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Transnational Migration, Identity and Belonging: The Case of Latin American Migrants in Austria

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SOCIOLOGIA
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

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Resumo

Ao emigrar para um novo país, os emigrantes não cortam simplesmente os laços com o seu país de origem; ao contrário, muitas vezes mantêm fortes conexões que influenciam profundamente as suas experiências ao emigrar. Estes laços duradouros desempenham um papel crucial na formação do seu sentimento de pertença e identidade, que continuam a evoluir ao longo da sua jornada de migração. Reconhecendo a natureza transnacional dos migrantes latino-americanos na Áustria, este estudo examina como estes negociam os seus múltiplos sentimentos de pertença e identidades dentro de um novo ambiente cultural e social. Para explorar estas dinâmicas, esta investigação empregou uma análise temática baseada em dez entrevistas semiestruturadas realizadas com latino-americanos residentes na Áustria. Os resultados revelam que o sentimento de pertença e as identidades dos participantes são predominantemente moldados pelas suas origens nacionais e regionais. Embora muitos imigrantes latino-americanos tenham criado um sentido de "casa" na Áustria, os seus sentimentos de pertença mantêm-se profundamente ligados às culturas e às pessoas dos seus países de origem. Além disso, demonstram uma forte identidade nacional com os seus países de origem, ao mesmo tempo que (re)constroem uma identidade latino-americana mais ampla, enraizada em semelhanças culturais partilhadas e em distinções face à sociedade austríaca. No geral, os resultados destacam a complexidade e fluidez do sentimento de pertença e da identidade, conceitos que são altamente subjetivos e continuamente redefinidos ao longo da experiência de emigração e integração.

Palavras-chave: Migração transnacional, Sentimento de pertença, Identidade, Latino-americanos, Áustria

Abstract

When migrating to a new country, migrants do not simply sever ties with their country of origin; rather, they often maintain strong connections that deeply influence their migration experiences. These enduring ties play a crucial role in shaping their sense of belonging and identity, which continue to evolve throughout their migration journey. Recognizing the transnational nature of Latin American migrants in Austria, this study examines how they negotiate their multiple belongings and identities within a new cultural and social environment. To explore these dynamics, the research employed thematic analysis based on ten semi-structured interviews conducted with Latin Americans residing in Austria. The results reveal that participants' sense of belonging and identities are predominantly shaped by their national and regional origins. While many Latin American migrants have created a sense of “home” in Austria, their feelings of belonging remain deeply connected to the cultures and people of their home countries. Furthermore, they show a strong national identification with their respective countries of origin, while simultaneously (re)constructing a broader Latin American identity rooted in shared cultural similarities and distinctions from Austrian society. Overall, the findings highlight the complexity and fluidity of belonging and identity as concepts that are highly subjective and continuously redefined throughout their migration and integration experience.

Keywords: Transnational migration, Sense of belonging, Identity, Latin Americans, Austria

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List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LAK	*Lateinamerikanischen Akademisches Kulturzentrum* (Latin American Academic Cultural Center)
LAI	*Österreichisches Lateinamerika-Institut* (Austrian Latin American Institute)
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

Chapter 1 – Introduction

In today's globalised world, an ever-increasing number of migrants are crossing borders, leaving their home countries to start new lives in different parts of the globe. Migration brings profound changes for these individuals as they find themselves in new and often unfamiliar environments. These new contexts significantly shape and influence their sense of belonging and identities. As migrants are adapting to a new society, they are also negotiating their connections to their country of origin.

This master's thesis explores the intersections of transnational migration, sense of belonging, and identities among Latin American migrants in Austria. While most migrants from Latin American countries typically move to Southern European countries, particularly Spain, due to historical, linguistic, and cultural affinities (Peixoto, 2012), a small number chooses Austria as their migration destination. Although Latin Americans form a minority within Austria's overall foreign population, their presence has been steadily increasing in recent years, making them an intriguing group to study, as their experiences barely have received attention in academic research within the Austrian context.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of transnationalism, this study aims to understand how Latin American migrants maintain connections, negotiate their identities, and a sense of belonging that transcends national borders. Scholars of transnationalism have recognized that migrants do not simply sever ties with their home countries. Instead, they maintain strong social, economic, and political connections that span across borders (Dahinden, 2012; Faist et al., 2014; Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Vertovec, 2001). These ongoing ties contribute to migrants' identities and belonging, often resulting in their existence in a state of "in-betweenness" - straddling life between their country of origin and their new host society. This study employs a transnational lens to explore how migrants' sense of belonging and identity are shaped by these cross-border dynamics, offering insights into the broader phenomenon of transnational migration.

Several studies have highlighted the ways how transnational migration impacts individuals' identities and sense of belonging, which are influenced by various factors. These include language (e.g. Afonso et al., 2023), religion (e.g. Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015) social networks, and interactions with the local population (e.g. Hellgren, 2019), as well as engagement in transnational activities (e.g. Snel and van Bochove, 2016). Looking through a transnational lens, transmigrants are believed to form multiple identities (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992) and have multiple belongings towards people, communities or places simultaneously (Vertovec, 2001). In the specific case of Latin American migrants, research conducted in Europe has shown that they often develop a shared Latin American identity as part of their identity construction process (Echeverri Buriticá, 2005). This is largely due to their tendency to form social networks with individuals not only from their own home countries but also from other Latin American nations (Gruner-Domic, 2005).

Building on previous research, the present study explores how Latin American migrants in Austria negotiate their sense of belonging and identities. It examines how they form and express their senses of belonging and identities as they adapt to a new environment and integrate into Austrian society while at the same time maintaining strong connections to their home countries. By using a transnational lens and by investigating personal migration experiences, this study examines how these migrants navigate the dynamic between their country of origin and host country, forming multiple belongings and identities that transcend national borders.

In particular, this research addresses the following key questions:

- How do Latin American migrants in Austria experience and negotiate their sense of belonging in both Austria and their countries of origin?

- How do Latin American migrants in Austria negotiate and form their transnational and multiple identities in a new social and cultural setting, and to what extent do they develop a shared Latino identity?

By answering these questions, the findings of this research aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the subjective dimension of transnational migration, particularly in the context of belonging and identity. Highlighting the experiences of Latin American migrants in Austria, an understudied but growing population, this study aims to contribute to academic research on this migrant group in the Austrian context and provide them with greater visibility.

This thesis is organised into seven sections. After this introductory chapter, the second chapter will review the existing literature on the main concepts of this thesis, namely, sense of belonging and transnational identities, thereby presenting and defining these concepts. The following short chapter will provide a brief context and background on Latin American migration to Europe and Austria. Due to the limited availability of literature and data on this migrant group in Austria, a look at the broader European context of Latin American migration should help gain insights into this migration flow. Chapter 4 will discuss the theoretical framework of this thesis and will present the most relevant ideas of transnationalism. Chapter 5 will outline the methodology used in this research, explaining the qualitative research methods and the process of data analysis. The subsequent chapter will present and analyse the research findings, covering aspects such as the migration process, transnational connections, and the sense of belonging and identities of the participants. The discussion and conclusion chapter will then interpret these findings in relation to the literature review and conclude with a summary of key insights.

1.1. Excursion: Latin America – concept and debates

Before reviewing the literature and introducing the main concepts relevant to this thesis, it is essential to briefly clarify a key term that will be used throughout. When speaking of Latin America and Latinos/as, it is important to have a deeper look at this debate and to understand its complexities. Latin America is a heterogeneous continent with different ethnicities, histories, and cultures (Eakin, 2007), which was significantly transformed and influenced by European conquest and colonization between the end of the 15th century and the 19th century (Chasteen, 2016). In fact, the invention of the concept and name "Latin America" goes back to the 1850s when French colonizers first used this term to establish their power in the region by forming a political entity that was based on Latin languages and cultures brought by the former European colonies (Spanish, French, and Portuguese) to the continent (Eakin, 2007). Thus, the idea and history of Latin America were built and further developed from a strong Eurocentric and colonialist perspective, as argued by Mignolo (2005): "After all, the American continent exists only as a consequence of the European colonial expansion and the stories of that expansion from the European point of view, that is, the perspective of modernity[1]" (p. 16). However, other scholars argue that the concept of "Latin America" is not merely a European imagination and contend that Latin America exists as a unified idea (Larrain, 2000; Romero, 2001). For the sake of this thesis, I decided to use the politico-geographical definition, following Eakin (2007), which includes 20 countries that became independent from Spain, Portugal, and France, as well as Puerto Rico. These countries are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela. This definition was chosen for pragmatic reasons and should not imply that other countries or territories are not part of this collective. Besides geographical and political aspects, the debate surrounding "Latin America" is also accompanied by the question regarding a sense of collectivity and a Latin American or *Latino* identity. Scholars have found that a shared Latin American identity exists alongside national identities and has continued to grow in and outside of this region. This identity is based on historical, social, economic, and cultural factors (Lerrain, 2000). As stated by Larrain (2000), this existence is demonstrated: 1) in works by Latin American authors and intellectuals who write about a common Latin American identity, 2) in poetry, music, and film, 3) in popular consciousness and cultural practices, and 4) through external imposition and shaping by the West. In this context, the use of 'pan-ethnic' identifications such as *Latino* or *Hispanic* also plays a role, especially since most of the participants of this study use the former to self-

[1] My translation. The original quote is: *Después de todo, el continente americano existe solo como una consecuencia de la expansión colonial europea y los relates de esa expansión desde el punto de vista europeo, es decir, la perspectiva de la modernidad*.

identify themselves. In the United States, Hispanic typically refers to individuals of Spanish-speaking origin, while Latino is generally used to describe people who have cultural connections to Spanish-or Portuguese-speaking countries (Román-Velázquez & Retis, 2021). In this thesis, the term Latino/a is being used to refer to anyone who comes from the above defined region of Latin America and who "manifests the palpable sense of belonging to the same group of people who share a similar historical trajectory that in turn gives coherent expression to the notion of the Americas" (Matos, 2003, p. 19).

To sum it up, it is not my intention to define migrants from different countries of the Latin American continent through a Eurocentric lens or to imply that Latin America exists as a culturally coherent unit. Rather, I aim to include the perspectives of Latin Americans living in Austria on this matter and to explore whether they themselves identify with the idea of Latin America and/or have a Latino identity, thus giving them a voice in this debate.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on the sense of belonging, as well as multiple and transnational identities, within the context of migration while simultaneously introducing and defining the concepts central to this study. The goal is to explore how these concepts are framed in relation to transnational migration and the factors that shape the sense of belonging and identity formation, particularly among Latin American migrants. The literature review was carried out based on the previously defined research questions. The findings of this literature review are organised into the following sections, which are divided into three parts and presented after the section detailing the methodology used. The first section addresses literature on the sense of belonging in the context of migration, the second focuses on the transnational and multiple identities of migrants, and the final section examines studies that explore these two concepts specifically in relation to Latin American migrants. While a lot of literature about migrants' sense of belonging and transnational identities could be found, literature on the specific case of Latin American migrants in Europe and Austria was relatively scarce.

2.2. Method

To gain a comprehensive understanding of these topics, a semi-structured literature review was conducted, offering an overview of key themes and identifying research gaps. This process was guided by the principles for conducting a literature review as outlined by Snyder (2019). In alignment with these guidelines, the first step involved designing the literature review by selecting appropriate databases and search terms, which, as Snyder (2019) notes, should be "based on words and concepts that are directly related to the research questions" (p. 337). The main databases used for searching relevant literature were Web of Science and Google Scholar. Additionally, the library search of the University of Innsbruck was used to identify possible studies on Latin American migrants in Austria or in other German-speaking countries. In a second step, the review was conducted between January and April 2024. To start, the following key words were looked up: "sense of belonging" AND "migration"; "transnational identity" AND "migration", "transnationalism". While for the search on "sense of belonging" a lot of articles showed up, the literature on "transnational identity" was scarce which is why the key words were broadened to include "migrant's identity", "multiple identities", "identity formation" AND "migration", "transnationalism". This was helpful as more literature was available. In a second step these keywords were combined with "Latin American", "Latino" and with various concrete nationalities including "Mexicans", "Colombians", "Brazilians", "Peruvians", "Argentinians" and "Venezuelans". Additionally, a specific search for "Latino identity" and "Latin American identity"

was conducted. Lastly, the keywords were also combined with “Austria”; however, no literature could be found. This shows a gap in the literature on Latin American migrants in Austria, which this thesis attempts to fill. Part of the conducting process was also scanning the identified articles in order to find other literature that might be relevant, as suggested by Snyder (2019). In summary, while a significant amount of literature on the sense of belonging and (transnational) identity of migrants was found, specific scholarship on Latin American migrants was relatively scarce. Before the writing process, all relevant articles identified were thoroughly analysed.

2.3. Sense of belonging in the context of migration

Authors from various disciplines and diverse contexts have explored the concept of “belongingness”, “belonging” or “sense of belonging”, resulting in multiple definitions and interpretations and thus lacking coherence and uniformity throughout research. In the academic debate, belonging is seen as intersectional (Wood & Waite, 2011), dynamic (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006), and even considered a human need (Allen et al., 2021; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Belonging is therefore a process that evolves over time as individuals are constantly impacted by new experiences and environments (Tunçer, 2023). As Antonsich (2010) points out, in a lot of literature, belonging is seen as something given and self-explanatory, which is why many authors fail to properly explain the term. When defined, belonging is generally connoted to a subjective and emotional feeling (May, 2013; Webb & Lahiri-Roy, 2019; Yuval-Davis, 2006) and, more precisely, belonging is referred to as having a strong emotional connection to a place or a group of people that one feels is essential to them (De Bree et al., 2010; Hagerty et al., 1996). According to Afonso and colleagues (2023), “the sense of belonging can be defined as a highly subjective and dynamic feeling of acceptance, inclusion, and connectedness to a specific contextual entity” (p. 519). Antonsich (2010) contends that belonging is a “personal, intimate, feeling of being ‘at home’ in a place (place-belonginess) and belonging as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging)” (p. 645). This second notion of belonging - “politics of belonging” – was introduced by Yuval-Davis (2006), who “has so far produced one of the most comprehensive analytical efforts to study the notion of belonging” (Antonsich, 2010, p. 645), and refers to politics concerning citizenship and status and thus splitting the community into ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Since this study will view belonging as a “subjective and intimate feeling” rather than belonging to a given political community (e.g. through citizenship), the political level and belonging as a term describing official membership is not discussed further. Regarding the first notion of belonging, Yuval-Davis (2006) has highlighted three important aspects of belonging and claims that “belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home’ and a place of being safe” (p. 197). The author further argues that the notion of belonging is constructed on three analytical levels,

including social locations, identifications, and emotional attachments, as well as ethical and political values. The first level hereby refers to the fact that individuals can experience multiple belongings called 'social locations' , which include age, gender, nation, ethnicity, and profession. Identifications, at the second level, represent the desire for connections and emotional involvement; the longing to belong. These identity narratives are dynamic, capable of multiplying and evolving over time. They are constructed both on an individual and collective level. The third analytical level, "ethical and political values", pertains to the ethical and political judgment applied to the other two levels (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In summary, belonging is multifaceted and multilayered, making it a 'puzzling' concept (Webb & Lahiri-Roy, 2019).

As already mentioned, belonging has been looked at in different contexts. Numerous studies focusing on belonging put migrants at the centre of their research as in the course of their migration, they are likely to form multiple ties and relationships (Wood & Waite, 2011). At the same time, this translocation of senses of belonging makes this concept specifically complex for migrants, as they find themselves in a new and unfamiliar environment (Ahmed, 1999). Migration studies have shown that migrants' experience and sense of belonging go hand in hand, and they have been looking at factors that strengthen or weaken migrants' sense of belonging. For example, Antonsich (2010) names five factors generating a feeling of belonging or of 'home', namely auto biographical (e.g., personal experiences, memories), relational (e.g., relations to friends and family, occasional interactions), cultural (e.g., language, religion), economic (e.g., professional life) and legal (e.g., citizenship, resident permits). Furthermore, migrants' length of stay (long-term or temporary) can influence their sense of belonging, too (Antonsich, 2010). In fact, research has demonstrated a positive link between migrants' interaction with the local population and their sense of belonging (Butcher, 2009; Massey & Magaly, 2010; Soto Saavedra et al., 2023; Wessendorf, 2019). For instance, Hellgren (2019) conducted a qualitative study involving migrants in Stockholm and Barcelona, revealing that immigrants felt more included and experienced a greater sense of belonging in Barcelona, where they engaged in more frequent daily interactions with locals compared to Stockholm. In a quantitative study of highly skilled migrants in Hong Kong, Xue et al. (2023) also came to the conclusion that relations with the locals matter, however, they found that the quality of interactions holds greater significance than the quantity, emphasizing its impact on migrants' sense of belonging. Contact with the local community is also associated with the integration of migrants, which is related to a stronger sense of belonging (Massey & Magaly, 2010). Generally speaking, positive interactions with locals contribute to fostering a stronger sense of belonging, whereas experiences of discrimination and exclusion have the opposite effect. The importance of a sense of belonging is demonstrated by its impact on psychological well-being, mental health, and overall life satisfaction (Mellor et al., 2008). A study of North Americans living in Israel showed that those migrants who felt a stronger belongingness to the host country and

had a better overall well-being were less likely to return to their home countries (Amit & Riss, 2013). Other factors that were linked with migrants' sense of belonging are knowledge of the native language (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Jackson, 2013; Xue et al., 2023;) and religious factors (e.g., going to church) (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Sabar, 2010; Visser et al., 2015). In regard to language, Lobera (2021) examined a study on Latin American migrants living in Spain, concluding that linguistic affinity plays a crucial role, with Latin Americans showing a greater sense of belonging towards Spain compared to other migrant groups. Interestingly, Xue and colleagues (2023) discovered in their study that knowledge of the local language is not significantly related to a sense of belonging. They attribute this finding to the existence of a common shared language among migrants and locals and therefore communication is still given. Jackson (2013) recognised the role of media as another significant factor shaping migrants' sense of belonging. The portrayal of migrant groups in the media and the consequent formation of stereotypical assumptions that people had influenced the daily experiences of the migrants involved in the study. Negative reports in the media were perceived to hinder their development of a sense of belonging (Jackson, 2013).

Research has revealed that a sense of belonging is developed over time and influenced by various factors mentioned above. In order to get a complete understanding of migrant's sense of belonging, it is crucial to analyse how this feeling evolves upon their entry into a new place and society (Afonso et al., 2023). As Amit and Bar-Lev (2014) mentioned "an immigrant is expected to gradually release previous attachments, social identifiers and even a sense of national commitment to his country of origin and develop a sense of local identity and belonging in the host country" (p. 948). As shown by a study examining Portuguese migrants residing in Luxembourg, Afonso and colleagues (2023) discovered that, over time, first-generation migrants not only developed a sense of belonging towards their new homeland but, at the same time, they still felt highly connected to the Portuguese culture and other Portuguese migrants living in Luxembourg.

Traditional perspectives and a large number of the studies presented so far predominantly focused on migrants' belonging towards their host country. However, scholars investigating migrant transnationalism have increasingly examined the complex and ongoing connections between migrants and their home societies in the political, social, cultural, and economic spheres during the past thirty years (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007), giving the concept of belonging significant attention in the present discussions surrounding international migration (Yuval-Davis, 2004). The majority of the leading transnationalism researchers have stressed the multiple belongings when defining transmigrants (see for example, Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2009). De Bree and colleagues (2010) define 'transnational belonging' as "feelings of being at home that cross the borders of nation-states" (p. 492). Therefore, transnational belonging involves preserving social and emotional ties to one location while creating new ones with another (Anthias, 2006). It should be noted that

transnational belonging refers not only to the national scales (the home and host country), but scholars have argued that migrants can develop a sense of belonging also to other localities, such as the town or the neighbourhood they reside in within the destination country (Jacobs et al., 2006). As research shows, individuals do not uniformly develop a transnational sense of belonging and may have varied attachments toward different places. For example, in a study of Turkish migrants in the USA, Yiğittürk Ekiyor (2018) discovered that they experienced a sense of belonging towards their new home and had grown ties of belonging. Other research on Turkish migrants in Europe demonstrated that their sense of belonging was notably stronger to their home country, with bonds forming more prominently in subsequent generations (Gelekci & Köse, 2009; Sahin, 2010 as cited by Yiğittürk Ekiyor, 2018). Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Blanc (1994) suggest that transnational belonging and transnational practices are connected, stating that "they [transmigrants] develop and maintain multiple relationships – familial, economic, social, organizational, and religious and political – that span borders" (p. 7). For instance, Snel and van Bochove (2016) showed in their study in the Netherlands that migrants' greater attachment to the people of their home county is correlated with their increased participation in transnational activities.

As demonstrated, numerous authors have addressed the sense of belonging of migrants in their research. Furthermore, a growing interest in transnational belonging can be observed. However, many studies either concentrate solely on a single aspect of belonging or adopt a quantitative approach (see for example Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Mellor et al., 2008; Snel & van Bochove, 2016; Xue et al., 2023; Yiğittürk Ekiyor, 2018), limiting a comprehensive understanding of migrants' sense of belonging. Moreover, several authors only examine migrants' present state of their sense of belonging without looking at the longitudinal evolution. To address this research gap, this study examines the dynamics of transnational belonging of Latin American migrants in Austria throughout their migration process.

2.4. Transnational and multiple identities of migrants

Similarly to the concept of belonging, identity is a much-discussed concept in the academic debate that has been looked at in various fields and contexts. Notably, identity plays a crucial role in contemporary discussions on migration and should serve to explore the way in which Latin American migrants position themselves in Austria. Given the complexity of identity, numerous definitions of this concept exist, which is why only the definitions that seem relevant to this study will be presented. For instance, Yuval Davis (2006) defines identities as "narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not)" (p. 202). She further explains that these narratives can be individual or collective (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Additionally, Jackson II (1999) states that "identity is that which confers a sense of self or personhood. It also refers to self-definition" (p. 9). This implies that individuals construct their identities based on how they see themselves. This study will therefore

inquire about the self-perceptions of the Latin-American migrants in Austria. Hall (1996) notes that identity is constructed through social categories such as class, gender, ethnicity, and nationality, which portray individuals as distinct from others. Therefore, his view pays attention to the development of identity through the celebration of difference as he states that "[identities] are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity" (Hall, 1996, p. 4). He further contended that identity must be examined within the broader historical and socio-economic framework (Hall, 1996). Jenkins (2008) suggests that individuals form their identities through interaction, and it is a process rather than something static; thus "identity can only be understood as a process of 'being' or becoming'" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 17).

Using a transnational lens, this thesis will focus on the transnational identities of migrants, which is a central area of interest in transnationalism studies. Vertovec (2001) notes two essential connections between identity and transnationalism. On the one hand, shared origins, cultures and languages create a perceived common identity, which forms the basis for transnational networks. Second, identity is negotiated and constructed in transnational networks at more than one location (Vertovec, 2001). In this context, transmigrants are said to form multiple or hybrid identities that cross-borders as explained by Glick-Schiller and colleagues (1992): "Within their complex web of social relations, transmigrants draw upon and create fluid and multiple identities grounded both in their society of origin and in the host societies" (p. 11). Transnational identities are therefore not exclusive to one locality, but various studies have shown that migrants can identify with multiple places, cultures, ethnic or religious communities, and nations (Ehrkamp, 2005; Nagel & Staeheli, 2004; Vertovec, 2001). Although transnational identities can take various forms and cross-national borders, according to Basch and colleagues (1994), these identities remain rooted in specific nation-states. For example, in a study conducted by Marcu (2011) on young Romanian immigrants in Spain, she found that migrants identified with both nations, considering themselves Romanian as well as Spanish. However, as shown by Vorobeva and Jauhiainen (2022), not all migrants have a national identification. In their study of Russian-speaking transmigrants from Estonia to Finland, they came to the conclusion that some of the individuals interviewed did not identify with any country at all (Vorobeva & Jauhiainen, 2022).

The experiences of migrants are characterized by the continuous exchange between two or more distinct cultural spheres which strongly shapes their identity formation (Mahalingam, 2006; Vertovec, 2001). In the context of transnationalism, many scholars find that the concept of identity takes on a hybrid form (Basch et al, 1994; Remennick, 2002; Sigad & Eisikovits, 2010). Hybridity refers to the mixture and the "in-between" of two or more cultures which is experienced by migrants when moving to a new country (Bhabha, 1996). For instance, Remennick (2002) found that Russian-Jewish immigrants in Israel adopt cultural hybridity, blending the lifestyles as well as the language of their

home and host countries. Focusing on identities, Schwartz and colleagues (2019) describe hybridizing as a process involving the interchange of identities, where individuals select favourable aspects from both cultures. Furthermore, researchers agree that transnational identities are constructed continuously (Ghosh & Wang, 2003; Hall, 1996; Nagel & Staeheli, 2004; Reisenauer, 2020; Vertovec, 2009) and in a variety of social settings and positions (Ghosh & Wang, 2003; Hall, 1996; Sigad & Eisikovits, 2010). Analysing their own identity transformation during their migration process, Ghosh and Wang (2003) came to the conclusion that migrants' multiple identities are flexible and that individuals can transition between them based on the situation and the desired outcome. Vertovec (2001) mentions different factors that influence the transnational identity formation of migrants including "histories and stereotypes of local belonging and exclusion, geographies of cultural difference and class/ethnic segregation, racialized socio-economic hierarchies, degree and type of collective mobilisation, access to and nature of resources, and perceptions and regulations surrounding rights and duties (p. 578)." Therefore, migrants' identity formation is a complex and individual process of self-descriptions that leads to individual identities of each migrant (Reisenauer, 2020). Esteban-Huitars and Vila (2015) conducted a qualitative study involving ten immigrants and found four different sources of identity that influence migrants' identity construction. The first one is the emigration itself which was identified as a life changing event in terms of work, friends and family, and which leads to the migrants' rethinking their identities. The second source of identity is the reference to the society of origin which includes the community of birth, religion and native language. Another category of identity is the host society where migrants mentioned the new ways of life (e.g., customs, traditions) and new social networks as sources to reconstruct their identity. The fourth category was referred to as 'origin-destination comparison' where migrants express their new identity by contrasting the lifestyles of the host and home country. Considering these aspects the authors concluded that "transnational identity is the product of dialogue between the society of origin ('prior knowledge') and the host society ('new experiences'), which begins with a 'life change' or 'biographical disruption', that is to say, emigration" (Esteban-Huitars & Vila, 2015, p. 23).

In addition to the national, cultural or ethnic identities, people also create their own identification categories and thus continuously shape their identities (Glick-Schiller et al., 1994; Levitt, 2001b). For example, in a study of Turkish migrants in Germany and Austria, Reisenauer (2020) observes that self-descriptions related to nationality, ethnicity, and culture are significant factors in identity construction but may not always take precedence. Instead, personal relationships often become more influential in shaping identity (Reisenauer, 2020). Additionally, Erkmen (2015) finds that for certain transnationals, their professional identities outweigh their national identities. Horst and Olsen (2021) suggest that transnational migrants have a cosmopolitan tendency, positioning them as global citizens. This shapes their multiple intersectional identities which extend their national or ethnic affiliations.

According to the authors a transnational citizen

> can feel connected to her or his ethnic group through family ties and a shared history; to residents of the city where (s)he lives through shared affiliations and everyday experiences; to fellow Muslims through a shared faith and religious practice; and to activists within, say, the global conservation movement through a shared concern for the environment. (Horst & Olsen, 2021, p. 6)

To conclude, due to the complexity and diversity of identity forms, migration processes require continual adjustments to individual self-descriptions (Reisenauer, 2020). As Christou (2011) explains:

> Hence, migrant subjects are not stable categories. They are thinking, feeling, being, becoming, and performative individuals who enter processual, dynamic, complex and above all affective social encounters in their search for meaning in their ancestral homeland, emotional journey of belonging and ultimately physical (re)settlement. (p. 257)

In this regard, Christou (2011) explores the concept of belonging and highlights its interconnectedness with identity, both of which are central to this study. Belonging is often analysed in conjunction with identity in transnational research (see Amit & Bar-Lev, 2014; Semak & Medaric, 2022; Vorobeva & Jauhiainen, 2023; Yiğittürk Ekiyor, 2018). Amit and Bar-Lev (2014) emphasize the close relationship between identity and sense of belonging, stressing the need to examine how social and self-identification processes unfold in the host country to fully understand a migrant's sense of belonging. While these concepts can be analysed separately, it is crucial to keep in mind their strong mutual influence which also plays a crucial role in this study.

2.5. Research on Latin American migrants' sense of belonging and identities in Europe

As shown in the previous sections, researchers have already recognised the importance of investigating the sense of belonging and multiple, transnational identities in the context of migration. Due to the growing importance of migration within a globalised and interconnected world, there is a large number of studies that deal with the question of the impact of migration on an individual's identity and sense of belonging. In the following section mainly studies regarding these topics on Latin American migrants in Europe will be presented in order to get a better understanding of this specific migrant group.

Generally speaking, not many studies on Latin American migrants in Europe and their negotiation of identities and sense of belonging were found in this literature review. The majority of the identified studies were conducted in southern Europe, where migrants from different Latin American countries form the majority group of the migrant population (Pellegrino, 2004). For example, in her study on young Colombians in Spain, Echeverri Buriticá (2005) uncovered that the sense of belonging to their home country significantly shapes their identity negotiations. The participants maintain strong ties to Colombia and often form small Colombian or Latin American communities. Interestingly, they tend to identify more closely with a Latin American identity than a Spanish one, which the author refers to as a "supranational identity" (Echeverri Buriticá, 2005, p. 141). Echeverri Buriticá further highlights that the construction of both national and Latin American identities occurs through the differentiation from the "others," the Spanish, while emphasizing the similarities among fellow Latin Americans. As expressed by one participant: "Well, the difference is not that they are Ecuadorian, Peruvian, or Colombian. The difference is that some are Latinos and others are Europeans."[2] (Echeverri Buriticá, 2005, p. 157). The importance of social networks is also shown by Feliu and colleagues (2012), who discovered that public spaces provide opportunities to exchange experiences of being a migrant in Spain with other Latin Americans and to uphold cultural practices of their home countries and therefore form transnational spaces. By examining Colombian and Ecuadorian migrants and the formation of transnational Latin-American communities in Spain, Eguren (2011) concludes that while these migrants establish communities with people from the same country, they usually do not form many relations with Spanish individuals or migrants from other Latin American countries. As demonstrated by Stroscio (2015), experiences of discrimination and negative perceptions as migrants reinforce relationships with family members and other Latin Americans in Spain as well as connections with their home country. Interestingly, in a study on young Latin Americans in Barcelona, London, and Oxford, Roca i Capará (2013) found that despite discrimination these migrants form flexible identities and form a strong sense of belonging towards the majority society.

Due to their historical and cultural ties (Peixoto, 2012), Spain and other southern European countries present a unique case for Latin American migrants. Consequently, in the following, studies on Latin Americans' sense of belonging and identities in other European countries, where post-colonial ties and language similarities are not as prevalent, will be presented. These studies are more likely to reflect situations similar to those in Austria. In a study conducted by Román-Velázquez and Retis (2021), of Latin American migrants in London, they found that Latin American migrants formed during their migration process multiple senses of belonging during their process. However, these feelings

[2] My translation. The original quote is: '*Bueno, pues es que la diferencia no es que sean ecuatorianos, o peruanos, o colombianos. La diferencia es que unos son latinos y los otros europeos*.'

were often connected with loneliness and the desire to return to their home countries (Román-Velázquez & Retis, 2021). Gruner-Domic (2005) conducted a qualitative study of Latin American women in Germany with a specific focus on their identities. The study concluded that while identity undergoes changes during the migration process, it does not result in a complete redefinition. Instead, migrants often feel a mixture of Latin American and German identities. Additionally, the author observed that Latin Americans tend to establish social networks with individuals from their own home country or from other Latin American countries (Gruner-Domic, 2005). Various studies examining the identity negotiation of Latin Americans find that this group of migrants form a pan-ethnic Latin identity or Latino identity (Echeverri Buriticá, 2005; Gruner-Domic, 2009; Pardo Claure, 2009; Sokół-Klepacka, 2017; Zevallos, 2008). For instance, in another study on Latin American women in Berlin, Gruner-Domic (2009) observed that the women developed a pan-ethnic Latina identity, yet they did not confine themselves to it. Encounters with other Latin American women and exposure to global media in Spanish expanded their sense of belonging beyond a singular identity, allowing for the emergence of a transnational pan-ethnic identity (Gruner-Domic, 2009). Although conducted in Australia and not in Europe, Zevallos (2008) carried out a noteworthy study on Turkish and Latin American women and came to interesting findings. The author found that the Latin American women developed a Latin pan-ethnicity by sharing a similar culture, such as food, music, language, festivities, and strong family ties. This formation of a Latino identity allowed the emergence of a Latin community, bringing together people from different Latin American countries. Furthermore, alongside their newly formed pan-ethnic Latin identity and their national affiliations, the migrants also identify to some extent as Australian, resulting in adopting a hybrid identity (Zevallos, 2008). Similarly, in her dissertation, Sokół-Klepacka (2017) examined the Latin American community in Edinburgh and found that a Latin American identity is constructed through sharing cultural similarities. Additionally, she observed that the migrants only discovered their Latin American identity after they had emigrated from their home country (Sokół-Klepacka, 2017). Investigating the construction of Latino identity in Wageningen, Netherlands, Pardo Claure (2009) comes in her dissertation to the same conclusion, namely that the identification as a Latino starts when migrating to a new country. The process of Latino identity construction leads to hybrid and multiple identities of Latin Americans in the Netherlands (Pardo Claure, 2009). Therefore, this thesis will also consider whether migrants from Latin America in Austria form a Latin-American or "Latino" identity as part of their multiple identities during their migration process. In this study, the term "Latino" adapts the definition of Oquendo (1995), which refers to those who "come from the territory in the Americas colonized by Latin nations, such as Portugal, Spain, and France, whose languages are derived from Latin" (p. 97).

In summary, it should be noted that some of the presented studies on Latin American migrants examine specific nationality groups (Echeverri Buriticá, 2005; Eguren, 2011; Strocio, 2005) while others

look at Latin Americans as a collective entity (Gruner-Domic, 2005; Prado Claure, 2009; Roca i Capará, 2013; Román-Velázquez & Retis, 2021; Sokół-Klepacka, 2017; Zevallos, 2008). As stated, this study will focus on Latin Americans, considering migrants from different countries in Latin America. This approach aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Latin American migrants as a minority group in Austria, exploring how individuals from diverse Latin American backgrounds construct their identities and sense of belonging within this context. Although Latin Americans share similar histories, cultures, and languages, they are not a homogenous group, and their national differences will also be considered.

2.6. Conclusion

This literature review has examined literature related to the sense of belonging as well as multiple and transnational identities within the context of migration, with a specific focus on Latin American migrants. The review has highlighted that while there is a substantial body of literature on the general sense of belonging and identities among migrants, studies specifically focusing on Latin American migrants in Europe, and particularly in Austria, are relatively scarce. This study attempts to fill this gap by investigating Latin American migrants in Austria, constituting a minority within the total migration population and who lack a common language or shared history with the dominant society. The analysis reveals that sense of belonging and identity are deeply interconnected and evolve through dynamic processes influenced by various factors such as social interactions, cultural practices, language, and transnational connections. Furthermore, it underscores that migrants often develop hybrid or multiple identities, negotiating between their national, ethnic, and transnational affiliations. In the case of Latin American migrants, this process is further complicated by the formation of pan-ethnic identities, such as "Latino," which emerge in response to the migration experience.

Building on these insights, the next chapter will outline the context and background of this study, explaining the migration patterns of Latin American migrants coming to Europe and Austria.

Chapter 3 – Context and Background

3.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to contextualize Latin Americans within the broader context of migration flows. Due to limited research and migratory data specific to Austria, firstly, a brief overview of Latin American migration trends across Europe will be presented. Secondly, the evolution and demographic profile of Latin American migrants in Austria is examined, utilizing data from Statistics Austria[3]. By analysing the migration patterns and backgrounds of Latin Americans in Europe and Austria, this part of the thesis seeks to give a basis for further understanding of how these immigrants reflect on and experience a sense of belonging and develop multiple identities in their lives abroad.

3.2. Brief overview of Latin American migration to Europe

Historically, Latin American countries have experienced significant migration from Europe. However, since the second half of the twentieth century the direction of the migration flows has shifted with more Latin Americans moving to various European countries (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019; Durand & Massey, 2010). This transition from a region characterized by immigration to one defined by out-migration was a gradual process, with each Latin American country experiencing its own unique trajectory. Although Latin American migration is marked by heterogeneity, some patterns can be generalized, allowing for the outlining of a timeline for this migration group (Durand & Massey, 2010). As shown by Bayona-i-Carrasco and Avila-Tápies (2019), three major waves of LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean) migration towards Europe can be observed. The fist mayor wave occurred after World War with a high number of migrants moving from the former Caribbean colonies to France, the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands to address labour shortages (Cervantes-Rodríguez et al., 2009). The second migration wave, spanning from the 1960s to the 1980s, was driven by political factors. During this period, many migrants from different countries of Central and South America fled their home countries and sought refuge in Europe from oppressive dictatorships (Durand & Massey, 2010). Since the turn of the century, significant migrations from South American countries to Europe have been observed, a phenomenon identified by Bayona-i-Carrasco and Avila-Tápies (2019) as the third wave. This migration wave was primarily driven by the weakening economic performance and political instability in Latin America, coupled with the hope for a better life and greater stability in Europe (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019). Furthermore, stricter immigration control in the United States after 11 September 2001 made Europe a more attractive migration destination (Pellegrino, 2004). Predominantly, these migrants settled - and still tend to settle - in Southern European countries,

[3] https://www.statistik.at/

notably Spain, due to post-colonial and historical ties. These connections result in more favourable treatment in legislation, as well as language similarities and the presence of established Latin American communities (Bayona-i-Carrasco et al., 2018; Bayona-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019). During the 2008/2009 economic crisis, which severely affected Spain and other Southern European countries, a new wave of internal European migration emerged, known as "onward migration," involving Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) migrants relocating from Southern Europe to other parts of Europe. By this time, many had acquired European passports, granting them the freedom to move within the EU. A considerable number of these migrants selected the UK as their new destination (McIlwaine, 2011).

As of now, recent data from the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) Migration Report show that around 5 million LAC migrants were living in Europe in 2020, a number that has quadrupled since 1990 (McAuliffe & Oucho, 2024). In terms of distribution and proportion within the migrant population, in 2011, Spain hosted 2.3 million migrants from the LAC region, representing 40 % of its total migrant population. Other countries with significant percentages of LAC migrants relative to their total migrant populations included Portugal (19.7 %), the Netherlands (18.2 %), and Italy (10.7 %) (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019). Looking at the demographic profile of LAC migrants in Europe, a relatively young age profile in comparison to the total European migrant population can be observed. This has to do with the fact that migration flows from Latin America and the Caribbean is still a relatively new phenomenon (Bayonia-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019). Additionally, LAC migrants are highly engaged in the European labour market, and they show relatively high levels of education compared to other migrant groups (Pellegrino, 2004). Notably, the LAC population in Europe is feminized, with 55 % being women This is often linked to the high demand for women in domestic service jobs across Europe. However, factors such as human trafficking and the involvement of women in the sex trade also contribute to the observed feminization of the migrant population (Pellegrino, 2004; Bayona-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019).

3.3. Latin Americans in Austria

Latin American migration to Austria primarily started in the second wave of LAC migration to Europe (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019), following the military coup in Chile in 1973. The former Chancellor of Austria, Bruno Kreisky, who was a socialist himself, fostered political connections with Chile's ex-president Salvador Allende. Therefore, Austria showed solidarity towards political leftist activists and provided refuge to Chilean refugees after the military coup. In the beginning of the 1980s around 2,500 Chilean refugees were living in Austria (Eckert, 2004). Following this wave of Chilean migration to Austria, there is a lack of existing research that explains the further development of

overall Latin American migration to Austria[4]. Therefore, data from Statistics Austria was used to outline the evolution and demographic characteristics of LAC migrants in Austria. The data presented below refers to individuals holding citizenship from a Latin American country; therefore, those born in Latin America who have gained Austrian citizenship are not included. As depicted in Figure 3.1, there has been a consistent growth of people with citizenship from a Latin American country moving to Austria since 2002[5]. At the turn of the millennium, the number of migrants stood at 5,350, a figure that has since tripled over the past two decades, aligning with the broader European trend of increasing Latin American migration. Since there was no significant increase in Latin American migrants during the economic crisis of 2008/2009, it can be assumed that Austria was not a primary destination for onward migration of Latin Americans from Southern European countries during that period. The data shows that Latin Americans remain a minority group among the population with a foreign citizenship, never exceeding 1 % at any point in time. Currently, more than 15,000 Latin Americans reside in Austria.

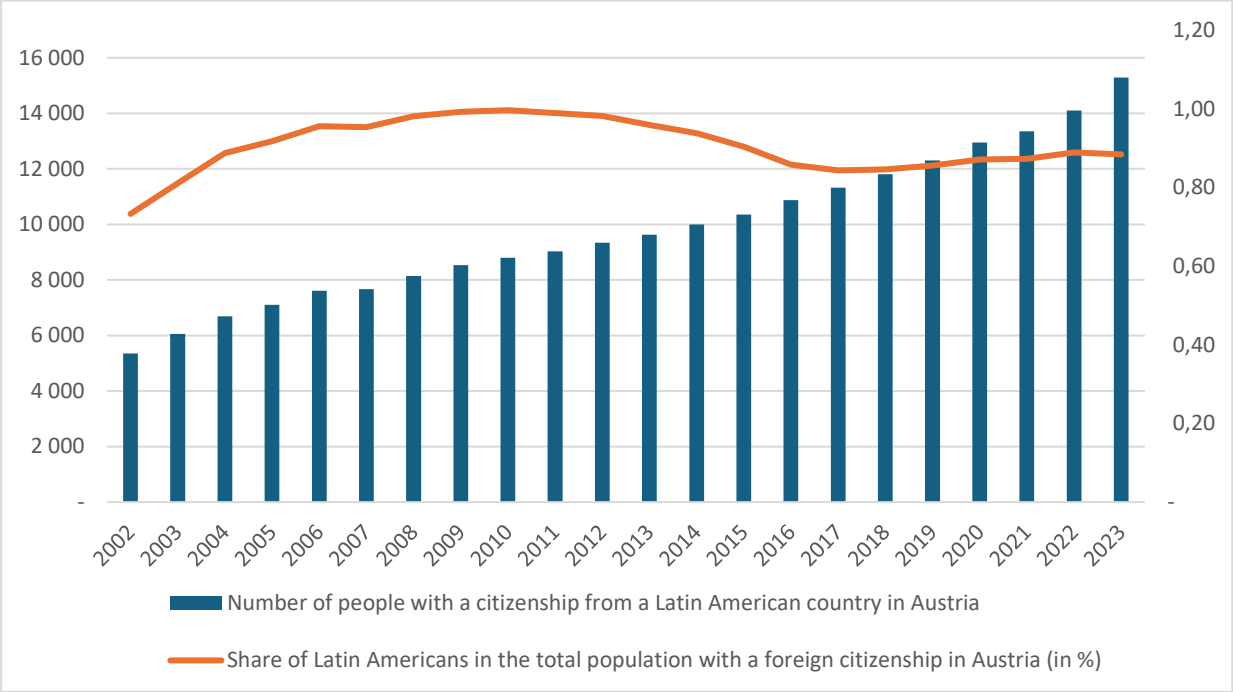


Figure 3.1. Development of Latin American migration to Austria. Source: by author

When differentiated by country of origin, Brazilians constitute the largest share of Latin American migrants in Austria, accounting for 28.9 % (4,413 individuals). Mexicans follow with 1,817 people (11.9 %), and Colombians come third with 1,719 people (11.2 %). Among Caribbean countries, only the

[4] See https://www.vienachilena.org/ for further information on Chilean migration to Austria, as well as insights into the experiences of first and second-generation migrants living in Austria.

[5] Statistics Austria began including and differentiating people with a citizenship from a Latin American country in their statistics only starting from 2002. Thus, earlier data is not available and therefore not included.

Dominican Republic has a significant presence, with over 1,000 migrants, making it one of the five largest Latin American migrant populations in Austria. Peruvians rank fifth, with 966 individuals (6.3 %) (see Figure 3.2).

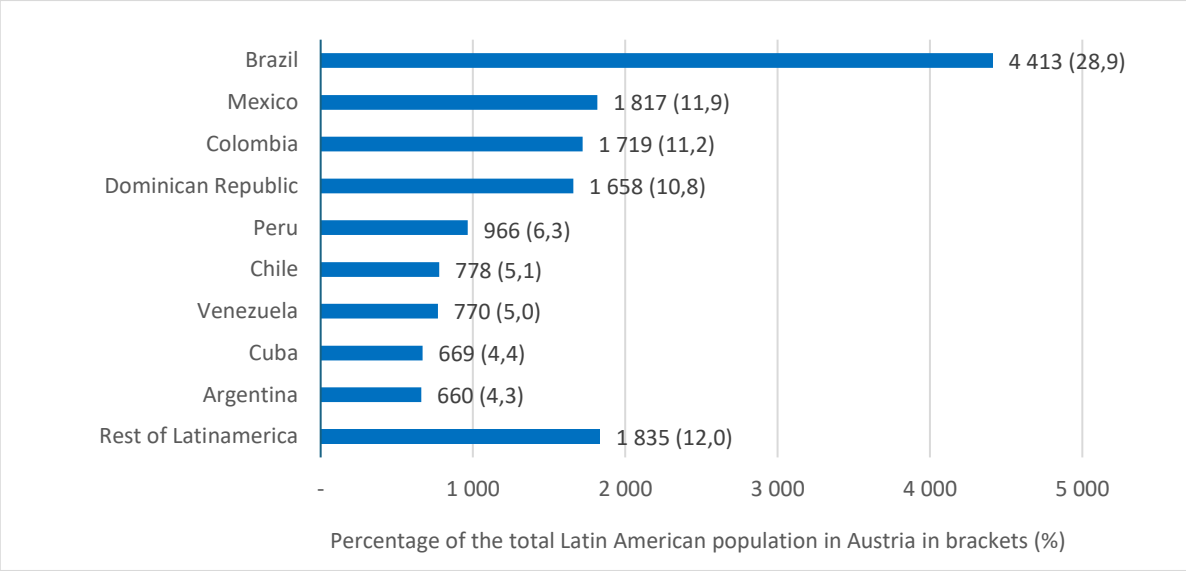


Figure 3.2. Population holding a Latin American citizenship by country in Austria. Source: by author

In terms of gender, it is noteworthy that the Latin American population in Austria has a strong female surplus with a share of 58.9 %. The female surplus is particularly visible among Peruvians and Brazilians, with proportions of almost two-thirds (Statistik Austria, 2023). This aligns with the general European trend (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019). The same applies to the age distribution of the Latin American population in Austria (see Figure 3.3.), which is relatively young compared not only to the overall Austrian population but also to the total population with a foreign citizenship. 86.4 % of all Latin Americans in Austria are of working age between 15 and 60 years old, with the prevalent age group ranging from 30 to 44 years (43.5 %). Dominicans stand out with the highest share of children (age 0-14), comprising 13.9 %, while Peruvians and Chileans have the highest share of individuals aged 60 or older, constituting 10.5 % and 10 % of their population respectively.

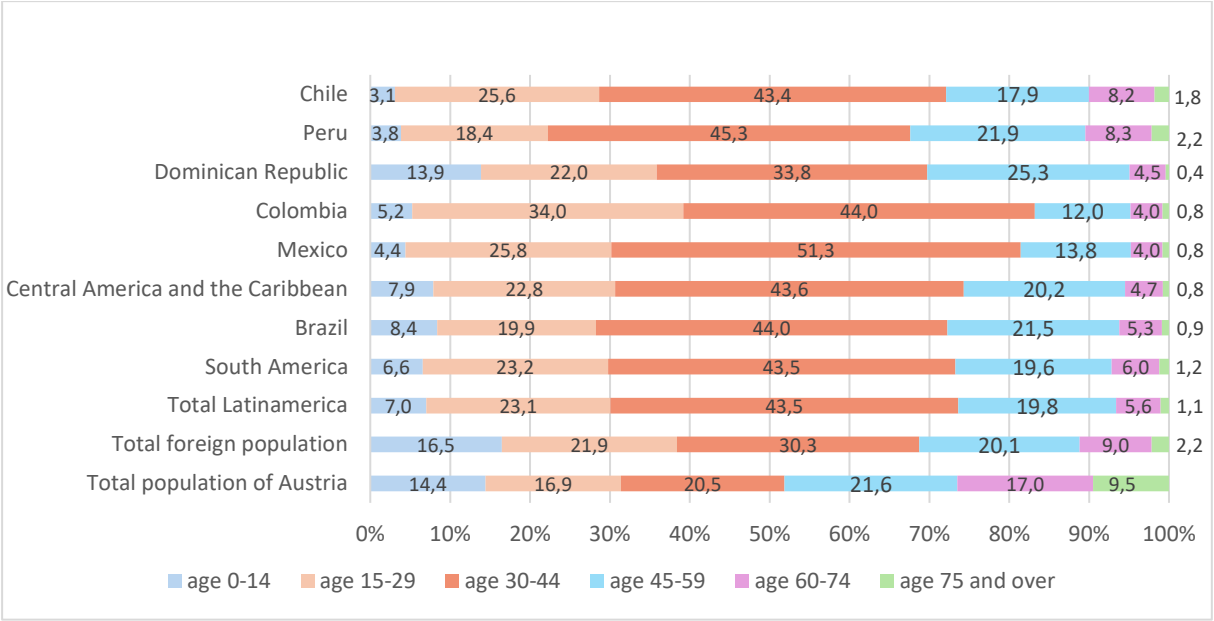


Figure 3.3. Age distribution of people holding a Latin American citizenship in Austria. Source: by author

3.4. Conclusion

In summary, this section has provided an overview of Latin American migration trends in Europe and their present status in Austria. By contextualizing the historical waves of migration, it becomes clear that Latin American migration is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon. In Austria, although Latin Americans remain a relatively small proportion of the foreign population, their numbers have steadily grown, suggesting that this growth is likely to continue in the future. The demographic profile of Latin American migrants in Austria, characterized by a predominantly young and female population, mirrors broader European trends. This contextual background provides the foundation for further analysis of how these migrants reflect on their sense of belonging and identities in their daily lives in Austria.

Chapter 4 – Theoretical Framework

4.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of transnationalism, which will guide the analysis of Latin American migrants in Austria, particularly focusing on how they develop multiple identities and a sense of belonging through engagement in transnational social fields. Transnationalism provides a lens through which to examine the lives of migrants who maintain ties to their home countries while simultaneously adapting to life in a new cultural and social environment. By using a transnational lens, the complex and multifaceted nature of migrants' experiences should be highlighted. This framework is particularly useful for understanding how migrants navigate multiple cultural landscapes, shaping their identities, experiences, and sense of belonging in ways that transcend national borders.

In this chapter, the development of transnationalism studies will first be introduced, and the concept will be defined, distinguishing it from the concept of diaspora. Furthermore, key characteristics of transmigrants will be discussed, along with how they operate within transnational social fields, influencing their sense of belonging and identity. In the next step, the relevance of transnationalism in the context of migrant adjustment will be examined, and common critiques of the concept will be presented.

4.2. Development of the transnationalism field

Traditional views on international migration mainly looked at migrants' motivations and integration into their new countries, assuming that they leave their previous lives and connections behind (Castles et al., 2014; Pries, 2022). In recent years, migration studies are undergoing a "transnational turn" (Faist, 2004), emphasizing that migrants' lives are marked by circulation and building ties to two or more societies that cross borders of nation states (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Vertovec, 2009). The emergence of transnationalism theory is often associated with the rise of globalisation (Pries, 2001), which is defined by the sociologist Stuart Hall (1995) as follows:

> Globalization is the process by which the relatively separate areas of the globe come to intersect in a single imaginary 'space' […] when sharp boundaries reinforced by space and distance are bridged by connections (travel, trade, conquest, colonization, markets, capital and the flows of labor, goods and profits) which gradually eroded the clear-cut distinction between 'inside' and 'outside'. (p. 190)

This global connection and the creation of a transnational space highly influenced the transnational perspective. Consequently, as Pries (2001) points out: "transnational spaces are

becoming a mass phenomenon and are important outcomes and forms of what is frequently referred to as 'globalisation'" (p. 23). The ongoing process of globalisation has transformed numerous aspects in our daily life with Levitt (2001a) proposing that a "transnational lifestyle may become not the exception but the rule" (p. 4). However, as pointed out by Klingenberg and colleagues (2020), transnationalism and globalisation are not interchangeable. While globalisation interconnects the world through "political, economic, and social activities," transnationalism focuses more specifically on the individual migrant and how migrants connect two or more societies by maintaining multiple cross-border relationships (Klingenberg et al., 2020; Levitt, 2001a).

Furthermore, transnationalism as a theory developed alongside diaspora studies which is another prominent concept in international migration research that focuses on cross-border populations and has been established in the academic debate for a longer period (Faist, 2010a). While these concepts are often used interchangeably and, as Faist (2010a) suggests, a clear separation cannot be made, it seems important to briefly address the diaspora concept as well. The traditional meaning of diaspora focused on the forced migration of populations due to a civil war or a genocide as, for example the Jewish or Middle Eastern diaspora (Brah, 1996; Clifford, 1994; Pries, 2022). According to Clifford (1994), "Diasporas usually presuppose longer distances and a separation more like exile: a constitutive taboo on return, or its postponement to a remote future" (p. 304). Upon relocating to a new country, diaspora communities often encounter difficulties to assimilate as they retain a collective memory and experience feelings of loss and nostalgia (Clifford, 1994). These communities were often perceived to occupy socially marginal positions in their host countries and to have a strong longing to return to their home countries (Levitt, 2001a). However, more recent uses have stretched the boundaries of this meaning to signify the perception of shared migration histories and communal ties among other communities (Anthias, 1998; Faist, 2010a). For instance, newer definitions of diaspora go away from a strict migrant's wish to return but rather highlight the strong and continuous bonds across borders (Faist, 2010a). To draw a distinction between diaspora and transnationalism, Faist (2010a) points out the following:

> While the term 'diaspora' always refers to a community or group and has been heavily used in history and literary studies, concepts such as transnationalism – and transnational spaces, fields and formations – refer to processes that transcend international borders and therefore appear to describe more abstract phenomena in a social science language. (p. 13)

Transnationalism draws attention to the particular cross-border movements rather than solely on the migrant communities themselves. Vertovec (1999) refers to transnationalism as "multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the border of nations states" (p. 477). This definition covers the two primary strands of current transnational studies "from below" and "from above".

Transnationalism "from above" (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003) hereby refers to the macro-level and to transnational connections between states, corporations or other powerful entities that operate across national borders. However, the majority of transnationalism scholars look at the concept "from below" (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998) concentrating on the micro-scales and examining the economic, cultural and political cross-border practices and networks of migrants (Tedeschi et al., 2020). To understand the transnational identity formation and sense of belonging of Latin American migrants, this study will adopt a "from below" perspective of transnationalism, centred in individuals and civil society (Vorobeva & Jauhiainen, 2022). In line with this view of transnationalism, the anthropological researchers Glick-Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1995), who played an important role in introducing the concept of transnationalism as a theoretical framework within the field of migration studies, define transnationalism as a "process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (p. 48), a definition widely cited in transnationalism literature. Tedeschi and colleagues (2020), who analysed 100 articles and books on transnationalism, came to the conclusion that "transnationalism 'from below' […] concerns cross-border (sociocultural, political, and/or economic) activities, practices, and behaviours that are meaningful, affect the identity and sense of belonging of people, and are carried out on a regular (not exceptional) basis in the everyday lives of individuals" (p. 615).

Generally speaking, the transnational perspective on migration moves beyond the classical migration theories and the "methodological nationalism" often associated with them (Pries, 2022). 'Methodological nationalism' is known as the belief that a nation is the inherent social and political structure of the modern world and refers to migration scholars who view the state as the only relevant setting for studies on international migration (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002). As Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004) and Glick-Schiller (2010) explain, transnationalism is used to overcome the national container model, which assumes that the nation-state is a fixed container where state borders function as societal boundaries with national norms. In contrast, transnationalism is rather based on the assumption that social relations, fields, and spaces can span across nation-states and national societies, allowing to structure social life both locally and transnationally (Glick-Schiller, 2010; Pries, 2022). However, transnationalism does not follow the idea that nation-states are diminishing in importance, let alone disappearing but rather acknowledges that nation-states continue to organize and structure significant aspects of social life (Pries, 2022).

4.3. Transmigrants' ways of 'being' and 'belonging'

When moving to a different country, transnational migrants (also referred to as transmigrants or transnationals) become actors who connect their home countries and their host countries, creating social ties and networks across borders (Faist, 2010b; Vertovec, 2009). Therefore, transmigrants live

both mentally and frequently physically across various locations spanning different countries (Pries, 2022). Portes and colleagues (1999) argue that migrants qualify as transmigrants operating within a transnational space only when they sustain consistent and ongoing cross-border interactions over time. Transmigrants create "transnational social fields"[6], a concept introduced by Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) to explain "networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed […] and connect actors, through direct and indirect relations across borders" (p. 9). Transnational social fields will serve as the analytical unit of this thesis as they make it possible to not only examine the social, political, cultural, and economic circumstances but also the positions in between them, allowing to analyse territorialized features as well as de-territorialized components (Faist et al., 2014). According to this perspective, being transnational involves engaging in transnational activities as well as fostering cross-border relationships and, at the same time, entails a way of thinking, feeling, and belonging (Dahinden, 2012). Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004) differentiate between transnational ways of "being" which refers to the "social relations and practices that individuals engage in" and "belonging" which includes "identities associated with their actions" (p. 1010). Therefore, the engagement in transnational activities causes migrants to develop identities and a sense of belonging to multiple places or in words of Glick-Schiller and colleagues (1992): "Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop multiple identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously" (pp. 1-2). Transnational activities encompass various actions such as sending remittances to families, engaging in political participation, or conducting cultural practices and customs (Faist, 2010b). Although this phenomenon is not new, these activities are significantly shaped by technological advances and decreasing transportation costs which offer an easy way to stay in constant exchange with family members or friends from the country of origin. This facilitates the migrant's ability to participate in multiple places simultaneously (Castles et al., 2014; De Haas, 2010; Faist et al., 2014) and, at the same time, these technological advancements distinguish transmigrants from earlier international migrants (Glick Schiller et al., 1995). Transnational migrants occasionally return to their place of origin to visit family and friends. However, there is often little desire to return permanently as they never truly leave their home country because of the multiple ties to family and friends that they maintain (Bruneau, 2010). The continuous exchange and engagement of transnational practise with relatives and friends from the home countries makes transnationalism also relevant for non-migrants (Levitt, 2001b; Tedeschi et al., 2020). As Levitt (2001b) points out: "Non-migrants who engage in core transnational practices are those whose social and economic lives depend upon and are shaped on a

[6] Faist (2000) introduced the concept of 'transnational social space' to refer to the social setting created by transmigrants.

regular basis by resources, people, and ideas in the receiving country." (p. 199) Transnational migrant communities are not a homogenous group, and it is essential, as noted by Al-Ali and Koser (2002), to take into account the social, economic, and political context, along with demographic factors such as gender or age when conducting research on transnational migrants.

4.4. Transnationalism and migrant adjustment

For the past decades, migrants' adaption and identity formation in their host country have been looked at through processes of assimilation (see for example, Gorden, 1964). Classical assimilation theory finds that migrants undergo assimilation into a dominant majority culture by leaving their original culture behind (Gordon, 1964). Additionally, it was thought that migrants should abandon their ties to their homeland (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995). This was understood as a steady, natural and non-reversible process (Suárez-Orozco, 2000) that would eventually lead to economic success (Gordon, 1964). However, these perspectives led to the marginalization of the experiences of cultural "others" and to the oversimplification of their identity (Mahalingam, 2006). Furthermore, Faist (2000) points out that that the concept of assimilation assumes that culture is something static which does not reflect migrants' realities. Certain scholars recognized that migrants may not exclusively adopt the culture of their new country as the only strategy (Murphy, 2006) and acculturation models, such as the one of Berry (1997) were designed to acknowledge the possible mixture of two cultures. As Phinney and colleagues (2001) highlight, Berry's framework has been frequently used to understand the process of migrants' identity formation. According to Berry (1997), migrants can adopt four different strategies during the acculturation process, which are assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization. "Assimilation" happens when migrants leave their original culture behind and look to interact with the other culture. In contrary, "integration" means that migrants simultaneously maintain their own culture as well as participate in the new culture. Migrants who reject the dominant culture and only hold on to their own culture fall under the process of "separation", while "marginalisation" involves the rejection of the other culture combined with the loss of the own culture (Berry, 1997). Among the four possible strategies, integration is seen to have the best outcome for migrants as they develop an integrated identity (Berry, 1997).

Recently various scholars have recognized that traditional models of assimilation and acculturation do not adequately capture the current patterns of migrants' adaptation and involvement (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995; Portes et al., 1999; Suárez-Orozco, 2000; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Although acculturation recognises the fact that immigrants may choose to move in between two cultures, transnationalism offers an alternative and assumes that all aspects of migrants' lives are influenced by living in a transnational space (Vertovec, 2009). From this perspective, Vertovec (2009) noted that migrant's transnational ties, practices, identities, and belongings do not have a negative

effect on integration in the host country. Integration hereby refers to a migrant's 'adaptation processes' (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013, p. 869) which are not fixed but are continuous negotiations where hybrid identities are constantly redefined (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Tedeschi et al., 2020). In fact, migrants can from multiple identities that transcends borders and at the same time be integrated into the host country (Lucas & Purkayastha, 2007; Tedeschi et al., 2020). As highlighted by Klingenberg and colleagues (2020), "belonging, for the transnational migrants, is a process which, in contrast to the expectation of acculturation, can co-exist alongside integration being a both/and rather an either/or process" (p. 457).

4.5. Transnationalism: a critical view

In recent years, scholars have extensively researched transnationalism, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to analyse various connections among transmigrants from a transnational perspective (Tedeschi et al., 2020). Research studies include among others the sending of financial remittances (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011), migrant entrepreneurship (Solano et al., 2020; Sommer, 2020), migrant's political engagement in their home country (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Pilati & Herman, 2020) and migrant's transnational identities and belongings (DeBree et al., 2010; Jackson, 2013; Klingenberg et al., 2020, Klok et al., 2017). While transnationalism has gained prominence within migration studies, it has also faced significant criticism. Scholars accused the concept of transnationalism to be imprecise, oversimplified and overly generalized (Wong, 2007). Other critics put in question the novelty of the concept as they argue that migrants have always maintained cross-border ties and carried out transnational activities (Priest, 2022). As previously noted, transnationalism theorists highlight the role of technological advancements and the therefore growing intensity of transnational migration, positioning transnationalism as a new study (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2009). Moreover, while transnationalism seeks to challenge the nation-state container model, Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2002) observe that studies employing a transnational perspective often revert to conceptual frameworks that reinforce the idea of a "bounded national container society" (p. 22). Additionally, other researchers have underscored the continued significance of national borders, as individuals still encounter restrictions in movement and trade (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). Other criticism points out that not all modern migrants can be considered transnational migrants (Vertovec, 2009), that transnational ties get less over time (De Haas, 2010), and that transnationalism only affects the first generation of migrants but not the second one (Portes, 2001). According to Portes et al. (1999), transnationalism should refer to activities that involve sustained and long-term social interactions. Furthermore, with the rapid advancements in technologies, it is however questionable if modern migrants can be 'not transnational' (Tedeschi et al., 2020).

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter we explored the theoretical framework of transnationalism as a lens for understanding the sense of belonging and identities of Latin American migrants in Austria. Transnationalism offers a valuable perspective that moves beyond traditional migration theories, by emphasizing the sustained cross-border interactions and complex social, cultural, and political ties migrants maintain with both their home and host countries. The concept of "transnational social fields", as introduced by Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004), provides a framework for analysing the multifaceted relationships migrants foster across borders, shaping their identities and belonging in diverse ways. Transnationalism provides a more dynamic and fluid understanding of migrants' development of a sense of belonging and identity formation, allowing for the coexistence of both integration in the host society and sustained transnational ties. When researching these concepts in a next step, the transnational lens will focus on the lives of transmigrants as they navigate between "here" and "there," examining how this duality shapes the experiences of Latin Americans in Austria.

Chapter 5 – Methodology

5.1. Introduction

The methodology chapter of this thesis outlines the research design and methods employed to explore the transnational sense of belonging and multiple identities of Latin American migrants in Austria on an individual level. The aim of this research is to gain a better understanding of their situation. Central to this is the exploration of personal impressions and subjective experiences of the migrants. Given the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews was chosen in order to find answers to the following research questions:

- How do Latin American migrants in Austria experience and negotiate their sense of belonging in both Austria and their countries of origin?
- How do Latin American migrants in Austria negotiate and form their transnational and multiple identities in a new social and cultural setting and to what extent do they develop a Latino identity?

This chapter provides a detailed account of the research design, sampling strategy, data collection, analysis procedures, and ethical considerations to ensure the credibility of the findings.

5.2. Research design

Considering the explorative nature of this research, this study uses a qualitative methodology to investigate the transnational sense of belonging and the multiple identities of Latin Americans living in Austria. As stated by O'Leary (2017), a qualitative approach "works at delving into social complexities in order to truly explore and understand the interactions, processes, lived experiences and belief systems that are a part of individuals, institutions, cultural groups and even the everyday" (p.272). Thus, a qualitative research method was chosen for its ability to provide in-depth insights into the lived experiences, perceptions, and feelings of Latin American migrants in Austria. More specifically, semi-structured interviews were conducted as they were seen as most relevant to collect high quality data. In contrast to other methods, interviews make it possible for the researcher to give an explanation on the topic, to encourage participants to co-operate, to clarify questions, and therefore avoid misunderstandings. Additionally, a semi-structured method is based on an interview guide, which facilitates the comparability of the data but also leaves room to adapt the questions depending on the interview partner and situation (May, 2011).

As part of this study, such an interview guide with open-ended questions was developed to ensure flexibility and thus allow the interview to go in different directions depending on the participants' answers to obtain further details about the topic. As the interviews were conducted in German or

Spanish, the interview guide was also translated into these languages. The interview guide focused on various key questions covering issues of interest in order to explore the subject matter. As Appendix A shows, the interview guide consists of three parts, which can be divided into an introduction part, a main part, and a conclusion. In the introduction part, the aims of the research were presented, and it was emphasized that confidentiality and anonymity were safeguarded. The interviews then began with several general and sociodemographic questions with the aim that the participant feels comfortable towards the interviewer. The main parts of the guide consisted of questions regarding the migration process and transnational connections, the development and experiences of a sense of belonging and the formation of the migrant's identities. At the end of the interview, migrants were also asked about their wishes and hopes for the future. Although the interview guide structured the key themes relevant to this thesis, the trajectory of each interview varied, with different narratives and topics emerging. The interview guides in all the three languages can be found in the appendix of this thesis (see Appendix A).

5.3. Selection of interview participants and data collection

The study focuses on Latin American migrants residing in Austria; hence, this group was the target audience for this research. The sampling strategy mainly consisted of purposive and snowball sampling. A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research questions (Robinson, 2014), while snowball sampling was used to reach out to further participants to complete this study. Hence, the participants had to meet a number of selection criteria to fit this research. The respondents had to have migrated from a Latin American or Caribbean country as an adult and had to live in Austria for more than three years so that they could speak about their experiences of belonging and the formation of identities. Furthermore, the interviewees had to be fluent in either German, English or Spanish to conduct interviews without a translator. Thus, Brazilians that were only fluent in Portuguese had to be excluded. Neither the age, the education level, nor the family status played a role in the selection process. Rather, the focus was to find participants of different genders, age groups, and countries of origin and to include various social groups and to therefore get an overall picture of the situation of this migrant group.

The majority of the participants were found through the help of the Latin American Academic Cultural Center (Lateinamerikanisches Akademisches Kulturzentrum (LAK))[7] and the Austrian Latin American Institute (Österreichisches Latinamerika-Institut (LAI))[8]. Both organisations are based in Vienna and work closely with the target group. Further contacts were forwarded by the already

[7] https://www.lak.or.at/
[8] https://www.vhs.at/de/e/lai

interviewed participants to reach the desired sample size. In total, ten persons between June and August 2024 were interviewed. The interviews were either conducted face-to-face or virtually via Google Meets, depending on the location of the interviewees, and lasted between 30 minutes to an hour and a half. The interviewees either resided in Vienna or Innsbruck and came from eight different Spanish-speaking Latin American countries (Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela). Participants between the ages of 27 and 70 years took part in the research and moved to Austria between 1988 and 2021. The table below presents a summarized sociodemographic composition of the persons interviewed as well as the reasons for migrating:

	Sex	**Age**	**Country of origin**	**Years living in Austria**	**Reasons for leaving the home country**	**Reasons for choosing Austria**
P1	M	31	Uruguay	9	To study abroad	The participant has spent one year living in Austria as part of a high school exchange and decided to come back to study at university.
P2	F	27	Peru	8	Safety concerns in the home country	The participant's father already lived in Austria.
P3	F	31	Colombia	8	To gain international experience	The participant followed a family from New York to Austria working as an AuPair.
P4	M	36	Nicaragua	14	Partner (Austrian)	The participant followed his ex-partner, who was Austrian.
P5	F	34	Venezuela	7	Economic and political instability	The participants father already lived in Austria.
P6	M	35	Venezuela	7	Economic and political instability	The participant's wife had family living in Austria.
P7	M	43	Chile	3	Economic and political instability	Prior to migration, the participant searched for countries that provide good education, social security and a working pension system and ultimately decided on Austria.
P8	F	36	Colombia	12	To gain international experience	The participant worked one year as an AuPair in

						Germany and then started a Master in Austria.
P9	F	42	Mexico	24	Job opportunity as AuPair	The participant followed a diplomat family from Mexico to Austria to take care of their children.
P10	M	70	Paraguay	36	Job opportunity as AuPair	The participant found a job as an AuPair.

Table 5.1. Main characteristics of the respondents

5.4. Data analysis

The analysis was guided by the research questions and the data was analysed by applying the principles of the Thematic Analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006). Finding recurrent topics or "themes" in the data allows thematic analysis to highlight the experiences and interpretations of the participants. This method relies on the researcher's judgment to identify the most relevant themes based on research literature and data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, in order to recognize recurring topics and to create categories, both deductive and inductive approaches were utilized.

Once the interviews had been conducted, they were transcribed in a first step. In a further step, the data under analysis was coded using MAXQDA, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, and the most relevant pieces of information were highlighted and labelled. This data was further studied to understand patterns and connections that recurred throughout the data. Next, several codes with shared similarities were combined, which became broader themes. This process was repeated, and the themes were reviewed aiming to capture and accurately reflect the information gathered. Once the information was analysed and themes were established, they were subsequently named and defined. Finally, data was extracted accordingly and supported by quotes provided by the participants in the interviews.

Although the working language of this thesis is English, the data was analysed in the original language (German or Spanish) throughout the entire process since there is always the risk of losing the original meaning in translation (González & Lincoln, 2006). Only the quotations directly used in the results section of this thesis were translated into English, with the original citations provided in the footnotes. Handling interview data in their original language is recommended by González and Lincoln (2006) for qualitative intercultural research.

5.5. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study

In this research, migrants who moved across the ocean to create a new home in Austria were studied. Migration entails significant changes (Ahmed, 1999), and prior to conducting the interviews, the reasons for migration were not known. It was therefore important to handle these topics with sensitivity and integrate ethical considerations. Narrating negative migration experiences as well as instances of discrimination and racism can create trauma and researchers need to be prepared for this. Thus, creating a space of trust during interviews was crucial (O'Leary, 2017). Participants were informed at the beginning of each interview that they could withdraw at any time or choose not to answer questions. It was emphasized that all statements would be treated strictly confidentially and anonymized. Following ethical research practices at ISCTE[9], written informed consent (see Appendix B) was sought in the language of the interview and obtained before starting the interview. In line with the consent form, recordings were deleted after transcription was completed and verified.

Moreover, there were other aspects to consider during the course of this research, one being language. Although I am fluent in Spanish, it is not my mother tongue hence the risk of losing information or misunderstandings was given. Nevertheless, I did not perceive this as hindering communication but rather I saw it as an advantage that the participants could choose in which language they wanted to speak during the interview. Second, doing interviews about abstract concepts like sense of belonging and identity presented challenges in obtaining desired answers directly. However, I approached these concepts by asking alternative questions related to feelings of home, places, or individuals, where and/or with whom the participants felt comfortable. This indirect approach helped gaining deeper insights into the migrant's sense of belonging and identity.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology used to explore the transnational sense of belonging and multiple identities of Latin American migrants in Austria, providing a structured framework to ensure credible findings. A qualitative approach, employing semi-structured interviews, was chosen to gain in-depth insights into the lived experiences of the migrants, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their perspectives. Following data collection, thematic analysis was employed to identify and the key topics that emerged during the interviews. These themes will be further explored in the following chapter, where the findings will be analysed and interpreted in detail to provide a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences.

[9] https://www.iscte-iul.pt/assets/files/2019/11/11/1573475578159_Code_of_Ethical_Conduct_in_Research%20_ISCTE_IUL_English_____november_2019.pdf

Chapter 6 – Findings and Analysis

6.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings from the empirical research and presents the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis. Although each migration story is distinct, common experiences were identified among the participants. This section will explore these shared experiences, examining the migration journeys of Latin American participants and their perceived sense of belonging to both Austria and their countries of origin. It will also explore their multifaceted identities. Rather than merely presenting the findings, this chapter develops a thematically structured 'analytical narrative' that puts findings in dialogue with the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 (see Braun & Clarke, 2021, pp. 130-132).

This chapter begins with a first section on the general migration process of the respondents including reasons for migration, difficulties they encountered as well as questions about returning. Subsequently, the transnational connections and activities of the participants will be looked at. Then, the findings on the participant's sense of belonging will be discussed. The multiple sites of belonging, as well as transnational belonging, will be examined and factors that influence this sense of belonging will be presented. The last section will look into the multiple identities of the participants as well as into the emergence of a Latino identity.

6.2. Migration process

In order to begin exploring how the participants of this study perceive their transnational sense of belonging and multiple identities since their relocation to Austria, it is necessary to look at the narratives that they presented when reflecting on their migration stories, reasons for migrating and the challenges they faced during the process. In this context, despite the diverse motivations behind the participants' relocation to Austria, three primary reasons emerge. The first group migrated due to personal relationships (love), having met their Austrian partners in their home countries and subsequently decided to move to Austria with them. The second common motivation for migration among participants aligns with broader trends observed in Latin American migration to Europe, driven by political instability, economic challenges, and safety concerns in Latin America (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Avila-Tápies, 2019). They aspired to find better opportunities and improve their quality of life in Austria. A participant from Venezuela explains it the following way:

> *The main reason is that Venezuela was going through a severe economic crisis at that time. It was horrible (…). We had nothing, I mean, how can I explain, the pharmacies had no medicine.*

> *The supermarkets had no food. There was a great shortage of basic necessities.*[10] (P5, female, Venezuelan, 34 years, living in Austria since 2017)

The third group sought international experience, moving abroad for purposes such as academic studies or Au Pair work. They hoped to improve themselves professionally, often with the initial expectation that their stay in Austria would be temporary. The reasons these migrants ultimately decided to stay in Austria are varied and often coincidental. Some of them met an Austrian partner, others found attractive job opportunities they were eager to pursue.

The reason why Austria was chosen as the destination country was either because some family members already lived here or because the participants thought that the Austrian system could provide them with better opportunities, social benefits, and better access to free education for themselves and their offspring. These reasons for selecting Austria are summarized by a participant from Chile who migrated with his wife and daughter:

> *Mainly for two reasons, which are very practical. One is social security because in Chile, we have a private system, and I didn't have enough savings to grow old in Chile. On the other hand, as a parent, I decided that I also needed to find a place with a good education system. What attracted me to Austria was that if we obtain citizenship, education is free. In Chile, university education is extremely expensive.*[11] (P7, male, Chilean, 43 years, living in Austria since 2021)

The idea of having a more prosperous future in Austria was generally dominant among the participants which influenced their motivation to migrate as well as accompanied them throughout their whole migration process.

Each migration journey inherently involves numerous transformations and possible difficulties, as migrants must build a new life from the ground up in an unknown setting (Afonso et al., 2022; Ahmed, 1999). The initial and unfamiliar impressions of Austria shared by the participants were that they perceived the country as remarkably calm and tidy in comparison to their home countries. All participants who arrived during the winter months also mentioned that the cold was something they had never experienced before and had to get used to. When they first arrived in Austria, the participants encountered various obstacles as they tried to adjust to the new and unfamiliar

[10] Por eso la razón principal es que Venezuela en ese momento atravesaba una crisis económica muy fuerte. Era horrible (…). Nosotros no teníamos nada, o sea, como te explico, las farmacias no tenían medicamentos. Los supermercados no tenían comida. Había mucha escasez de lo básico.

[11] Principalmente por dos cosas, son motivos súper prácticos. Uno, un tema de Seguridad Social, porque en Chile tenemos un sistema privado, yo no tenía ahorros suficientes como para poder envejecer en Chile. Y por otro lado, al ser papá decidí que también tenía que buscar un lugar donde el sistema de educación fuera bueno y me llamó la atención que tanto acá como en Austria, si logramos la ciudadanía, es gratuito. En Chile es carísimo, es muy caro estudiar en la Universidad.

surroundings. The majority of participants found the first year to be especially challenging, mentioning obstacles such as the language barrier, separation from friends and family, guilt, legal issues, and adjustments to new living conditions:

> *So, at first, it was difficult because of the language and for several other reasons. Firstly, I don't have family here, I had no support or anything, and I didn't get along well with my wife's family, who lives in Austria.*[12] (P6, male, Venezuelan, 36 years, living in Austria since 2017)

The primary challenge mentioned was indeed the linguistic barriers, as most of the participants had limited or no prior knowledge of the German language. The inability to communicate, both in daily life and in relation to official matters or legal documents, placed a significant burden on the migrants. In most cases, they relied on the assistance of friends or acquaintances who acted as interpreters and advisors. This initial time of the migration process was marked for many participants by feelings of frustration, loneliness, and sadness. Another challenge noted by some participants in this study was the sense of guilt they experienced— and in some cases still experience— about leaving their home countries and families. One participant mentioned feeling guilty due to the potential negative impact of emigration on his home country's economy, feeling a sense of responsibility for this effect. Additionally, other participants expressed that they feel conflicted about the improved quality of life and greater opportunities they have found abroad, which their families back home may not have access to, as explained by a migrant from Colombia:

> *The first three years are incredibly challenging, (…) because of the dilemma of living in parallel realities. It's like when you're enjoying something here, you think about wanting to share that with the people you love who are in your home country, so you can't fully enjoy it, and then you feel guilty because you might be having a better life.*[13] (P3, female, Colombian, 31 years, living in Austria since 2016)

However, as they progressed through their migration journey, these migrants mentioned that they had found ways to cope with these sentiments of guilt, handling this situation better.

Another significant aspect of the migration process involved navigating visa and residency issues, which was stated by most of the participants. Within the EU (European Union), Austria's migration and

[12] Entonces al principio fue difícil, por eso por el idioma y también por varias razones. Porque yo por primero no tengo familia aquí, no tenía ningún apoyo ni nada y no me la llevaba bien con la familia de mi esposa que vive en Austria.

[13] Los 3 primeros años son súper difíciles, (…), por este dilema que tú vives en tus realidades paralelos. Entonces es como si estás disfrutando algo acá, estás pensando que quisieras compartir eso con la gente que amas y que está en tu país y entonces no lo puedes disfrutar del todo y luego tienes sentimientos de culpa porque tal vez estoy teniendo una mejor vida.

integration policies are notably strict for non-EU immigrants, especially regarding obtaining permanent residence or nationality, as shown by the 2022 Migrant Integration Policy Index (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). This was confirmed by all the participants who did not have an EU passport and, therefore, had to apply for a visa to enter and stay in the country. Only two of the participants hold an EU-passport (Polish, Portuguese), who were, however, aware of their advantage compared to those without such documentation. All participants highlighted that the visa and residency process was a considerable obstacle, and they were faced with multiple challenges. One participant even had to temporarily leave the country, while another revealed that she briefly lacked a residency permit. The following quote from a participant from Colombia, who arrived with a student visa, underlines the gravity of this challenge, which often became an existential issue for the migrants participating in this study:

> *I believe one issue I struggled with greatly was the visa issue. The student visa needed to be renewed every year, and thus the work permits as well (...). So, if you don't have a visa, then you don't have a work permit, you don't have an insurance number, and then you have no income. (...) And I always emphasize this because I don't know how easy it is for people who don't have visa problems to understand, but it really is an existential problem. If you don't have it, you don't know what to do with your life, whether to go back or stay. If you stay, what do you do then?* [14] (P8, female, Colombian, 36 years, living in Austria since 2012)

Consequently, it is not surprising that the idea of returning to their home countries was particularly prominent during this period. The initial struggles with adjusting to a new environment and the uncertainty about the future made returning home a considerable option. A participant from Nicaragua explained that due to the language difficulties he could initially not even imagine his future in Austria:

> *In a way, yes, I made many plans to leave, yes. I think it was grounded in the fact that I was not able to communicate. I didn't speak the language. It was super complicated, so I only thought about my future plans, and all of them involved Nicaragua, Nicaragua. But when I learned*

[14] Ich glaube ein Thema, mit dem ich sehr stark zu kämpfen hatte, war das Thema Aufenthalt. Dieses Studentenvisum, das jedes Jahr verlängert werden musste und somit auch die Arbeitsbewilligungen (…). Also wenn man ein Visum nicht hat, dann hast du keine Arbeitsbewilligung, dann hast du keine Versicherungsnummer und dann hast du kein Einkommen. (…) Und ich betone es immer, weil ich nicht weiß, wie einfach das für Menschen zu verstehen ist die kein Visumproblem haben, aber das ist wirklich ein existenzielles Problem. Wenn man das nicht hat, man weiß nicht, was man mit dem Leben tut, also geht man zurück oder bleibt man da. Wenn man dableibt, was tut man dann?

German and could communicate, these thoughts went away, let's say. [15] (P4, male, Nicaraguan, 36 years old, living in Austria since 2010)

Similarly to what was mentioned by this participant, questions of return became less common by most of the participants as the migration process progressed. When asked about their current intentions to return to their home countries, nearly all participants indicated plans to remain in Austria in the near future. However, looking toward the distant future, about half of the Latin American participants in this study could envision themselves living in their home countries upon retirement.

6.3. Transnational connections

Despite relocating to a new country, transnational migrants are not considered to cut ties with their home countries. Instead, they "forge and sustain multifaceted links" between their country of origin and their destination country, thus creating transnational social fields (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004). To understand the sense of belonging and multiple identities through a transnational perspective, it is essential to have a look at the transnational dimensions of the participants' experiences while living in Austria. When analysing the participants of this study, it becomes evident that they maintain strong connections with their home countries and engage in transnational activities, thus qualifying them as transnational migrants. Transnational activities encompass regular exchange with family members, participation in political matters, staying informed about the political situation in their home countries (e.g., reading the news), sending remittances as well as making regular trips to their home country. All participants mentioned that they hold regular contact with their friends and families. In order to communicate, they use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, or Instagram. The emergence of technological advances facilitates this exchange (Faist et al., 2014), as explained by a participant from Nicaragua who migrated to Austria in 2010:

Yes, at the beginning I used Facebook and Skype because there were no other options. And now with WhatsApp, since it has been available, it's much easier because you can always make a video call and all that. Because phone calls are extremely expensive, extremely expensive, yes.[16] (P4, male, Nicaraguan, 36 years, living in Austria since 2010)

[15] De cierta manera sí, hice muchos planes de irme, sí. Creo que todo es a raíz de que no te puedes comunicar, no hablaba el idioma. Era supercomplicado, entonces yo solo pensaba en mis planes de futuro y todo eso era solo Nicaragua, Nicaragua. Y cuando aprendí alemán y me pude comunicar, se me quitaron estas ideas, digamos.

[16] Sí, al inicio usé Facebook y Skype, porque no había más. Y ahora en WhatsApp, desde que WhatsApp existe es mucho más fácil porque siempre puedes hacer una videollamada y todo eso. Porque la telefonía es carísima, carísima, carísima, sí.

All participants emphasized the importance of maintaining regular contact with their family and friends in their home countries calling them at least once a week. However, this communication is challenged by the time difference, and some participants noted that finding a suitable time for both parties to talk can be difficult. Additionally, the long distances between Austria and their home countries were frequently cited as challenging in their migration experience. This is also the case when it comes to making regular trips back home. Most participants expressed a desire to visit their families frequently. Although many have returned to their home countries one or more times since relocating to Austria, the high cost of flight tickets and limited vacation time from work make it difficult, as a participant form Uruguay noted when asked how often he returns to Uruguay:

> *Yes, but not very often. I would say about every 2 or 3 years, because the flight is very, very expensive and it's a long distance, and it's not worth it for less than 2 weeks. And I also don't want to spend my 2 weeks of vacation just in Uruguay.*[17] (P1, male, Uruguayan, 31 years, living in Austria since 2013)

This reflects the broader impact of geographical distance on transnational migration. The considerable physical distance between the home country and the host country plays a crucial role in shaping the migration experience. Therefore, when examining the experiences of transnational migrants, the proximity between their country of origin and their destination country is an important factor that should be considered.

In addition to maintaining social contacts and visiting their home countries, participants in the study also engage in other transnational activities. Some participants mentioned that it is important for them to stay informed about the political developments in their home countries. These migrants regularly read the news and watch news programs from their national television, and they make an effort to participate in elections as well. Interestingly, migrants who left their home countries due to political instability often showed less interest in political developments from their countries of origin. Many expressed disappointment with the political situation in their home countries, leading them to distance themselves from these issues. Other participants maintain strong ties with their home countries through various means, such as establishing businesses. Additionally, some actively contribute by donating money, sending remittances to family members, or engaging in activism to support their countries of origin. These diverse connections that bridge borders illustrate how the Latin American migrants in this study create transnational spaces (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004).

[17] Ja, aber nicht so oft. Also ich würde sagen, so alle 2 Jahre oder 3 Jahre, weil der Flug ist sehr, sehr, sehr teuer und es ist sehr weit entfernt und es zahlt sich nicht aus für weniger als 2 Wochen. Und ich will auch nicht meine 2 Wochen Urlaub für Uruguay ausgeben.

After briefly analysing the participants' transnational ways of "being", it is now time to examine the transnational ways of "belonging" (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004, p.1010), which constitutes the central focus of this thesis.

6.4. Transnational sense of belonging

As discussed in the literature review, a sense of belonging is fundamentally subjective (Antonsich, 2010; May, 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2006) and encompasses multiple dimensions. This study was guided by the components of belonging proposed by Yuval-Davis (2006), which include feeling 'at home', experiencing emotional attachment, and a sense of 'safety'. To explore these dimensions, the study employed questions such as "Where do you feel at home?" and "Where do you feel safe and being a part of?" The responses revealed that most participants affirmed to have these feelings towards both their home countries and Austria. Despite this, when specifically asked about their sense of belonging to Austria, many participants expressed reservations, indicating that overall, they do not feel part of Austrian society nor have an attachment to the Austrian culture. This contradiction between feeling comfortable and safe in Austria and not feeling a strong sense of belonging should be considered in the analysis of the findings.

6.4.1. Multifaceted aspects of belonging

Participants described their sense of belonging in multifaceted ways: some connected it to a country or a city, others to specific places, cultures and to certain social groups or to their families and friends, showing that a sense of belonging can be directed to different entities (see also Afonso et al., 2022; Anthias, 2006; Jackson, 2013). These multiple sites of belonging become apparent through the participants' experiences and reflections. When asked what 'feeling at home' means to them and where they consider their home to be, most participants emphasized the emotional dimensions of home, such as comfort and the presence of people they trust and feel at ease with. For instance, one participant from Uruguay said:

> *I feel at home here. So, in my apartment here in Vienna, I feel at home, and I also feel at home in Uruguay. I feel at home where I am familiar with the surroundings and where there are people I like.*[18] (P1, male, Uruguayan, 31 years, living in Austria since 2015)

The significance of social relationships was highlighted by many participants, with several emphasising the role of family in fostering a strong sense of belonging. Migrants often face the

[18] Ich fühle mich hier zu Hause. Also in meiner Wohnung hier in Wien bin ich zu Hause, ich fühle mich auch in Uruguay zu Hause. Ich fühle mich dort zu Hause, wo ich mich auskenne und wo es Leute gibt, die ich mag.

challenge of leaving behind family members, which can complicate their sense of connection or home-making. A participant from Venezuela, who migrated with her Venezuelan husband, described this situation as follows:

> *It's difficult because I feel that home is about the people. But I'm divided. I have my husband here (in Austria), and my mother is back there (in Venezuela).*[19](P5, female, Venezuelan, 34 years, living in Austria since 2017)

A respondent from Colombia reflects similarly on this sense of belonging but places particular emphasis on the significance of pursuing her interests and sharing that with people in her surroundings:

> *And I believe that once I can pursue and share my political, academic, and personal interests with others, that creates a sense of home and belonging for me. When I feel comfortable with these people, who form an extended family or chosen family, this happens for me both here in Vienna, Austria, and in Colombia when I return. In my view, home doesn't necessarily have to be a physical place; rather, it is where one feels comfortable and can pursue their interests.*[20] (P8, female, Colombian, 36 years, living in Austria since 2012)

Safety was another factor that was mentioned, and that provided some of the participants with a feeling of home. As previously noted, many participants mentioned that they left their home countries due to feelings of insecurity and came to Austria in search of a safe environment. The sense of safety provided by their new surroundings plays a crucial role in their feelings of home. Two participants also reflected on the comfort of their current apartments, emphasising that home for them is the physical place of their apartment, without taking into account the broader national or cultural context. For them having a place to come home to provides them with safety and ease. For instance, a participant from Chile highlights the importance of his living space:

> *So, my house and my home are in the place where I live, but not the country itself. I think of myself as a citizen of everywhere, but my true homeland is the four walls where I live. There is*

[19] Es que es difícil porque yo siento que el hogar son las personas. Pero es que estoy dividida. Tengo a mi esposo aquí, tengo a mi mamá allá.

[20] Und ich glaube, sobald ich meine politischen oder wissenschaftlichen und persönlichen Interessen verfolgen kann und mit Menschen teilen kann, das finde ich, das macht so ein Heimatsgefühl und das macht so ein Zugehörigkeitsgefühl. Also wenn man sich mit diesen Menschen, die die eine Art von erweiterter Familie, eine ausgesuchte Familie bilden, wohl fühlt und das passiert mir hier in Wien, in Österreich, als auch in Kolumbien, wenn ich zurückkehre, etabliere ich das auch. Es ist nicht das Heimat ein physischer Ort sein muss meines Erachtens, sondern es ist eher, wo man sich wohl fühlt wo man meines Erachtens seinen Interessen nachgehen kann.

no other place where I feel more comfortable than in my bed watching Netflix.[21] (P7, male, Chilean, 43 years, living in Austria since 2021)

Although the sense of belonging is interpreted differently by each participant, all participants underline that they created and feel a sense of belonging or at home both in Austria as well as in their home countries. This is also evident from the quotes mentioned previously, which illustrate that a transnational sense of belonging can be established in multiple locations, thereby transcending national borders (De Bree et al., 2010). The lasting ties to the homeland and new connections in Austria have resulted that the participants developed a transnational belonging, particularly in terms of their experiences of 'home'. The critical aspect is that participants feel at ease and content, establishing multiple forms of belonging in various places, as expressed by a participant from Nicaragua:

I feel like both. I feel at home here (in Austria), I feel really good and comfortable here. I also feel good there (in Nicaragua).[22](P4, male, Nicaraguan, 36 years, living in Austria since 2010)

It is important to emphasize that while participants have gained new feelings of belonging in Austria, they did not lose these sentiments towards their home countries. Instead, a sense of belonging adds to existing affiliations rather than excluding them, as explained by a participant from Colombia:

It is simply an addition. It's not either/or; one does not give up on Colombia just because they are also interested in Austria or the EU now. [23] (P8, female, Colombian, 36 years, living in Austria since 2012)

Despite all participants reporting a degree of belonging towards both Austria and their home country, the intensity of this connection varies. While they express satisfaction with their lives in Austria, feeling secure and having established a home, not all participants experience a strong national belonging to Austria. Many have created a sense of place and built social connections in Austria, but this does not always translate into a deep connection to Austrian society or culture. A participant from Chile illustrates this point:

[21] Entonces mi casa y mi hogar son en el lugar que yo habito, pero no el país. Yo creo que soy un ciudadano de todas partes, pero mi verdadera patria son las cuatro paredes donde vivo. En ningún otro lugar me puedo sentir más cómodo que en mi cama viendo Netflix.

[22] Me siento como ambos, yo me siento en casa aquí (Austria), me siento súper bien aquí, me siento cómodo, me siento bien allá (Nicaragua) también.

[23] Also es ist nur etwas dazugekommen. Es ist nicht entweder oder; man verzichtet nicht auf Kolumbien, weil man sich auch für Österreich interessiert oder für die EU auch mittlerweile.

I believe I am certainly a part of society because I live here, and de facto I am, but when it comes to 'belonging,' whether I feel like I am part of the society, I would say not really.[24] (P1, male, 31 years, Uruguayan, living in Austria since 2015)

Most participants shared similar sentiments, indicating that their sense of belonging to their home country remains significantly stronger as compared to their connection to Austria. They do feel some belonging because Austria provides them with safety and good opportunities for their future, however, their emotional and cultural attachment to their home countries remains significantly stronger. This is explained by a participant from Mexico who has been living in Austria for more than 24 years:

I like my life in Vienna. I feel adapted to Vienna. Do I belong to Vienna? No, because my heart is in Mexico.[25] (P9, female, Mexican, 42 years, living in Austria since 2000)

The participants' ties to Austria are more about feeling adapted and integrated into their new environment rather than a deep sense of belonging or an emotional attachment to Austrian society and culture. In contrast, they continue to experience a deep sense of connection to the culture and people of their homeland. These strong cultural ties are evident in their daily lives as participants make efforts to incorporate elements from their home countries into their new life in Austria. One participant from Venezuela explains that, although he has created a sense of home and safety in Austria and cannot envision moving back to his home country, he still experiences a profound cultural connection to Venezuela that he does not feel towards Austria:

Well, home in terms of living here (Austria), but culturally and everything else, is Venezuela.[26] (P6, male, Venezuelan, 35 years, living in Austria since 2017)

Although the majority of participants indicated that they had created a sense of 'home' in Austria, having established places of belonging and feeling generally satisfied with their lives, they did not express a strong sense of belonging to Austria as a nation. Despite having friends, a job, and a new life in Austria, they reported a lack of emotional attachment to Austrian society and culture. Their sense of belonging is primarily linked to their practical integration into life in Austria, rather than a deeper, emotional connection with Austria, which in contrast they still experience towards their home countries. This underlines the fact that the degrees of belonging and attachment that transnational

[24] Ich glaube ich bin natürlich Teil der Gesellschaft, weil ich hier wohne und de facto bin ich es schon, aber so „belonging", ob ich mich Teil der Gesellschaft, also ob, ob ich mich Teil von der Gesellschaft fühle, da würde ich sagen eher nicht.

[25] Me gusta mi vida en Viena. Me siento adaptada a Viena. ¿Que pertenezco a Viena? No, porque mi corazón está en México.

[26] O sea, casa en cuanto a vivir aquí (Austria), pero a cultura y todo eso en Venezuela.

migrants establish can vary (Klingenberg et al., 2020; Vertovec, 2009) and should be considered when researching transnational belonging.

6.5. Factors influencing and shaping migrants' sense of belonging

The previous section showed that the concept of belonging involves different spatial, national, socials and cultural dimensions, each shaped by individual reference points and personal experiences. During the interviews, it became apparent that various factors influenced the migrants' sense of belonging to both Austria and their home countries. These factors will be explored in this section.

6.5.1. Social interactions and receptivity

Family, friendships, and social networks were recurring themes in the interviews, strongly influencing the sense of belonging of the participants. By staying in touch with family and friends in their home countries, the participants preserved a sense of belonging to their places of origin. In order to foster a sense of belonging in the host country, it seems essential to build a social network in this new environment. During the interviews it became apparent that many of the participants find it difficult to get in touch and establish friendships with Austrians despite making an effort:

> *(…) I haven't been able to establish a relationship with an Austrian, except for my husband. It's very difficult. After these 8 years, I feel like I don't understand what Austrians think. It's very hard for them to open up to someone different or to try new things. That's what I mean.*[27] (P2, female, Peruvian, 27 years, living in Austria since 2016)

Indeed, the majority of participants indicated that they have few or no Austrian friends and described Austrians as relatively reserved and distant. This lack of Austrian friendships contributes to their sense of not fully belonging to Austrian society. When asked whether they feel part of Austrian society, many responses reflected this sentiment, as illustrated by the following quote:

> *(feeling part of) the Austrian society, no, because I don't have anyone like that, an Austrian friend.*[28] (P6, male, Venezuelan, 35 years, living in Austria since 2017)

Conversely, those who mentioned that they have formed friendships with Austrians report a stronger sense of belonging to the receiving country.

[27] (…) no ha logrado hasta ahora entablar una relación con un austríaco, al menos que sea mi esposo el único. Es que es muy difícil. Estos 8 años, es como que no sé en qué piensan los austriacos. Pero es muy difícil que ellos se abran a alguien diferente, que intenten cosas nuevas también, a eso me refiero ya.

[28] O sea, (me siento parte) con la sociedad austriaca, no, porque no tengo a nadie así, amigo austriaco.

The literature suggests that Latin American migrants often form friendships with fellow nationals or other Latin Americans (Feliu et al, 2012; Gruner-Domic, 2005; Pardo Claure, 2009), reflecting a common trend observed in this study as well. Many participants mentioned that their friendship groups mainly consist of other Latinos/as, which at the same time produces a sense of belonging by sharing the same language and similar cultures:

> *Belonging? When I'm with my family, it feels like being in Peru. It's not 100%, but... or when I go to a Latin event, surrounded by many Latin Americans, with Latin food and everything being Latin, loud music and all, that's when I feel at home. It's like, 'Oh, I missed this.'* [29] (P2, female, Peruvian, 27 years, living in Austria since 2016)

This sentiment underscores how the participants feel a strong sense of belonging among fellow Latin American migrants in Austria. By sharing cultural practices, participants manage to create an emotional feeling of belonging. At the same time, these social connections play a crucial role in their establishment of a home in Austria.

In addition to discussing social interactions, participants were asked about their experiences with discrimination or racism and their reception by Austrian society. While the majority reported that they had not personally encountered such issues, some noted hearing about incidents affecting other Latin Americans living in Austria. They did note, though, a certain level of ignorance regarding their home countries and cultures, particularly from older generations of Austrians. A participant from Peru addresses this issue the following way:

> *I had a Mexican friend who was also a classmate of mine, and someone told her: 'Oh, in Mexico, they still travel by horseback, that there are no cars, and they ride horses or donkeys.' They don't even know where Peru is.* [30] (P2, female, Peruvian, 27 years, living in Austria since 2016)

By examining the social interactions of the participants in this study, it became evident that while most express a strong sense of belonging with fellow Latin Americans, they struggle to develop similar connections with Austrians. Many participants find it challenging to establish friendships with Austrians, which impacts their overall sense of belonging to Austrian society.

[29] ¿Pertenencia? Cuando estoy con mi familia es como estar en Perú. Sí un poco, no 100%, pero…o cuando me voy a un evento latino, cuando están muchos latinos y la comida también latina, todo es latino, música alta todo y ahí es como me siento en casa. Es como que, 'Ay extrañaba esto'.

[30] Tenía una amiga mexicana que también era compañera mía, y a ella le dijeron: 'ay que en México todavía se van a caballo, que no hay autos y se van a caballo o en burro.' Ni siquiera saben dónde está Perú.

6.5.2. Language proficiency and interest in culture

Language was another key factor strongly influencing the participants' sense of belonging, especially to a group. The lack of fluency in German was perceived as a barrier to interacting with the members of the host society, and thereby complicating the development of a sense of belonging to the Austrian people and culture. A participant from Chile explains that he feels restricted because he has not yet fully acquired proficiency in the German language.

> *I struggle to feel like I belong because I understand only about 50% of the conversations, so I can't fully express my personality. German feels like a cage—it's a linguistic cage. I can't be who I am in German, but I am confident that this will change and become a bit more manageable over time.*[31] (P7, male, Chilean, 43 years, living in Austria since 2021)

This quote highlights the participant's experience of feeling constrained by his limited language skills. His inability to fully understand or express himself in German limits his capacity to engage meaningfully with others. This linguistic barrier creates a sense of isolation and impedes his integration into the local community. Many participants responded in a similar way, feeling that knowing the local language has an impact on their sense of belonging. There is a sense of optimism that as their language skills improve, these challenges will lessen, allowing for a more genuine connection with the host society. Most participants highlighted the importance for them to learn German. The participants who already had reached a good level of German agreed to this, explaining how much changed for them during the migration process, after they were able to communicate with the local people and express themselves:

> *I think it changes a lot once you have a good level of German. If you only have a basic level, it ultimately doesn't help much—you can just say 'Hello, give me a hamburger.' It's useful for going to a restaurant, but not for navigating within the system or talking to people. So, I believe the language barrier is very significant.*[32] (P3, female, Colombian, 31 years, living in Austria since 2016)

[31] Me cuesta sentirme parte porque yo entiendo como un 50% de las conversaciones, entonces yo no logro demostrar mi personalidad. El alemán cuarto quien yo soy, es como una jaula. Es una jaula lingüística. Yo no puedo ser quien soy en alemán, pero yo tengo confianza en que eso va a ir cambiando y se va a hacer un poco más llevadero.

[32] Creo que cambia un montón en el momento en que tienes un buen nivel de alemán, porque si tienes un nivel básico de alemán, no te sirve finalmente, o sea solo puedes decir 'hola, dame una hamburguesa'. O sea, te sirve para ir a un restaurante, pero no te sirve como para moverte dentro del sistema o hablar con la gente. Entonces creo que la barrera del idioma es muy fuerte.

Another frequent aspect concerning language was the difficulty posed by dialects. Austria presents a unique setting due to the many different dialects spoken throughout the country, which poses a particular challenge. Participants mentioned that even with several German language courses, understanding locals can be quite challenging. This often led to frustration among participants, especially when Austrians do not make an effort to speak Standard German or show understanding:

> *(…) that's what I struggle with because people know that I am different and that I'm not from Austria. And I think to myself, why don't they speak to me in Standard German? Why don't they make an effort?* [33] (P2, female, Peruvian, 27 years, living in Austria since 2016)

This highlights how dialects can create linguistic barriers and hinder communication, thus impacting migrants' sense of belonging. The participant further mentioned that she only feels a sense of belonging when people speak to her in Standard German, and she can follow the conversation. Thus, belonging can also be situational.

In addition to learning the language of the host country, showing interest in its broader culture and history significantly strengthened the participants' sense of belonging to Austria. One participant from Venezuela, who did not express a strong emotional attachment to Austria, noted a lack of interest in learning about Austrian culture, as he did not see it particularly meaningful:

> *As I mentioned, I haven't really shown much interest in learning about or familiarizing myself with Austrian culture. I've gone to festivals a few times and I like them, but honestly, I don't even know what they are celebrating. Sometimes it's just about being there and having a good time.* [34] (P6, male, Venezuelan, 35 years, living in Austria since 2017)

In contrast, participants who demonstrated a greater interest in Austrian traditions, language, and society reported a stronger cultural connection and sense of belonging to their host country.

In summary, proficiency in the local language, as well as showing interest in the host country's culture, emerged as a crucial factor contributing to a sense of belonging.

6.5.3. Length of stay

Reflecting on their migration journeys, most participants observed that their sense of belonging to the receiving nation developed gradually. Thus, the development of a sense of belonging is a dynamic process (Tunçer, 2023). The migrants in this study indicated that their feelings of belonging have

[33] (…) eso es lo que me cuesta porque las personas saben que yo soy, me ven que soy diferente y que no soy de Austria. Y yo pienso en mi cabeza, ¿pero por qué no hablan conmigo *Hochdeutsch*? ¿Por qué no tratan?

[34] Por lo que te digo como que no he mostrado interés en como en aprender o familiarizarme con la cultura así de Austria. He ido a veces a festivales y todo eso y me gustan, pero como tal ni siquiera sé que celebran. A veces solamente es como para estar ahí pasarla bien.

strengthened over time compared to when they first arrived in the country. For instance, one participant from Uruguay remarked:

> *Yes, absolutely. It does play a role. The longer I am here, the more I become a part of this place. But I will also never be any less from where I come, from Uruguay.*[35] (P1, male, Uruguayan, 31 years, living in Austria since 2015)

This evolving sense of belonging is reinforced through various factors, as previously discussed, including social connections and language proficiency. Integration into the Austrian job market and a deeper engagement with the Austrian system also play critical roles, as another participant elaborated:

> *The more you learn about things—historically, politically, administratively, how things work—the stronger and more developed this sense of belonging becomes, definitely.*[36] (P8, female, Colombian, 36 years, living in Austria since 2012)

Thus, as migrants become more embedded in their new environment and gain a deeper understanding of their host country's systems, their sense of belonging to that country is reinforced. However, spending many years in Austria does not automatically translate to a strong sense of belonging to the receiving country. Looking at the answers of the participants, those migrants who have been living in Austria the longest do not necessarily show a stronger belonging compared to others. Thus, other factors appear to play a more decisive role in shaping their sense of belonging.

As already noted, developing a sense of belonging to the host country does not mean losing a sense of belonging to the home country. For most participants, being physically distant from their home country did not significantly affect their sense of belonging. Instead, their connection to their home countries seemed to remain strong throughout the entire migration process.

6.6. Multiple and transnational identities

The ways in which migrants negotiate their identities in a new setting is another central aspect of this study. It is important to recognize that identities and a sense of belonging are deeply intertwined, which is why these themes are closely related (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2014). Transmigrants are believed to form multiple identities that cross borders (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992). In this study, both a strong identification with the home country and the development of a Latino identity were observed. The findings on these aspects will be presented in the following.

[35] Ja, voll. Also es (Zeit) spielt schon eine Rolle. Ja, weil im Endeffekt, also je länger ich da bin, desto mehr von hier bin ich. Aber ich werde auch nicht weniger von dort, von Uruguay.

[36] Also je mehr man über Dinge erfährt, historisch, politisch, administrativ, also wie die Dinge funktionieren, desto mehr bildet sich auch dieses Zugehörigkeitsgefühl auf jeden Fall und wird verstärkt.

6.6.1. Negotiating national identities

When asked about how they identified themselves, almost all participants referred to their national origins, such as Uruguayan, Colombian, or Peruvian. For instance, a participant from Venezuela emphasized her strong cultural connection to her home country:

> *I would first say that I am Venezuelan. Because the food I eat is from Venezuela, the music I listen to is Latin culture. The way I speak and express myself is also Latin culture. So, the first thing I would say is that I am Venezuelan.*[37] (P5, female, Venezuelan, 34 years, living in Austria since 2017)

This response illustrates that for many participants, their national identity is the most immediate and prominent aspect of their self-concept. Their everyday lives and cultural practices strongly influence this self-identification, reflecting a deep-rooted connection to their home country's culture, even while residing in Austria. According to Hall (1996), identities are shaped through the celebration of cultural differences and distinctions. This is evident in the participants' discussions of their cultural practices and preferences. Participants often contrasted their home cultures with the "Austrian" culture, emphasizing aspects that set them apart:

> *But I do identify more with the music, with the cuisine, with those things. These are cultural aspects of who I am. Yes, I identify more as Latino, as Nicaraguan.*[38] (P4, male, Nicaraguan, 36 years, living in Austria since 2010)

This quote reflects how participants define themselves through their connections to cultural practices like music and cuisine, which are important to their sense of identity. The migrants in this study identify strongly as individuals from specific countries, demonstrating that their cultural heritage remains a central aspect of who they are, despite their presence in a new cultural environment.

Transnationalism scholars often emphasize the fact that migrants take up partly the identity of their new destination country (Ehrkamp, 2005; Vertovec, 2001). However, in this study the majority of the participants did not show any national identification towards Austria, as stated by a participant from Colombia when being asked if she also identifies with the receiving country:

[37] O sea, yo lo primero que diría es que soy venezolana. Porque es que lo que yo como es de Venezuela, lo que yo escucho es cultura latina. Como yo hablo como me expreso, también es cultura latina. Entonces, lo primero que diría es que soy venezolana.

[38] Pero sí me identifico más con la música, con la gastronomía, con estas cosas. Como son las partes culturales de lo que soy. Sí, me identifico más como latino, como nicaragüense.

No, Austrian never. I think it would be strange. I am Colombian or Latina, yes.[39] (P3, female, Colombian, 31 years, living in Austria since 2016)

This sentiment is echoed by another participant, who, despite undergoing the process to acquire Austrian citizenship, expressed doubt about ever identifying as Austrian:

Right now, I am going through the process to become Austrian. [...] But I believe that even if I do that and perhaps get an Austrian passport, I don't think I will feel Austrian.[40] (P2, female, Peruvian, 27 years, living in Austria since 2016)

Although some participants have converted or might convert into an Austrian citizen in the future, their personal sense of national identity remains firmly rooted in their home countries. Nevertheless, most of the participants mentioned that they have adapted to the life in Austria and how some aspects of Austrian culture are reflected in their daily lives. This adaption illustrates a form of hybridity, blending elements of their native culture with aspects of the residing country's culture and lifestyle, influencing their identity (Basch et al., 1994; Bhaba, 1996; Remennick, 2002). For example, one participant from Uruguay who lives together with his Austrian partner and daughter in Vienna, noted:

No, I think in my daily life, I lead a more Austrian lifestyle than a Uruguayan one. For example, the times I eat dinner and how I plan things. These are the things that are a bit harder to adjust to when I am in Uruguay because I am simply used to how things are done in Austria.[41] (P1, male, Uruguayan, 31 years, living in Austria since 2015)

This quote highlights how, despite maintaining a strong cultural connection to Uruguay, the participant has integrated certain Austrian practices into his daily routine. These new habits can sometimes be challenging to adjust back to when visiting Uruguay, influencing the identity both in the home as well as the host country. Most participants mentioned having adopted some Austrian cultural aspects, such as attending traditional Austrian parties and enjoying Austrian cuisine. However, the mixing of different cultural practices did not show to have an effect on the (trans)national identification of the participants. During the interviews, participants also described specific situations in which they identified stronger with Austria than in their everyday lives. For example, when being abroad and

[39] No, Austriaca nunca. Creo que sería raro. Yo soy colombiana o latina, sí.

[40] Right now, I am going through the process to become Austrian. [...] But I believe that even if I do that and perhaps get an Austrian passport, I don't think I will feel Austrian.

[41] Nein, ich glaube, in meinem täglichen Leben führe ich ein eher österreichisches Leben als an ein uruguayisches Leben. Also die Zeiten, zu denen ich abendesse, wie ich Sachen plane. Und das sind die Sachen, die wenn ich in Uruguay bin etwas schwerer sind zu akzeptieren, weil ich einfach es gewohnt bin, wie die Sachen so in Österreich laufen.

engaging in conversations about Austria or when supporting Austrian sports teams (e.g., the Austrian national football team during the European Championship), they found themselves having a stronger connection to Austria. As Gosh and Wang (2003) suggest, migrant identities are situational and fluid rather than fixed, which can also be observed from the participants of this study despite showing a strong national identification with their home countries.

Other literature on transmigrants indicates that national identity can recede as migrants find other sources with which they identify more strongly, such as their profession (e.g., Erkmen, 2015) or religion (e.g., Zevallos, 2008). During the interviews, however, identification with religion or professional life did not prominently emerge among the migrants of this study. Although there were instances where participants mentioned other forms of identification, such as being a migrant or a single mother, their national identity emerged as the most significant aspect of their self-concept, alongside a Latino/a identity, which will be explored further in the following section.

6.6.2. Identifying as Latino/a

Another objective of this study was to explore to what extent Latin Americans develop a Latino identity when living outside their region, as suggested by other researchers (Echeverri Buriticá, 2005; Gruner-Domic, 2005; Sokól-Klepacka, 2017; Pardo Claure, 2009; Zevallos, 2008). This thesis does not assert the existence of a singular, defined Latino or Latin American identity but rather considers the responses and attitudes of the participants, which are based on their subjective perceptions and are presented in the following.

Indeed, one of the frequently mentioned aspects of their multifaceted identities is that most participants self-identify strongly as Latino/a and feel a deep connection to their Latin American heritage. During the interviews, the participants often used their national and Latin American identities interchangeably. This identification as Latino/a feels often automatic and intrinsic. One participant expressed:

> *But yes, I feel Latina. I feel like there's something about the language and the region that feels automatic, and I feel part of the group.*[42] (P3, female, Colombian, 31 years, living in Austria since 2016)

This sentiment reflects how the participants connect their Latino identity through shared language and culture. These aspects were frequently highlighted throughout the interviews. Participants consistently emphasized that their Latino identity is defined by common cultural elements such as

[42] Pero sí, me siento latina. Siento que hay como algo que igual el idioma a la región hay algo como que siento que es automático y que me siento parte del grupo.

music, food, and language. These similarities produce a collective identity as Latinos/as, which according to Jenkins (2008), is a "similarity among and between a plurality of individuals who either see themselves as similar or have in common similar circumstances and behaviours" (p.103). Additionally, participants attributed specific characteristics to Latinos/as, which further shaped this identity. Commonly cited characteristics include spontaneity, joyfulness, and openness. As revealed in the interviews, the Latino identity often emerges in contrast to the dominant Austrian culture [43]. Cultural attributes are usually discussed in contrast to Austrian norms and distinctive Latino characteristics become more apparent when compared with Austrians. As Hall (1997) suggests, identity is constructed in relation to "others" and emerges from the differences between "us" and "them". Therefore, the Latino identity tends to become more pronounced when contrasted with Austrian culture and society, emphasizing that compared to the cultural differences between Latinos and Austrians, the Latinos, in this sense, are more homogenous. This dynamic is illustrated by the following quote:

> *Yes, we are more spontaneous, I would say. In Latin America, everything is spontaneous. If we want to go to the beach, we just call people and go. But here, everything has to be planned; people have a calendar at home and say, 'This weekend, I'm meeting with so-and-so and we are going hiking in the mountains.' Why plan that, if you can just improvise? Yes, we Latin Americans are spontaneous (…), and you notice these things when you're living here.* [44] (P7, male, Chilean, 43 years, living in Austria since 2021)

Out of the ten participants, only two mentioned that they do not identify as a Latino/a or believe that a shared Latino-Identity does not exist. One participant from Uruguay stated that with the perceived commonalities that Latin Americans share, he cannot identify, thus feeling different:

> *But I don't have that Latino feeling because I don't relate with many of the things that Latin Americans abroad identify, as I feel things are a bit different in Uruguay.* [45] (P1, male, Uruguayan, 31 years, living in Austria since 2015)

[43] It should be noted that a unified Austrian culture and society does not exist per se, as it is not homogeneous but rather multicultural. This study focuses more on how Austrian culture and society are perceived by the participants and represents a generalization.

[44] Sí, somos más espontáneos, yo diría. En Latinoamérica todo es espontáneo. Si queremos ir a la playa como que uno llama a las personas, vamos a la playa. Pero acá siempre hay que planificarlo todo y la gente tiene en la casa como un calendario y dice, ya este fin de semana me voy a juntar con tal y voy a ir a la montaña a caminar. ¿Porque planificas eso, si solo puedes improvisar? Sí, los latinoamericanos somos espontáneos, (…) y de esas cosas te das cuenta cuando estás viviendo acá.

[45] Aber ich habe dieses Latino-Gefühl nicht, weil viele von den Sachen, womit sich Lateinamerikaner im Ausland identifizieren, habe ich nicht, weil ich habe das Gefühl, das es in Uruguay ein bisschen anders ist.

Although he recognises that there is a Latino identity that unifies people from this region, he does not identify with it.

Emigration presents a turning point for migrants which influences their identities (Esteban-Guitart & Vila, 2015). Many participants of this study mentioned that the Latino identification increasingly gained significance with their migration to Austria, as explained by a participant from Colombia:

> *And so, I do think that this feeling might be stronger now, because of having this international experience, having friends from other parts of Latin America, and sharing several common points.* [46] (P3, female, Colombian, 31 years, living in Austria since 2016)

These shared similarities are often discovered while living abroad, suggesting that being in a foreign environment often intensifies the connection to their Latin American roots as individuals navigate their identities within a new cultural context:

> *And of course, when I meet someone who speaks Spanish here, it's like I can start a conversation and there's a connection. You don't realize this in Venezuela because everyone speaks Spanish there, but here it's not something that happens every day, so it's something I discovered here.* [47] (P6, male, Venezuelan, 35 years, living in Austria since 2017)

Despite the contrast with the mainstream Austrian society, social interactions with other Latin Americans and the formation of a Latino community have a significant impact on this sense of identity as well. According to Jenkins (2008), social interactions are crucial in the formation of identities. As previously mentioned, the participants' social circles are predominantly composed of individuals from various Latin American countries. The shared language and common cultural aspects foster this connection:

> *It's about sharing these cultural aspects, as I mentioned before, because we have a lot in common in Latin America. It doesn't matter if I'm from Argentina or Mexico; we have many similarities, like in music and other things. So, I've stayed with Latino friends to share these aspects, and I feel comfortable and at ease.* [48] (P4, male, Nicaraguan, 36 years, living in Austria since 2010)

[46] Y así, pero sí creo que tal vez ese sentimiento puede ser más fuerte ahora, porque como más de esa experiencia internacional y de tener amigos de otras partes de Latinoamérica también y de tener varios puntos en común.

[47] Y claro, cuando aquí conseguí a alguien que habla español y entonces es como que puedo instalar una conversación y hay *feeling*. Claro ya eso no te das cuenta ya en Venezuela, porque ahí todo el mundo habla español y en cambio, aquí no es algo cotidiano, entonces sí es algo que descubrí aquí.

[48] Es para compartir estas cosas, pues como te hablaba antes estas cosas culturales, pues porque tenemos mucha similitud en Latinoamérica, ¿sabes? Es igual de donde sea, si soy de Argentina o de México, tenemos mucha

Sharing cultural practices fosters a sense of community and strengthens Latino identity. Many participants noted that engaging with people from other Latin American countries, leading to new friendships, is an experience they did not have while living in their home country. This interaction has contributed to a stronger sense of Latino identity for most participants after leaving their home countries. When asked if her Latin American identity was as strong in Colombia as it is now in Austria, a participant responded:

> *Not as strong, I would say, because in Colombia you only know Colombians, after all.* [49] (P3, female, Colombian, 31 years, living in Austria since 2016)

The Latino identity that the participants of this study have developed is primarily expressed through their distinction from Austrian culture and society, and simultaneously through interactions with other Latin Americans. This identity is reinforced by perceived cultural similarities within the Latin American community.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that Latinos are not a homogeneous group, which is also shown by the participants of the studies:

> *(…) Because, you know, in the end, even though we are very, very similar, there are always certain things that identify us as a country.* [50] (P4, male, Nicaraguan, 36 years, living in Austria since 2010)

6.7. Conclusion

This chapter examined the experiences of Latin American migrants in Austria, highlighting their migration journeys, transnational connections, sense of belonging and identity negotiations. Overall, the findings highlight the fluid and complex nature of belonging and identity for Latin American migrants, shaped by their transnational lives and connections. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

similitud. Musical y estas cosas, y sí me he quedado con amigos latinos y para compartir estas cosas creo y me siento a gusto

[49] No tan fuerte, creería porque en Colombia solo conoces colombianos al final.

[50] (…) porque vos sabes al final, aunque seamos muy, muy similares, siempre hay como ciertas cosas que nos identifican como país.

Chapter 7 – Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the sense of belonging and identities of Latin American migrants residing in Austria and answer the previously defined research questions. Through a transnational lens, this research aimed to consider the connection that the transmigrants of this study maintain to their homelands while building new lives in Austria, thereby creating transnational social fields (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004). The focus was to put the individual in the centre and to analyse the migrant's everyday lives, employing a transnationalism 'from below' approach (Tedeschi et al., 2020; Vorobeva & Jauhiainen; 2022). In this section, the key findings of this study will be summarized and interpreted.

Migration is not a seamless process, but it takes time to adapt to a new environment (Vertovec, 2009), which influences migrants' sense of belonging and identities. This was also evident in the migration experiences of the participants of this study. They encountered several challenges upon first moving to Austria, including language barriers, legal issues and feelings of being overwhelmed. Particularly in the first years, these challenges led migrants to reconsider their migration decisions and questions of return were prominent. Factors such as job opportunities, safety, social insurance, family, and education for their children are reasons why migrants ultimately decided to remain in Austria, although some of them with the thoughts of returning to their home countries once retired. At the time of the interview, all participants expressed satisfaction with their lives in Austria despite room for improvement.

Transnational ways of "being" and "belonging" are closely interconnected (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004), which is why transnational connections and activities must not be overlooked when researching transmigrant's sense of belonging and identities. All of the participants of this study can be classified as transmigrants, as they maintain strong connections with family and friends in their countries of origin and engage in transnational activities such as regular phone calls, visits, sending remittances, political activities, and social activism. In line with transnationalism scholars (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995; Pries, 2022; Vertovec, 2009), the Latin American migrants of this study do not cut ties to their home countries as often assumed in traditional views on migration (Castles et al., 2014). Instead, they actively foster these connections and exchanges, highlighting the ongoing importance of their transnational relationships. Although technological advancements have facilitated communication and exchange with friends and family (Faist et al., 2014), the answers of the participants revealed that some of these activities are complicated by the distance between Austria and their respective countries of origin, as well as the time difference. Therefore, this study suggests that the distance between the home and the host country should be considered when researching transmigrants.

The main focus of this study is the question regarding migrants' sense of belonging. As discussed in the literature review (Chapter 3), belonging is a complex concept (Afonso et al., 2022) that cannot be seen as something given (Antonsich, 2010). In the course of this study, the question of belonging also proved to be not always easily understandable but rather highly subjective and multifaceted. This study was guided by the definition of Yuval-Davis (2006), who finds that "belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home' and a place of being safe" (p.197), which influenced the questions posed during the interviews (e.g., "Where do you feel at home?", "Where do you feel safe?"). The participants' responses also revealed the multiple sites and aspects of belonging, highlighting the subjective nature of this concept. Some thought of "home" as a physical place, which could be an apartment, a country, or a city. For migrants who identified "home" as a physical location, it usually referred to the place where they currently live and carry out their daily lives. However, for most of the participants, "home" represents the emotional component and attachment in terms of a sense of feeling comfortable, often reflected in the people with whom they spend their time. This can include the love and dedication of family and friends, as well as shared interests and activities. An emotional sense of "home" can occur towards different entities in different places and multiple countries. Thus, they establish a sense of home both in Austria and in their country of origin, generating a transnational sense of belonging. However, when asked if they felt a sense of belonging to Austria as a nation or to Austrian society (e.g., "Do you feel part of the Austrian society?"), most responded negatively. The participants' attachment to Austrian society and culture was rather low. Hence, this study challenges the notion that a sense of belonging and "feeling at home" are concepts that can be used interchangeably when researching belonging. The participants explained this sense of non-belonging by limited social contacts with Austrians (with an Austrian partner often being an exception). Austrians are often described as being "different" and rather distant making it difficult to establish friendships with them. Furthermore, language difficulties were identified as another factor contributing to the participants' sense of non-belonging. In the context of Austria, language is particularly challenging for migrants due to the many dialects spoken, which has led to feelings of frustration among participants. In line with other studies (e.g., Butcher, 2009; Massey & Magaly, 2010; Wessendorf, 2019 or Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Jackson, 2013), this study concludes that language and local contacts significantly influence the sense of belonging to a society or a nation as a whole. However, Latin Americans in Austria find alternative ways to achieve their sense of belonging, particularly through connections with fellow Latin Americans. The respondents demonstrated a strong sense of belonging to other Latin Americans in Austria, with whom they spend their leisure time. This sense of belonging is based on perceived cultural and historical similarities, as well as language. With other Latin Americans, the study's participants are able to engage in cultural practices and experience a connection that often

feels “automatic”, as described by one participant in the study (P3, female, Colombian, 31 years, living in Austria since 2016).

Belongingness is believed to significantly impact individuals' overall life satisfaction (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Mellor et al., 2008), and Amit and Riss (2013) found that migrants with a stronger sense of belonging to their host country reported better overall well-being and were less likely to return to their home country. Interestingly, participants in this study all expressed contentment with their lives in Austria, and most planned to spend their future there despite not feeling a strong national belonging to Austria or Austrian society. However, as noted, they found a sense of belonging through other affiliations.

In summary, participants established a sense of home in Austria while simultaneously maintaining strong connections to their home countries. Despite their overall contentment with life in Austria, they felt little attachment to Austrian society and culture, with their sense of belonging remaining deeply rooted in the society and culture of their home countries. However, in their search for belonging, they developed strong attachments to fellow Latin Americans in Austria. Furthermore, the various senses of belonging that emerged throughout the interviews demonstrate that this concept must be considered in relation to different entities (e.g., places, people, society, culture) to generate accurate responses and interpret them effectively.

From a transnational perspective migrants are thought to form multiple identities (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992) that are dynamic and context-dependent (Tedeschi et al., 2022). Furthermore, researchers have found that national identities are not as strong for some migrants, with other identities related to their jobs or religion taking precedence (Erkmen, 2015; Zevallos, 2008). However, in this study, all participants showed a strong identification with their country of origin. When asked how they identified themselves, their national identity (e.g., Colombian, Peruvian, Venezuelan, etc.) was dominant. This can be attributed to the participants feeling a strong connection to their home countries and their society and culture. Migrants are believed to live in a state of “in-between” (Bhabha, 1996), mixing two or more cultures, thus forming hybrid identities (Basch et al., 1994). The migrants in this study noted that their daily lives are shaped by various cultural aspects and lifestyles. However, this has little impact on their national identity, as most participants do not identify with the host country, Austria. First generation migrants only show a small degree of hybridity, meaning that on an emotional level, they show a strong and singular affiliation to their country of origin, however at a cognitive level, they recognize multiculturalism (Foroutan, 2013; Wagner, 2016). Although migrants live outside their home country and navigate a new social and cultural environment, their identity remains rooted in their country of origin. As demonstrated, the participants in this study did not feel a strong sense of belonging to Austria, its society, or its culture, which may explain their lack of identification with the country. According to Colic-Peisker (2010), “one belongs to a group with whom

one identifies" (p. 470). Conversely, in the context of Latin American migrants, this can be understood as not identifying with a group to which one does not feel a sense of belonging.

Further connecting belonging and identity, in the same way, can be used to explain why most of the participants of this study identified as Latino/a. The participants of this study showed a strong sense of belonging towards fellow Latin Americans in Austria, sharing similar cultural practices and language, which is reflected in most of the participants mentioning that their friendship groups consist mainly of Latin Americans. Indeed, Mehra et al. (1998) claim that migrants tend to find friends among their own ethnic group rather than with members of the host country. In this study, friendships among participants were formed based on perceived similarities, mutual language understanding, and difficulties in interacting with members of the dominant society. While some participants initially avoided seeking contact with Latin Americans in order to engage more with Austrian culture and language, they ultimately found it challenging to build friendships with Austrians. Since social interactions are essential for feeling comfortable in a place (De Jong Giervald et al., 2015), friendships with other Latin Americans, which were easier to establish, were formed instead. Other participants mentioned that as soon as they heard Spanish and learned that someone was from Latin America, a sense of connection instantly emerged, leading to the development of friendships. Thus, as the participants felt a strong identification with Latin American people as well as culture, including music and food, they feel more connected and can share these cultural practices. Most of the Latin Americans in this study believe they share certain commonalities, which helps them develop a Latino identity. By contrast, one participant from Uruguay rejected identifying as Latino as he feels he does not share certain similarities. Thus, a Latino or Latin American identity is something that one develops and feels personally, rather than being solely tied to one's geographical origin.

As noted by the migrants, their Latino identity was not as strong in their home countries because contact with other Latin Americans from a different country was relatively limited, the shared characteristics (e.g., language) were taken for granted and national differences were more pronounced than they are now in Austria. Latin Americans are not a homogeneous group, a fact also highlighted by the participants in this study. However, local and national differences are diminished in Austria, and the development of a Latin pan-ethnicity has allowed individuals from various Latin American countries to unify (see also Zevallos, 2008). The migrants' Latin American identity becomes particularly prominent in their distinction from the "others" (Hall, 1997), the dominant Austrian society. Thus, people feel similar to each other because the "others" are perceived as different (Hall, 1997; Noble et al., 1999). This distinction was highlighted during the interviews and encompasses factors such as language, lifestyle, and attitudes that are seen as differing between the Latin American community and the Austrian society. In other words, the similarities of Latin Americans become more visible when contrasting them to the dominant Austrian society, thus fostering the development of a Latino identity.

Latin American identity in Austria is formed through social interactions with Latin Americans and perceived similarities that are distinct from the dominant Austrian society.

Overall, this research focused on first-generation migrants who moved to Austria in their adult years and examined their identity negotiation and belonging in the daily lives. However, these concepts may not only affect first-generation migrants but also extend to second-generation migrants who were socialized in the host country and whose ties to the country of origin might be weaker (see for example, Afonso et al., 2023; Basch et al., 2000; Dusi et al., 2015; Nibbs & Brettel, 2016). The further exploration of how these concepts are negotiated in the everyday lives of second-generation migrants in Austria would provide valuable insights as this is an issue that also concerns a participant from this study:

> *If I had children with her (Austrian girlfriend), I would like them to also feel the way I do, I mean, to feel identified, and not have the sensation of not belonging, because I have friends who don't know what they are, (...). Because they ask me: 'And if you have a child, what will it be?' It will be two things, for me it's clear. It will be Nicaraguan because of his father and Austrian because of his mother.* [51] (P4, male, Nicaraguan, 36 years, living in Austria since 2010)

Additionally, this study showed the complexity of transmigrant's sense of belonging and identities, highlighting the multiple facets of these concepts and thus, leaving room for future research. Especially, further questioning and defining the sense of belonging seems crucial to capture all nuances and to guarantee comparability across different studies and migrant groups.

In conclusion, this study provided the first comprehensive insight into the sense of belonging and identities of Latin American migrants in Austria, showing that their sense of belonging and self-identification are predominantly shaped by their national and regional origins and cultural practices. While they navigate life in Austria and even create a "home" in this country, their sense of belonging remains deeply connected to the cultures and societies of their home countries, illustrating the ongoing influence of their cultural heritage on their identities.

[51] Si tuviera hijos con ella (novia austriaca) me gustaría que también ellos puedan sentirse como yo, digo identificados, y que no tengan la sensación de no pertenencia porque conozco amigos que ellos no saben que son (…). Porque me dicen: y si tienes un hijo, ¿qué va a ser? Va a ser dos cosas, para mí es claro. Va a ser nicaragüense por su padre y austriaco por su madre.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview guide – English version

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to conduct an interview with me. As you already know, I want to investigate about the situation of Latin American migrants in Austria. I am particularly interested in understanding your sense of belonging and identity formation in relation to both Austria and your home country.

Most of the questions are open questions, so you can talk about anything that comes to your mind. There are no right or wrong answers. I would like to record the interview so that I can transcribe it afterwards. Of course, all information will be treated strictly confidentially and will be anonymized in the analysis. The interview will last about 30 to 60 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin? If not, I would like to start with the interview now and ask you the first question.

Main part

1. Demographic/Background information

- Could you briefly introduce yourself?
    - How old are you? Which country do you come from? What is your current occupation? What is your relationship status? Do you have children?
- How long have you been living in Austria?

2. Migration experience

- Could you tell me about your migration process to Austria and your reasons for migrating?
- Why did you choose Austria as a destination country?
- What were your initial impressions of Austria and has your perception of Austria changed since you first arrived?
- Have you experienced any challenges or difficulties during the migration process?
- Have you ever thought about returning to your home country or moving elsewhere? Do you plan on staying in Austria in the future?

3. Transnational migration and connections to the home country

- Do you still have connections to your country of origin?
- How do you maintain connections with your home country while living in Austria?
    - Have you kept in touch with your family and friends in your home country? How would you describe your interactions and relationships?
    - Do you visit your home country often, or have you since moving to Austria?

4. Sense of Belonging

- Where is ‘home’ for you? And what does it mean to feel ‘at home’ (to you)?
- Do you still feel connected to your home country? Do you miss your home country?
- Do you feel at home in Austria? If so, could you elaborate on what contributes to this feeling? Do you feel that you are part of Austrian society?
- Are there specific places, communities or people where that you feel connected to and that make you feel you belong?
- Do you feel satisfied with your life in Austria?
- Did you ever feel like you were not welcomed in your migration experience? Have you ever felt discriminated? If yes, how did that make you feel?

5. Identity

- When you think about your personal identity, how do you see yourself? (For example, do you identify more with your home country, with Austria, or a combination of both?)
- How would you describe the influence of your Latin American heritage on your life in Austria?
- Do you identify more strongly with your Latin American heritage or with Austrian culture?
- How has this changed during the migration process? Have there been any significant events or experiences in Austria that have influenced your sense of identity?
- Who do you spend most of your time with here in Austria? (With other people from your home country, with other Latin Americans or Austrians?)
- How important is it for you to connect with other Latin Americans in Austria?
- How do you feel when you interact with other Latin Americans in Austria? Do you feel a shared connection or common ground?
- Do you feel that you have developed a Latino identity since moving to Austria?

<u>Conclusion</u>

6. Future Outlook

- Where do you see yourself in the future, in terms of your life in Austria and your connections to Latin America?
- Finally, I would like to ask you your wishes and hopes. What do you wish for your future? Do you have any fears about the future?

Interview guide – Spanish version

Introducción

Muchas gracias por aceptar realizar esta entrevista conmigo. Como ya sabe, estoy investigando sobre la situación de los migrantes latinoamericanos en Austria. Estoy particularmente interesada en comprender su sentido de pertenencia y formación de identidad en relación tanto con Austria como con su país de origen.

La mayoría de las preguntas son abiertas, por lo que puede hablar de cualquier cosa que le venga a la mente. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Me gustaría grabar la entrevista para poder transcribirla después. Por supuesto, toda la información será tratada de manera estrictamente confidencial y será anonimizada en el análisis. La entrevista durará entre 30 y 60 minutos. ¿Tiene alguna pregunta antes de comenzar? Si no, me gustaría empezar con la primera pregunta.

Parte principal

1. Información demográfica/antecedents

- ¿Podría presentarse brevemente?
- ¿Cuántos años tiene? ¿De qué país viene? ¿Cuál es su ocupación actual? ¿Cuál es su estado civil? ¿Tiene hijos?
- ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva viviendo en Austria?

2. Experiencia migratoria

- ¿Podría contarme sobre su proceso de migración a Austria y las razones por las que decidió migrar?
- ¿Por qué eligió Austria como país de destino?
- ¿Cuáles fueron sus primeras impresiones de Austria y cómo ha cambiado su percepción del país desde su llegada?
- ¿Ha experimentado algún desafío o dificultad durante el proceso de migración?
- ¿Alguna vez ha pensado en regresar a su país de origen o mudarse a otro lugar? ¿Planea quedarse en Austria en el futuro?

3. Migración transnacional y conexiones con el país de origen

- ¿Aún mantiene conexiones con su país de origen?
- ¿Cómo mantiene esas conexiones con su país de origen mientras vive en Austria?
- ¿Sigue en contacto con su familia y amigos en su país de origen? ¿Cómo describiría sus interacciones y relaciones?
- ¿Visita su país de origen con frecuencia o lo ha visitado desde que se mudó a Austria?

4. Sentido de pertenencia

- ¿Dónde está "su hogar"? ¿Qué significa para usted sentirse "en casa"?

- ¿Siente que sigue conectado/a con su país de origen? ¿Extraña su país de origen?
- ¿Se siente "en casa" en Austria? Si es así, ¿podría explicar qué contribuye a ese sentimiento? ¿Siente que es parte de la sociedad austríaca?
- ¿Hay lugares, comunidades o personas específicas con las que se sienta conectado/a y que le hagan sentir que pertenece?
- ¿Está satisfecho/a con su vida en Austria?
- ¿Alguna vez sintió que no fue bien recibido/a durante su experiencia migratoria? ¿Ha experimentado discriminación? Si es así, ¿cómo le hizo sentir?

5. Identidad

- Cuando piensa en su identidad personal, ¿cómo se ve a sí mismo/a? (Por ejemplo, ¿se identifica más con su país de origen, con Austria, o con una combinación de ambos?)
- ¿Cómo describiría la influencia de su herencia latinoamericana en su vida en Austria?
- ¿Se identifica más con su herencia latinoamericana o con la cultura austríaca?
- ¿Cómo ha cambiado esto a lo largo del proceso migratorio? ¿Ha habido eventos o experiencias significativas en Austria que hayan influido en su sentido de identidad?
- ¿Con quién pasa la mayor parte del tiempo aquí en Austria? (¿Con otras personas de su país de origen, con otros latinoamericanos o con austriacos?)
- ¿Qué tan importante es para usted conectarse con otros latinoamericanos en Austria?
- ¿Cómo se siente cuando interactúa con otros latinoamericanos en Austria? ¿Siente una conexión o terreno común compartido?
- ¿Siente que ha desarrollado una identidad latina desde que se mudó a Austria?

<u>Conclusión</u>

6. Perspectivas futuras

- ¿Dónde se ve en el futuro en términos de su vida en Austria y sus conexiones con América Latina?
- Finalmente, me gustaría preguntarle sobre sus deseos y esperanzas. ¿Qué desea para su futuro? ¿Tiene algún temor sobre el futuro?

Interview guide – German version

Einführung

Vielen Dank, dass Sie zugestimmt haben, ein Interview mit mir zu führen. Wie Sie bereits wissen, möchte ich die Situation von lateinamerikanischen Migrant*innen in Österreich untersuchen. Besonders interessiert mich, wie Sie Ihre Zugehörigkeit und Identitätsbildung in Bezug auf sowohl Österreich als auch Ihr Herkunftsland wahrnehmen.

Die meisten Fragen sind offen formuliert, sodass Sie über alles sprechen können, was Ihnen in den Sinn kommt. Es gibt keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten. Ich würde das Interview gerne aufnehmen, damit ich es anschließend transkribieren kann. Natürlich werden alle Informationen streng vertraulich behandelt und in der Analyse anonymisiert. Das Interview wird etwa 30 bis 60 Minuten dauern. Haben Sie noch Fragen, bevor wir beginnen? Wenn nicht, würde ich jetzt gerne mit dem Interview starten und Ihnen die erste Frage stellen.

Hauptteil

1. Demografische/ Hintergrundinformationen

- Könnten Sie sich bitte kurz vorstellen?
- Wie alt sind Sie? Aus welchem Land kommen Sie? Was ist Ihr aktueller Beruf? Wie ist Ihr Beziehungsstatus? Haben Sie Kinder?
- Wie lange leben Sie schon in Österreich?

2. Migrationserfahrung

- Können Sie mir etwas über Ihren Migrationsprozess nach Österreich und Ihre Gründe für die Migration erzählen?
- Warum haben Sie Österreich als Zielland gewählt?
- Was waren Ihre ersten Eindrücke von Österreich und hat sich Ihre Wahrnehmung von Österreich seit Ihrer Ankunft verändert?
- Haben Sie während des Migrationsprozesses Herausforderungen oder Schwierigkeiten erlebt?
- Haben Sie jemals darüber nachgedacht, in Ihr Heimatland zurückzukehren oder woanders hinzuziehen? Planen Sie, in Zukunft in Österreich zu bleiben?

3. Transnationale Migration und Verbindungen zum Herkunftsland

- Haben Sie noch Verbindungen zu Ihrem Herkunftsland?
- Wie pflegen Sie Verbindungen zu Ihrem Heimatland, während Sie in Österreich leben?
- Haben Sie noch Kontakt zu Ihrer Familie und Ihren Freunden im Heimatland? Wie würden Sie Ihre Interaktionen und Beziehungen beschreiben?
- Besuchen Sie Ihr Heimatland oft oder seit Ihrem Umzug nach Österreich?

4. Zugehörigkeitsgefühl

- Wo ist für Sie „Zuhause“? Und was bedeutet es für Sie, sich „zuhause“ zu fühlen?
- Fühlen Sie sich noch mit Ihrem Heimatland verbunden? Vermissen Sie Ihr Heimatland?
- Fühlen Sie sich in Österreich zuhause? Wenn ja, können Sie erläutern, was zu diesem Gefühl beiträgt? Haben Sie das Gefühl, Teil der österreichischen Gesellschaft zu sein?
- Gibt es bestimmte Orte, Gemeinschaften oder Menschen, mit denen Sie sich verbunden fühlen und die Ihnen ein Gefühl der Zugehörigkeit geben?
- Sind Sie mit Ihrem Leben in Österreich zufrieden?
- Haben Sie in Ihrer Migrationserfahrung jemals das Gefühl gehabt, nicht willkommen zu sein? Haben Sie jemals Diskriminierung erlebt? Wenn ja, wie hat sich das für Sie angefühlt?

5. Identität

- Wenn Sie an Ihre persönliche Identität denken, wie sehen Sie sich selbst? (Zum Beispiel: Identifizieren Sie sich mehr mit Ihrem Heimatland, mit Österreich oder mit einer Kombination aus beidem?)
- Wie würden Sie den Einfluss Ihres lateinamerikanischen Erbes auf Ihr Leben in Österreich beschreiben?
- Identifizieren Sie sich stärker mit Ihrem lateinamerikanischen Erbe oder mit der österreichischen Kultur?
- Wie hat sich das im Laufe des Migrationsprozesses verändert? Gab es bedeutende Ereignisse oder Erfahrungen in Österreich, die Ihre Identität beeinflusst haben?
- Mit wem verbringen Sie die meiste Zeit hier in Österreich? (Mit Menschen aus Ihrem Heimatland, mit anderen Lateinamerikanern oder mit Österreicher*innen?)
- Wie wichtig ist es Ihnen, sich mit anderen Lateinamerikanern in Österreich zu vernetzen?
- Wie fühlen Sie sich, wenn Sie mit anderen Lateinamerikanern in Österreich interagieren? Empfinden Sie eine gemeinsame Verbindung oder Gemeinsamkeiten?
- Haben Sie das Gefühl, seit Ihrem Umzug nach Österreich eine Latino-Identität entwickelt zu haben?

<u>Abschluss</u>

6. Zukunftsausblick

- Wo sehen Sie sich in der Zukunft in Bezug auf Ihr Leben in Österreich und Ihre Verbindungen zu Lateinamerika?
- Abschließend möchte ich Sie nach Ihren Wünschen und Hoffnungen fragen. Was wünschen Sie sich für Ihre Zukunft? Haben Sie irgendwelche Ängste bezüglich der Zukunft?

Appendix B

Informed consent – English version

INSTITUTO UNIVERSITÁRIO DE LISBOA

INFORMED CONSENT

The present study arises in the context of a *master´s dissertation* underway at Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

This study aims to explore the transnational sense of belonging and multiple identities of Latin American migrants in Austria. Your participation in the study, which is highly valued as it will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field of science, consists of a 30min – 1h long interview that will be recorded.

Iscte is responsible for the processing of your personal data that are collected and processed exclusively for the purposes of the study, legally based on 6(a) of the GDPR.

The study is conducted by Theresa Neuschmid (theresaneuschmid@gmail.com), who you may contact to clear up any doubts, share comments or exercise your rights in relation to the processing of your personal data. You may use the contact indicated above to request access, rectification, erasure or limitation of the processing of your personal data.

Your participation in this study is **confidential**. Your personal data will always be processed by authorised personnel bound to the duty of secrecy and confidentiality. Iscte assures the use of appropriate techniques, organisational and security measures to protect personal information. All investigators are required to keep personal data confidential.

In addition to being confidential, participation in the study is strictly **voluntary**: you may choose freely whether to participate or not. If you have decided to participate, you may stop your participation and withdraw your consent to the processing of your personal data at any time, without having to provide any justification. The withdrawal of consent shall not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal.

Your personal data will be kept until the Master thesis has been successfully completed, after which they will be destroyed or anonymised, with their anonymity being assured in the study's results, being disclosed only for purposes of statistics, teaching, communication in scientific meetings, books or articles.

There are no expected significant risks associated with participation in the study. Iscte does not disclose, or share with third parties, information related to its personal data.

Iscte has a Data Protection Officer who may be contacted by e-mail: dpo@iscte-iul.pt. If you consider this necessary, you also have the right to submit a complaint to the Portuguese Data Protection Authority (CNDP).

I declare that I have understood the aims of what was proposed to me, as explained by the investigator, that I was given the opportunity to ask any questions about this study and received a clarifying reply to all such questions. **I accept** participating in the study and consent to my personal data being used in accordance with the information that was given to me.

Yes ☐ No ☐

_____(place), _____/____/_____ (date)

Name:_____

Signature: _____

Informed consent – Spanish version

INSTITUTO UNIVERSITÁRIO DE LISBOA

Consentimiento informado

El presente estudio se realiza en el contexto de una tesis de maestría en curso en Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

Este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar el sentido de pertenencia transnacional y las múltiples identidades de los migrantes latinoamericanos en Austria. Su participación en el estudio, que es muy valorada ya que contribuirá al avance del conocimiento en este campo de la ciencia, consiste en una entrevista de 30 minutos a 1 hora que será grabada.

Iscte es responsable del procesamiento de sus datos personales, los cuales se recopilan y procesan exclusivamente para los fines del estudio, basándose legalmente en el artículo 6(a) del GDPR.

El estudio está realizado por Theresa Neuschmid (theresaneuschmid@gmail.com), con quien puede ponerse en contacto para aclarar cualquier duda, compartir comentarios o ejercer sus derechos en relación con el procesamiento de sus datos personales. Puede utilizar el contacto indicado anteriormente para solicitar acceso, rectificación, eliminación o limitación del procesamiento de sus datos personales.

Su participación en este estudio es **confidencial**. Sus datos personales serán siempre procesados por personal autorizado sujeto al deber de secreto y confidencialidad. Iscte garantiza el uso de técnicas, medidas organizativas y de seguridad adecuadas para proteger la información personal. Todos los investigadores están obligados a mantener la confidencialidad de los datos personales.

Además de ser confidencial, la participación en el estudio es estrictamente **voluntaria**: puede elegir libremente si desea participar o no. Si ha decidido participar, puede detener su participación y retirar su consentimiento para el procesamiento de sus datos personales en cualquier momento, sin tener que proporcionar ninguna justificación. La retirada del consentimiento no afectará la legalidad del procesamiento basado en el consentimiento antes de su retirada.

Sus datos personales se conservarán hasta que la tesis de maestría se haya completado con éxito, después de lo cual serán destruidos o anonimizados, asegurándose su anonimato en los resultados del estudio, y divulgándose únicamente con fines estadísticos, de enseñanza, comunicación en reuniones científicas, libros o artículos.

No se esperan riesgos significativos asociados con la participación en el estudio. Iscte no divulga ni comparte con terceros información relacionada con sus datos personales.

Iscte tiene un Delegado de Protección de Datos, a quien se puede contactar por correo electrónico: dpo@iscte-iul.pt. Si lo considera necesario, también tiene derecho a presentar una queja ante la Autoridad Portuguesa de Protección de Datos (CNDP).

Declaro que he comprendido los objetivos de lo que se me ha propuesto, según lo explicado por la investigadora, que se me dio la oportunidad de hacer cualquier pregunta sobre este estudio y recibí una respuesta aclaratoria a todas ellas. **Acepto** participar en el estudio y consiento que mis datos personales sean utilizados de acuerdo con la información que se me ha proporcionado.

Sí ☐ No ☐

_____(lugar), _____/____/_____ (fecha)

Nombre: _____

Firma: _____

Informed consent – German version

INSTITUTO UNIVERSITÁRIO DE LISBOA

EINVERSTÄNDNISERKLÄRUNG

Die vorliegende Studie entsteht im Rahmen einer Masterarbeit an der Universität Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

Diese Studie zielt darauf ab, das transnationale Zugehörigkeitsgefühl und die multiplen Identitäten von lateinamerikanischen Migrant*innen in Österreich zu erforschen. Ihre Teilnahme an der Studie, die sehr geschätzt wird, da sie zur Weiterentwicklung des Wissens auf diesem Gebiet der Wissenschaft beiträgt, besteht aus einem 30min – 1h langen Interview, das aufgezeichnet wird.

Iscte ist verantwortlich für die Verarbeitung Ihrer personenbezogenen Daten, die ausschließlich für die Zwecke der Studie erhoben und verarbeitet werden und rechtlich auf Artikel 6(a) der DSGVO basieren.

Die Studie wird von Theresa Neuschmid (theresaneuschmid@gmail.com) durchgeführt, die Sie kontaktieren können, um Unklarheiten zu klären, Kommentare abzugeben oder Ihre Rechte in Bezug auf die Verarbeitung Ihrer personenbezogenen Daten auszuüben. Sie können die oben angegebene Kontaktadresse verwenden, um Zugang, Berichtigung, Löschung oder Einschränkung der Verarbeitung Ihrer personenbezogenen Daten zu beantragen.

Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie ist **vertraulich**. Ihre personenbezogenen Daten werden stets von autorisiertem Personal verarbeitet, das der Geheimhaltungs- und Vertraulichkeitspflicht unterliegt. Iscte stellt die Verwendung geeigneter technischer, organisatorischer und sicherheitstechnischer Maßnahmen zum Schutz personenbezogener Daten sicher. Alle Forscher sind verpflichtet, personenbezogene Daten vertraulich zu behandeln.

Zusätzlich zur Vertraulichkeit ist die Teilnahme an der Studie **strikt freiwillig**: Sie können frei entscheiden, ob Sie teilnehmen möchten oder nicht. Wenn Sie sich zur Teilnahme entschlossen haben, können Sie Ihre Teilnahme jederzeit beenden und Ihre Einwilligung zur Verarbeitung Ihrer personenbezogenen Daten widerrufen, ohne eine Begründung angeben zu müssen. Der Widerruf der Einwilligung berührt nicht die Rechtmäßigkeit der aufgrund der Einwilligung bis zum Widerruf erfolgten Verarbeitung.

Ihre personenbezogenen Daten werden bis zum erfolgreichen Abschluss der Masterarbeit aufbewahrt, danach werden sie entweder gelöscht oder anonymisiert, wobei deren Anonymität in den Ergebnissen der Studie gewährleistet wird, die ausschließlich zu statistischen Zwecken, für den Unterricht, die Kommunikation bei wissenschaftlichen Treffen, in Büchern oder Artikeln veröffentlicht werden.

Es sind keine signifikanten Risiken im Zusammenhang mit der Teilnahme an der Studie zu erwarten. Iscte gibt keine Informationen zu personenbezogenen Daten an Dritte weiter oder teilt diese. Iscte hat einen Datenschutzbeauftragten, der per E-Mail kontaktiert werden kann: dpo@iscte-iul.pt. Falls erforderlich, haben Sie auch das Recht, eine Beschwerde bei der portugiesischen Datenschutzbehörde (CNDP) einzureichen.

Ich erkläre, dass ich die Ziele des mir vorgeschlagenen und von der Forscherin erklärten Vorhabens verstanden habe, dass ich die Gelegenheit hatte, alle Fragen zu dieser Studie zu stellen und auf alle Fragen eine klärende Antwort erhalten habe. **Ich erkläre** mich mit der Teilnahme an der Studie einverstanden und willige ein, dass meine personenbezogenen Daten gemäß den mir gegebenen Informationen verwendet werden.

Ja ☐ Nein ☐

_____(Ort), _____/____/_____ (Datum)

Name: _____

Unterschrift: _____