

# What Happens Post-Return Migration? The Experiences of Brazilian Returnees from Ireland

## O que acontece após a migração de retorno? As experiências dos brasileiros que retornam da Irlanda

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

Return migration is described as a situation where the migrants return to their country of origin, by their own will, after a significant period of time abroad (DUSTMANN & WEISS, 2007: 238). Return migration brings consequences with it for both origin and host communities. It also immensely affects the lives of the people involved (both migrants and non-migrants). Returnee migrants, in particular, face socio-psychological problems after the return migration process. The few studies that have addressed returnees' psychological reactions after they returned have found considerable adjustment problems, especially around the re-integration process (YEHUDA-STERNFELD & MIRSKY, 2014). Reintegration can be defined as the re-inclusion of a person in a group and society of his/her country of origin (IOM, 2011:82). According to Cassarino (2008), reintegration includes social-psychological, economic, and cultural aspects, which are interrelated and mutually affect one another. Chobanyan (2013) asserts that return migrants typically find themselves in a difficult psychological situation due to social insecurity, loss of networks, and because some are not ready to return. The data from this study, for instance, also demonstrate that most participants faced many problems readapting to life in Anápolis-GO, after returning from Ireland, many of which overlapped and intertwined.

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However, there is still a lack of pertinent research on return migration aimed at understanding the many challenges returnees face in their home country and how the return migration process affects people's lives. There is some empirical evidence to suggest that return migration is a complex process that has consequences for both originating and receiving communities and intensely affects the lives of the people involved (DE HAAS AND FOKKEMA, 2010). For Ni Laoire (2011: 21), return migration "is frequently conceived in terms of an opposition between 'myth' and 'reality', highlighting a disjuncture between 'home' as dream and 'home' as actually experienced." She argues that while this is a useful conceptual framework, "the negotiations of identity and belonging involved in the process of return migration are more complex than this" (*ibid.*, 2011:21). For Christou (2006:835), return migrants generate multidimensional understandings of self and belonging, rationalised through the return migratory project. Christou examined the spaces of inclusion and exclusion during the return process of Greek-Americans to Greece. She found that "the return migrant emerges as a socially and politically sensitised figure on various levels of adjustment and social interaction during the return settlement process" and that "the binary representations of 'home-host', 'foreign-familiar' [...] all express a cultural anxiety that takes shape in the form of anxious negotiations of the self as either more or less Greek" (Christou, 2006:839). Finally, she noted that "'Greekness' as the ultimate plan of action, fulfilled during the homeland return, is tested by homeplace constructions of 'otherness' which create states of being of 'strangeness' for the return migrant" (*ibid.*).

As other studies of return migration have shown, feelings of belonging need to be renegotiated upon return, both at the community and family level (NI LAOIRE, 2011; DE BREE *et al.* 2010). For instance, de Bree *et al.* argue that "return migration is not simply a matter of 'going home', as feelings of belonging need to be renegotiated upon return" (DE BREE *et al.* 2010:489). In their research on return migration, belonging and transnationalism among migrants who returned from the Netherlands to Morocco, they found that "while returnees generally feel a strong need to maintaining various transnational practices, the meanings they attach to these practices depend on motivations for return, gender and age" (*ibid.*). Finally, they noted that those who returned as children generally feel uprooted, notwithstanding the transnational practice they maintain (*ibid.*).

In contrast, a study by de Haas and Fokkema (2010), which explored the causes and reasons for returning to Morocco, concluded that relatively few returnees expressed concerns about their future financial situation. This was because their state pensions or social benefits, sometimes supplemented by income from one or more investments, were generally sufficient to live

comfortably in rural areas of Morocco, where living costs are much lower than in Europe (DE HAAS and FOKKEMA, 2010:551). Although returnees generally experienced a fairly smooth re-adaptation, this does not mean their return was simply a matter of “going home” (*ibid.*:552). The study also noted that, at the family level, returnees sometimes face difficulties in regaining a position in the family (*ibid.*:552-3). Although the majority of children interviewed were happy that their father had finally returned home, this decision was often not beneficial for them (*ibid.*:553). In this sense, the most common conflicts seem to revolve around the father’s decision not to bring the family to Europe (*ibid.*:553). However, the majority remained of the opinion that their decision to leave their family behind was the right one (*ibid.*:554). Its conclusions reveal that, in general, return migration is a complex and multifaceted process, which has consequences for both origin and host communities and intensely affects the lives of the people involved in it (*ibid.*).

Return migration has been largely overlooked in Brazil, despite the extensive emigration of Brazilians since the 1980s. Globally, the number of international Brazilian migrants in 2022 was 4,598,735 million (MRE, 2022: 3). Return migration has also been largely overlooked in Ireland, especially regarding significant non-EEA immigrant groups living in the country. This study aims to contribute to filling this empirical gap, analysing the settlement challenges faced by Brazilians returning from Ireland for reintegration in Anápolis, in the state of Goiás. As they form the largest non-EU immigrant group living in Ireland, the case of Brazilian migration is particularly relevant to examine return migration in the Irish migration context. Ireland represents a new European frontier for Brazilians, who have historically migrated primarily to Portugal and other Western European countries (JORDAN & DUVELL, 2002; TORRESAN, 2012). Although Brazilian migration to Ireland is a fairly recent phenomenon compared to other European nations, the number of Brazilians in Ireland has grown significantly since the beginning of the migratory flow (CSO, 2002, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2022) and the country is now home to the 8th largest Brazilian community in Europe (MRE, 2020). For example, in 2002 there were only 1,232 Brazilian nationals in Ireland. In 2006, their number grew to 4,720. Between the 2006 and 2011 censuses, the Brazilian population doubled in size and its number stood at 8,704. The growth in the number of Brazilian nationals continued and in April 2016 the number was 13,640. This figure increased significantly in 2022 to 39,556. Consequently, since 2006 the Brazilian population has grown more than 8 times.

The paper is organized as follows. The following section provides the empirical analysis: it begins with a description of the data, preceded by a

description of participants' background characteristics, and ends with the description and interpretation of the results. The final section provides the final summary and implications of the study.

## 2 METHODS

### 2.1 Data

Case study methods were utilised to explore return-migration reintegration challenges through the context of Anápolis, a mid-sized city of 386,923 habitants located in the Midwest state of Goiás in Brazil (IBGE, 2019a, b). This paper draws on data collected as part of a four-year research project on the determinants of Brazilian migration from Anápolis in Goiás, to Gort in County Galway, Ireland (DE FARIAS, 2022). The evidence presented below emerges from in-depth, qualitative interview with 40 Brazilian migrants in Anápolis. Of these, 8 interviews were with couples, 13 were with individual females, and 11 were with individual male participants. The sample was comprised of 19 males (47.5%) and 21 females (52.5%). To build a richer understanding of their background, family dynamics, and migration experiences, the study also carried out 45 questionnaires with the participants. This provided a unique opportunity to study the participants' past and current socio-demographic and socio-economic situation in Brazil and the country of destination. The fieldwork took place between May and September 2018. All the interviews were conducted in Portuguese, the interviewees' native language, and each interview was recorded electronically using a Philips voice recorder. All first names used are pseudonyms, to protect respondents' anonymity. In addition, an informed consent form was signed by each participant before participating in the study.

### 2.2 Respondents' background characteristics

This section summarises some key information about the background of the sample. The sample of 40 participants was comprised of 19 males (47.55%) and 21 females (52.5%). In terms of the age of the participants, 5 were less than 35 years old, 20 were aged 35 to 50, 11 were aged 51 to 60 and 4 were aged 61 to 70. The majority were mature people middle-aged or older; this is a noticeable indicator of labour migration flows.

The participants in Anápolis had diverse educational backgrounds. Twenty participants attended Primary education. However, only 6 had finished this level of education, whilst 14 had dropped out. Those who dropped out of Primary education had an average of 5.3 years of schooling, while those who finished had an average of 8 years of schooling. Furthermore, 14 participants

had attended Secondary education, however 4 dropped out. Finally, 2 participants had Technical education, 1 had an incomplete Higher education, and 3 had completed Higher education. As to the participants' religious affiliation, the majority were Evangelicals (45%), followed by Catholics (37.5%), no religious affiliation (12.5%) and Spiritists (5%).

Regarding marital status, 28 participants were married, while 6 were single, 5 were divorced or separated, and 1 was cohabiting. In terms of family composition, 34 participants stated they had children, although family sizes were relatively small, with a total of 69 children, an average of 1.72 children per family.

In terms of immigration status, 31 out of 40 people were undocumented during most of their time in Ireland, representing 80% of the total sample. Of these undocumented migrants, 25 people entered the country with a tourist visa and overstayed their permission and 6 people held a work permit but became undocumented later.

Regarding the working status of the participants 31 out of 40 were actively working; 16 were formally employed and 15 were self-employed. A further 5 were retired, 4 were looking after home/family (i.e. neither at work nor retired), while 2 were unemployed over a long period (*Maria Eduarda* and *Vinícios*). The majority of the participants in Brazil were immersed in a variety of different sectors and occupations: 14 participants were self-employed, 6 were employed in commerce, 4 in the public sector, 3 in health care, 2 in education, and 1 participant each in cleaning/housekeeping mechanical and security sectors.

The data indicate that 36 participants did send remittances regularly home during their time in Ireland. Other 2 participants said they did send remittances, but only rarely. Finally, 1 participant said he did send remittances home, but only sometimes, while 1 only said he did send remittances home, however, very little. It appears that female participants (21) were more likely to send remittances home than males participants (19).

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 *Economic challenges*

The **Table 1** display the results of the data analysis on the challenges facing Brazilian returnees from Ireland to reintegrate in Anápolis. Most participants faced a variety of problems after returning, many of which overlapped and intertwined with each other. Unsurprisingly, the most important theme to emerge from the data were *the economic challenges*, mentioned 20 (50%) participants, of which 10 were male and 10 were female. Participants

mentioned that they faced a variety of economic problems upon return. The most cited economic problem was *the difficulty in re-adapting to life with a low salary*, mentioned by 10 (25%) participants, of which 6 were male and 4 were female. For example, 50-year-old *Ana Clara*, a married mother and former meat-processing worker, who lived in Ireland between 2001 and 2003, faced many difficulties in adapting to low wages: “We faced many difficulties, everything was difficult, we had to get used to living with little money, so I thought like, “I cannot spend what I brought from Ireland, because then it will be necessary.” The high working load in Brazil was a problem too; in Ireland, it is much smaller.” A similar example came from 59-year-old, *Davi Lucca*, a married father and former meat-processing worker, who lived in Ireland between 2002 and 2003:

Adapt with low salary, work a full month and earn a very low salary, it takes time to get used to, it was not easy not, and in Ireland, your work is valued. Here I earned 6,000 a year, in Ireland I made that money per month, besides I had to start working here at 5 o'clock in the morning, it was not easy, in Ireland you usually work from 8 o'clock to 5 o'clock, much easier.

The second most cited economic problem was *the cost of living (especially the difficulty to buy food)*, mentioned by 8 (20%) the participants, of which 5 were female and 3 were male. The testimony of *Melissa*, a 50-year-old married mother who lived in Ireland between 2007 and 2009 exemplify this theme among the participants:

Wow, when I got here and went to the supermarket to shop for the first time, I got scared, I got scared, so I said, ‘My God what I came to do here in Brazil again.’ Things are very expensive here, money is little, and money is not enough. To tell you the truth, I regretted bitterly that I came back to Brazil, and my husband too, he knows that he made a mistake, today we want to come back very much, but it is difficult because of the financial difficulty, today we work selling grams in the city, only enough to feed us, pay the bills, and pay for the maintenance of the truck.

This is also the case for 53-year-old *Ana Luíza*, a married mother who lived in Ireland between 2003 and 2009:

I faced some difficulties; it was not so much the heat, but the financial issue. Because in Ireland you get used to earn well, to be paid weekly. Everything here is different; you work hard and earn little. Not to mention the cost of living in Brazil that is very high. Even earning little, we do not give up eating vegetables and fruits, because if you save money on it, you get sick, it gets more expensive.

The third most cited economic problems were *re-adapting to being paid monthly*, mentioned by 4 (10%) participants, of which 3 were male and 1 were female. Another 4 (10%) participants said they faced difficulties in *changing their consumption habits acquired in Ireland* “of not having to thinking about money,” of which 2 were male and 2 were female. The other economic problem faced was a lack of money, mentioned by 2 (5%) participants. A representation of this could be seen in the story of the participants *Vicente* and *Vinícius*. In the following quotation, *Vicente*, a 48-year-old married father and former meat-processing worker, who lived in Ireland between 1999 and 2002, describes his difficulty to adapt to lack of money upon returning to Anápolis: “The first difficulty was the lack of money, I got used to earning a good salary weekly in Ireland. Here in Brazil, you receive only at the end of the month, and in addition, the salary is very low.” On the other hand, he had no difficulty re-entering the job market due to his experience in the meat-processing sector:

I did not have not because I had a lot of experience in the cattle slaughtering area, they were hiring at the time I returned to Brazil, but the salary is very little. This led me to invest in a business, I opened a store, but unfortunately, the business did not work, I had no experience with business, this led me to lose a lot of money. This encouraged me to migrate to Australia, I lived there for another 10 years, and you realized the sacrifice I made.

This is also the case for *Vinícius*, a 42-year-old single man, who lived in Ireland between 2004 to 2005 and 2007 to 2011, who is still unemployed since this return in 2011:

The first difficulty was the lack of money and the lack of employment, I have been unemployed for more than five years, and if it were not for my mother’s support, I would be living on the street and starving. The lack of professional training has aggravated my situation, to do

a training in SENAC (The national service of commercial learning) I need money, besides I do not even have a high school diploma, so it is very difficult to get a job, that is why I want to return to Ireland, but I have no money.

The other themes that emerged was a feel of shock with the economic difficulties people were facing and dealing with their complaints about life (n=2, 5%), to keep the assets acquired in Ireland (2 participants, 5%), being cheated by a partner after returning (1 participant, 2.5%), re-learning how to live with financial limitations (1 participant, 2.5%), the fall of the living standard acquired in Ireland (1 participant, 2.5%), re-adapting to the living standard and difficulty in forgetting the Euro (1 participant, 2.5%) and feeling inferior for not being able to work (1 participant, 2.5%). Moreover, that data showed that most participants faced different economic problems after returning to Anápolis.

### 3.2 Labour market challenges

Labour market problems were the second most cited problems, mentioned by 17 (42.5%) participants. Interestingly, females were more likely than males to face labour market access problems, with 11 and 6, respectively. Participants mentioned a variety of labour market problems they faced upon return. The great majority (n=14, 35%) said that they faced problems in accessing the labour market upon their return, of which 9 were female and 5 were male. The case of *Lara*, a 35-year-old single mother of 3 children who migrated to Ireland twice (2003 to 2004 and 2005 to 2009), is very telling. She faced difficulty re-entering the job market due to her low level of school education and lack of professional experience:

The biggest difficulty was to re-enter the labour market, I had neither college nor even finished high school, and lack of professional experience as well. In Ireland, I worked with cleaning and housework that did not add much to my resume. Thankfully, I had the support of my family at the beginning. Today I work, as a cashier in a supermarket, the only problem here is that you earn a minimum wage, so there is never any money left. I missed Ireland for a while, especially my friends. However, today I am happy here with my children and family.

A similar example came from *Beatriz*, a 34-year-old married woman and mother of 3 young children, who lived in Ireland between 2005 and 2010 and faced challenges in accessing the job market:



Our biggest challenge was accessing the job market, because our resumes were already out of date, I got jobs faster, but my husband did not, it took him a long time to get a job. After that, we decided to set up a car mechanic business; my husband already had some experience in that area. When we arrived, we had to live in favour (*without paying rent or bills*) in the house of my husband's grandparents, so we started from scratch, and in addition, with three small children, the expenses were very high with our food.

The second most cited labour market challenge was a lack of both opportunities and employment, mentioned by 4 (10%) participants, of which 3 were female and 1 were male. Other labour market problems cited were the high work load (2 participant, 5%), the feeling that your work is not valued or appreciated as much as it was in Ireland (2 participants, 5%) and being unemployed after returning (1 participant, 2.5%). The examples below the participants *Rebeca* and *Maria Alice* illustrate the difficulties participants faced in finding a job. In the case of *Rebeca*, a 46-year-old, divorced women, mother of two children, who lived in Ireland between 2005 to 2007. Her main problem was not having a profession or diploma:

The biggest difficulty was lack of employment, the situation was even more difficult because I had neither profession nor diploma, besides I was already 35 years old, it weighed a lot, that's why at the beginning I decided to invest part of the money to open a business to sell clothes, but the business did not work, I lost 7 thousand Reais, today I work as a baker in a bakery, and selling barbecue on weekends.

In the case of *Maria Alice*, 40 years old, single mother of two teenage children, who lived in Ireland between 2006 and 2008, she faced difficulties finding a job because she was pregnant at the time of her return to Brazil:

I had trouble finding work because I was pregnant; when my son completed six months of being born, I got a job. I had too much trouble with the excessive heat, I had a lot of allergy because of the pregnancy, besides I had a little depression too, I cried a lot for having returned too, but with time it was passing.

### 3.3 Weather related problems

The third most cited problem facing returnees was the challenges to adapt to the weather in Brazil, mentioned by 16 (40%) participants, of which 8 were male and 8 were female. Interestingly, all 16 participants mentioned having difficulties in re-adapting to the heat in Brazil, while 2 participants mentioned having skin health problems due to the heat (burns, bubbles and allergies). The testimony of **Felipe**, 57 years old, divorced, and father of 3 adult children, who lived in Ireland between 2004 and 2009 exemplifies this theme well among the participants. For him, adapting to the heat was his biggest challenge in adapting to Brazil:

Adapting to the heat was my biggest challenge, oh my lady, I almost died here, I spent three months to readjust my body, and sometimes I took four to five baths a day because of the heat. It was a crazy thing the heat I felt here when I came back from there, I arrived in the month of November, in the middle of winter in Ireland, I left there it was snowing, then I arrived in the middle of the summer.

This was also the case of Melissa, a 50-year-old, married woman and mother of 2 teenager children, who lived in Ireland between 2007 to 2009:

I felt bad with the weather, because I leave there with a wonderful cold, with beautiful skin, I arrived here I came across the heat, my body gave bubbles, as if it were burns, I was scared of it, so I asked myself 'Why did I come back?'

### 3.4 Psychological issues

Another interesting theme to emerge from the data was psychological issues, mentioned by 13 (32.5%) participants. Female were more likely than males to face a psychological issue, with 11 and 2, respectively. The most cited psychological issue was a feeling of regret and blame for their decision to return, mentioned by 9 (22.5%) participants. Females were more likely than males to feel regret and guilt, with 7 and 2, respectively. Another 4 (10%) participants mentioned feeling depressed after the return, all of whom were female. Interestingly, a further 4 (10%) participants felt nostalgia and longing to both Ireland and friends left behind, all of whom were female. The other psychological issues mentioned were dealing with a divorce, being left and feeling betrayed by the husband (1 participant, 2.5%), the gaining and loss of weight (1 participant, 2.5%), isolation and being locked in the house

(1 participant, 2.5%), feeling sad (1 participant, 2.5%), sleeping problems (1 participant, 2.5%) and living with the regret of not having applied for Irish citizenship before returning (participant 1, 2.5%). The example of *Isadora*, a 54-year-old, divorced woman, who lived in Ireland between 2001 and 2005, illustrate the trauma of divorce and betrayal by a partner:

Look, in my case, my return to Brazil was very disappointing. The money saved from Ireland changed my husband a lot, to start with, he changed me to another younger woman, that is to say, our return caused the end of our marriage, and he felt invincible with the power of money. I very much regret having let him oppress me, of never screaming, of letting him think only of himself, of never having thought of myself, but part of what happened was my fault too. He also tried to keep most of the things we got in Ireland, he spent almost all the money we got in Ireland, and he was very dishonest.

In addition to facing challenges related to marital separation, *Isadora* also faced health problems:

So it was my biggest challenge to deal with the separation and betrayal of my husband, besides I faced many health problems, I spent a lot of money taking care of myself, I was unable to work for a few years, it took me a while to get up again today I work as a Portuguese language teacher and an English teacher, but I still have depression problems, today I live with my sister so she helps me a lot, but I still cannot get emotionally involved with another man.

Other participants faced feelings of isolation upon returning to Brazil; this is the case of *Maria Cecília*, a 49-year-old, married woman, and mother of 2 grown children, who lived in Ireland between 2007 to 2010:

I did not have to, I was isolated inside the house by my own option, because I did not want to be here, I was forced to come, but soon after I reacted and went to look for a job, today I have my own business selling pots.

Other participants felt feelings of inferiority, regret and blame upon return to Brazil; this was the case of 32-year-old *Catarina*, a married woman and the mother of 4 children, who lived in Ireland between 2005 and 2011:

Thank God, my husband got a job as soon as he arrived, but I felt inferior, because I could not work because of my four small children, that was hard because in Ireland I had my own money. I also suffered because I did not want to go back to Brazil, I wanted to have stayed there to try to get my children's documents, today they would have this patrimony in their hands, the Irish citizenship, so for me to come back was like a failure, I did not I wish I had come.

Interestingly, more people reported having had psychological issues during the return re-integration process than during their period in Ireland. Together, these findings demonstrate that immigrants are vulnerable to developing psychological issues both during and after migration.

### *3.5 City and urban related problems*

Another interesting theme to emerge was urban-related problems, mentioned by 6 (15%) participants, of which 3 were female and 3 were male. Among the problems mentioned were the difficulty of adapting to the dirty streets, mentioned by 3 (7.5%) participants. The other problems faced included the difficulty to adapt to a lack of security and violence (2 participants, 5%), the traffic noise and drivers' rudeness (1 participant, 2.5%) and re-adapting to the way they walk on the streets of Anápolis (not carefree, as in Ireland) (1 participant, 2.5%).

### *3.6 Did not face problems at all*

Interestingly, some participants (6 participants, 15%) mentioned that they did not face problems at all after retuning. Mainly those with jobs offers, those with civil public jobs and those with a better financial situation and their own houses. Take, for example the testimony of participant *Antonella*, a 66-year-old single woman who lived in Ireland between 2009 and 2010. She did not face many challenges because she was a civil servant and had a secure job, however, other members of her family who also lived in Ireland faced changes to find employment upon returning to Brazil:

So it was not difficult for me not because I had my job guaranteed, I was a civil servant in Anápolis, I had my own house too, so it was not difficult for me. But my daughter's family faced a little difficulty, especially my son-in-law, he spent many years without a job.

Other participants did not face many challenges because they had support from the community, family, and their former employers; this

was the case of physical education teacher *Pietro*, a 62-year-old married man, who lived in Ireland between 1999 and 2000, and 2002 and 2004 and 2007 and 2008:

Nothing, nothing, I was very well accepted by the community, the company that I worked with was reopened again, my job was already guaranteed, because they knew me. My mother supports me, my friends. I did not miss [Ireland] because every time I came on vacation to Brazil the return to Ireland was always painful, it was difficult. Do not get me wrong, I enjoyed a lot in Ireland, the organization of things, the security, and the money we made there. However, unfortunately, I did not adapt with the life there, I would say a confined life, when it is not the weather, its laws, and lack of leisure options, what we like, what I like. Here the lack of security takes away our freedom, but if you know how to live in a place you can go wherever you want, in Ireland sometimes you could not, it bothered me a lot. So here in spite of the difficulties you have more freedom, you have access to the things you like.

A similar example came from public civil servant *Antônio*, a 62-year-old married man who lived in Ireland between 2004 and 2007. He didn't even worry about earning less when he returned to Anápolis: "I did not have problems, not to tell the truth, even earning less my life here is better than there, here I have my own house, I have my family by my side." And *José*, a 70-year-old, construction worker, who lived in Ireland between 2000 and 2012: "No difficulty, nothing, nothing, it seemed that I had never left, I love this Brazil of ours, I love being Brazilian, here it has everything, here is our place."

### *3.7 Property related issues*

Interestingly, 5 (12.5%) participants mentioned having properties problems after the return, of which 3 were female and 2 were male. Among the property problems mentioned were that some felt that their property was run down and dilapidated (2 participants, 5%), some found the house too small compared to Ireland and felt they were living on a farm (1 participant, 2.5%), others had a problem re-adapting to the shape of the houses (1 participant, 2.5%), some had difficulty finding a place to live and had to rely on relatives for shelter (1 participant, 2.5%) and adapting to a new house in a different neighbourhood (feeling out of place) (1 participant, 2.5%).

### 3.8 Health related issues

Another 4 (10%) participants reported having faced health-related issues. Females were more likely than males to face a health issue, with 3 and 1, respectively. All the participants (4 participants, 10%) mentioned having to deal a personal health problem after returning, while 2 (5%) participants mentioned that they had difficulty accessing health care. A representation of this could be seen in the story of the participant Mariana, a 58-year-old married woman, who faced a health problem and difficulty accessing care she needs after returning to Anápolis:

What really weighed in the beginning was really my health, which even made me stay. Difficulty in accessing health in Brazil is difficult too, in Ireland it is easier, even if you are illegal and do not have the medical card, it is easier for you to go to doctors, to do tests, people stop taking exams in Ireland to do in Brazil, but here today you have to have a good health plan, or else, have money to pay, or face queues in public hospitals. You have to return to Brazil prepared to stay, because if you do not prepare to stay, any difficulty you face makes you want to return to Ireland. My son-in-law and my daughter are examples of this, they already had the house furnished here, had their car, the children in school, but the first difficulty they faced they returned to Ireland.

### 3.9 Network and friendship problems.

Other 3 (7.5%) participants mentioned that they faced friendship and network problems. Males were more likely than females to face these problems, with 2 and 1, respectively. Among the problems faced, they mentioned the loss of friendships while in Ireland (2 participants , 5%), the loss of contact with many people (1 participant, 2.5%) and the loss of old business clients (1 participant, 2.5%). See for instance the testimony of participant *Esther*, a 44-year-old divorced woman:

The loss of friendships was a problem, the friendships I had moved away from me, so I found this difficult. There was also the difficulty of reintegrating into the labor market, perhaps because of my age, and the lack of an academic formation, of a course. It was only after four years that I got a fixed, signed-up job. During this time I did informal work, I found ways to pay the bills.

### 3.10 People's manner problems

Finally, 2 (5%) participants reported having difficulties dealing with people's manners, especially people's impoliteness.

**Table 1.** The Challenges Facing Brazilian Returnees from Ireland in Anápolis.

Theme(s) emerged	Participant(s)	%
	Anápolis	
Economic challenges	20	50
Labour market challenges	17	42.5
Weather problems	16	40
Psychological issues	13	32.5
Urban/City related problems	6	15
Did not face problem at all	6	15
Property issues	5	12.5
Health related issues	4	10
Network/ Friendship problems	3	7.5
People's manner problems	2	5

Source: Author's field research.

### 3.11 Regretting the Return Decision

The Table 2 displays the results of the data analysis on the reasons why some returnees regretted their decision to return to Anápolis, while others did not. The data showed that 21 (52.5%) participants did not regret their decision to return to Anápolis, of which 11 were female and 10 were male. Participants mentioned a variety of reasons as to why they did not regret their decision to return. For instance, 6 (15%) participants did not regret because they had their family with them, of which 5 were female and 1 were male. A further 5 (12.5%) participants did not regret because it was the right time to return, of which 3 were male and 2 were female. Another 4 (10%) participants did not regret because they had a serious health problem, of which 3 were female and 1 were male. Interestingly, 3 (7.5%) participants did not regret because of their advanced age, of which 2 were female and 1 were male. Other 3 (7.5%) participants did not regret their decision because they had their own house, all of whom were female. A further 3 (7.5%) participants did not because they felt they had enough to live on (financial security), of which 2 were female and 1 were male. Others 3 (7.5%) participants did not regret

because they helped a very close family member who was facing a difficult health problem. The other themes mentioned by the participants were: having their own house and a second one bought with money from Ireland (usually for renting) (2 participants, 5%), achieved the migration goals/targets and was happy and satisfied (1 participant, 2.5%), have a simple but dignified life (1 participant, 2.5%), felt happier in Brazil (1 participant, 2.5%), there is no country like Brazil (1 participant, 2.5%), because their family needed them (1 participant, 2.5%) and because they did not have enough time in Ireland to make connections (1 participant, 2.5%).

However, the other 19 (47.5%) participants did regret having returned to Anápolis, of which 10 were female and 9 were male. Participants mentioned a variety of reasons to why they did regret their decision to return. Personal reasons were mentioned by 6 (15%) participants, of which 3 were female and 3 were male. The main personal reasons given were that the return was the biggest mistake they had ever made (2 participants, 5%), they should have stayed and applied for citizenship (2 participants, 5%), if they knew that he/she would separate they would have stayed in Ireland (1 participant, 2.5%), they could not change what was already done, i.e. the death of a relative (1 participant, 2.5%), and that they were forced to return by their partner (1 participant, 2.5%).

The same number of the participants (6, 15%) mentioned that they came back at the wrong time and that they should have stay longer or settled in Ireland, of which 3 were female and 3 were male. A further 6 (15%) participants regretted the return due to family reasons, of which 4 were female and 2 were male. Among the family reasons that led to the regret of return were that some felt that they should have tried to bring their families to Ireland (3 participants, 7.5%), of which 2 were female and 1 male.

Others cited that they would love to have their children brought up and attending college in Ireland (2 participants, 5%) and one (1, 2.5%) regretted the return because she felt that if they had stayed in Ireland they would be able to help their families more. Other 2 (5%) participants regretted their decision because they felt that they could manage their business in Brazil from Ireland and that there was no need to return. 2 (5%) other participants regretted returning due to reasons linked to their previous life in Ireland. They cited four reasons: they felt they had a good life in Ireland; there was no violence in Ireland and access to health care and affordable cost of living. Finally, 2 (5%) more participants mentioned that they regretted due to reasons linked to their lives in Brazil and society. They mainly mentioned that life in Brazil is more difficult and complicated, the country is violent, that there are more financial difficulties and the cost of living is higher.



**Table 2.** Regretting the Return Decision

Theme(s) emerged	Participant(s)	%
	Anápolis	
People who did not regret returning	21	52.5
People who regretted returning	19	47.5
<b>Reasons for not regretting returning</b>		
Had their family with them	6	15
It was the right time to return	5	12.5
Because he/she had a serious health problem	4	10
Because of their advanced age	3	7.5
Had their own house	3	7.5
Helped a very close family member facing a difficult health problem	3	7.5
Felt they had enough to live (financial security)	3	7.5
Had their own house and a second one (bought with money from Ireland)	2	5
Have a simple but dignified life	1	2.5
Achieved his/her migration goals/targets (happy and satisfied)	1	2.5
He/she is happier in Brazil	1	2.5
There is no country like Brazil	1	2.5
Because their family need them	1	2.5
Did not have had enough time to make connections	1	2.5
<b>Reasons for regretting returning</b>		
Personal	6	15
The time of the return	6	15
Family	6	15
Business	2	5
Life and society in general at the host region	2	5
Life and society in general at the origin region	2	5

Source: Author's field research.

## 4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Returning migrants face socio-psychological problems after the return migration process. Previous studies that have addressed the psychological reactions of returnees upon their return have found considerable adjustment problems, especially around the reintegration process (YEHUDA-STERNFELD & MIRSKY, 2014). According to Cassarino (2008), reintegration includes socio-psychological, economic and cultural aspects, which are interrelated and affect each other. Chobanyan (2013) states that returning migrants generally find themselves in a difficult psychological situation due to social insecurity, loss of networks and because some are not prepared to return.

This study analyses were based on data collected as part of a four-year research project on the determinants of Brazilian migration from Anápolis in Goiás, to Gort in County Galway, Ireland (DE FARIAS, 2022). The Brazilian community of Gort is arguably the most famous case of Brazilian migration in Ireland and, over the years, has been featured in both academic scholarship and the media (MAC CORMAIC, 2008; RTE, 2011). The first Brazilians arrived in Gort in 1999–2000 to work in a local meat processing factory (HEALY, 2006). They were mainly from Vila Fabril, in Anápolis, in the state of Goiás, in the Midwest of Brazil (MCGRATH, 2010).

This study reveals that most participants faced a variety of challenges after returning from Ireland to re-integrate in Anápolis, many of which overlapped and intertwined with each other. The difficulties faced by most returnees were related to (1) economic challenges, (2) labour market challenges, (3) weather related problems, (4) psychological issues, (5) city and urban related problems, (6) property related issues, (7) health related issues, (8) network and friendship problems, and (9) people's manner problems. The collected data also evidence that despite challenges to re-integrate 21 (52.5%) participants did not regret their decision to return; while the other 19 (47.5%) participants did regret having returned to Anápolis. Participants mentioned a variety of reasons to why they did not regret or regretted their decision to return to Brazil. The results corroborate previous studies (CASSARINO, 2008; YEHUDA-STERNFELD & MIRSKY, 2014), as they show that Brazilian returnees faced considerable adjustment problems, especially around the reintegration process, including socio-psychological, economic and cultural aspects, which are interrelated and affect each other.

The findings of this study show that returning migrants need be supported financially and psychologically during both the return migration process and during the reintegration phase in their home communities. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. 31 of the study's participants, the great majority, returned to Brazil by their own means (with no government

support in either Ireland or Brazil). The other 9 participants returned with the support of the IOM assisted voluntary return and reintegration program (AVRR). The study also asked those who returned through the IOM program, if they received any additional financial assistance besides the airline tickets. Only three people did receive additional financial support besides the airline tickets. The other 6 participants said they were entitled to additional financial support; however, they were unable to redeem the benefit once at the origin region. Some found the system too complicated, others were not able to contact the IOM representative in Brazil, and one participant said that her benefit was withdrawn by other people on her behalf and that she was threatened when tried to claim it back. However, none of the participants received reintegration support from neither the IOM or the Brazilian Federal Government or the regional/local government in the State of Goiás. Hence, future research is needed to increase our understanding of the long-term reintegration process of this Brazilian returning community from Ireland. In particular, future research would benefit by exploring further their reintegration into the labour market, psychological and economic well-being, and the reconstruction of the family and personal networks. A further element that could be explored in future research would be the reintegration of children (1.5 and second generations) who have lived in Ireland for many years and returned to Anápolis with their families. 37 participants stated they have children. 14 participants declared they had children born abroad; 16 children were born abroad in total. Of these, 3 were born in Portugal, while the rest were born in Ireland. Regarding citizenship, only nine children has either Irish or Portuguese citizenship.

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the settlement challenges faced by Brazilian returnees from Ireland during their re-integration in Anápolis, in the state of Goiás. This paper draws on data collected as part of a four-year research project on the determinants of Brazilian migration from Anápolis in Goiás, to Gort in County Galway, Ireland (de Farias, 2022). The evidence presented below emerges from in-depth, qualitative interview with 40 Brazilian return migrants in Anápolis. This study reveals that most participants faced a variety of challenges after returning from Ireland to re-integrate in Anápolis, many of which overlapped and intertwined with each other. The difficulties faced by most returnees were related to (1) economic challenges, (2) labour market challenges, (3) weather-related problems, (4) psychological issues, (5) city, and urban-related problems, (6) property-related issues, (7) health-related issues, (8) network and friendship problems, and (9) people's manner problems. The collected data also evidence that despite facing challenges in their re-integration, 21 (52.5%) participants did not regret their decision to return; while the other 19 (47.5%) participants regretted having returned to Anápolis. The results corroborate previous studies (Cassarino, 2008b; Yehuda-Sternfeld & Mirsky, 2014), as they show that Brazilian returnees faced considerable adjustment problems, especially around the reintegration process, including socio-psychological, economic and cultural aspects, which are interrelated and affect each other.

**Keywords:** Return migration determinants; Post-return Migration Reintegration; Brazil; Anápolis; Goiás; Ireland.

## RESUMO

Este artigo examina os desafios de assentamento enfrentados pelos brasileiros retornados da Irlanda durante sua reintegração em Anápolis, no estado de Goiás. Este artigo baseia-se em dados coletados como parte de um projeto de pesquisa de quatro anos sobre os determinantes da migração brasileira de Anápolis, em Goiás, para Gort, no condado de Galway, Irlanda (de Farias, 2022). As evidências apresentadas a seguir emergem de entrevistas qualitativas e aprofundadas com 40 migrantes brasileiros que retornaram em Anápolis. Este estudo revela que a maioria dos participantes enfrentou diversos desafios após retornar da Irlanda para se reintegrar em Anápolis, muitos dos quais se sobrepunham e se entrelaçavam. As dificuldades enfrentadas pela maioria dos repatriados estavam relacionadas com (1) desafios econômicos, (2) desafios do mercado de trabalho, (3) problemas relacionados com o clima, (4) questões psicológicas, (5) problemas urbanos, (6) questões relacionadas com a propriedade, (7) questões relacionadas à saúde, (8) problemas de redes-sociais e amizades e (9) problemas de comportamento das pessoas. Os dados recolhidos evidenciam também que apesar de enfrentarem desafios na sua reintegração, 21 (52,5%) participantes não se arrependeram da decisão de regressar; enquanto os outros 19 (47,5%) participantes lamentaram ter retornado para Anápolis. Os resultados corroboram estudos anteriores (Cassarino, 2008b; Yehuda-Sternfeld & Mirsky, 2014), pois mostram que os repatriados brasileiros enfrentaram consideráveis problemas de ajustamento, especialmente em torno do processo de reintegração, incluindo aspectos sociopsicológicos, econômicos e culturais, que estão inter-relacionados e afetam uns aos outros.

**Palavras-chave:** Determinantes da migração de retorno; Reintegração Migratória Pós-Regresso; Brasil; Anápolis; Goiás; Irlanda.