

Impact of Brazilian indulgence on intercultural interaction: a study from an Indian perspective

O impacto da indulgência brasileira nas interações interculturais: um estudo de uma perspectiva indiana.

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RESUMO

Utilizando as teorias interculturais de Lewis (2006) e de Hofstede (2010) que classificam a cultura brasileira como multi-ativa e indulgente e a cultura indiana colocada entre multi-ativa reativa e restrita respectivamente, este artigo aborda o impacto da indulgência na cultura brasileira no contexto da interação intercultural Índia-Brasil, sendo os dois países membros do BRICS. Acredita-se que essa diferença cultural se espelhe no uso da linguagem nas situações de comunicação. Com o apoio de estudos estatísticos e de ranking internacional, foi investigada a dimensão cultural da indulgência na cultura brasileira que se manifesta nas diversas esferas da vida social cotidiana, no trabalho, nos festivais, no corpo físico, e na linguagem. O estudo concentra-se nas diferenças e semelhanças culturais com o objetivo de adquirir uma compreensão mais aprofundada da indulgência na cultura brasileira pelos alunos de português língua estrangeira e seu impacto na comunicação intercultural com a Índia.

Palavras-chave: indulgência; português como língua estrangeira; interação intercultural; BRICS

ABSTRACT

Using Intercultural Theories by Lewis (2006) and Hofstede (2010) that classify Brazilian culture as multi-active and indulgent and Indian Culture as midway between multi-active, reactive and restrained respectively, this article looks into the impact of indulgence on the intercultural interaction between India and Brazil, both member countries of BRICS. Cultural differences are expected to reflect the use of language in communicative situations. With the support of statistics and international ranking, indulgence is studied in different areas: in social daily life, in work, in festivals, in the body, and in the language. This study focuses on cultural differences and similarities with an aim to acquire mindful understanding of indulgence in Brazilian culture by students of Portuguese as foreign language and its impact on intercultural communication with India.

Keywords: indulgence; Portuguese as foreign language; intercultural interaction; BRICS

With an aim to achieve better economic and social development, many culturally dissimilar countries across the continents are entering into regional or global partnerships, joint-ventures, and collaborations. BRICS is one such group with five-member countries: Brazil (South America), Russia (Eurasia), India (Southeast Asia), China (Asia), and South-Africa. With vast dissimilar cultures, the only common factor between them is the resolve to succeed in obtaining mutually beneficial deals through fruitful communication of their goals. Of special interest to this study is the relation between Brazil and India; countries that despite their large cultural diversity share a part of their common history of Portuguese colonization, problems like corruption in public life and “poverty and sharp socioeconomic inequalities.” (ABDENUR, 2014).

Faced with these socioeconomic issues in their respective countries, both the nations have committed to working for better conditions for their citizens. According to the Head of the Programme of Indian Studies in the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Edgar Leite, “Brazil India ties have been considered a strategic priority by both nations since the New Delhi Declaration of January 2004.” A ranking by worldpopulationreview.com¹ based on GDP (Gross Domestic Product); China is the second, India is the fifth and Brazil is the ninth largest economies of the world. Termed as ‘Mammoth Markets’ of the future (LEWIS, 2006, p.104) and as ‘Breakout Nations’ by (SHARMA, 2012), how will Brazil and India overcome their sociocultural and linguistic dissimilarities to achieve mutually satisfying goals through intercultural dialogue?

Supported by the intercultural theories of Lewis (2006) and Hofstede (2010) along with articles in the media, international surveys and literature authored by well-known Brazilian writers, this study explores the Indulgence (HOFSTEDE, 2010) in Brazilian culture and its potential impact on the intercultural interaction with India under the ambit of BRICS. An attempt is made to study the ways in which it can be explained through cultural parameters of daily activities, work, time and space, physical body, leisure and celebration of festivals and Portuguese language to understand its impact on intercultural interaction.

¹ [GDP Ranked by Country 2021 \(worldpopulationreview.com\)](http://GDP.Ranked.by.Country.2021.worldpopulationreview.com) (22/11/2021)

Intercultural Theories: definitions of basic terms

“Indulgence is a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, Restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and need to be restricted by strict social norms”. (HOFSTEDE, 2010, p.280) Based on these traits Brazil has been categorized as an indulgent culture while India as a culture that practices Restraint.

Culture on the other hand is defined as “a pattern of learned, group related perceptions -including both verbal non-verbal language, attitudes, values, belief systems, disbelief systems, and behaviours- that is accepted and expected by an identity group ” (SINGERS, 2000, p.30) Beliefs and disbeliefs are translated into actions and manifest themselves in all aspects of life. For instance, in the Indian culture work is believed to be *karma* (action) that determines the quality of present and future life of a person whereas in the Brazilian culture work is considered as punishment (*castigo*). In an interaction between these two belief systems, communicative challenges may cause a misunderstanding due to their difference in approach to work.

“An interaction turns intercultural when one or more participants notice the impact of cultural difference that it has on the interaction. The impact of culture on the dynamics of engagement with others is what concerns the intercultural interaction analysts”. Thus, when two cultures with different attitudes, values, belief systems linguistic and non-linguistic differences engage in interaction there will be differences in perceptions of reality as “each culture makes different demands. Spencer-Oaty and Franklin (2009, p.3)” This was evident when looking from the window of his car at the cows, a Brazilian tourist in India wondered why Indians do not consume the cows (beef) roaming on the streets or Indian women do not wear shorts in hot weather, it revealed his ignorance on the Indian values that treats cow as sacred animal and treats saree as an apparel symbolic of womanhood in Indian, opposed to the Brazilian culture that perceives cow as food and saree as a mere piece of cloth.

Therefore, for an efficient intercultural communication to take place, an awareness of the differences in cultural values of the participants is of fundamental importance. It leads to a better mutual understanding well beyond linguistic dimensions. The graph below (Figure 1) shows the differences in six cultural values (HOFSTEDE, 2010) between India and Brazil, namely: Power Distance Index (PDI) (8%), Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) (36%), Individualism vs Collectivism Index (ICI) (10%), Masculinity vs Femininity (MAS) (7%),

Long term Orientation vs Short term Orientation (LOTI) (7%), Indulgence vs. Restraint (IRI) (33%).

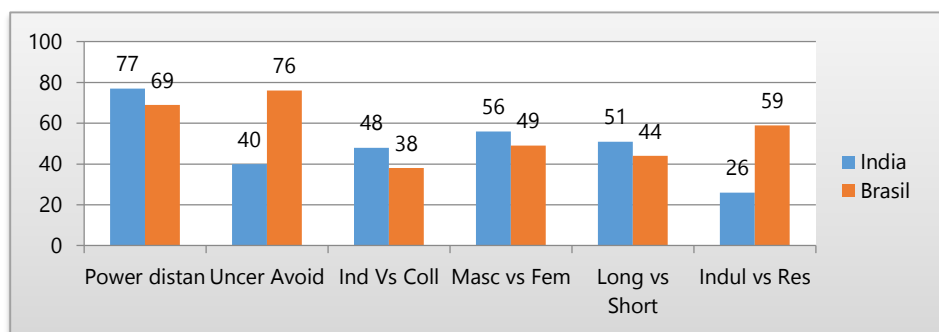


Figure 1. Cultural Dimensions: India and Brazil: <https://www.geert-hofstede.com/tools.html>

A large difference in the value of Indulgence in Brazil (59) and India (26) by 33 percentage can be observed. Among countries surveyed for the dimension of Indulgence vs. Restraint, Brazil ranks 26th while India far below ranks 73rd (HOFSTEDE, 2010, p. 282). This means that Brazilians have greater tendency to “enjoy life and have fun”, than their restrained Indian counterparts. The statistics shown here are not being considered in absolute terms, but as approximate referral points given the fact that both countries have distinct socio-cultural history of their own that will be discussed later in this study.

The indulgent Brazilian society is, generally, characterized as extrovert, happy and healthy engaging in leisure activities, indulging in sports, seeking gratification of sexual desires, are generally obese², with less moral discipline, higher birth rate, higher crime rate, open to foreign music and films etc. People in Indulgent societies practice freedom of speech, being more expressive and emotional and are seemingly in charge of their own lives. They place higher degree of importance on leisure and act as they please and spend money as they wish. “Societies that score higher on indulgence have lower scores on moral discipline. Their members are less likely to value moderation and to have few desires.” On the other hand, India is considered as a society with more restraint in gratification of desires, stricter social moral and values, lesser crime rate and is more traditional. Hofstede (ibid, p. 288)

To corroborate the data from Hofstede, we refer to Lewis Cultural Model for a broader perspective about cultural differences between India and Brazil. The triangle given below

² According to a report on JN of Globo news (20hrs,13/05/2017) the obesity in Brazil has shot up to 60% in the last decade.

(Figure 2), Brazil coloured red, is placed on the top of axis of Multi-active and Reactive while India is placed in median between Multi-active and Reactive. This means that Brazil has more typical traits of Multi-active culture while India possesses cultural traits of both Multi-active and Reactive cultures.

The Linear-active are those cultures who plan, schedule, organize, pursue chronological action chains, and just focus on and do one thing at a time. Multi-actives are those lively, loquacious people who do multi-tasking, planning their priorities not according to a time schedule, but according to the relative thrill or importance that each appointment provides.

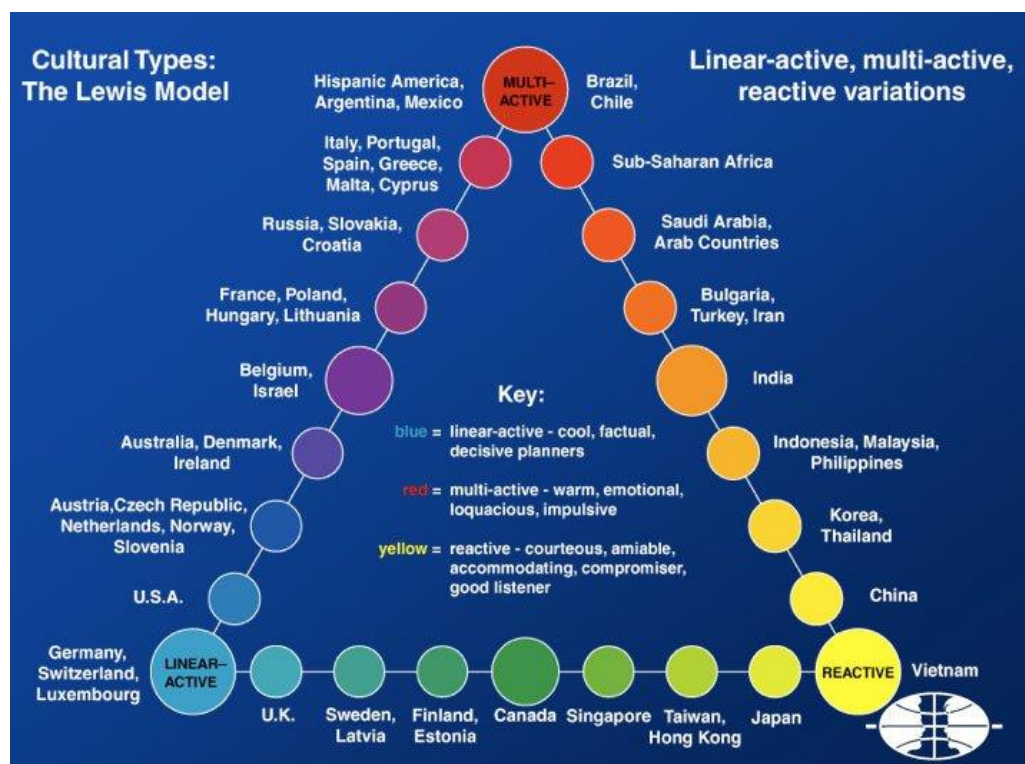


Figure 2. Lewis Cultural Model: <https://www.crossculture.com/latest-news/the-lewis-model-dimensions-of-behaviour/> (Google Images: 30/11/2021)

On the other hand, Reactive cultures prioritize courtesy and respect, listening quietly and calmly to their interlocutors and reacting carefully to their plans or proposals. The Multi-active Brazilians are described by Lewis (2006, p.541) as follows:

They are loquacious and verbose to the extreme, the Brazilians use gestures and facial expression to emphasize their point of view (...) Brazilians are very expressive especially when it comes to showing emotions such as disbelief, joy, sympathy or disappointment. Thus, their expression of joy comes alive in festivals like carnival. Another characteristic trait being Brazilian is that they love music and dancing.

Some of the major cultural traits of Indians, according to Lewis (2006, p.435) are: " family oriented, loyal to a group, often professional, honour both family and group, creative do-it-yourself outlook and problem-solving mentality, risk-takers, experimenters, and savvy at business." These generalized cultural profiles help comprehend the style of interaction when interacting with people of dissimilar values. "The values are seen as a construct that inherently influence peoples' attitude and everyday behaviour. It is a network of ideas that a person views to be desirable and important." (ROKEACH, 1973; BOYD, 2015). Based on cultural traits of Brazilians and Indians described by Hofstede (2010) and Lewis (2006), a table (Figure 3) is compiled by the researcher demonstrating their generalized communicative styles.

		Brazilians	Indians
Hofstede		(Indulgent-59%)	Restraint (26%)
	Gestures	expressive, smiling, emotional, extrovert, back-slapping, hugging, happy, healthy	view smiling as suspect
	Morals	game and gambling spirit, low moral values	patriotism and national pride, stricter moral value
	Speech	value freedom of speech, don't value moderation in speech and action	value law and order, moderation in speech and action
	Desires	impulsive, many desires	restraint, less desires
Lewis		Multi-active	Multi-active- Reactive
	Speaking	loquacious, emotional, verbose, use of facial expressions	long verbose sociable preamble eloquent, humble, respectful courteous, warm, adaptable, ask for other's opinion
		elastic truth	truth subject to negotiation, risk takers do-it-yourself mentality, creative
	Time and space	time is linear, unpunctual, "space-invaders" focus more on process than product	time is cyclical, punctual, work round the clock, work closely, no physical contact bear initial losses for future gains
	Listening	listening is erratic, lot of interruption strong eye contact	attentive, listen at length

Figure 3: Table (researcher's) of cultural traits of Brazilians and Indians. Hofstede (2010); Lewis (2006)

Both Brazilians and Indians are verbose and expressive. However, Indians exercise moderation in speech and listen attentively while Brazilians interrupt frequently and their attention span is shorter. Therefore, Indians will have to be patient to understand Brazilians' expression of emotions 'from the heart' (Lewis: *ibid*:543)

In the diagrams below (Figure 4) Lewis gives a general pattern of communication for achieving an agreement by Multi-active expressive Brazilians and Multi-active-Reactive listening Indians.

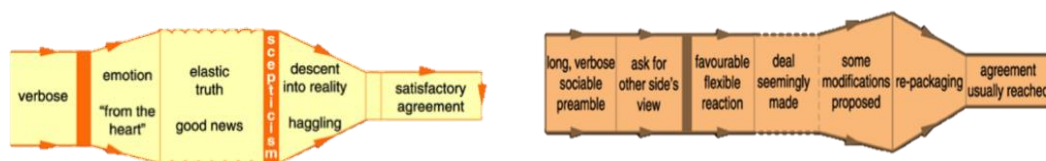


Figure 4: Communication Styles: Brazil (Left) India (Right) by Lewis (Google Images: 15 /11/2021)

We now explore how Indulgence influences the various aspects of Brazilians' life and the way it may interfere in intercultural communication in terms of dissimilar values.

Indulgence in daily life

The large number of packed hair salons, beauty parlours, tattoo parlours, gymnasiums, children's playgrounds, football courts, bars, and restaurants, *pizzarias*, *sorveteria*, *drinkaria*, *confeitaria*, *bijutaria*, *recreios*, samba schools, trekking and bicycle tracks, cinemas, theatres and so on in the city of Rio de Janeiro, it is an example of Brazilian indulgence in leisure activity. There is even an exclusive *namoradeira* (lovers' park) on the banks of a lake in the city that may appear queer to restrain practised by Indians in public display of affection. The loud decibels of folk music often termed as the north-eastern *forró*, *churrasco* (barbeque) and *cerveja* (beer) parties in the backyard or roof-tops garden on weekends and special family get-togethers are manifestations of a typical collectivist Brazilian Indulgence.

Brazilian consumerist behaviour in the form of impulsive shopping can be another example of Indulgence. According to a National Survey conducted by SPC³ (*Serviço de Proteção ao Crédito* (*SPC Brasil*, translated as Protection Service to the Credit) through their

³ https://www.spcbrasil.org.br/uploads/st_imprensa/release_compras_parceladas4.pdf, access on 12/07/2019

portal '*Meu Bolso Feliz*', 79% of the participants said they made purchases on credit. This behaviour of Brazilian consumer is interpreted by the economic head of the SPC, Marcela Kawauti who warns that "Due to the ignorance on the notion of impulsive buying and spending, the credit could turn problematic and even lead to uncontrolled purchasing and consequently to default".⁴(translated by author (t. a.)

Brazilians as multitasker, emotional, and impulsive people make appointments and promises in haste that are as quickly forgotten as they are made. Dates for submission of work are often extended multiple times to accommodate the late bloomers. Their gestures, facial expressions, loquacious emotional behaviour can be overwhelming or even amusing for an interlocutor from Linear active- Reactive cultures.

Indulgence at work

Brazilians' attitude towards work has its origin in the history of slavery in Brazil. While comparing the racism in the United States to racism in Brazil, Damatta refers to '*racismo à brasileira*' (Brazilian racism) where 'everyone knows his place' (*cada um sabe o seu lugar*) making a reference to the slave economy that lasted till the end of late nineteenth century where the body of a slave was treated as the capital. The masters of the slave committed atrocities to extricate forced labour from them while they themselves lived in comfort of their *fazendas* enjoying the fruit of slave labour.

The slavery lasted in Brazil longer than any other country of the world till it was abolished in 1888. Describing the social difference during the slave economy, Meade (2004, p.46) explains that "the master class and the entire Brazilian economy relied heavily on slave labour. If slaves did everything, many of their white masters did little in producing their livelihood, taking care of their own homes, themselves, their children, or the place they inhabited." This social disparity continues to exist according to Damatta, "tragically according to the racial hierarchy" (*tragicamente de acordo com a hierarquia das raças*) where work is considered a punishment. Damatta (1984) explains the idea in terms of domestic work (*casa*) and job (*rua*):

Work in our culture is seen as punishment. As the name says it all, the word is derived from latin- *tripliare* meaning to punish as tripalium in the ancient

⁴ "O crédito pode tornar-se um problema, devido à perda da noção dos gastos e compras por impulso, e até mesmo gerar um descontrolo das compras e uma consequente inadimplência."

Rome was an object of torture, a type of yolk used to tame the slaves. Between home (where there is no work and strangely and wrongly, we do not see domestic work as work, but as a service or even a pleasure or a privilege) and the street, the tough work in Brazil is seen as something biblical.⁵(t. a.)

The dichotomy between work at home and work outside is seen by the Brazilian anthropologist in terms of the relation between *patrão/escravo* as the employer/employee. But this relation ceases to exist at home where the *escravo* (slave) takes on the role of *patrão* (master) and performs the household chores for himself without coercion, compulsion, or fear of punishment and therefore, the domestic work becomes pleasure for him. This Brazilian dichotomy between work and pleasure as explained by Damatta can become challenging and problematic in situations of intercultural communication. This was evident in an incident that took place in India a few years ago. For a lunch organized for a visiting Brazilian delegation comprising of over fifty representatives of Brazilian industry, only two turned up for one-to-one meeting with their Indian counterparts. On inquiry it was found that most of them had left for sight-seeing early morning for Agra; the city of Taj Mahal and would not be back until late night. The organizers were surprised and had no idea what to do with lunch prepared for over hundred guests and worse, how to face the ire of those businessmen who travelled from all over India looking for potential business opportunities in Brazil. This episode is an example of Brazilian Indulgence for leisure over work as a priority that can cause culture shock to Indians. The caricature below (Figure 5) represents the state of economies of BRICS countries. Brazil has been caricatured as the indulgent non-performing member state and India as the support for the rest.

⁵ Trabalho que no nosso sistema é concebido como castigo. E o nome diz tudo, pois a palavra deriva do latim *tripliare*, que significa castigar com o tripalium, instrumento que, na Roma Antiga, era um objeto de tortura, consistindo numa espécie de canga usada para supliciar escravos. Entre a casa (onde não deve haver trabalho e curiosa e erroneamente não tomamos o trabalho doméstico como tal, mas como serviço ou até mesmo prazer ou favor...) e a rua, o trabalho duro é visto no Brasil como algo bíblico.



Figure 5. Image representative of attitudes to work of members of BRICS (source: unknown)

Work is an important and serious concern for Indians at personal (domestic) as well as a professional level and is deeply entrenched in Indian psyche. Indian aphorism ‘Work is worship’ is the key to success of Indians in India and abroad.

Indulgence in Carnival

Known as period of excess and self-indulgence, Carnival is a well-known festival of Brazil especially of Rio de Janeiro in terms of dancing, eating, and drinking and merry making. Incidentally, the words for the idea of fantasy called *fantasia* and the dress worn to realize it called *fantasia* are synonymous. The excitement and enthusiasm of living out the personal wild fantasies obliterates the notions of time, space, and social boundaries. It symbolises the union of the mind with body through the mental and physical *Fantasia* (*fancy dress worn by samba dancers*) that leave little for imagination. Worn by men, women, and children of all age groups desirous of realizing their fantasies that may range from a disguise of a panther, President Obama, a fairy, or a Disney character.

To live out this fantasy, there is a complete logistics and infrastructure in place. Markets selling fancy and flashy material are available in all big cities specially in São Paulo, Salvador and Rio de Janeiro that attract shoppers from all over Latin America looking to customise and live out their own wild fantasies for few days. Thousands of reals are spent to get the colour and fit right as shown below in Figure 6. This is the time for freedom from everything undesirable work being the first to be excluded from the festivities. Well-known Brazilian Anthropologist Roberto Damatta (1984) explains the difference of the attitudes towards work as job and working for Carnival.

I think that carnival is basically an inversion of the world. In carnival, we exchange the work as the ordeal for the body (the ancient tripalium or roman yolk used to subjugate the slaves into submission) by the body as an instrument of beauty and pleasure. At work, we spend, submit and waste away the body. In carnival, also this happens, but other way round. Here the body is spent by the pleasure. (...) Here we use the body to give us maximum pleasure and joy.⁶ (t. a.)



Figure 6: *Fantasia* outfits worn during Carnival (Google Images, 13/12/2021).

Many believe Carnival is a licence to sin- to do whatever one likes. As a result, the crime rate involving sexual assault, violence and theft, spikes considerably. As seen in the images above (Figure 6) body as an instrument of pleasure is expressed by singing, dancing, binge drinking of alcohol, sexual promiscuity, and drugs intake.

Indulgence in the physical body

The Indulgence in the body as an instrument of beauty and pleasure is extremely important and described by Damatta as a social trait that permeates all classes of society. Brazilians adorn their bodies with tattoos, piercings, trendy colourful hairstyles, and maintain a perfectly chiselled body, even if it means taking recourse to plastic surgery, implants, Botox shots, full body waxing, work-out in gym, jogging, manicure, and pedicure. They in general are appreciative of better techniques and styles to enhance their 'look' (neologism borrowed from English language).

⁶ Penso que carnaval é basicamente uma inversão do mundo....no carnaval, trocamos o trabalho que castiga o corpo (o velho tripalium ou canga romana que subjugava escravos) pelo uso do corpo como instrumento de beleza e de prazer. No trabalho, estragamos, submetemos e gastamos o corpo. No carnaval isso também ocorre, mas de modo inverso. Aqui, o corpo é gasto pelo prazer. (...) Aqui usamos o corpo para nos dar o máximo de prazer e alegria...

Brazilians consider the body odour as the most embarrassing and intolerable part of social life and are well known for taking multiple baths in a day. To get rid of body odour a wide collection of perfumes, deodorants are available to both genders whereas for Indians body odour is a natural part of being. This cultural difference was narrated by a visiting Brazilian professor when she went looking for a deodorant in India a few years ago. Following a long search in the market she was surprised to find it in a shop's sanitation and hygiene section! Brazilians' self-indulgence in sensuous gratification by looking, smelling, and feeling good has made the beauty products industry a lucrative business. An entrepreneur in Rio de Janeiro capitalized on this habit by selling a spray of deodorant for R\$ 2 during Carnival in 2019 (Figure 7). Indulgence in body has brought for Brazilians, world acclaim in the form of perfect beach-bodies in the world of fashion, modelling and body-building industry in both female and male categories.



Figure 7: A spray of deodorant on sale during Carnival, Rio de Janeiro (Google Images: 14/12/2021)

The self-indulgence manifests itself in their consumer habits. According to a popular television programme on Globo channel, *Mais Você* (viewed on 02/06/17)⁷, the period of downward trend of Brazilian economy did nothing to deter the Brazilians from investing in beauty. A turn-over of 244 million Reals was reported in the year 2016 according to ABF (*Associação Brasileira de Franchising*) from 710 centres belonging to 11 franchises specializing in eyebrow designing, translating into an increase of 28.8% from the previous year 2015. Also interesting are the figures revealed by SPC (*Serviço de Proteção ao Crédito*) about

⁷<http://gshow.globo.com/programas/mais-voce/episodio/2017/06/02/ana-maria-mostra-como-sobrancelha-virou-um-negocio-e-mostra-quarta-prova-do-fecha-conta-massas.html#video-5912074>

the cutting down of expenses by the Brazilians in the following sectors. Brazilians cut down the least on the expenditure on beauty treatment by just 16.7% of their budget whereas the cut in budget for eating at Bars and Restaurants was 35.4%.

Sector	Reduction in expenditure
1. Bars and restaurants	35.4%
2. Travel	30.9%
3. Clothes, accessories, footwear	29.2%
4. Cable TV	19.7%
5. Telephone Fixed & Celular	18.8%
6. Expenditure on Beauty treatment	16.7%

Fig. 8. Data from SPC (*Serviço de Proteção ao Crédito*)

The table above shows that except Indulgence in the body, Brazilian can compromise on any other aspect of social and personal life. And this no-compromise attitude extends to even going ‘under the knife’ to get a perfect chiselled body.

According to a survey carried out by ISAPS (International Society of Plastic Surgery)⁸ of total Aesthetic Cosmetic Procedures performed in 2019, Brazil came second with 2565675 only behind United States of America having 3982749, surgeries contributing thus 10.7% of total number of plastic surgeries performed worldwide. In the year 2019 Brazil held first position in per capita surgeries performed 715 per 100,000 while United States of America held second position with 456 per 100,000.⁹ Some procedures known as Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL) and Brazilian Bikini Wax have come to be associated with Brazilian Indulgence in the body.

The Indulgence is just not limited to beauty treatments and personal wellbeing, it extends to concern for the health and hygiene which is evident from the surroundings; the meticulously swept clean roads, rivers, lakes and beaches, parks pavements and other public places, concern for protection of environment and natural resources. The well-known Brazilian habit of taking multiple baths in a day, a habit acquired from the native indians is an important part of their daily routine towards personal well-being.

Does indulgence make Brazilians a happy people? In a recent informal random opinion poll conducted by this researcher among thirty adults to find out most common stereotypes on

⁸ [Global Surve 2019 Stand 2020.indd \(isaps.org\)](https://www.isaps.org/Global_Survey_2019_Stand_2020.indd(isaps.org))

<https://www.isaps.org/Media/Default/global-statistics/2016%20ISAPS%20Results.pdf> access on 11/07/2019

⁹ [Cosmetic Surgery Solicitors:: The Countries With the Largest Number of Cosmetic Surgeries](#) access on 12/12/2021.

Brazilians, ten Brazilian participants responded being happy (*alegre*) as their first choice. According to Lewis (ibid: 540-541) “Brazilians are happy to be Brazilian believing in the prolific potential of their country, they ‘avoid unpleasantness, love music and dancing, enjoy being Brazilian”. Brazil is ranked thirty-second (32) on the World Happiness Ranking for the year 2016-2018 (part 1)¹⁰.

On the other hand, “societies that score higher on indulgence have lower scores on moral disciplines. Their members are less likely to value moderation and have less desires. The criminal rates are higher, and more police force is deployed to check law and order”. In the year 2020, Brazil’s homicide rate was 23.6 per 100,000 placing it 7th in the world of crime. This is evident from the advice given on safety measures to be observed by the Brazilian citizens under the headings: Safety at home, Safety on the street, Safety in the traffic and Safety on the highway, besides Safety on motorcycle, Safety from kidnapping, and Safety from assault, on the site called *denúncia BR*¹¹ for a better and safer Nation. In total, there are ninety-seven safety tips, the highest being on the category on Safety on the highway. This points to the crime at all the places especially in Rio where the “*bala perdida*” (random bullet) is a common term employed by the media whenever a death by accidental shot is reported. The anonymous perpetrator of the crime is almost never known or caught by the police.

Indulgence in language

The spoken language of a society mirrors its vision of the world and the interpersonal relation of its members. The social happiness index is amply reflected in the Portuguese language of Brazil that has a feel-good emotional aspect to it. In a research method called Meaning Extraction Method (MEM), Boyd et al. (2015) were able to extract core values through texts shared by users on Facebook. In a table compiled for tabulating words with value; they associated words like money, enjoy, spend, free, change with indulgence and found that “language derived values show considerable and consistent relationship with behavioural topics.” Applying the same principle, we researched for words that are commonly used and found in the lexicon such as *amor, tranquilo, jóia, beleza, linda, flor* used as forms of address

¹⁰ <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2019/changing-world-happiness/> access on 11/07/2019

¹¹ <http://www.denunciabr.com.br/dicas/> accessed on 11/07/2019

between close relations or acquaintances. These words connect people instantly through a positive and happy state of the mind of the speaker to that of the addressee.

In most parts of Brazil, the second person (informal) 'tu' is rarely used except in some regions in northeast and other regions, thus adopting a uniform way of social form of address eliminating hierarchy of age, gender, or class by mostly using third person 'você', that is almost looked down upon in Portugal but has become a hallmark feature of Brazilian Portuguese. The slower pace, the open prolonged vowels, the informality in spoken language reflects more openness and informality of the Brazilian culture.

The Brazilians express their emotions through a rich repertoire of interjections; *Oi! ué!, eitá!, olha! oba! Íii! Nossa!* Of the eleven categories found in the *Gramática da Língua Portuguesa* (Pasqual & Ulisses: 1997:333) the biggest category is that of *espanto e surpresa* (shock and surprise) and just one for *cansaço* (tiredness). The interjections are subject to change according to area and personal choice. For example, the interjection of *eitá! minha nossa!* are said to have north-eastern flavour of the Portuguese language.

Other common feature of Portuguese language in general is the frequent use of taboo words for emotional expressivity like *Caralho! Foda! Porra! Merda! Teu cu! Filho da Puta!*¹² etc. that could cause a culture shock to restrained Indians. They are used nevertheless to heighten the degree of emotional intensity and are not considered offensive.

Another feature particular to Portuguese linguistic culture is the word *jeitinho* due to its multiplicity of definition and meanings oscillating between social dimensions of Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Indulgence versus Restraint. In her Ph.D thesis titled *Jeitinho- Um Estudo da Identidade Nacional*, later published as a book titled *Jeitinho- The Art of Being More Equal than Others (Jeitinho-A Arte de Ser Mais Igual do que Os Outros)*, Barbosa (2005: XI) proposes many facets of definitions of the word in the preface from which the following excerpt was chosen to illustrate its ambiguous nature and the difficulty in placing it on the Hofstede six dimension scale.

When *Jeitinho* is contextualized within the area of interpersonal relationships, it is, as a thumb rule, positive. When it is discussed upon our institutions, it is qualified as being negative. When it is described to foreigners it appears under the garb of happy and creative, when it is described to Brazilians it appears negative and harmful to Brazil.¹³ (t. a)

¹² Four letter words not translated to respect the sensibility of English readers.

¹³ Quando o *jeitinho* é contextualizado no âmbito das relações interpessoais é, via de regra, positiva. Quando ele surge nas discussões sobre nossas instituições, sua qualificação é negativa. Quando é descrito

In the preface for the same book the Brazilian anthropologist Damatta (2005: XXI) calls it an institution just like the carnival, football or *jogo de bicho* (lottery involving animals' names), that is passed on from one generation to another and unlikely to disappear with economic development or historical evolution of Brazil. He explains:

Jeitinho can be seen as something shameful, close to favour and corruption. It does not exclude the possibility of being seen as a proof of our social and political ingenuity, a trait as positive as the carnival and football as constitutive elements of our identity.¹⁴ (t. a)

Jeitinho represents the Brazilian impulse to circumvent the law and achieve quick results through short-cut means at no or little extra cost, mainly at the interpersonal level. At its extreme opposite end, it becomes corruption and crime when executed at institutional level and on a larger scale. Commenting on the present political situation in the country Damatta, in Globo expresses his concern by saying “It is the very Brazilian *jeitinho* applied to the law to dribble justice. (*“É o brasileiríssimo jeitinho aplicado à lei para driblar a Justiça”* (2017)¹⁵. Here by using the verb *driblar* (to dribble) used mostly in football as a metaphor, he highlights the uniqueness of *jeitinho* to Brazilian culture where gratification is sought and carried out within shortest possible time irrespective of the law and the means used to achieve it.

Brazil-India Interaction: Difference in Eastern and Western philosophies

According to Hofstede (2010) as “gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and have fun” referred to earlier in this paper, need some reflection. Lewis’s (2006: 438-439) observes that “Hinduism dominates Indians’ social behaviour with the

para estrangeiros surge com uma roupagem alegre e criativa, quando é descrito para brasileiros aparece como negativo e prejudicial ao Brasil.

¹⁴ Assim se o *jeitinho* pode ser lido como algo vergonhoso, próximo do favor e da corrupção. Ele não exclui a possibilidade de ser também tomado como prova da nossa malandra engenhosidade social e política, como um dado tão positivo quanto o carnaval e o futebol como elemento constitutivo da nossa identidade (2005: xxi).

¹⁵ https://oglobo.globo.com/opiniao/sobre-bocalidades_brasileirismo21443560#ixzz4jZCj4RqI access on 20/07/2019 (it is very Brazilian to

associated taboos and lists ‘growing world acceptance of spiritual tenets and values in India’s favour’ as the motivating factor. Hofstede (2010: 248) too, believes that:

Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism) are separated from western religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) by a deep philosophical line. They offer various ways in which a person can improve him- or herself; however, they consist not of believing, but of rituals, meditation or way of living.

Thus, while the western interculturalist propose generalized theories and scales for diverse cultures, they need to consider the collective spirit of the East as a group of humanity coexisting by following the philosophy of self-effacement to attain a higher spiritual path opposed to the individualist society in the West in which the individual is the focus of social and cultural fabric of the society. According to Shi-Xu (2005, p. 53):

The terms ‘the basic natural human desires’ does not take into account the philosophical fabric of non-western and specifically the eastern discourse on indulgence and gratification of desires which considers life as perpetually changing (*anijjang*), full of suffering (*dukhang*) and uncertain (*anatta*) according to principles of Buddhism, different from static, optimistic and ideal-utopic principles of western way of thinking.

According to Eastern philosophy the origin of all suffering is desires that are born because of the ego, an example as is clearly manifest in Sanskrit language: the first person singular personal pronoun- I (*ahem*) is synonymous with the word Ego (*ahem*). A collectivist society like India practices restraint and self-effacement by the individual in the larger interest of the whole (collective). In line with this philosophy, happiness finds its true value in the collective consciousness as a shared experience. In contrast with the aphorism ‘work as punishment’ in Brazilian culture, the Indian Buddhist philosophy of *Nirvana* and *Moksha* (freedom from the suffering of cycle of birth and death) preaches restraint in gratification of desires and advocates the value of *karma* (action/work), considering work as worship. According to Tiwari (2008, p.198)

The Buddha stresses on extinguishing the desires which primarily causes misery to human beings. He said ‘your so-called self is nothing but a flame. It is burning through your desires. When all desires disappear, the flame disappears. Thus, nirvana would mean the state of ‘desire-lessness’. *Nirvana* having a sense of negation, saves one from being egoistic. As the word liberation can give a sense of superiority. Thus, *nirvana* also includes ‘ego-lessness’.

The collectivist Eastern discourse on restraint involving ‘extinguishing the desires’ contrasts with the individualist western discourse on gratification of desires. Mahatma Gandhi in his book titled ‘Self-Restraint V. Self-Indulgence’ written in 1928 has advocated self-restraint in personal, professional, and moral spheres of life not only for the Indians but for all those who seek a higher spiritual path of life.

Therefore, the implicit cultural dissimilarity in attitudes and values reflected in linguistic expression can sometimes develop into misunderstanding in intercultural communication. This can be resolved through increased cultural exchange programs, and people-to-people contact programmes through social media to acquaint both cultures about the notions of indulgence reflected in the work and social life in their respective countries.

In this regard programmes of cultural awareness should be telecast on Brazilian culture in India and Indian Culture in Brazil. The success of the Brazilian tele serial produced by Globo Television Channel in 2009 called Route to India (*Caminho das Índias*) generated interest and awareness about ‘mystical’ Indian culture and made Brazilian travel to India to further explore its ancient civilization.

Another step forward is the introduction of BRICSTV (TV BRICS). Du Zhanyuan, the President of China International Publishing Group states, "The BRICS nations also have great potential for people exchanges and should promote more cultural cooperation that engage media, think tanks and young people to create more mutual understanding and appreciation of art and culture. " ¹⁶

The internationalization of various ancient Indian practices of *Yoga* for general wellbeing and *Ayurveda* system of medicine for health, have earned a lot of appreciation by Brazilians which is an expression of their Indulgence, the trait characteristic of openness and receptivity to foreign cultures and personal wellbeing.

¹⁶ BRICS Nations Urged to Extend Exchanges | TV BRICS, access on 11/12/21

The Brazilian Indulgence in personal care and grooming is reflected in the casual yet thought provoking remark on beauty, made by the parrot-puppet called *Lourão*; the co-host of the television programme *Mais Você* saying " Being poor is sad enough. Being poor and ugly is worse, isn't it! Investing in beauty is the least one can do." ¹⁷

For a successful intercultural interaction, the Indians should have a mindful understanding of Brazilian Indulgence in daily activities, physical body, work, festivities, and language while Brazilians will do well to understand the Indian Restraint rooted in Eastern religion and philosophy and respect the cultural dissimilarities to achieve mutually satisfying goals.

Mindfulness defined by Ting-Toomey (1999, p.621):

“means attending to one’s own internal assumptions, arising emotions, intentions, cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors. Mindful reflexivity requires us to tune in to our own cultural and personal habitual assumptions in scanning a communication scene. It also means "emptying our mindset" and de-clutter the internal noises so that we can listen with an in-the-moment pure heart. ”

Being mindful of the dissimilar other’s communication patterns, values and behavior facilitates adapting one’s own actions and reactions in conducting a meaningful intercultural dialogue.

Intercultural Competence- Know the dissimilar ‘Other’

The intercultural theorists underline the significance of acquainting oneself with the dissimilarities in subjective behaviour that reflects the cultural values embedded in attitudes, habits, and behaviour during interaction. According to Lewis (2006: xvi) “A working knowledge of the basic traits of *other* cultures as well as ours will minimize unpleasant surprises (culture shocks), give us insights in advance and enable us to interact successfully with nationalities with whom we previously had differences”.

Hofstede (2010, p.400) agrees that “Effective intercultural negotiations demand an insight into the range of cultural values to be expected among partners from other countries, in

¹⁷ *Ser pobre já é triste. Ser pobre e feio não dá, né! Investir na beleza é o mínimo que ele pode fazer.*

comparison with the negotiator's own culturally determined values. They also demand language and communication skills to guarantee that the messages sent to the other party parties will be understood in the way they were meant by the sender." He further adds that "Indulgence will affect the atmosphere of the negotiations and strictness of protocol."

Brazilians' verbosity, informality in gestures or words, and extrovert impulsive behaviour may overwhelm their Indian interlocutors who are initially formal, reserved, observant and cautious. They may have little liking for Brazilian gestures such as black slap, a casual smile, or a friendly embrace in the initial stage of interaction. Brazilian notion of time, punctuality and work ethics could take Indians by surprise as they are quite at ease working round the clock. In case of any doubt, it would be advisable to seek clarification instead of acting on one's own preconceived cultural assumptions. Therefore, a working knowledge of each other's culture and language aid better intercultural communication.

Teaching the Brazilian communicative patterns and values to students of Portuguese as a foreign language in India will help them acquire intercultural communicative competence and become more efficient in resolving the issues arising from any misunderstanding originating due to lack of mindful insight about the dissimilar 'other'.

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