society. The systems exist independent of individuals. The systems are persistent and appear when communication takes place. With its systems-theory approach, societal communication systems are in place independent of individual intervention, providing a unique foundation for the meaning of community. Luhmann's view of society existing independent of individuals suggests that immigrants come to an existing social context that is not designed to be impacted by the new entrants into the system. For this reason, understanding how Brazilian executive women develop their own sense of community and belonging within a system that continues to exist independent of their actions brings a deeper understanding to the actions developed for the experience of belonging. The study of the relationships between the individual and the systems which affect them has shaped a variety of perspectives in the social sciences. Community is a concept of great relevance in the development of sociology and is considered a key concept that gives sociology its unity beyond diverse sociological theories (Nisbet, 1967). According to Nisbet (1967), the importance of community to sociology can only be compared to the importance of the impact of the idea of a contract on the political philosophy in earlier centuries. The debates in community studies is an ongoing debate. A recent survey suggested that there are over 30 theories in community psychology alone (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

Psychological Theories

In 1974, psychologist Seymour Sarason's seminal book *The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology* introduced the concept of a "psychological sense of community" (PSOC) to explain the nature of the relationships established between individuals and their extended social groups, like the community. He proposed that it become the conceptual center for the psychology of community, asserting that psychological sense of community "is one of the major bases for self-definition". Sarason argued that there were many factors that had to be taken into consideration when evaluating an individual. He recommended expanding the individual-based focus and considering how broader settings contribute to both the well-being and pathology of individuals. Thus, including the need for a deep understanding of the community to understand the individual. (Weinstein, Reppucci & Levine, 2010). He broadly described PSOC as "the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what expects from them, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (p. 157). On a sociological level, Sarason considered the loss of community relationships as a result of modern society, impacting the human psyche, and contributing to the feeling of loneliness, alienation, psychological pain, and feeling of helplessness towards social forces (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sarason's constructs have become the most studied theories for psychological sense of community (Sanchez-Vidal, 1991). Quite a few studies have followed, and in addition to some treatment that has been characterized as fuzzy and atheoretical (cf., Pretty, 1990), some impressive theoretical and empirical development has emerged around this concept, which by 1986 had come to be regarded as a central overarching value for Community Psychology (Sarason, 1986; Chavis & Pretty, 1999).

Sense of Community

Early work on Psychological Sense of Community (PSC) was based on neighborhoods as the referent, and found a relationship between PSC and greater participation (Hunter, 1975; Wandersman & Giamartino, 1980), perceived safety (Doolittle & McDonald, 1978), ability to function competently in the community (Glynn, 1981), social bonding (Riger & Lavrakas, 1981), social fabric (strengths of interpersonal relationship) (Ahlbrandt & Cunningham, 1979), greater sense of purpose and perceived control (Bachrach & Zautra, 1985), and greater civic contributions (charitable contributions and civic involvement) (Davidson & Cotter, 1986).

According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), the concept of community is a multidimensional concept composed of four dimensions (membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection) explained in the next section. Although McMillan and Chavis' original conception contemplated both the sense of relational community and geographic one, the focus of the study will be on the relational community. Several studies on community developed over the decades point to the importance of considering: a) the relational aspect of the various communities with which the individual maintains contact; b) the emotional connections and c) the influence of emotional connections on the individual (Rossi & Royal, 1996). Chavis and Pretty (1999) point out that differences in the level of sense of community relative to the community geographic area can be mediated by aspects such as linking and creating community identity. From the perspective of studying the sense of community at a group level, Weisenfeld (cit. by Brodsky & Marx, 2001) considers this study inappropriate since the general sense of community would be dependent on multiple individual perspectives. The author argues that the sense of community should be studied with a focus on individuals. Brodsky and Marx (2001) study the multiple senses of community experienced by

individuals, and the various levels of engagement experienced at the micro and macro-community level. The authors come to the conclusion that within the same community, there are levels of identity and that individuals develop various senses of community depending on the roles, without losing perspective of the whole or the parts which make the community.

Kingston, Mitchell, Florin and Stevenson (1999) came to the conclusion that there are different meanings of community in different neighborhoods, but that the individual characteristics of residents (education and socio-economic status) also exert an influence on the sense of community within the same neighborhood. This suggests that community interventions must take into account both the characteristics of the community and the characteristics of the individuals that constitute them. The sense of membership is connected to the individual's perception. Former studies support Hill's (1996) claims that the sense of community may be specific to a particular community and that account should be taken for the specific characteristics of each community.

McMillan and Chavis' Theory of Sense of Community

According to McMillan and Chavis' (1986), the initial studies in the area of sense of community lacked a coherently articulated conceptual perspective focused on sense of community, and none were developed from a definition of sense of community. Also, prior authors attributed equal contribution to each of the elements in their measure of sense of community, when an individual's experience has value-laden nature, leading to varied attributions to feelings, experiences, and needs (Sarason, 1974). Similar to Sarason (1974), McMillan and Chavis argue that there is an impact of the community to the individual sense of community and belonging. The individual experiences are weighed differently based each individual's relationship with the community. The importance of these studies is that they

revealed that the experience of sense of community does exist and it does operate as a force in human life. (McMollan & Chavis, 1986). The aim of this study is to understand how Brazilian women developed their sense of community with a focus on behaviors used to feel a sense of belonging. Modern society develops a community around interest and skills more than around locality (Durkheim, 1964) so a focus on McMillan and Chavis' element of membership, that incorporates belonging, will guide this study.

A sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan, 1976).

Membership is the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Membership is a feeling that one has invested part of oneself to become a member and therefore has a right to belong (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Buss & Portnoy, 1967). It is a feeling of belonging, of being a part (Backman & Secord, 1959). Membership has boundaries; this means that there are people who belong and people who do not. The boundaries provide members with the emotional safety necessary for needs and feelings to be exposed and for intimacy to develop (Bean, 1971; Ehrlich & Graeven, 1971; Wood, 1971). Membership has five attributes: boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment, and a common symbol system. These attributes work together and contribute to a sense of who is part of the community and who is not.

Boundaries are the most troublesome feature of this part of the definition (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The authors highlight that social psychology research has demonstrated that people have boundaries protecting their personal space. Groups use language, dress, and rituals to create boundaries and people need these barriers to protect against threats (Park, 1921; Perucci, 1963). When groups have boundaries, it becomes apparent that there are those kept out

of the group. Boundaries are subtle and often only recognizable by members of the group. This mechanism which creates a barrier to separate “us” from “them” reduces anxiety by delimiting who can be trusted. This is how boundaries establish a structure for emotional safety. The group’s intimacy is safe, offering emotional safety.

The sense of belonging and identification involves the feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group, and a willingness to sacrifice for the group” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.10). This is when individuals identify with the group.

Personal investment when (a) working for membership is described by McMillan (1976) as providing a feeling that one has earned a place in the group and (b) that, as a consequence of this personal investment, membership will be more meaningful and valuable. “A common symbol system serves several important functions in creating and maintaining sense of community, of which is to maintain group boundaries” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 10).

While there are numerous psychological theories related to the community construct, this study uses McMillan and Chavis’ (1986) framework for understanding assimilation and its relationship to community membership and a sense of belonging.

Cultural Assimilation

Acculturation is defined as “changes that take place as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences” (Schwartz et al., 2010, p. 237). Acculturation is a step in the assimilation process (Gordon, 1964). Assimilation is a process in which formerly distinct and separate groups come to share a common culture and merge together socially. As a society undergoes assimilation, differences among groups decrease. (Healey & Stepnick, 2022). Cultural assimilation plays a primary role in determining the success of immigrants by overcoming those cultural barriers. Immigrants assimilate by a process of learning. (Monteiro,

2021). According to Berry (1990, p. 235), immigrants experience “the process by which individuals change, both by being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes underway in their own culture”. Assimilation is, in fact, a process of ethnic change whereby “foreigners” become nationals even as the characteristics of a national may change (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2003; Waldinger, 2007).

Classic theories of assimilation have treated cultural assimilation as a process of cultural subtraction, whereby the ethnic elements of the individual are stripped away and replaced with Anglo European cultural and linguistic norms (Gordon 1964, Park and Burges 1921, Ziyanak, 2015). According to current theories of assimilation, this process consists of two main stages, cultural assimilation and social assimilation. According to Spielberger (2004) cultural assimilation consists of the adoption of those values, norms, patterns of behavior and expectations without which a person is incapable of functioning with minimum effectiveness in a society. Social assimilation consists of the absorption of the newcomers into the primary groups of the host society, into face-to-face interaction as accepted members of the social groups of the host society in a range of activities from clubs to courtship and marriage. Social assimilation implies that two cultural groups no longer exist, but only one. Gordon (1964) uses the same distinction but speaks of complete absorption as “structural assimilation.” During the first stages of the process of assimilation a situation of multiple cultures exists. Apart from the essential values and behavior patterns which are shared, a wide range of distinct cultural values and behavior patterns exist side by side. The relationship between the two cultures in a situation of multiple cultures varies greatly from one of domination of one culture by the other; hostility of one to the other; indifference or acceptance. Through this described assimilation process, it

becomes clear that language skills and similar cultural values (Western values) support a faster assimilation process.

The existence of a strong community among immigrant people and its importance in the process of assimilation has long been recognized (Fitzpatrick, 1966; Moya, 2005). “One integrates from a position of strength, not from a position of weakness” (Fitzpatrick, 1966), is a frequently quoted remark. Immigrants need the traditional social group in which they are at home, in which they find their psychological satisfaction and security, in order to move with confidence toward interaction with the larger society. The immigrant community is the beachhead from which they move with strength. The immigrant community is the basis of familiar relationships and interactions which gives immigrants an identity and the security of living according to familiar patterns among familiar people. This network of relationships is called the immigrant community. (Fitzpatrick, 1966; Layton-Henry, 2001). Participation in community organizations and other voluntary associations is fundamental to the immigrant experience. (Lauer, 2022),

The immigrant community is important because cultural beliefs vary across immigrant groups in a systematic fashion reflecting the culture in the country of origin, and individuals who live in the same country face similar economic and formal institutional environments (Waters & Gerstein, 2015). Recent research to analyze and discuss cultural differences has employed a combination of five major dimensions of individualism–collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, femininity–masculinity (gender role differentiation), and long-term orientation. Among these dimensions, individualism–collectivism has received the most attention (Fatehi et al., 2020). In this research, the focus is on Hofstede’s (2001) cultural dimensions anchored on individualism vs collectivism.

Culture is a very complex construct. It has been studied in many fields, including anthropology, psychology, sociology, and management. Each of these fields has used its own methodology and terminology, which makes an already complex construct much more difficult. Despite its complexity or possibly because of it, often, it has been defined and operationalized simplistically (Taras et al., 2009). At present, however, most cross-cultural inquiries and discussions apply various forms of cultural dimensions (Fatehi et al., 2020). In some cultures, individuals are considered independent and separate psychologically from other individuals, individualistic cultures. In others, individuals are regarded as interdependent and continually aware of the situational context of which they are a part of the larger entity of a collective, collective cultures. According to Fatehi, Priestley, & Taasobshirazi (2020), in individualistic cultures, people behave according to self-interest and personal preferences and consider independence and self-sufficiency very important. In collectivist cultures, groups are of primary importance—individuals are secondary. In these cultures, individuals acknowledge the contributions of others to their existence. They may sacrifice self-interest to promote the interest of the collective. Cultures that are considered individualistic include the United States. Brazil is considered a collectivist culture.

Figure 2.1

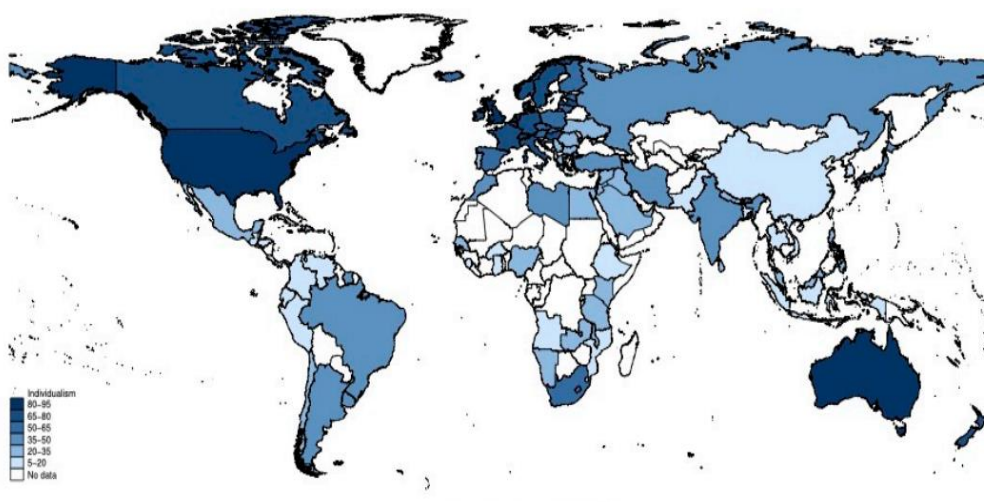
Attributes of cultural orientation of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism

Cultural orientation	Dimension (hierarchy)	
	Horizontal	Vertical
Individualism	Independent/autonomous self and similar to others, equality in status.	Independent/autonomous self and different from others, status differential expected and accepted → inequality, intragroup competition, submission to authority.
Collectivism	Interdependent self and similar to others, equality in status.	Interdependent self and different than others, status differential → inequality is accepted, self-sacrifice for in-group is essential, submission to authority.

Note. Cultural orientation views according to Fatehi, Priestley, & Taasoobshirazi (2020).

The immigrant community is foundation for cultural assimilation, anchoring the immigrant experience in a known environment while enabling the immigrant to slowly learn customs and behaviors of the host community, leading to cultural assimilation. This is particularly important because this will represent the channels through which contacts will develop; ideas, attitudes and values come to be known, then shared or rejected; the possibilities for primary group interaction develop. Occupation and education are important levers for immigrant community assimilation. With increased global competition for talent, immigration remains a key factor for talent availability in the U.S. According to Ruiz and Gramlich (2019), the United States (U.S.) is home to more college-educated immigrants than any other country, in absolute numbers. However, only about a third (36%) of all immigrants in the U.S. have a college degree, well below the shares in Canada (65%), the UK (49%) and other economically advanced countries with substantial numbers of immigrants.

Figure 2.2



Source: Hofstede et al. (2010)

Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework

A theoretical framework's function is to provide the "particular perspective or lens through which you will investigate your topic and to help you define and limit the problem" (Foss & Waters, 2016, p. 174). Research has demonstrated that individuals hold multiple senses of community, as they belong to multiple diverse communities at once (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Mannarini & Fedi, 2009). A sense of community (SOC) as a framework for cultural integration is an ongoing area of study (Verdier et al., 2012). McMillan & Chavis's (1986) theory of SOC is widely utilized for many recent studies on the sense of community in psychological literature.

This study will use McMillan & Chavis' (1986) concepts for developing a sense of community, membership, and belonging to frame this study. McMillan (1976) defines a sense of community as a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to being together. Community membership is an important element of McMillan and Chavis' (1986) classic sense of community framework. A growing body of literature now regards acculturation as a multidimensional phenomenon and advocates that studies approach it from a learning perspective. (Masgoret & Ward, 2006), (Ward & Geeraert, 2016), (Rudmin, Wang & Castro, 2017). The working hypothesis of the cultural learning approach, influenced by Argyle's (1986) work is that people in cultural transitions may lack the necessary skills needed to engage in the new culture (reviewed by Masgoret & Ward, 2006). This may result in difficulties managing the everyday social encounters. To overcome these difficulties, individuals are expected to learn or acquire the culture-specific behavioral skills (such as the language) that are necessary to negotiate this new cultural milieu (Bochner, 1972). Specifically, the cultural learning approach entails gaining an understanding in intercultural communication styles,

including their verbal and nonverbal components, as well as rules, conventions, and norms and their influences on intercultural effectiveness.

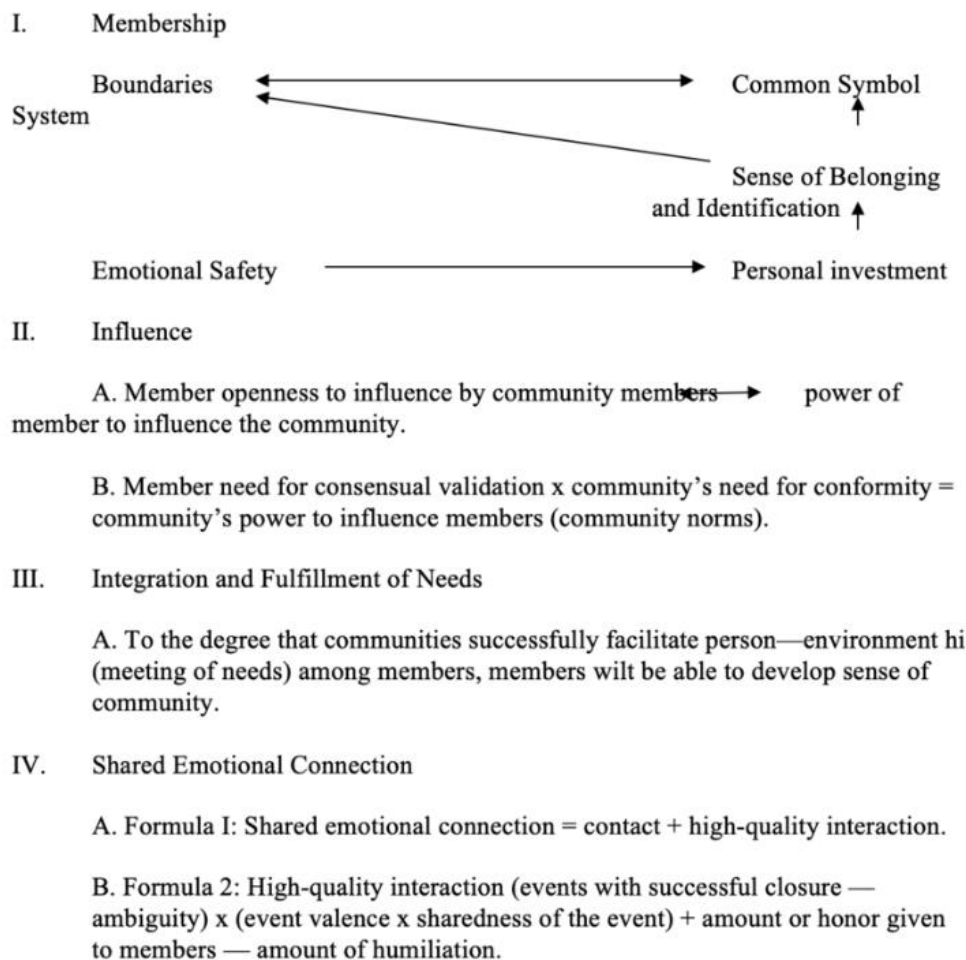
In addition to their descriptive framework of SOC dimensions, McMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed a theoretical model that hypothesizes 1) the origins of each SOC dimension (considered independently) and 2) how the dimensions interrelate to produce SOC. McMillan & Chavis' (1986) five-attribute definition of membership are: boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment, and a common symbol system.

McMillan and Chavis' framework provides guidance by which the concept of membership and belonging can be more systematically analyzed using qualitative data. The study will focus on the membership attribute. The first element of the sense of community (SOC) framework is membership, defined as “the feeling of belonging or sharing a sense of personal relatedness” and “a feeling that one has invested part of oneself to become a member and therefore has the right to belong” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). Membership was theorized to have five attributes: boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment, and a common symbol system. By this theory, membership is based on the notion that there are people who belong to a given community and people who do not belong to that community.

Five attributes of *membership* seem to fit together in a circular, self-reinforcing way, with all conditions having both causes and effects, described in Figure 2.3 (McMillan & Chavez, 1986).

Figure 2.3

Elements of Sense of Community and Their Hypothesized Relationships



Boundaries provide protection for intimacy. The emotional safety that is a consequence of secure boundaries allows people to feel that there is a place for them in the community and that they belong. A sense of belonging and identification facilitates the development of a common symbol system, which defines the community's boundaries. We believe too that feelings of belonging and emotional safety lead to self-investment in the community, which has the consequence of giving a member the sense of having earned his or her membership.

Chapter 3

Introduction

The purpose of the qualitative narrative research study is to understand how Brazilian women develop their sense of community as they transition from Brazilian to American culture while experiencing assimilation to a new culture. This chapter describes the research plan and methodology used by the researcher. The first section discusses the research question. The second section examines the qualitative research approach to include the narrative research design and how it is in accordance with the study. The third section addresses the participant's selection. The fourth section examines the research procedures. The final section describes ethical considerations, including the plan for protecting human subjects and ensuring credibility.

Qualitative research begins with one or more relatively broad research questions that may be revised iteratively as the research is carried out to narrow the research aim or purpose (Denny, 2022). The author goes on to describe how qualitative research provides insights and understanding of people's experiences. Qualitative research is a form of social science where focus is on understanding people's world, interpreting their experiences and making sense out of it (Gupta & Awasthy, 2021). The authors further explain that "behavior is grounded by the situation and their interpretation of the context. It is all about inner life"(p. 13). Qualitative research may also be used in informing the development of interventions or in understanding barriers and facilitators to their successful implementation. (Denny & Weckesser , 2019). Qualitative research's strength is its ability to provide complex theoretical descriptions of how the participants experience a given context, providing details about their lived experiences (Gupta & Awasthy, 2021). This interpretation supports the social-constructionist aim of seeking perception and understanding as an end objective (Swanson & Holton, 2005). Only by

interacting with participants, “observing, and communicating with them can we understand the meaning-making that individuals bring to, and create from, a dynamic stream of events” (Swanson & Holton, 2005, p. 225). Qualitative research is about our quest to understand complex human beings and social systems (Swanson & Holton, 2005) and learn the meaning that the participants hold about the problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). People shape their daily lives using stories of who they are and how they interpret them (Gupta & Awasthy, 2021). Narrative research is the chosen approach because it focuses on how people make sense of lived experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Question

The present study is guided by one main question, followed by a sub-set:

RQ1. What are the experiences of female Brazilian executives in developing a sense of belonging and identification while pursuing their professional careers?

SQ1. What resources or interventions supported their development of a sense of community?

SQ2. What practices or activities supported their sense of belonging?

SQ3. How has their identity evolved since immigrating?

Narrative Research

Individuals make meaning from their lived experiences and express this meaning through storytelling, and narrative inquiry is the method of data-mining these individuals’ stories to discover how the individual makes sense of their worlds (Gupta & Awasthy, 2021). The narrative approach can use stories or oral histories, written autobiographies and biographies, and interviews (Butina, 2015; Hoshmand, 2005) to capture details about the person’s culture,

experiences, identity, and lifestyle (Butina, 2015). A narrative approach involves a deeper understanding of everyday life affected by social constructions and culture, aligned with the aim of this study that focuses on understanding the experiences of Brazilian women developing a sense of community and belonging as they assimilate into a new culture. Not to mention, the overarching goal for this study was to describe multiple realities and develop a better understanding through purposeful open-ended interviews with a small sample of subject; all qualities of a qualitative research study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997).

One-on-one interviews will be the primary data-gathering strategy, allowing Brazilian women to convey their experiences in their own words (Creswell, 2012). It will provide a narrative representation of Brazilian women's experiences and how they developed their sense of community while leveraging McMillan & Chavis' membership framework to build an understanding of their sense of belonging. The qualitative study will present a first-hand account of the lived experiences via a chronology of events from Brazilian women's perspectives.

More specifically, to collect the data needed for this study, I will use in-depth interviews as part of my narrative inquiry research design. The research method that guided these inquiries is known as "parallel stories," a method introduced by C.J. Craig, in which stories are said to both "form the source of information through storytelling as well as the vehicle for interpretation and reinterpretation of experience" (Craig, 2007, p.13). According to Craig (2007), parallel stories embody two forms of meaning recovery.

Research sample

In qualitative research, the selection of the research sample is purposeful (Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling will be used with the objective of yielding insight and understanding (Bloomberg & Volpi, 2019) of the experiences of immigrant women assimilating into a different

culture. As Reybold, Lammert, and Stribling (2013) point out, the logic of selection is grounded in the value of information-rich cases and emergent, in-depth understanding (Bloomberg & Volpi, 2019). For this case study, the criteria for inclusion is being a professional Brazilian woman who has chosen to immigrate to North Dallas to pursue continued professional career development. In addition, all participants have this career move supported by their organizations.

The participants will be recruited through the researcher's Brazilian network in the North Dallas region. The Dallas-Fort Worth region has been a magnet for corporate headquarters and major company operations, attracting 24 Fortune 500 company headquarters as of 2020 and 44 headquarters among the Fortune 1000 (2021, Dallas Business Chamber) and international professional women are part of big organization's talent development strategies.

There are no incentives offered to the participants. A recruitment invitation letter (see Appendix A) will be provided to the participants explaining the purpose of the research, protection of human subjects, and the potential benefits of the research for the understanding of the development of sense of community and belonging while assimilating to a new culture. This letter will be sent via LinkedIn messages. The researcher will also provide contact information for the participants to contact her and access information pertaining to their involvement in the study.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection method for this study includes individual, in-depth semi-structured interviews using the same interview protocol with each participant. Asking people questions about their lives, opinions, and experiences, and allowing them freedom of expression in telling their stories is powerful method of understanding people's life worlds (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Semi-structured interviews correspond with the qualitative research design for answering

the questions “how” and “why”. Semi-structured interviews are associated with the ontological and epistemological stance that reality is socially constructed and interpreted in line with the worldviews of participants (Mason, 2004), supporting the research goal of understanding how professional Brazilian women developed their sense of community and belonging, and which mechanisms or behaviors supported their assimilation. The flexibility in semi-structured interviews makes it possible to cross-check and validate information from previous interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2015), allowing themes to be developed and understood as respondents describe their experiences. A sample of the interview questions is in Table 3.1. For the complete interview protocol, refer to Appendix B.

Table 3.1

Abbreviated interview protocol

Literature supporting question.	Question	Probe	Assumption
The sense of community and belonging are impacted by shared experiences (McMillan & Chavis, 1986)	Before coming to USA, how would you have described your sense of community and belonging?	In other words, what activities made you feel connected with others?	Sense of community highly anchored by national experiences (soccer, Carnaval, beach life) with less reflection on personal identify.
Understand sense of community, defined by McMillan (1976) as group of people with shared experiences and mattering to one another.	What have been your actions to feel a sense of community in USA?	What has made it difficult to assimilate to a new culture?	Brazilian women will find community in celebrations and customs with Brazilian origins..
Understand sense of belonging, defined by Tonnie as resulting from personal interactions.	How would you describe your support group as you transition to USA?	For my clarity, these are individuals with whom you feel connected?	Brazilian women will actively seek out other Brazilian women.
Understand experiences with membership, defined	What behaviors or activities make you feel connected to your		Professional Brazilian women will highlight professional activities

as feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).	new community? Why?		which can be replicated in USA. Activities connected to organizational culture are more easily identified and transferred.
Sense of membership is impacted by personal investment (McMillan (1976).	As you transitioned to USA, how has the relationship with your community in Brazil been impacted, and why?	Can you elaborate? What is being impacted?	Sense of membership will have declined as a consequence of less personal investment.
A common symbol is important in maintaining a sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).	Reflecting on your assimilation journey, how would you describe the impact of your experiences on your connections with other Brazilian immigrant woman? How do you think these experiences impacted your connections with other Brazilian professional women who used to be part of your community?		The connections to Brazilian communities in Brazil will be impacted by having less common daily challenges, news, and activities.

Data Analysis

NVivo Pro 12 will be used for keeping track of data and emerging themes and understandings. This software assists in organizing and analyzing qualitative data and possesses the ability to classify, sort, and arrange data while also examining developing relationships and themes. NVivo Pro 12 coding will be used since the researcher is a beginner. The NVivo Pro 12 coding method directly takes what the participants say and assigns a code or phrase to passages, identifying themes as the researcher analyzed the qualitative data (Saldana, 2013). NVivo Pro 12 codes data to support identification of trends and themes that are discovered through word

frequency charts, comparison diagrams, word clouds, etc. (QSR International, 2020).

Additionally, NVivo also automatically transcribes imported audio, which is beneficial to the recorded interviews, as well as allows for the ease of centralizing data that may be imported from multiple sources (QSR International, 2020). NVivo stores data within the software, as well as within folders on the researcher's device. Data stored within the software will be secure as NVivo is compliant with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Data stored within folders will be secured on a password protected laptop, where the folders containing the data are encrypted and also password protected.

Following the established semi-structured interview guide allows for easier discovering of emergent ideas. Each participant will be asked the same questions, with some further being asked to elaborate based on their responses. Essentially asking each participant the same question provides for a better opportunity to format transcribed responses into potential ideas prior to running through NVivo data analysis. Each transcribed response will be reviewed within a word document generated by NVivo in the same order in accordance with the semi-structured interview guide questions. According to Creswell & Poth (2018), using software that can analyze data imported from texts, audio/video files, websites, focus groups, and survey responses can assist researchers in analyzing qualitative research.

Pre-established codes from the theoretical framework will be used to interpret interview questions. The coding process will be analyzed using a language pack, which allows for themes to be identified through content analysis and sentence structure and then assigned significance to some themes instead of others based on the frequency of occurrence within the data (QSR International, 2020). These developed themes will be then combined into groups and the results presented as nodes for each broad idea and each theme discovered within the group (QSR

International, 2020). These groups will be narrowed down by combining them based on similarities and developed into broader themes supporting understanding and identifying answers that address the research questions. “Thematic analysis is a foundational approach of qualitative methodology that is flexible across other methods of analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 4). This method provides theoretical freedom but holds its own clear, theoretically and methodologically sound guidelines, as Braun and Clarke laid out.

Ethical Considerations

I will maintain trustworthiness and validity by clarifying the researcher’s bias. As a Brazilian professional woman and a DEI practitioner, who assimilated to the culture in USA, it is my goal to identify behaviors and mechanisms that support the development of a sense of community and belonging for individuals assimilating into a new culture. I want to support both the immigrant community, as well as develop impactful organizational programs for the development of a belonging culture. This way, the outcomes of this research will benefit the academic community, the organizational culture community, and my personal ambitions. According to Machi & McEvoy (2009), “personal attachment to an interest provides the passion and dedication necessary for conducting good research, which is a plus” (p. 19).

I will manage my bias by leveraging NVivo Pro 12 computer software for identifying themes and documenting my filed notes as my impressions of the participants’ stories evolve. To further support a professional approach, I will share with the participants and readers that I am a

Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers have had to defend their studies and prove them valid amidst the primary status afforded quantitative research, as some question the legitimacy of “people’s stories” (e.g. Loh, 2013). The trustworthiness of this study is established by the researcher’s use

of accepted methodology to ensure the study's credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of findings. Transparent data collection, data analysis, and thoroughly detailed explanations of the data analysis process will be used. These methods include peer debriefing, member checks, triangulation. Peer debriefing allows a qualified peer researcher to review and assess transcripts, emerging and final categories from those transcripts, and the final themes or findings of a given study. Janesick (2007) suggested that peer debriefing enhances the trustworthiness and the credibility of a research project. Member checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, is a technique for exploring the credibility of results. Data or results are returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999).

Credibility

Credibility refers to whether the researcher accurately represents what the participants think, feel, and do (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The process includes having participants review a summary of the recorded interview. This is important to ensure the participants' perspectives are portrayed accurately. Credibility is often established through the triangulation technique and determines whether or not the study relays adequate information to back any claims made.:-

Dependability, Confirmability, and Transferability

Qualitative research is an observational method that gathers data that is not numerical. The objectives of qualitative research are to determine underlying issues, reasoning, and insight into the root causes of problems. Dependability is established by auditing during research – what do you mean by auditing? How do you do it produces study results that are subject to both change and instability (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Transferability is best established through thick description, the researcher reviews study results and the extent to which they can be transferred between the researcher and subjects of the study. Some qualitative research methods for collecting data include interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and observations (Kampenes et al., 2008). These methodologies provide insight into personal perspectives, actions, and experiences from those directly related to the topic of study for inclusion in the research. Core goals of qualitative research designs are to understand the non-quantifiable aspects that can influence people. This particular research design focuses on studying participants' experiences, perceptions, and opinions.

Limitations

Delimitations

This study is delimited to research participants who meet the following criteria: (1) identifies as Brazilian women, (2) have lived in USA for at least 5 consecutive years, (3) reside in North Dallas area, (4) may or may not be proficient in the English language.

Summary

This qualitative narrative case study explores how Brazilian women develop a sense of community and belonging while experiencing assimilation as they transition from Brazil to the United States. The findings from this study will offer guidance for a better understanding of the immigrant population and offer insights into practices and activities that supported their sense of belonging. It is imperative to establish an environment of trust and openness with participants prior to the start of the survey. Individual, semi-structured questions will be used for all interviews, enabling the researcher to compare responses, seek better understanding via follow up questions, and develop themes based on software enhanced approach. This approach could

provide transferability of results to other professional Brazilian immigrant population assimilating to USA.

References

- Ahlbrandt, R.S. & Cunningham, J.V. (1979). A new public policy for neighborhood preservation. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Ahn, M. Y., & Davis, H. H. (2020). Students' sense of belonging and their socio-economic status in higher education: a quantitative approach. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 1-14.
- Aldous, J., Durkheim, E., & Tonnies, F. (1972). An Exchange Between Durkheim and Tonnies on the Nature of Social Relations, with an Introduction by Joan Aldous. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77(6), 1191–1200. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2776225>
- Allan, K.D. (2005). Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World. Pine Forge Press.
- Allen, K. Kern, M.L., Rozek, C. S., McInerney, D. M. & Slavich, G. M (2021) Belonging: a review of conceptual issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 73(1), 87-102. DOI: [10.1080/00049530.2021.1883409](https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2021.1883409)
- American Immigration Council (2021). Immigrants in the United States. September 21, 2021. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-the-united-states>
- Anfara, V. A., & Mertz, N. T. (2006). *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Argyle, M. (1969). *Social interaction*. London: Methuen.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497–529. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497>

- Bachrach, K.M. & Zautra, A.J. (1985). Coping with a community stressor: The threat of a hazardous waste facility. *Journal of Health & Social Behavior*, 26(2), 127-141.
- Backman, C., & Secord, P. (1959). The effect of perceived liking on interpersonal attraction. *Human Relations*. 12, 379-384.
- Bean, H. B. (1971). *The effects of a role-model and instructions on group interpersonal openness and cohesiveness*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, West Virgins University, Morgantown, WV.
- Bell, C. & Newby, H. (1972). *Community studies: An introduction to the sociology of the local community*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Berntsen, C. L. (1955). THE ABSORPTION OF IMMIGRANTS [Review of The Absorption Of Immigrants, A comparative study based mainly on the Jewish community in Palestine and the State of Israel. (The International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction), by S. N. Eisenstadt]. *The Australian Quarterly*, 27(2), 117–119.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41416497>
- Berry, J.W. (1990). Psychology of acculturation: Understanding individuals moving between cultures. In R.W. Brislin (Ed.), *Applied cross-cultural psychology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Berry, J. W., & Hou, F. (2017). Acculturation, discrimination and wellbeing among second generation of immigrants in Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 61, 29-39.

- Berry, J. W., Poortinga, Y. H., Segall, M. H., & Dasen, P. R. (2002). *Cross-cultural psychology: research and applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Berry, J. W., J. S. Phinney, D. L. Sam, and P. E. Vedder. (2011) *Immigrant youth in cultural Transition: Acculturation, Identity, and Adaptation across National Contexts*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Bloomberg L. D. & Volpe M. (2019). *Completing your qualitative dissertation : a road map from beginning to end* (Fourth). Sage
- Bochner, S. (1972). Problems in culture learning. In S. Bochner & P. Wicks (Eds.), *Overseas students in Australia* (pp. 65–81). Sydney, Australia: University of New South Wales Press.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1997). *Qualitative research for education*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2),77-101.
- Brodsky, A.E., & Marx, C.M. (2001). Layers of identity: multiple psychological senses of community within a community setting. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 29(2), 161-178.
- Bruner, J. S. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2015). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

- Buss, A. H., & Portnoy, N. W. (1967). Pain tolerance and group identification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 6, 106-108.
- Butina, M. (2015). A narrative approach to qualitative inquiry. *Clinical Laboratory Science*, 28(3), 190–196.
- CATO Institute (2002). Immigrants have enriched American culture and enhanced our influence in the world. Source: <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/immigrants-have-enriched-american-culture-enhanced-our-influence-world>
- Chavis, D. M. (1983). Sense of community in the urban environment: Benefits for human and neighborhood development. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.
- Chavez, C. (2008). Conceptualizing from the Inside: Advantages, Complications, and Demands on Insider Positionality. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(3), 474-494.
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2008.1589>
- Chavis, D.M., Lee, K.S., & Acosta J.D. (2008). *The sense of community (SCI) revised: The reliability and validity of the SCI-2*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Community Psychology Conference, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Chavis, D.M., & Pretty, G. (1999). Sense of community: Advances in measurement and application. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 27(6), 635-642.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2007). *Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: borderland spaces and tensions*. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226552>
- Combs, A., & Krippner, S. (2008). Collective consciousness and the social brain. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 15(264–276)
- Cox, T. (1994). *Cultural diversity in organizations: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco: Berrett- Koehler.
- Craig, C. J. (2007). Story constellations: a narrative approach to contextualizing teachers' knowledge of school reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 173–188.
- Creary, S., Rothbard, N. Scruggs, J. (2021). Improving Workplace culture through evidence-based diversity, equity and inclusion practices. *The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania*, May, 2021
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th edition). Boston, MA. Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.
- Dallas Business Chamber (2021) <https://www.dallaschamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03>

- Davidson, W.B., & Cotter, P.R. (1986). Measurement of sense of community within the sphere of city. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 16, 608-619.
- Dawes, S. (2016). Introduction to Michel Maffesoli's 'from Society to Tribal Communities.' *The Sociological Review*, 64(4), 734–738. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12433>
- Denny, E. (2022). How to do qualitative research? Qualitative research methods. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 129(7), 1166-1167.
- Denny, E. & Weckesser, A. (2019). Qualitative research: what it is and what it is not. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 126(3), 369-369.
- Doolittle, R. & MacDonald, D. (1978). Communication and a sense of community in a metropolitan neighborhood: A factor analytic examination. *Communication Quarterly*, 26, 2-7.
- Durkheim, E. (1897). *Suicide, a study in sociology*. (1951 Edition, J. Spaulding & G. Simpson , Trans.).
- Durkheim, E. (1982) [1901]. "Preface to the Second Edition". Pp. 34–47 in *The Rules of Sociological Method and Selected Texts on Sociology and its Method*, edited by S. Lukes, translated by W. D. Halls. New York: The Free Press. ISBN 978-0-02-907940-9. p. 45.
- Ehrlich, J. J., & Graeven, D. B. (1971). Reciprocal self-disclosure in a dyad. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 7, 389-400.

- Fatehi, K., Priestley, J. L., & Taasoobshirazi, G. (2020). The expanded view of individualism and collectivism: One, two, or four dimensions? *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 20(1), 7–24.
- Fitzpatrick, J. P. (1966). The importance of “community” in the process of immigrant Assimilation. *The International Migration Review*, 1(1), 5–16.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3002231>
- Foss, S., Waters, W. (2016). *Destination dissertation: a traveler’s guide to a done dissertation*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Freda, M. F., Lemmo, D., Auriemma, E., Picione, R. D. L., & Martino, M. L. (2023). From sense to meaning: Narrative function coding system for the experience of illness. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 23(1), 41-61. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-06-2022-0081>
- Glynn, T.J. (1981). Psychological sense of community: Measurement and application. *Human Relations*, 34, 789-818.
- Gordon, Milton M. (1964). *Assimilation in American life : the role of race, religion, and national origins*. New York : Oxford University Press
- Greene, M. J. (2014). On the Inside Looking In: Methodological Insights and Challenges in Conducting Qualitative Insider Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(29), 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1106>
- Gupta, R. K., & Awasthy, R. (Eds.). (2021). *Qualitative research in management : Methods and experiences*. SAGE Publications India Pvt, Ltd..

- Healey, J.F., Stepnick, A. (2022). *Race, ethnicity, gender, and class. the sociology of group conflict and change*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishing
- Hill, J.L. (1996). Psychological sense of community: suggestions for future research. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24 (4), 431-438.
- Hofstede, G. (2001), *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Hoshmand, L. T. (2005). Narratology, cultural psychology, and counseling research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 178–186. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.178>
- Hou, F., Schellenberg, G., & Berry, J. (2018). Patterns and determinants of immigrants' sense of belonging to Canada and their source country. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41(9), 1612-1631.
- Janesick, V. J. (2007). Peer debriefing. *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology*.
- Jary, D., & Jary, J. (1991). *Collins dictionary of sociology*. London: HarperCollins.
- Jos. P. Fitzpatrick, "The Integration of Puerto Ricans," *Thought*, XXX (Autumn, 1955), pp. 402-420
- Kingston S.R, Mitchell R, Florin P, Stevenson J. (1999). Sense of community in neighborhoods as a multi-level construct. *Journal of Community Psychology*; 27(6), 681–694.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2008). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Kampenes, V. B., Anda, B., & Dyba, T. (2008). Flexibility in Research Designs in Empirical Software Engineering. *In* 12th International Conference on Evaluation and Assessment in Software Engineering (EASE) 12 (pp. 1–9). <https://doi.org/10.14236/ewic/EASE2008.6>
- Kayama, M. & Yamakawa N. (2020) Acculturation and a sense of belonging of children in U.S. Schools and communities: The case of Japanese families. *Child Youth Serv Rev.* 2020 Dec;119:105612. doi: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105612. Epub 2020 Oct 15. PMID: 33082613; PMCID: PMC7560265.
- Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(3), 480-500. DOI:10.1177/1077800406286235
- Layton-Henry, Z. (2001). *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences*, Pergamon.
- Lauer, S. (2022). Cosmopolitan social infrastructure and immigrant cross-ethnic friendship. *Current Sociology*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921221102983>
- Loh, J. (2013). Inquiry into issues of trustworthiness and quality in narrative studies: A perspective. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(33), 1-15.
- Luhmann, N. (1995). *Social systems*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Luhmann, N. (2012). *Theory of society*. Stanford University Press, 2012.
- Machi, L.A. & B.T. McEvoy. (2009). *The literature review: Six steps to success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

- McLeod, P. L., Lobel, S. A., & Cox, T. H., Jr. 1996. Ethnic diversity and creativity in small groups. *Small Group Research*, 27, 246-264
- Mann, L. (1980). Cross-cultural studies of small groups. In H. Triandis & R. Brislin (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Social Psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 155-209). Boston: Allyn & Bacon
- Mannarini, T., & Fedi, A. (2009). Multiple senses of community: The experience and meaning of community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 37(2), 211-227.
- Masgoret, A.-M., & Ward, C. (2006). The cultural learning approach to acculturation. In D.L. Sam & J.W. Berry (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology* (pp. 58–77). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Marvasti, A., & Faircloth, C. (2013). CHAPTER FIFTEEN: Narrative and Genre in Qualitative Research: The Case of Romanticism. *Counterpoints*, 354, 322–338.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/42981175>
- Mason, J. (2004), “Semi-structured interview”, in Lewis-Beck, M.S., Bryman, A.E. and Liao, McKinsey (2017) article <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/focusing-on-what-works-for-workplace-diversity>
- McMillan, D. (1976). *Sense of community: An attempt at definition*. Unpublished manuscript, George Peabody
- McMillan, D. & Chavis, D. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and Theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14, 6-23

- Merton, R. K. (1972). Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(1), 9–47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2776569>
- Mertova, P., & Webster, L. (2019). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: an introduction to critical event narrative analysis in research, teaching and professional practice* London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429424533>
- Monteiro, S. (2021). Cultural assimilation: Learning and sorting. *Review of Economic Analysis*, 13(2), 115- 156. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15353/rea.v13i2.4045>
- Moya, J. C. (2005). Immigrants and associations: A global and historical perspective. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 31(5), 833-865
- Nelson, G., Prilleltensky, I. (2010). *Community psychology: in pursuit of liberation and well-being*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nisbet, Robert. (1967). *The sociological tradition*. London: Heinemann.
- Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health sciences research*, 34, 1189-1208.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Palese E. (2013). Zygmunt Bauman. Individual and society in the liquid modernity. *SpringerPlus*, 2(1), 191. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-1801-2-191>
- Park, R. E., & Burgess, W. E. (1921). *Introduction to the science of sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Perrucci, R. (1963). Social distance strategies and intra-organizational stratification: A study of the status system on a psychiatric ward. *American Sociological Review*, 28. 951-962.

- QSR International. (2020). How auto coding themes works. http://help-nv11.qsrinternational.com/desktop/concepts/how_auto_coding_themes_works.htm
- Rainey, K., Dancy, M., Mickelson, R., Stearns, E., & Moller, S. (2018). Race and gender differences in how sense of belonging influences decisions to major in STEM. *International journal of STEM education*, 5(1), 1-14.
- Reybold, L. E., Lammert, J.D., & Stribling, S.M. (2013). Participant selection as a conscious research method: thinking forward and the deliberation of ‘emergent’ findings. *Qualitative Research*, 13(6), 699-716
- Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovits, M.J. (1936). Memorandum for the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist*, 38, 149–152.
- Riger, S. & Lavrakas, P. (1981). Community ties patterns of attachment and social interaction in urban neighborhoods. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 9, 55-66.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Royal, M.A, Rossi, R.J. (1996). Individual-level correlates of sense of community: findings from workplace and school. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24(4), 395-416
- Ruiz, G.N. & Gramlich, J. (2019). 4 paths highly educated immigrants take to study and work in the U.S. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/01/4-paths-highly-educated-immigrants-take-to-study-and-work-in-the-u-s/>
- Rudmin, F., Wang, B., & de Castro, J. (2017). Acculturation research critiques and alternative research designs. In S. J. Schwartz & J. B. Unger (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of acculturation and health* (pp. 75–95). Oxford University Press.
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

Sánchez-Vidal, A. (1991). *Psicología comunitaria: bases conceptuales y operativas –Métodos de intervención*. Barcelona: PPU.

Sarason, S.B. (1974). *The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sarason, S.B. (1986). Commentary: The emergence of a conceptual center. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14, 405-407.

Schmaus, W. (1994). *Durkheim's philosophy of science and the sociology of knowledge: creating an intellectual niche*. University of Chicago Press.

Schwartz, S. J., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., & Szapocznik, J. (2010). Rethinking the concept of acculturation: implications for theory and research. *The American psychologist*, 65(4), 237–251. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019330>

Shadish, W. R. (1995). Philosophy of science and the quantitative-qualitative debates: Thirteen common errors. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 18(1), 63-75.

Solomontos-Kountouri, O., & Strohmeier, D. (2021). The need to belong as motive for (cyber)bullying and aggressive behavior among immigrant adolescents in Cyprus. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 2021(177), 159–178. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20418>

Spielberger, Charles (2004). *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology*. New York: Academic Press

Swanson, R.A. & Holton III, E. F. (2005). *Research in organizations: Foundations and methods of inquiry*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

- Taras, V., Roney, J., & Steel, P. (2009). Half a century of measuring culture: Review of approaches, challenges, and limitations based on the analysis of 121 instruments for quantifying culture. *Journal of International Management*, 15(4), 357-373.
- Taylor, J. (2011). The intimate insider: Negotiating the ethics of friendship when doing insider research. *Qualitative research*, 11(1), 3-22.
- T.F.F. (Eds), *The sage encyclopedia of social science research methods*. CA:Sage Publications.
- Turner, J. C., & Tajfel, H. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel, & W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7-24). IL: Nelson-Hall.
- Verdier, Thierry, Manning, Alan, Bisin, Alberto, Algan, Yann. (2012). *Cultural integration of immigrants in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Waldinger, R. (2007). Did manufacturing matter? The experience of yesterdays second generation: A reassessment. *International Migration Review*, 41(1), 3–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2007.00055.x>
- Waldinger, R. D, & Fitzgerald, D. (2003). Immigrant “Transnationalism” Reconsidered. UCLA: Department of Sociology, UCLA. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/067683p8>
- Wandersman, A. (1984). Cognitive social learning and participation in community development. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 12, 689-708.

- Wandersman, A., & Giamartino, G. A. (1980). Community and individual difference characteristics as influences of an initial participation. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 8*, 217-228.
- Ward, C., & Geeraert, N. (2016). Advancing acculturation theory and research: The acculturation process in its ecological context. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 8*, 98–104.
- Waters, M.C. & Gerstein, M. (2015). *The integration of immigrants into american society*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/21746>.
- Will, G. F. (2014, February 13). ‘George Will: Why immigration reform matters’. Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/george-will-why-immigration-reform-matters/2014/02/13/04e7dfac-94db-11e3-84e1-27626c5ef5fb_story.html
- Wood, H. G. (1971). An analysis of social sensitivity. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 32*(2-B),1200.
- Ziyanak, S. (2015). Critically assessing classic assimilation theory and alternative perspectives for immigrants and the second generation in the united states. *Race, Gender & Class, 22*(1), 143-149.

Appendix A

A Narrative Research Study on How Brazilian Women Executives Build a Sense of Community and Belonging When Transferred to the United States

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Principal Researcher: Silvia Regina Siqueira

Faculty Advisor: Kit Kacirek, Ed.D.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

You are invited to participate in a research study about Brazilian women executives building a sense of community and belonging as they assimilate to the United States. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a successful Brazilian female executive who has chosen to be transferred to the United States for your career development.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Who is the Principal Researcher?

Silvia Regina Siqueira, srsiquei@uark.edu

Who is the Faculty Advisor?

Kit Kacirek, Ed.D., kitk@uark.edu

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this narrative case study is to create new knowledge by exploring how Brazilian women executives develop a sense of community and belonging while experiencing assimilation as they transition from Brazil to the United States.

Who will participate in this study?

5 Brazilian executive professionals between 35 and 50 years old

What am I being asked to do?

Your participation will require you to answer pre-scripted questions that may be followed by questions for further clarification. The interview will follow a conversational format and all answers are voluntary.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?

There are no anticipated risks to participating. Confidentiality will be kept and responses are voluntary.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

There are no anticipated benefits to the participant.

How long will the study last?

45 minute interview with no follow-up interviews

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?

No, there will be no compensation for your participation.

Will I have to pay for anything?

No, there will be no cost associated with your participation.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?

If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may refuse to participate at any time during the study. Your job, your grade, your relationship with the University, etc. will not be affected in any way if you refuse to participate.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. Data will be kept anonymous, records will be stored in secure laptop.

Will I know the results of the study?

At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results. You may contact the faculty advisor, Kit Kacirek, Ed.D., kitk@uark.edu and Silvia Regina Siqueira, ssiquei@uark.edu. You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

What do I do if I have questions about the research study?

You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher or Faculty Advisor as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

Principal Research: Silvia Regina Siqueira, ssiquei@uark.edu

Faculty Advisor: Kit Kacirek, Ed.D., kitk@uark.edu

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Integrity and Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Integrity and Compliance
University of Arkansas
105 MLKG Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

Appendix B Interview Protocol

Content	Questions	Probe
Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Thank you for agreeing to be a part of my study on understanding the experiences of Brazilian women in developing a sense of belonging and identification as you assimilate to a new culture. As a Brazilian woman who also immigrated to USA, this research is important to me. • Participating in this study is completely voluntary and your personal information will not be disclosed. • I am now going to go over the informed consent with you before I have you sign int. You will be given a copy to keep. • I am going to record our interview as well as take a few notes on my computer 	
Background		
	How long have you been working for the organization that transferred you to USA?	
	When did you arrive in USA for this international assignment?	
	Can you tell me about your current job in the organization, and how it compares to your job in Brazil?	Does this mean that you'll be sharing some of the same experiences as you did before?
Transition to community and belonging		
	Before coming to USA, how would you have described your sense of community and belonging?	In other words, what activities made you feel connected with others?
	What have been your actions to feel a sense of community in USA?	What has made it difficult to assimilate to a new culture?

	How would you describe your support group as you transition to USA?	For my clarity, these are individuals with whom you feel connected?
	What behaviors or activities make you feel connected to your new community? Why?	
	As you transitioned to USA, how has the relationship with your community in Brazil been impacted, and why?	Can you elaborate? What is being impacted?
	Reflecting on your assimilation journey, how would you describe the impact of your experiences on your connections with other Brazilian immigrant women? How do you think these experiences impacted your connections with other Brazilian professional women who used to be part of your community?	