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Making Boston Brazilian:
Overcoming Immigrant Challenges Through Local Economic Action

by
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To my parents, who taught me to treasure our immigrant stories.
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Introduction

Mais eu tou sem dinheiro no bolso
E aqui me conhecem como um ilegal
Estou andando atrás dessa gente
E com esse negócio a coisa vai mal.
Se me pegam eu perco o meu emprego
Vão ter que me dar casa e comida
Ali o negócio melhora
E eu nunca mas eu vou sair dessa vida.

But I have no money in my pocket
And here they know me as an illegal
I'm moving behind these people
And with this business things go wrong.
If they catch me I lose my job
They're going to have to give me home and food
There, matters will improve
And I'll never leave this life.

Comedy poem in The Brasilians newspaper, June 1988

In the 1970s, New York-based Brazilian immigrant-run newspaper The Brasilians began running a comic section called “The Adventures of Zé Brazuca.” The eponymous character Zé (a shortening of “José,” akin to English “Joe”) Brazuca is a lower-class undocumented immigrant in the United States. His stories were those of a charming troublemaker who was constantly “swinging to-and-fro between order and disorder” as he found his way in the country (Vieira 2008, 87). In the mock-song above, Zé sings about his current state as an immigrant. While lamenting his hardships, he jokes that perhaps prison might at least give him the relief of having food and shelter. Despite the severity of his misfortunes, Zé faces them with a light-heartedness and devises a clever solution in each comic episode that keeps him surviving until the next. Historian Thomas Skidmore explains that severe economic troubles in Brazil caused its first major wave of emigration to occur in the 1980s. However, he stresses the
emigration is of note because, “Brazilians are famous for their optimism about the country,” even in the face of hardships (qtd. in Margolis 1994, 3). Skidmore, like the spirit of Zé Brazuca, affirms an understanding of Brazilians as fundamentally optimistic people who, as challenged immigrants, are prone to devising inventive solutions to their tribulations in a new country. True to their sentiments, Brazilians have indeed made it their national pastime to exchange anecdotes of amusing work-arounds they craftily schemed for a day-to-day obstacle or lack of resource. The practice, known as “jeitinho,” is at the core of the story I seek to tell of Boston.

This thesis analyzes how Brazilian immigrants have built a community in the Greater Boston area and established practices to facilitate survival and integration. First, how has the United States conceived their identities and activities as Brazilian immigrants? I find that a host of historical and sociopolitical forces have led Brazilians to be represented in a twofold manner— as a hardworking, entrepreneurial “New American” community and as an ill-fated population of undocumented, exploitable foreign-born workers. Consequently, I organize my research under the two overlapping themes of economic activity and immigration status. The U.S. public has not only scrutinized Brazilians for their performance under these parameters, but also produced a sociopolitical climate that proliferated Brazilian immigrants’ undocumented status and left them vulnerable to exploitation, isolation, and harsh immigration enforcement. Second, in light of the social structures shaping their circumstances, how have Brazilian immigrants living in Greater Boston created a place for themselves? I argue that by examining the local economic activities and practices of Brazilian immigrants, we can identify the range of strategies and actions they use to overcome and negotiate with the structural constraints of their immigrant realities.

As part of this relationship between individual agency and overarching conditions, I first examine public perception of Brazilians and how it compares to Brazilians’ own
understanding of their identity and place in the Greater Boston community. For mainstream narratives, I use the Boston Globe’s coverage of Brazilians from the 1990s and 2000s. The newspaper The Brazilian Times provides a look at what role Brazilians describe themselves as playing in the community. Along with economic labels, immigration status emerges as an obstinate element in discussions about Brazilians. I also explore how these interpretations are rooted in the social context surrounding Brazilian immigration.

Next, I demonstrate how Brazilians respond to public expectations and representations by creating a local economic system that addresses their unique challenges. Economics is fundamentally the study of scarce resources and the choices behind the allocation of those resources. This element of choice is close to the heart of this thesis, as I examine how Brazilians exercise agency given their limitations. My research reveals the importance of small business activity in the Brazilian immigrant story. These businesses, ranging from corner shops and restaurants to house-cleaning and car repair services, are instrumental to the creation of community in the region. They act as key venues for building social networks, sharing information, and connecting people to resources. Through these forms of support, Brazilian immigrants are able to address major adversities of life in the United States—particularly, navigating language barriers, unfamiliarity with goods and services, a lack of social and cultural capital, and the anxiety and suspicion towards U.S. institutions that comes with living undocumented. Local economic activity thus provides a window to examining how Brazilians act as free agents despite (and within) their structural limitations, particularly in response to the public narratives around them as immigrants.

To begin exploring these actions and their context, it is crucial to first ground this study in the history that has influenced the reality of today’s Brazilians. The contemporary geopolitical, economic, and legal history between the United States and Brazil have constructed
the structural conditions informing Brazilian immigrants’ integration. These dimensions are firmly interconnected. U.S. politics before and during the Cold War led to an insistence on deeper economic and cultural ties to Brazil. However, after an unsuccessful show of capitalism in Brazil ended in economic crisis, the country lost geopolitical relevance in the eyes of the United States. As the Cold War concluded, diasporic Brazilians became just another immigrant group, as opposed to one that advanced U.S. political interests. This decade was characterized by hostile U.S. narratives and policies around immigration, which coincided with rapidly increasing rates of migration from Brazil. The Brazilians of Greater Boston mostly entered into this hostile political climate as undocumented immigrants, pursuing economic opportunity in the wake of their home country’s failures. Brazilian immigrants’ position in their communities are thus a product of this interwoven history of political and economic events. The story of today may be personified by Zé Brazuca, but it begins almost a century earlier with yet another character that once represented Brazilians abroad.

Geopolitical History

The birth of the contemporary relationship between Brazil and the United States is perhaps best embodied in a cultural icon: Carmen Miranda. With her tutti-frutti hat and samba performances, the Brazilian actress was the muse of the 1930s’ Good Neighbor Policy, which sought to warm U.S.-Latin American relations (Skidmore 2010, 163). Miranda’s government-crafted Hollywood capers not only facilitated deepening political and economic ties between the two countries, but also imbued a cultural legacy of alluring exoticism in depictions of Brazilians that has followed today’s immigrants as they navigate their new communities. During World War II, Brazil escalated its relationship: it sided with the United States and Allied Powers, embracing democracy despite being itself a dictatorship at the time. The United States
capitalized on the alliance with an arsenal of influences, introducing democratic ideals, trade and investment, and expanded cultural exchange (121).

Migration from Brazil to the United States began under the economic missteps of Brazil’s military dictatorship during the 1970s, and a difficult transition into democracy that only worsened the economy. The dictatorship began after a coup in 1964 that was fueled by fears of communism. Although the United States denied playing a role, it had in fact encouraged the insurgents by offering military support on standby (Skidmore 2010, 151). The United States advocated for Brazil’s adoption of global capitalism, a precarious transition. Under the pressure of the Cold War, the dictatorship tried to simulate rapid growth by borrowing from the United States, but this strategy created a mounting debt crisis. As Brazil became further engaged with the democratic West, its dictatorship became unpalatable. The nation re-transitioned into democracy, holding elections once again in 1985. That year, vice president José Sarney assumed the Brazilian presidency after the sudden death of Tancredo Neves, the president-elect that succumbed to an intestinal infection in the days leading up to his inauguration. While the popular Tancredo had promised to restore true democracy to the nation, Sarney approached his term with the old-school elite politics of patronage (181).

Sarney had inherited a foreign debt crisis from the previous dictatorship that became inescapable by 1983. Addressing the crisis necessitated urgent sources of funding, and the Brazilian government resorted to inflationary money creation, which in turn created its own looming crisis. In 1986, the Sarney government began the Cruzado Plan to stabilize threatening rates of inflation. It was an instant success, reigning in inflation to steady rates, while creating a mini-boost in the economy. However, this success was short-lived. The Cruzado Plan was unsustainable in its methods, overheating the economy, and President Sarney refused to “hit the brakes” on his popular economy-booster at least until midterm
elections were over. His political choice proved fatal: by 1989, the annual inflation rate spiraled out of control, reaching an astronomical 1783% (185). Grocery store employees would apply more expensive price stickers every day, while customers ran to beat them to it and buy food at the previous day’s price. This economic turmoil in the 1980s provided the impetus for the first major migration period to the United States, growing a small anti-dictatorship stream of emigration into a substantial flow. Brazil, a country that had been an immigrant-receiver for most of its history, now found itself sending increasing numbers to the United States. Arguably, the inflation crisis was not the direct cause of emigration, but rather a supplement to the economic event that preceded it: Brazil’s invitation into the global market as “a test case for capitalism in the developing world” (174).

U.S. geopolitics before and after the Cold War informed its migration relationship with Brazil, influencing the “legitimacy” granted to Brazilians’ reasons for immigration. Sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel’s (2003) work provides a useful framework for analyzing the effects of this relationship on Brazilians’ arrival to the United States. He explores geopolitical conditions between the United States and the Caribbean during the 20th century, demonstrating the importance of geopolitics on each country’s migration histories. Grosfoguel uses Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “symbolic capital,” defined as “the power to impose upon other minds a vision, old or new, of social divisions” (qtd. in 2003, 104). Brazil’s political economy at the onset of migration bears strong thematic similarity to Grosfoguel’s case study through its entanglement in Cold War anti-communism. Specifically, Brazil went from being a capitalist project for the United States to a failed example from which it could no longer derive symbolic capital. Similarly, sociologist Alejandro Portes demonstrates how the size of many immigrant populations in the United States mirrors the political, economic, and military involvement of the United States in their sending countries (Portes 1999, 167). Their opportunities and living
conditions upon arrival are determined by the relationship between the symbolic capital of the sending country and the receiving country’s political climate—with immigration status acting as a key variable. For instance, both Grosfoguel and Portes highlight the variations in refugee status, permanent residency adjustments, and access to citizenship used to favor Cubans fleeing communism above other Latin American immigrants. In the post-Cold War era, U.S. foreign policy shifted towards “domestic pressures to preserve and defend its borders from nonwhite illegal immigrants” and away from “symbolic or military geopolitical struggles” against a superpower (Grosfoguel 2003, 122). Brazilians fleeing the economic consequences of their toxic political environment waned in relevance to the United States, which had changed its priorities once again. Brazilian immigration thus has not benefitted from a form of sponsorship under U.S. law. Instead of qualifying for a crisis-related protection or an opportunity for immigration status adjustment, many Brazilians entered a country during a time of increasingly restrictionist views on immigration that questioned their economic causes of migration.

*Modes of Incorporation*

Two major pieces of US immigration legislation were passed in the late 20th century: the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996. The IRCA was more moderate, even including a temporary amnesty component—an opportunity Brazilians arrived too late to benefit from. As Brazilian immigrated in ever greater numbers during the early 1990s, they found themselves contributing to a growing public frustration over unauthorized immigration, as well as a greater public defensiveness over public services. Political scientist Lina Newton remarks that a build-up of this “immigrant versus taxpayer” narrative culminated in the passage of IIRIRA, which severely ramped up immigration enforcement. The law increased the
number of Border Patrol agents by at least 1,000 per year from 1996 through 2001. Furthermore, it fortified the physical US border, expanded detention centers, and streamlined procedures for deportation (Newton 2008, 60-61).

IIRIRA fundamentally altered the relationship Brazilian migrants had to the United States. First, it affected decisions regarding when to leave the States by creating legal barriers to reentry for those who had already resided in the United States while undocumented. Given the cyclical nature of Brazilian migration and the prevalence of undocumented status among Brazilians, these barriers slowed the “yo-yo” pattern that had characterized immigration between the two countries until that point. Those already in the United States began to stay longer than before. Second, IIRIRA complicated how Brazilians could enter the country by tightening tourist visa restrictions, making this popular, safer path to entry much harder to obtain. This forced many immigrants to take a difficult extra step – first travel to Mexico, then cross the border into the United States. Changing statistics on Brazilian migration correlate with the introduction of IIRIRA. The number of deported Brazilians skyrocketed from 88 in 1992 to a peak of 32,103 in 2005. This immigration surge was abruptly cut off the following year after Mexico also changed its visa laws, hindering migration through the border. At the 2005 peak, Brazilians became the fourth most deported immigrants, following Mexicans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans (Migration Policy Institute). Their demographics also shifted towards lower class, darker-skinned, and female immigrants, a departure from the light-skinned, middle-class men who entered the United States through air travel in years prior. The enforcement-intensive post-reform period was thus a critical turning point in Brazilian migration history, as it increased similarities between Brazilians and other immigrant groups, making them susceptible to the dominant narratives about immigrants that prevailed in their new homes.
Brazilians are a difficult immigrant group to study demographically for three reasons: the change in their race and class make-up over time, their ambiguous ethnic categorization as Latinos, and their largely undocumented status. The number of Brazilians in the United States is a question of great debate. The U.S. Census offers a count of 212,000 as of 2000, but other sources contest this number. For example, sociologist Maxine Margolis (2003, 54) cites between 800,000 and 1.1 million Brazilians in the United States in 2001. Establishing accurate official counts of Brazilian immigrants is difficult because of questions around ethnicity and legal status. First, the U.S. Census provides confusing categories for ethnicity and national origin when it comes to Brazilians. For example, identifying as “Hispanic/Latino” includes ancestry from several countries, such as those of “South America and other Spanish origin.”¹ This definition is confusing to Brazilians, who are from South America, but not from a country of Spanish origin. While this factor certainly causes trouble when Brazilian immigrants fill out surveys, the second and more consequential issue is that many Brazilians are undocumented, and are thus cautious of filling out government forms. For example, Margolis (2003) recounts how a rumor that mass deportations would immediately follow the 2000 Census spread fear among many Brazilian respondents. The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates that, from 2010-2014, there were 105,000 undocumented Brazilians in the United States, with most living in the Greater Boston area. According to Margolis, the data used in the MPI estimate significantly undercounts the total Brazilian population. However, we can use the MPI data to assume that undocumented immigrants make up a significant share of Brazilians in the country, regardless of the exact population size.

Most Brazilian immigrants come from the southeast, which is the richest and most populous region of Brazil. The state of Minas Gerais in particular is home to Governador

¹ The “Hispanic/Latino” category’s definition is even more nebulous given that “Hispanic” origin can include Spain, but “Latino” identity does not.
Valadares, a city famous for its remarkably high rates of immigration to the United States. Greater Boston is an ideal location to study Brazilians, as it is the primary destination for Brazilian immigrants in the United States (Fritz 2010, 6-7). There are several theories as to why the Boston area became such a central destination for Brazilian immigrants. Political scientist Ana Martes (2000) proposes a few major events that established the initial social networks between Brazil and Boston—all of which, for a lack of richer data, are vague observations. First, a cohort of World War II engineers traveled to Governador Valadares to work on a mineral extraction, and upon returning, brought their domestic employees with them. This line of travel continued after the war with return trips to buy precious stones. Further connections were strengthened in the 1960s when a number of women from Rio de Janeiro were offered jobs as maids and twenty men from Belo Horizonte were hired as soccer players; both of these groups hailed from the southeast. These early immigrants would go on to invite relatives to join them. Finally, several Brazilians also came to Boston as students and decided to stay. (Jouët-Pastré & Braga 2008, 5).

In summary, Brazilians’ geopolitical context of entrance into the United States works in tandem with the immigration narratives and policies of the 1990s to shape their incorporation into Greater Boston. Brazil lost its international symbolic capital after it was no longer useful as a Cold War representative of capitalism. As they fled economic turmoil—an “invalid” reason for migration—Brazilians arriving in the 1990s entered into an anti-immigrant political climate. These factors are what have left many Brazilians with their undocumented status and current public perception, realities that the community must navigate as they claim their place in Greater Boston.
Here is a limited amount of academic literature about Brazilians in the United States. Even less can be found under Latina/o Studies, indicative of Brazilians’ tenuous relationship with Latinidad. Maxine Margolis’s 1994 *Little Brazil* is one of the few ethnographies written on Brazilian immigrants. I have found it has served as a reference point for where the community once was, and how far it has come. Despite being centered in New York City, Margolis’s findings contain informative similarities and differences. The Brazilians in her study were mostly undocumented, and worked a similar assortment of basic service jobs like restaurant work, construction, and domestic service. At the time, however, most of this cohort of Brazilians had planned to return to Brazil as soon as possible with their savings. These immigrants were also predominantly of middle-class origins and resentful of the lower-class jobs they had come to take up (as noted above, these demographics shift in the years following this 1994 study). Perhaps the most striking difference about early New York City Brazilians is their lack of community. Margolis observes an “ideology of disunity” permeating the Brazilian immigrant scene: Brazilians did not spend time together, trust one another, or organize themselves in any structured way outside of church (1994, 197). In contrast, my research shows that the Brazilian community has developed significantly in the two decades since this ethnography, creating supportive resource networks in Greater Boston and rising to regional visibility as a result.

Two other works on Brazilians are useful to my thesis. *Becoming Brazuca*, edited by Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia Braga, compiles a series of key contributions to the literature on Brazilians. It includes statistical and demographic data, historical summaries, and analyses of relevant themes in the Brazilian immigrant experience. I use this volume as a grounding source for the thesis, as its all-encompassing nature is a helpful reference point. It is
supplemented by *Brazilian Immigration and the Quest for Identity* by Catarina Fritz. This short study provides similar information to draw from as *Becoming Brazuca*, but distinguishes itself through its focus on race and immigration status. The book confirms my understanding of undocumented status as a pervasive experience for Brazilians, and through its extensive interviews, provides me with perspectives that go beyond the limits of my own interviews. As Fritz learns from her informants, ethnicity is an uncomfortable question. Most Brazilians find it difficult to identify as “Latino,” especially when it is used interchangeably with “Hispanic.” Identification within race covers the whole spectrum, with half of Fritz’s informants simply choosing to identify as “mixed.” Brazilian identity within these parameters is interestingly complex, and reverberates through Brazilians’ grappling with the United States economy and their immigration status. I find that the literature on Brazilians has consistently arrived at similar conclusions as Fritz when investigating race and ethnicity. Instead of elaborating on the various ways Brazilians define themselves, I focus on the strategic implications of their self-identifications.

Throughout this thesis, I will explore the concept of Brazilian invisibility. Braga writes, “politics, ethnicity, lack of documentation, and the transient nature of Brazilian immigrants [are] factors leading to their invisibility in American society” (2008, 9). This resonates with my understanding of how key structural forces have constructed Brazilian immigrant identity. However, “being invisible can connote nothingness or a lack of belonging, yet it has also been seen historically as strength and power… a critical factor is whether the person, entity or, in our case, the community feels in control of the process and outcomes of making invisibility a component of its identity” (10). Invisibility of Brazilian identity can be either advantageous or detrimental, depending on how much agency Brazilians feel they have in that process. As Fritz discovered, since Latinidad is negotiable for many Brazilians, being identified under the
“Hispanic” or even “Latino” labels and the negative stigmas they bring might not be desirable for some Brazilians, who would rather distinguish themselves as a separate ethnicity. This may be why my research on public depictions of Brazilian immigrants do not call upon other unwelcoming Latino narratives such as associations with violent crime, welfare abuse, or overt racialization. Moreover, exercising “invisibility” may be advantageous to undocumented Brazilians who not only would prefer less exposure to authorities, but can more easily slip out of the ethnic stereotypes that would trap immigrants who more closely match the “undocumented immigrant” expectation.

Overall, Brazilians exhibit a unique set of similarities and differences with other Latin American immigrants. Their contentious relationship with Latinidad begins with Brazil’s standing as the only Latin American country with Portuguese colonial history. From this origin, the nation-state of Brazil carries a distinct cultural, political, and economic history. It distinguished itself as a historic destination for immigrants, an emerging economy, and as a beacon of Latin modernization eager to join the global market. Brazilians’ fates became entangled with other Latinos under the United States’ Cold War influence. It fell to a dictatorship that reversed its economic hopes and turned it into an immigrant-sending country for the first time. In the Unites States, Brazilians' identification under Latinidad once again becomes malleable, especially by white Brazilians who may more easily associate with Portuguese-Americans. Similarities to other Latino immigrants include undocumented status and entrepreneurship, but Brazilians less commonly fall under more specific negative labels such as poverty, crime, welfare dependency, and racialized otherness. Brazil’s cultural legacy, as well as its immigrants’ reluctant identification under Latinidad, are critical to these different public characterizations.
Methodology

My relationship with my subject matter is not that of an outsider. I, myself, am a Brazilian immigrant who lives in Greater Boston. My family immigrated in the late 1990s, during the period of immigration crackdown I have underscored. Having been raised around the local Brazilian community, I am familiar with local businesses, as well as the challenges Brazilians face as immigrants. When I first began this project in my senior seminar, however, I did not go into my research with the themes I have now. My motivation came from a genuine curiosity to learn broadly about my community through an academic lens, especially under Latina/o Studies, and consider what small piece I could add to the body of knowledge about Brazilians in the United States. I had personal knowledge of economic activity and immigration status, but I did not actively search for these topics. As I proceeded with a historical review of Brazilians’ arrival in the United States, it led me to question modes of incorporation. An analysis of Boston news articles uncovered undeniable thematic patterns. I discovered that Brazilians are consistently evaluated under economic terms: as either entrepreneurs or employed within an assortment of labor like construction and cleaning services. Inextricably tied to this was the question of immigration status, or more specifically, their lack of papers. Brazilians’ social identity were primarily constructed under the two umbrellas of labor and status. As I transitioned into field work for my thesis, I did so with a renewed specificity, focusing on small business activity as the most effective arena for understanding how Brazilians have not only been recipients of these labels, but have acted upon (and despite) them.

I researched *Boston Globe* articles from 1990 to 2015, a 25-year period that encompasses the vast majority of Brazilian immigration history. Articles about Brazilians in this newspaper shed light on how the rest of the Greater Boston community sees them fitting into society. My search terms were limited to “Brazilian” and “immigrant*.” Using these two simple terms
allowed me to accomplish three things. First, it eliminated many articles covering news on Brazil itself. Second, it increased the likelihood of individual-focused articles, which also made the stories more likely to be local ones. Lastly, I believe these terms maintain a relatively neutral starting point – since almost all adult Brazilians during this period were in fact immigrants, the term was ultimately factual regardless of how a story decided to frame it. Despite an approach that attempted as neutral a search as possible, a few consistent themes emerged in how Brazilians have been depicted: once again, their entrepreneurship and undocumented status. I pair my examination of Boston Globe articles with an analysis of Brazilian newspapers. I use the Brazilian Times, a prominent regional newspaper for Brazilians, to compare the similarities and differences in how Brazilians tell stories about themselves with non-Brazilians’ interpretations. For this perspective, I analyzed the main front-page story of each Friday edition of the Times from June 1 to August 31, 2018. The Times releases new issues on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Therefore, Brazilians attending stores and restaurants on Sunday—the busiest day for Brazilian businesses—will invariably be reading the Friday issue when they pick up a copy, hence my choice of publication day. As a free newspaper, the Times also keeps full renditions of all of their issues online. I used this feature to access the issues I wanted and compile the themes of 14 different front-page headlines. Lastly, I returned to the Boston Globe’s summer 2018 coverage of Brazilians to draw a direct comparison.

The thesis is based on fieldwork undertaken from June 1st to June 6th of 2018, complemented by a set of interviews in the fall of 2018. My observational field research consisted of visiting and spending time in several corner stores, restaurants, and other shops throughout Everett and Somerville, visiting each business to record observations once. These cities are two of the three Greater Boston locations with the highest density of Brazilians. Framingham, the Massachusetts city with the most Brazilians, is further west of central
Boston, located on the edge of the Greater Boston region, and was thus outside of my reach for field research. Somerville and Everett are closer to the heart of Boston, each being roughly a twenty-minute drive away from downtown. Despite not being at the center of the metropolitan region, the two smaller cities are remarkably densely populated. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Somerville is the 16th densest city in the United States, outranking Boston (51st) and San Francisco (21st). Everett is ranked 94th, with a population density comparable to Philadelphia and Miami.

Somerville is a city northwest of downtown Boston and borders the city of Cambridge to the south. It is connected to the MBTA subway system. Like Cambridge, which is home to universities including Harvard and MIT, Somerville is the college town of Tufts University. The two cities share much of the same college-town demographics and culture, particularly as destinations for college students and young professionals. According to Luciano, one of my two informants, rising rent prices in Cambridge initially led to the Brazilian population there being pushed into Somerville. Somerville, however, has also experienced significant gentrification, beginning when the MBTA was extended through it in 1985 (Somerville Community Corporation). These newer residents share the city with other long-time residents and working-class immigrants such as those from Brazil, Haiti, El Salvador, and Portugal. Luciano warns that some of these Brazilians have ultimately been driven out by rising rent once more, spreading into nearby cities. This account helps explain the dispersal of Brazilians around Boston, particularly their emergence in Everett, one of Somerville’s neighboring cities.

Everett is a city located directly north of downtown Boston. Unlike Somerville, it is not connected to the Boston subway system, and consequently feels more removed from downtown. The subway does not extend north of downtown at all, but central Boston is still accessible via bus routes. Everett is part of a cluster of cities north of Boston that have higher immigrant
populations than the rest of the Greater Boston region, including Chelsea, Revere, and Malden, which have become destinations for a variety of new immigrant communities (with similarities to Somerville) such as Salvadorans, Haitians, and Chinese. Historically, Everett was a major destination for Italian immigrants, and has continued to be strongly influenced by Italian-Americans, the ethnic community most prominent in the city next to Brazilians. This city is comparably more working-class than Somerville.

The field research was conducted from June 1st to June 6th of 2018. Most of this research was conducted in Everett, as the city’s layout facilitated the type of research I was doing. Everett is a smaller city than Somerville, with a downtown square that is dense with Brazilian businesses. Meanwhile, Somerville’s businesses, particularly the Brazilian-owned ones, were more dispersed across the city. Consequently, I spent an extended amount of time recording observations inside three locations in Everett and one in Somerville, while also exploring the areas around these businesses in both cities. In Everett, I observed one popular corner store called Super JC Market, as well as two restaurants popular for late-night dining: Chriscilla’s Pizzeria and Santana’s Plaza Café. I grew up in the city neighboring Everett and have visited these places repeatedly, and this background knowledge informs my understanding of their local popularity. In Somerville, I sat down in a store similar to Super JC Market called Mineirão: One Stop Mart—likely a reference to the owner’s origins in Minas Gerais. This store and the city blocks that I explored in Somerville were completely new to me, unlike Everett.

In addition to observations, I examined business cards, fliers, and newspapers that were available at all of the shops and restaurants I visited. I draw from the writings of Jose Esteban Muñoz and Martin Manalansan to conceptualize these items as “ephemera.” They prove to be just as informative as the fieldwork in understanding the Brazilian community’s organization. Muñoz argues that ephemera are about “traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things” (1996,
10).” Manalansan adds that such ephemeral evidence “embodies the fleeting, nomadic, messy, and elusive experiences and processes of self-making” among what Muñoz calls “minoritarian subjects”—of which include, most relevantly, people of color, immigrants, and the undocumented (105). The idea of these Brazilian artifacts as “traces” of a minoritarian community is highly resonant; the ephemera I studied trace the contours of a socio-economic network of free agents proposing services and information that work to the benefit of immigrants, especially the undocumented. Their physical impermanence and elusiveness only furthers their suitability as not only tools within an undocumented community, but as evidence with which to document a community that is, by necessity, elusive.

Finally, I also interviewed two Brazilian immigrant entrepreneurs, who own their own small businesses—a restaurant and a diversified corner store. Within 30-minute interviews, I asked them about their business’ origin stories, how they decided what goods and services to offer, what role they felt their business played in the community, and how they believed Brazilians are perceived by the region at large. We held our conversations in Portuguese, with some English loanwords inevitably scattered throughout. Their voices will shed light on my findings along the way, contributing to key insights in both chapters.

Overview

In the first chapter, I interpret Brazilians’ social position and how their identity has been constructed in the region. What has integration into Greater Boston looked like for Brazilians so far? How have non-Brazilians come to define, categorize, or evaluate this new immigrant community? What has become associated with the Brazilian immigrant? How do Brazilians themselves interpret their social role, and their immigrant group more broadly? To explore these questions, I turn primarily to newspaper coverage of Brazilian immigrants. To
analyze what the Greater Boston population’s perception has been of Brazilians as they have integrated into the region, I turned to the largest mainstream newspaper with a regional focus, the *Boston Globe* and a prominent regional newspaper *The Brazilian Times*. This comparison of newspaper depictions, essentially focusing on how Brazilian identity has become publicly constructed, will constitute Chapter 1.

The first chapter will deal heavily with the public narratives told about immigrants. In *Illegal, Alien, or Immigrant*, political scientist Lina Newton demonstrates how we can find political narratives at the heart of immigration policy changes. Her work helps me place Brazilian immigration in an accurate sociopolitical context. I utilize her breakdown of immigrant narratives to analyze depictions of Brazilians in media, particularly newspapers. Newton proposes, "policy narratives and the social constructions of the target populations embedded in these narratives are essential to understanding how lawmakers divide and subdivide the immigrant population." She argues that "constructing divisions that indicate who is assimilable and who should be kept out allows policymakers to… [channel] labor to specific segments of the economy" (2008, 4). Newton’s claims are germane to my themes of labor and immigration status, as Brazilians’ worth as immigrants are constantly evaluated by media through their performance under these parameters. I also use Newton’s work to inform my discussion of another major question in this study: the concept of immigrant “deservingness.” I aim to parse out what traits and actions make an immigrant “deserve” to be in the country, and how Brazilians respond to those expectations. Anthropologist Ana Ramos-Zayas (2006) proposes a similar framework of “worthiness.” In her study of Puerto Ricans in Chicago, she identifies a “‘politics of worthiness;’ that is, the tacit and explicit insistence that Puerto Ricans in general, and the Puerto Rican poor in particular, must prove their deservingness of U.S. citizenship to be legitimately entitled to civil rights and social benefits that other—particularly
white male—populations can assume as inalienable." She notes that other Latin American immigrants are also drawn into these politics (2006, 285). Like Newton, Ramos-Zayas emphasizes the role of media as an arbiter of whether immigrants achieve such worthiness. These two authors guide my analysis of the immigrant narratives and evaluations of deservingness embedded in newspaper depictions of Brazilians.

My second chapter investigates what Brazilians have done as actors in response to the structural forces and public narratives that have shaped their experiences in the country. I focus on the local “economic system” that I demonstrate has been built by and for Brazilians to address the desires and concerns of Brazilian immigrants. To learn how to study Brazilians, one does not need to draw exclusively from literature about them. Brazilians share valuable similarities with Dominicans, as anthropologist Christian Krohn-Hansen reveals in his ethnography, *Making New York Dominican*. I use his work as an ethnographic guide for practice theory, a position that “insists on the existence of a dialectical relationship between creative, social action, and social structure” (2013, 131). Krohn-Hansen situates Dominicans as immigrants responding to economic structural changes and other limitations of resources and access. Having acknowledged these obstacles, Krohn-Hansen then illustrates how Dominicans have come to carve their own place in New York City. Upon the collapse of the urban manufacturing industry, Dominicans became increasingly self-employed, starting small businesses like bodegas. Despite the immigrant status and low incomes of many Dominicans, they have become “an ethnic political force” in the city, securing electoral representation. I hope to similarly situate Brazilians as real actors working to transform the constraints imposed on them. Krohn-Hansen’s findings are also a point of reference for understanding immigrants’ small business practices. Particularly, my interviews with Brazilian business owners share similarities with Dominicans in raising initial capital, maintaining business partnerships, and
evaluating what products and services their customers want. I have used his approach to studying businesses owners and their enterprises to guide my own analysis.

In line with Krohn-Hansen’s work, I want to make clear that the thesis is not about documenting an “ethnic enclave.” The trope of the ethnic enclave is overly concerned with spatial “rootedness,” ignores the interactions that occur across ethnic boundaries, and dismisses the evolving nature of integration not only in one city, but within a greater sociopolitical order that spans borders and decades. Instead of artificially segregating an immigrant group, I seek to make connections between Brazilians’ practices in their host country and “the much larger historical, political, economic, and cultural field within which they operate and upon whose existence their practices and ways of thinking are premised” (Krohn-Hansen, 11). Far from being an isolated community, Brazilians’ economic and social activities are consistently interwoven with that of other immigrant groups in Greater Boston as well as native-born residents. Chapter 2 will weave my observations and ephemera into a study of Brazilians’ economic activity and resource organization, attempting to capture their actions as autonomous agents within the narratives written about them.

This thesis is a small snapshot of the Brazilian experience in the United States. Despite this limited scope, I believe it represents something larger. I return to the question of choice here. The ways Brazilians have had their choices constrained by macroeconomics, geopolitics, and political rhetoric echo the stories of other immigrant groups to the United States. Being an immigrant is a challenging journey to undertake. Resilience, resourcefulness, and enduring optimism are crucial values for immigrants both during migration and life in the host country. The choices Brazilians have been able to make in Greater Boston—how they have exercised their agency in the face of major structural barriers—can illuminate what it means to be an immigrant in this country.
Chapter 1

Competing Narratives on Brazilian Immigrants

Yet, the biggest reason that Brazilian immigrants believed in [a fraudster], those interviewed said, is because they wanted to.

“At least he gave me hope for a short time that I could stay here forever,” [one Brazilian victim] said.

*The Boston Globe* newspaper, 13 Nov. 1994

The excerpt above, taken from a *Boston Globe* story, captures the alleged perspective of Brazilian immigrants who had been scammed by a Framingham man offering applications for permanent residency. The fraudster claimed to have special connections in Washington and charged over a thousand undocumented Brazilians at least $500 each to have him submit their papers for them. Despite the cruelty of his scheme, the article limits the victims’ voices to apparent expressions of gratitude. Tellingly, the article is titled “Lost Dreams, Missing Money: Immigrants Paid Suspect $500,000.” Such wording places culpability directly on the victims—the actor here is not the manipulative criminal, but rather the Brazilians who willingly forfeited their savings to him. The majority of the story goes on to flesh out a humanizing characterization of this criminal’s life, while relegating Brazilians to a few descriptors: undocumented, vulnerable, and evidently responsible for their own misfortune.

In this chapter, I examine the history of the *Boston Globe*’s coverage of Brazilian immigrants in Greater Boston. I argue that the *Boston Globe*’s coverage of Brazilian immigrants arranges them under a dichotomy of “deserving” and “unwelcome” narratives. The qualities associated with each narrative are directly attributable to the U.S. sociopolitical climate during
their arrival along with their economic realities. Moreover, the *Boston Globe*’s depictions of Brazilians reinforce the social guidelines used to manage immigration, determining how easily Brazilian immigrants can integrate into the Greater Boston community. Next, to evaluate how Brazilian immigrants view themselves in the community, I compare the *Boston Globe* with a selection of articles by the *Brazilian Times*, a regional Brazilian ethnic newspaper that consistently spotlights stories about Brazilians. I find that while both publications play to the same notions of what constitutes the immigrant experience, the *Brazilian Times* justifies Brazilians as belonging in the country more firmly than the *Boston Globe* does, while also going further in its criticism of U.S. immigration policy by printing stories that urge for reform.

Media is crucial to examine because it can tell us how immigrants are expected to be treated by a community. Frances Aparicio establishes, “media coverage promotes public discussion and eventually leads to the creation of public opinion” (2010, 66). Because of this influence, media has the capacity to carry out the sociopolitical desires of the nation-state. As anthropologist Ana Ramos-Zayas argues, “public media representations become powerful disciplining strategies of the state” (2006, 285). Media depictions are therefore useful measures of local attitudes towards immigrants. I turn to the *Boston Globe* as a bellwether of mainstream media narratives in Greater Boston.

To generate narratives for an immigrant group, media depictions necessarily enmesh themselves in the question of immigrant “deservingness.” As political scientist Lina Newton contends, "If the nation never has and, for the foreseeable future, never will stop all immigration completely, the management of immigration will perpetually be about constructing typologies of acceptable and unacceptable immigrants" (2008, 18). Brazilians are no exception to this practice, and are organized under markers of “worthy” or “unwelcome.” The Brazilian community is accordingly scrutinized over whether they collectively fall into one
category or the other. Ramos-Zayas frames the role of media as creating binary classifications of Puerto Ricans by compartmentalizing them into “those who are ‘deserving’ American citizens—namely, those invested in proving their worthiness with their upward mobility, aspirations, and accomplishments—and those who are ‘criminals’ and deemed ‘undeserving’ of claiming full citizenship rights” (2006, 285). Paralleling this dichotomy, the *Boston Globe* simplifies Brazilian identity into two narratives: one of deserving immigrants boasting economic achievements, and a second of undocumented Brazilians denied opportunities because of their criminal status.

How do immigrants situate themselves in the context of these narratives and manipulate them with their own stories? We can understand Latino news media “as advocating immigrant rights and including the Latino perspective on immigration politics” (Aparicio 2010, 67). Thus, to understand how Brazilians respond to the pressures around them and make sense of their own world, I analyze the *Brazilian Times* and place its use of deservingness, visibility, and vulnerability in comparison to Greater Boston’s major mainstream news publication.

*The Globe’s Sociopolitical Implications*

My analysis of *Boston Globe* articles on Brazilians reveals that public depictions of Brazilian immigrants are dominated by two narratives: one of immigrants fulfilling the American Dream through economic ambition, and another focusing on Brazilians’ undocumented status and its consequences. Some *Boston Globe* articles welcome the narrative of “newcomers” following the American Dream by starting new businesses, working hard, and “revitalizing” local economies. Brazilian industriousness and entrepreneurial “spirit” are consistent themes. Several of these articles reference Brazilian immigrants’ drive to earn money, whether in the United States or Brazil. Other articles, however, employ a different
depiction that highlights Brazilians’ position as “illegal,” exploitable foreign workers, attempting to illustrate the consequences of undocumented status and to characterize Brazilians as troubled immigrants. Very few articles fall outside these dual depictions. The two narratives are consistent with the search for the “deserving immigrant” that dominated the United States immigration conversation at the turn of the century. Notably, they are absent other signifiers associated with Latino/immigrant groups, such as welfare dependency, gang crime, or need for asylum. They are also noteworthy given most Brazilians’ context of migration: their position as economically-motivated immigrants grappling with restrictive immigration laws is essential to understanding their media characterization.

The Boston Globe’s coverage captures the interlocking forces informing Brazilian migration, with content that parallels changes in politics and migration flows. Brazilians’ motivations for immigrating are economic specifically because Brazil’s economy failed in the transition out of a US-backed Cold War dictatorship. With U.S. support retracting, Brazilians entered a country that did not recognize their cause of migration as “valid,” making authorized status difficult to obtain. At the same time, negative US rhetoric towards immigration culminated in the passage of IIRIRA a few years after Brazilians began immigrating. IIRIRA incentivized immigrants to establish long-term roots in the country, but also increased the power imbalance between employers and undocumented workers, fostering a climate of fear and anxiety among Brazilians. These two impacts help explain the articles’ attention to local entrepreneurship and immigration status, respectively. Additionally, the volume of Boston Globe articles roughly fluctuates over time in parallel with changes in migration flows. Through my search, I found that there is a remarkably concentrated period of coverage on Brazilian immigrants from 2001 to 2007 (ranging from 25 to 42 articles per year on archive), with distinctly infrequent coverage in years outside of this period (annual article counts mostly in
the single digits). The uptick is most attributable to a combination of intensified Brazilian migration and harsher enforcement during this period. IIRIRA increased the U.S. Border Patrol force to a high point in 2001; simultaneously, Brazilian immigration began to increase, reaching its all-time peak in 2005. After 2007, the Brazilian economy recovered rapidly from the Great Recession while the United States struggled, which likely diminished the flow of Brazilian immigrants.

Finally, the Boston Globe’s depictions echo the dominant national value system for judging immigrants. The sociopolitical narrative inspiring IIRIRA was one distinguishing the “deserving” immigrant from the “public burden.” Brazilians are coded as “deserving” when they demonstrate having “earned” their place as immigrants, typically through economic activities. Simultaneously, being an “illegal” immigrant evokes suspicion and can act as a disqualifier for deserving success in the country. Stories about undocumented immigrants spotlight the suffering that their status causes them, but do not attribute it to flaws in immigration policy. They suggest misfortunes such as labor exploitation, legal scams, and even death are expected consequences of living undocumented. By engaging with these narratives, the Boston Globe also makes claims about the visibility of Brazilian identity, defining invisibility as a weakness instead of an advantage. It does this by elevating entrepreneurs as reputable community figures, while emphasizing the voicelessness of the undocumented.

Boston Globe Coverage

Articles about Brazilians as entrepreneurs and hard workers illustrate the industrious “ideal immigrant” narrative at the core of the Boston Globe’s coverage. The Boston Globe is replete with Brazilians successfully integrating via economic activity. For example, a 2001 article titled “Newest ‘Pilgrims’ Settle In: Brazilians Expand Thriving Economy” (Knox),
enthusiastically reports on the budding Brazilian community further north in Plymouth, making a glowing connection between these newcomers and our U.S. founders. The article touches upon key themes surrounding Boston Brazilians: their potential to enliven communities, their entrepreneurialism, and their “transitional” condition as incompletely American due to an unfinished cultural integration. The new Brazilian residents of Plymouth are praised for starting local businesses, working hard, and enrichening the neighborhood’s culture. The story features an enterprising immigrant, Claudio D’Oliveira:

He lived in Dorchester, worked in a gas station and studied English at Quincy College. "I learned so much," he said. "I had to learn many things. First, I had to learn to respect people . . . People respect the rules, that is something that I really like."

While clock-driven tourists may envy the relaxed atmosphere of sunny Brazil, D’Oliveira said, he respects the moderation of American society. You can’t drink until you are of age. You can go out and have fun, he said, but the bars close at 1 a.m. At home the parties last longer - maybe too long, he said.

"America gave me a lot of opportunity," D’Oliveira said. "I didn’t have much opportunity in Brazil . . . And let me say, I love America." He takes his opportunity seriously; he works seven days a week.

D’Oliveira speaks positively about the United States. and its more hardworking culture. The combination of his responses and the author’s narration work to reinforce stereotypes contrasting fun-loving Brazil with the diligent United States. D’Oliveira’s dialogue is an interesting appraisal of U.S. values as superior to those of Brazil, proving his loyalties lie in the right place. This is narrated as a positive choice, true to sociologist Peggy Levitt’s claim that, “many Americans… expect newcomers to renounce their membership in their home countries in exchange for full social and political membership in the United States” (2001, 4). The article suggests that while D’Oliveira is still not fully “American,” he is well on his way to integrating
successfully. His economic dedication, signaled by him working “seven days a week,” identifies him as a deserving immigrant who “takes his opportunity seriously.”

The article goes on to praise local Brazilian ESL students, emphasizing their favorable visibility by quoting a vice principal, who says, “They're doing extremely well… we've been watching this program closely… the community has grown here in Plymouth and its adding to the diversity of the town.” This point is highlighted through the introduction of another local Brazilian entrepreneur who graduated from the ESL program, making a connection between visibility and economic success.

Brazilians’ relationship to work and the economy is an ever-present theme. In perhaps the only significant favorable article during the Great Recession period, the 2010 story “Brazilians showcase their rise in Boston” (Sacchetti) warmly features a local entrepreneur, Pablo Maia, and the “first Brazilian trade show in the United States” that he organized:

The exposition is a chance to show that Brazilians are highly entrepreneurial - more likely to own a business than the typical state resident - and that they pay taxes and create jobs.

"We want to be part of Massachusetts; we don't want to be just 'the Brazilian community' in the state," said Maia, sitting in an air-conditioned office filled with fliers selling real estate in Massachusetts and in Brazil. "We are making a difference. But if we're more integrated, we'll do much better."

This article exemplifies the *Boston Globe’s* linkage of economic activity with successful integration. Maia expresses his intentions when he says he doesn’t want Brazilians to simply be “the Brazilian community,” or in other words, an ethnic enclave. He affirms that integration will allow Brazilians to “do much better.” The article reveals what completes Maia’s position as a deserving immigrant: he is one of the ones that “pay taxes and create jobs.” Brazilians who can “rise in Boston,” evidently, are decidedly not public burdens, and are entrepreneurs who expand the economy. The same themes were exemplified in the title of an earlier article during
the height of Brazilian migration from 2004: “Brazilians Bring A Soaring Spirit: New Neighbors Trace the Steps of Their Immigrant Predecessors” (Weld). The article grants optimistic descriptions of Brazilians “rising” to prominence and visibility with a connection to “predecessors,” so long as the immigrants are making respectable economic contributions.

Even with portrayals of the American Dream, public perception is sometimes revealed to be mixed with concern. In 2002, the Globe published “Melting pot goes suburban,” highlighting Brazilians’ movement into the suburbs outside of Boston. It portrays the new residents as revitalizing their communities, although noting the sudden influx has been concerning for environmentalists and urban planners (Flint).

Free-market conservatives applaud how immigrants are reviving older suburban communities, …[but] those who want to slow immigration are trying to align themselves with environmentalists and smart-growth advocates - identifying immigrant-laden population growth as the most powerful force driving sprawl… "There are huge implications, for schools, for housing, the labor market. There are some areas that aren't used to receiving immigrants. There can be conflict within neighborhoods," [an urban researcher] said.

The Brazilian immigrants bring new life to stagnant suburbs, and while this influx is generally welcome, it is notably met with some suspicion towards immigrants. The newcomers will likely disrupt the old way of things, may create “conflict,” and could adversely affect the urban environment. Here, urban planning expertise is deployed as cause for wariness, as these immigrants’ presence can apparently have serious ramifications for the locals’ way of life.

The most prominent source of unease for the public may be Brazilians’ legal status, a decisive barrier to their integration. A 2006 article, “Brazilians Add A Touch of Home: Throughout Region, New Immigrants Are Reshaping Their Communities” (McCabe), spotlights Everett, a city with a concentrated Brazilian population, and the impact of Brazilian businesses, high church engagement, and participation in the labor market on the community:
Across the North region - from Malden, to Peabody, to Gloucester - newly arrived Brazilians are reshaping their communities. They're opening shops, praying in churches, buying homes, and working as dishwashers, house cleaners, and construction workers, among other jobs.

The article further attempts to balance the two major views of Brazilians in relation to their community: their admirable revitalization of neighborhoods and their status as vulnerable undocumented foreigners. The article continues,

Life is not easy for all these new arrivals. Brazilians, particularly those here illegally and those with limited English, risk exploitation. Afraid of being turned in, they will often take jobs working long hours for low wages, a labor advocate said… But while many struggle for work, others are flourishing.

The themes of vulnerability and prosperity are juggled from sentence to sentence, revealing the close entanglement of competing narratives. The undocumented status of these immigrants threatens to undermine the inspirational story the Boston Globe puts out about their economic integration.

Despite the approving portrayals of Brazilians in some articles, the Boston Globe has produced several stories questioning their presence in the United States, most of them focusing on immigration status. These stories consistently depict the misery of living undocumented. They show Brazilians as illegal and therefore vulnerable, suffering immigrants, often placing this pain in relation to the workforce. Some articles in this category border on sympathy. While there is indeed value in exposing injustice faced by the vulnerable, these accounts stop short of mentioning immigration policy or advocating for some action to be taken.

A 2001 article covering the new diversity in Boston neighborhoods kicks off the less welcoming coverage of Brazilians by the Globe. In the article, Brazilians are directly placed in a “new immigrant” cohort whose social and legal status in the United States has been shaped by an era of restrictive immigration policies. Several immigrant groups are described in
comparison: “Visas have been difficult to obtain for most Mexicans, Colombians, Brazilians, and Salvadorans, making them far more likely to live in Boston without documentation” (Rodriguez). This commentary directly connects to the changes made by IIRIRA, which forced many Brazilians to enter through the U.S.-Mexico border, thus sweeping them into the United States. narratives that follow other Latin American immigrants. Relatedly, the Boston Globe covered a 2009 study comparing the region’s Brazilian immigrants with immigrants from the Dominican Republic (Sacchetti). Although the reason for directly comparing these two groups is never stated, the article explains how Brazilians are less insured, more stressed, dramatically more likely to be undocumented, and less likely to file income taxes than Dominicans. The article goes on to outline the controversy surrounding the study, presenting differing perspectives on its implications. At its core is a questioning of the merits of Brazilians in the community compared to another immigrant group.

Accounts of worker exploitation and the threat of deportation appear in several articles. Two significant Globe stories emerged in 2010, each covering these issues. The first involved a Department of Homeland Security officer who was found guilty of employing an undocumented Brazilian woman as her housekeeper. The story’s pull lies in the hypocrisy of a higher-up DHS employee knowingly hiring an undocumented immigrant. The housekeeper, while not portrayed as culpable of any wrongdoing, is still diminished as simply being “a cleaning lady” and illegal “alien,” although ultimately redeemed for cooperating with police and eventually becoming a legal resident (Saltzman). The participants in the court collectively do not seem to see hiring an undocumented employee as any sort of problem:

Although prosecutors might have had the authority to apply the law in the case, "the judge" said, "their felony charge" struck him as excessive, and his sentence is likely to reflect his distaste…
"This is a cleaning lady," he told prosecutors, a remark he made several times. "There must be some sense of proportion."

The prosecutors also affirm that this particular case is more serious than “simply” hiring a cleaning lady, regardless of treatment:

"We would certainly not have brought this case . . . if it was simply someone employing an illegal alien," said Assistant US Attorney John T. McNeil, deputy chief of the criminal division, who obtained the indictment of Henderson.

Both the judge and the prosecution seem to agree that “someone employing an illegal alien” is not a very noteworthy crime. Their words reinforce a sense of normalcy about the situation that suggests the housekeeper did not “deserve” any better treatment because of her status. The article condones their portrayal of the housekeeper as forgettable, contributing to the invisibility of undocumented Brazilians more broadly. In this case, invisibility is not a shield, but rather a weakness, as the housekeeper was not the one to speak up for herself but was instead confronted by DHS agents after accusations from the officer’s coworkers.

The second worker-related story from 2010 was the scandal of the Upper Crust pizza chain, a quickly growing local business that was revealed to be exploiting its workers. Upper Crust gave men from the poor Brazilian town of Marilac, Minas Gerais, the opportunity to work in the United States, and the pizzeria grew from the steady stream of undocumented labor. However, it eventually ran into trouble with the Labor Department for forcing 80-hour work weeks at rates below minimum wage (Abelson). The Brazilians here once again fall under the narrative of the exploited immigrant, suffering as a consequence of their illegality and foreignness:

"They took advantage of me, but not only me - everyone," Chico said through a translator. "I felt humiliated that I work and work and I was not valued."

"I was so exhausted; I thought I wouldn't make it there and come back," Luis Lucas da Silva said through a translator. The Marilac native returned to Brazil
last fall after working double shifts for several years. "My body couldn't take it anymore. I couldn't even take my feet off the ground."

The immigrants are both emotionally and physically in pain because of this exploitation but are powerless to stand up for themselves.

Da Silva, who entered the country with a fake passport he bought in Portugal, told Tobins [the business owner] that employees were planning to strike unless they received raises or overtime pay. Tobins became incensed. They didn't have any rights, he shouted, according to three former workers and a manager present at the meeting. If they wanted more money, Tobins said, they should find another job. Then he fired da Silva and Filho [another worker] on the spot.

Remarkably, the story continues this bleak tone to conclude on a sad note. The “powerless” protagonists of the article succumb to their illegality and are deported without any redemption for their suffering. In the final sentence, the article makes a point to illustrate that this is the death of an American Dream:

Da Silva was arrested in August 2007, along with Botelho and other illegal Upper Crust workers who had tried to buy immigration documents. Da Silva spent eight months in prison before being deported in 2008... Sometimes when he's riding [his bike around his hometown], he glances down at the "Made in America" flag printed on the bike. It reminds him of what he lost.

The Globe does not only show illegality as a problem in the workplace, but also as a harmful state of existence that places Brazilians’ worth as immigrants into question. The Brazilian workers’ invisibility is the worst kind: it prevents them from “[having] any rights,” but does not shield them from law enforcement. The story does include an acknowledgement of a systematic problem: the workers at one point reported their treatment to labor officials. However, the story makes sure to emphasize that this was not the path to a solution. It narrates, “matters only got worse after the investigation,” explaining how the Labor Department’s intervention incited the workers’ boss to punish them all with pay cuts. Eventually, even after enduring exploitation and attempting to stand up for themselves, they
end up deported. The final detail illustrating an American flag logo drives the message home with a cruel irony.

Finally, in the strongest depictions of undocumented misfortune so far, two Globe stories directly connect the status of Brazilians to their deaths. The first, a short article from 2010, is headlined, “Pulse, Hopes Fading, Immigrant Seeks Heart” and spotlights a father with a potentially fatal heart condition. The man at the time was struggling to qualify for a heart transplant because of his undocumented status (Sacchetti). His worried family feels almost powerless to help. The article’s subheading proclaims, “Status as illegal could be fatal complication for one Brazilian man.” Powerfully, this subheading may be the most indicative out of all the bleak Globe coverage—illegality is literally described as a deadly condition.

In an even more tragic story from 2007, an undocumented Brazilian teenager from Marlborough committed suicide:

The stunning public act, within sight of court clerks and commuters, has shaken a community and triggered an anguished cry for help from his family and friends, who believe Rezende killed himself in despair over his immigration status.

"He always said, `I've been here 11 years and I have no rights. I have no right to a driver's license, no right to continue studying, I have no rights to anything," said his mother, Deusuita, weeping on her couch, near an array of photographs of her son.

The article makes it explicit that the cause of suicide was despair over being undocumented, emphasizing that such immigrants have “no rights to anything.” Stories like these illustrate the thoroughly hopeless, morbid, and ostensibly fatal condition of illegality, while failing to suggest something must change. This has the effect of establishing a hopeless tone, suggesting the problems undocumented Brazilians face are simply the way things are, and could have even been prevented had they chosen not to immigrate illegally. Thus, the cynical coverage
intimates that by virtue of being undocumented, these immigrants may have set themselves up for exploitation and tragedy. In this sense, a “sympathetic” article about Brazilian misfortune can still primarily work to discourage immigration by highlighting the “punishments” incurred for one’s undocumented status. They suggest that immigration is perhaps not a worthwhile endeavor if the consequences of being undocumented are so grave.

Through its coverage of Brazilian immigrants, the Boston Globe mirrors much of the measures of immigrant “quality” that have dominated US narratives during Brazilian migration. The newspaper either depicts Brazilians as hardworking entrepreneurs or ill-fated illegals. The former portrayal signals an immigrant is “deserving” of integration and presence in the country, while the latter evokes suspicion over Brazilian immigration. Even with sympathetic portrayals of immigrant hardship, the Boston Globe does not go as far as criticizing the immigration legal system. It fails to assert that policy changes are needed, leaving the implication that migrating illegally leads to natural punishments. This is true even if undocumented immigrants work as hard as their authorized counterparts—unauthorized status makes them ineligible for success. To contrast coverage of Brazilians by a mainstream newspaper, I will next review how Brazilians choose to represent themselves in print media.

The Brazilian Times Front Page

Based on its widespread availability during my field research, the Brazilian Times may be the most popular Brazilian newspaper in Greater Boston. It is apparently based in Somerville, according to its Facebook page, and reaches at least as far as Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, according to its title banner. In 2018, the paper celebrated its 30th anniversary, having been in publication since 1988, roughly the beginning of major Brazilian migration to the United States. The Brazilian Times is written almost entirely in Portuguese,
with the exception of the page banners.\textsuperscript{2} As the name promises, it is very focused on local news that features Brazilians: accidents and deaths involving Brazilians, upcoming fairs, the activities of local Brazilian-owned businesses, Brazilian entertainment, and ads found in every section of the paper. The front-page stories of this newspaper throughout the summer of 2018 were entirely Brazilian-focused. Every one of the 14 weekend features were about a specific Brazilian or small group of Brazilians. These stories were also often about people living in the region: eight of the stories were about residents of New England, especially Massachusetts, while the other six referenced Brazilians in other parts of the country. There were only two stories that were not attached to a specific location and that instead spoke to national issues. The \textit{Brazilian Times} thus works to fill a gap in regional representation left by the \textit{Boston Globe}, which only occasionally features Brazilians in its issues.

Immigration, particularly involving undocumented Brazilians, is a prominent theme for the \textit{Brazilian Times} front page. The topics of these immigration stories were not any more sanguine than the \textit{Boston Globe} ones, and instead confirmed the vulnerability of undocumented immigrants to exploitation and federal enforcement. Five of the weekend stories from the summer were about immigration enforcement. A series of three June headlines in a row were about the family separation crisis at the border. These included the two national-issue stories: one announced the government had lost track of 49 missing Brazilian children, and the other spotlighted one Brazilian woman separated from her child as becoming a “symbol” of the nationwide crisis. Another covered a Brazilian captured by ICE at the Boston airport. One additional article was about the indirect risks of immigration, featuring the testimony of a Brazilian domestic worker who was a victim of sexual abuse by her US employer, who threatened to report her to immigration enforcement.

\textsuperscript{2} The \textit{Brazilian Times} does not include bylines for its articles. Consequently, no authors will be cited in this review.
The story of Jocelyn, the Brazilian mother separated from her son, echoed the narratives of other families migrating from Latin America at the time of the zero-tolerance policy. It was captured in the June 29, 2018 article “Brazilian Woman Becomes Symbol of the Fight Against Separation of Families In the U.S.” The mother and son had been migrating through Central America. Upon being detained in El Paso, Jocelyn’s son was sent to a “shelter” in Chicago. Jocelyn was able to plead her case with lawyers, who reunited her with her son after seven months. In a departure from the typical economic motivations of immigrants, the Brazilian Times notes that Jocelyn sought asylum in the U.S. “to flee an abusive relationship and because gangs were threatening her son.” Her story thus serves as a powerful example of a Brazilian who “deserves” a chance at legal immigration. While Jocelyn’s story is similar to the impactful accounts of other immigrant families torn apart, the Times description of her as a “symbol” of the crisis overall reveals a degree of public visibility in Brazilians’ self-perception. Highlighting her indignant bravery, the article quotes her:

“I involved myself in this cause… to fight for the mothers that have gone through this with me. I was imprisoned for seven months. This was unjust… I ask that God help us in this case. There is much injustice with the mothers and the separation of their children. It’s very hard for the families.”

At the same time that the article portrays Jocelyn as a deserving, highly visible Brazilian, it condemns the immigration policy as irrefutably deplorable. It supports her criticism with denunciations from her lawyers and allies at nonprofits, who are fighting for the end to the zero-tolerance policy. Even though the law ultimately reunited her with her son, the article makes clear it has not earned our forgiveness, as “the [legal] battle, in the name of [Jocelyn] and other immigrants, is far from over.” Presumably, as Jocelyn suggests, God is on the Brazilian immigrant’s side in this struggle.
On August 3, 2018, the front-page story “Undocumented Brazilian Housecleaner Speaks About Sexual Abuse” covered the testimony of Luna, a Brazilian domestic worker who survived an attempted sexual assault by her male employer. Like the family separation article, this one uses a Brazilian’s story as a window to a national issue—in this case, the author explains the “#MeToo” movement to readers. First, the article begins by affirming the reality of immigrant exploitation. It points out how the paper frequently reports on these stories, a similarity it shares with the *Boston Globe*: “The *Brazilian Times* has covered diverse stories where Brazilians were exploited by their patrons and some even threatened with being handed over to the immigration department.” It then continues with the testimony of Luna, who was suddenly attacked by her employer while she was cleaning his house. After Luna fought him off and locked herself in his bathroom, he threatened to have her deported if she told anyone. She shares:

“When I understood what he wanted to do, I kneeled and asked God to keep me calm, give me strength, and to help me get out alive... He told me ‘If you want to live, if you want a normal life, shut your mouth and don’t tell anyone about this. You are an immigrant. You have no documents. You don’t speak English. If you tell anyone what happened, I will hand you over to immigration. You and your husband will be deported.”

Despite her fear, Luna brought her case to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, which successfully had the man temporarily imprisoned and ordered to pay her an indemnity.

This story, like the one about Jocelyn, depicts undocumented Brazilians as empowered to act against injustice and succeed to some degree. Compare this to the *Boston Globe* stories about the exploited pizza restaurant workers and the DHS officer’s domestic worker. For the

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3 The full story title and the front-page title differ. On the front page, the headline is “He Threw Me On The Ground and Tried to Rip Off My Pants.” Additionally, the full story has the thematic subheading “Courage to Denounce.”

4 The #MeToo movement is a movement against sexual assault and harassment, particularly as perpetrated by men in positions of power, such as employers against their female employees.
restaurant workers, voicing their discontent effectively had them deported. While this shed light on immigrants’ challenges, the article does not advocate for any alternative. Additionally, the *Boston Globe* story about the “cleaning lady” case did not give her agency (she had little choice but to cooperate when confronted by officials) and interviewed all actors except the immigrant herself. This is true to Aparicio’s argument that “To bolster claims about objective reporting, journalists… find "accredited sources,' to present both the pros and cons of any issue… However, mainstream media cannot claim to be "objective" in their news when they systematically exclude Latino/a perspectives. This question has serious ramifications with regard to news about immigration” (Aparicio 2010, 68). In this attempt to show “all sides,” the article does include some criticism of the law, adding “advocates for immigration reform said [the court case] illustrated the broken nature of the immigration system and the near impossibility for ordinary Americans to avoid doing business with undocumented workers.” However, the *Brazilian Times* goes even further by elevating a recent Massachusetts law called the Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights, which protects undocumented domestic workers who report sexual abuse. It thus offers an example of legislation that is the right step forward. Once again, I make the distinction here that this article does not suggest all is right with the legal status quo. Although Luna achieved redemption through the law, the article makes clear the broader system does not work in favor of immigrants. It refers to the language barriers and fear of the “new immigration politics of President Trump” and quotes a local organizer who says, “this happens every day, but most of the time, no one hears about it.”

Lastly, the August 24 front page story, “One More Brazilian Denounces ICE’s Persecution In Boston Airport,” recounted the experience of a Brazilian immigrant woman’s son arriving attempting to enter the U.S. The teenager was imprisoned by ICE upon his arrival, detained overnight, and then deported after his visa rejection was confirmed. Unlike the
previous two, this story does not depict justice being delivered in any capacity. What it instead offers is another sympathetic account of Brazilians being unfairly treated by immigration enforcement. The son’s immigration status (and why he was rejected) is only vaguely described, eluding any label of “illegality” that would imply he may not have deserved entry in to the country. The article lets the mother and son’s voices lead. The son describes his treatment: “They handcuffed me, I was treated like trash...they asked me many questions...served me a horrible breakfast, then [put me in a cell]... and only returned my belongings once I arrived in Sao Paulo.” The mother criticizes ICE’s behavior, making clear the message of this story: “…I have contributed much to this country and to see my son treated marginal is revolting... I never imagined my son [being treated this way] without having done anything wrong.” She argues that if her son did not have the authorization to enter the country, all the authorities should have done was simply “send him back” instead of putting him through “all this disorder that will certainly cause trauma.” Again, while this story does not depict Brazilians as in control of their legal fates, it does continue the themes of Brazilians deserving a better immigrant experience and a legal system that can and should be reformed.

This collection of stories suggests Brazilians are highly conscious of their own vulnerabilities as immigrants. It is important to clarify, however, that almost all of the other front-page stories were also about Brazilians in danger or trouble. The non-immigration headlines were about a range of crimes and accidents Brazilians either caused or were victim to. There may be various reasons for this—most simply, it may just be the nature of newspaper marketing to place the most sensational headlines on the front page (this is likely the case, since the articles inside each Times issue are generally less sensational than those on the front). Even with this in mind, the large share of these headlines that are about the dangers of immigration status indicate it is a prominent fear.
To ensure a more direct comparison of the two news sources, I went back and checked on the *Boston Globe’s* coverage of Brazilians during the same summer 2018 time period. This time, I simply searched “Brazilian” since non-U.S news stories would be easier to comb through within the shorter time frame. Even without the inclusion of “immigrant” in the search, immigration was once again the dominant topic. About twelve articles throughout the summer covered the stories of specific Brazilians, and eight of them were chiefly about immigration enforcement. Two stories spotlight different Brazilians’ unfair treatment during immigration enforcement proceedings, with courts intervening in favor of the Brazilians. Another pair of stories is also focused on immigration proceedings, but in this case, the Brazilians were being arrested for crimes: one woman for ATM scamming and another man for rape and assault. In this same vein, a May 25 story titled “Brazilian national pleads guilty to firearm charge” incriminates another immigrant, but stops short of discussing immigration enforcement proceedings other than his arrest.

Mirroring the *Brazilian Times’* attention to the issue, the *Globe* covered stories of three different Brazilian mothers who were separated from their children at the border and were battling for reunification. One mother’s story was even included in the front page of the *Boston Globe’s* June 22 issue, the only story about a Brazilian to make it there this summer. Interestingly, this mother was a different one than the woman lauded as a “nationwide symbol” of the crisis in the *Times*. However, their coverage is in fact very similar—in an example of high sympathy for Brazilian immigrants, the mother’s story is compellingly told, with generous quotes and a portrayal of an unjust system in need of immediate correcting. This is somewhat a departure from pre-Trump narratives of Brazilian immigration, in the years surrounding its peak.
Conclusion

The Boston Globe does not ignore Brazilian voices. It often shares emotional quotes from the Brazilians in their stories. However, as a mainstream news source pursuing “objectivity,” the paper does privilege, as Aparicio argues, “sources accredited as experts, usually finding people who are aligned with dominant institutions and giving them the power to establish and define the issues at stake.” This leaves the Globe at risk of “[reproducing] symbolically the existing structure of power in society's institutional order.” Following what Aparicio observes about Latino media broadly, the Brazilian Times places Brazilians in authority over their own stories, essentially turning to “alternative ‘experts,’ creating major epistemological, ideological, racial, and gender differences in which perspectives are perceived as having value” (Aparicio 2010, 69). Brazilians use their platform to evoke established narratives of immigrant deservingness, foregoi ng the mainstream pro/con balancing act while pushing exclusively for pro-immigration reform.

The Brazilian Times and the Boston Globe differ in their criticism of the immigration system. Articles covering immigration troubles in the Brazilian Times consistently lamented the fact that immigration enforcement and law exists in the way that it does. However, the collection of Boston Globe articles that I examined from the pre-Trump era never went so far. There were no condemnations of immigration policies as the reasons for immigrant suffering. This may have changed during the Trump administration for issues such as the zero-tolerance policy, as the historically left-leaning Boston Globe has likely backlashed against the administration’s caustic anti-immigrant stance. However, regarding incidents beyond Trump’s family separation crisis, the Brazilian Times rejects the interpretation that immigrants are at fault for the consequences of their status, while the Boston Globe appears un convinced. Because of media’s power to enforce the will of the state, Boston Globe stories that lack systemic
criticisms ultimately suggest undocumented Brazilians are at fault for their suffering—and by extension, undeserving of belonging.

The *Brazilian Times* demonstrates how Brazilians view themselves as vulnerable. Simultaneously, they believe they are more deserving, visible, and empowered than the mainstream media depicts them. Conscious of the social parameters for judging immigrants that loom over their daily lives, Brazilians are motivated to overcome immigrant challenges, perform the “deserving immigrant” persona, and mitigate the damage caused by stigmatized aspects of their lives such as language barriers and legal status. The next chapter illustrates how Brazilians respond to public expectations by creating an economic system for themselves that diminishes their vulnerability and isolation.
Chapter 2

**Jeitinho: Brazilian Agency Through Economic Activity**

For Brazilians, the *jeitinho* (literally “little way”) is a source of national pride. Usually conveyed through amusing anecdotes, it refers to any range of rule-bending or creative pragmatism used to achieve some sort of goal, usually amidst a lack of adequate resources. Anthropologist Roberto Da Matta describes it as “a style, a way of being, a mode of existence that, despite being founded in universal qualities, is exclusively Brazilian” (Tosta 2004, 580). I conceptualize *jeitinho* as a practice of Brazilian agency towards resourcefully overcoming their obstacles, and apply it to the immigrants of Greater Boston. Chapter 1 explored the public expectations held for Brazilians—a model of a prosperous and enthusiastic immigrant. It also showed what qualities are stigmatized, and would cast Brazilians further into a foreign otherness. This chapter addresses how Brazilians respond to these factors. In light of the social circumstances informing their arrival, what practices, actions, and tools have Brazilians taken advantage of to facilitate their integration into Greater Boston? How do they practice their *jeitinhos*? I outline a host of strategies Brazilians employ to better present a public persona of “deservingness,” avoid encounters that betray a racialized otherness, and generally lead acceptable lives in their community.

To explore these questions, I conducted observational field research in two Brazilian-heavy neighborhoods in Greater Boston and collected ephemera from these locations. I also complement my evidence with the voices of the two Brazilian entrepreneurs I interviewed: Eustaquio and Luciano, two men who each own a business in the region. The previous chapter demonstrated the centrality of economic activity, especially entrepreneurship, to Brazilian
identity, as well as the social challenges Brazilians face in the United States. In turn, this chapter employs a fundamentally economic perspective, with “economics” defined here as the study of the organization of scarce resources, goods, and services, as well as the human decisions behind these allocations. A local economic “system” thus encompasses the ways its members have decided what resources (material goods, services, social connections, and information) people need and how to effectively distribute them within a network.

My research indicates that it is vital for an immigrant community to facilitate access to such resources. This need to build support systems is made urgent by the two most prominent obstacles inherent to Brazilian immigration: legal status and language barriers. As previously noted, many Brazilians are undocumented—up to one-third of all Brazilian immigrants in the United States, according to the Migration Policy Institute. Additionally, English language acquisition is persistently challenging. Whether it’s because of high-hour workweeks or uncertainty over how long they will stay in the country, some Brazilians become like sociologist Peggy Levitt’s “recipient observers,” and do not learn much English even after many years of living in the United States (2001, 57). Consequently, Brazilians must face the timeless immigrant challenge of helping one another prosper and navigate these barriers by maintaining social connections and cultivating Brazilian-friendly resources and services.

The Brazilian-owned economy in Boston is organized to help overcome the challenges of living as an immigrant. In her 1994 ethnography of Brazilians in New York, anthropologist Maxine L. Margolis was surprised to find a pervasive lack of community strength. She describes an “ideology of disunity” that discourages Brazilians from trusting one another, creating mutually beneficial resource structures, or even socializing outside of church (1994, 196). My experience with the Brazilian community in Greater Boston has been a stark contrast to Margolis’s findings. My research instead shows how much the Brazilian community has
developed in the two decades since her writing. I argue that the ever-growing structure of Brazilian economic life in Greater Boston acts as a strong platform for exchanging information, social bond-building, and increasing access to goods and services, all of which work to help immigrants thrive in the United States.

Organizing Resources

My exploration of Brazilian businesses reveals how Brazilians organize material goods, services, and information in ways that promote immigrants’ access to them. Super JC Market, a Brazilian store in Everett, is most demonstrative of the way Brazilian small businesses work to bring various resources close together in space. The owner and manager of the store Super JC Market, Eustáquio, immigrated from Brazil in 1988, participating in the emerging years of the migration wave. Eustáquio originally planned to return to Brazil after making a sufficient amount of savings, but his plans changed when he married in 1995 and went on to have children. To him, JC Market represents the culmination of his decision to establish roots in the country. In 2001, he decided it would be a worthwhile endeavor to start his own business. Eustaquio started Super JC Market with a sócio, a business partner, named Carlos. They paid $10,000 for the initial store space, most of which came from savings. Since “Eustaquio” is actually his middle name, Eustaquio contributed his first name, Jose, to the store’s name. Their initials joined to create the “JC” in the name. After a few years of working together, Eustaquio felt like the sociedade wasn’t working out, and offered to buy the store from his sócio at what he considered “market price.” Jose, however, ratcheted the price to $150,000, a deal Eustaquio

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5 At the time of Margolis’s writing in the 1990s, her Brazilian informants almost universally expressed an intent to return to Brazil.
6 Before becoming an entrepreneur, however, Eustaquio made money by working in jobs familiar to recently-arrived immigrants. He shared that he had begun as a domestic cleaner, eventually going on to work at a Stop & Shop grocery store as well. Eustaquio worked both of these jobs at the same time, completing 11am-7pm shifts at Stop & Shop throughout the week while organizing his house cleaning services around those hours.
considered unfair but to which he good-willingly obliged. Since then, Super JC Market has grown every year, continuously expanding its space and services, and embedding itself further in the community.\footnote{Eustoquio’s story of his path to entrepreneurship resonates with other narratives of immigrant upward mobility. Krohn-Hansen’s Dominican \textit{bodega} owners in New York City, for example, shared similar career milestones. They too gathered capital from friends and family to invest in their small stores, partnering with a “\textit{socio}” to get the business off the ground. Sometimes, the \textit{sociedad} falls apart. Other times, the business is able to go on and prosper.}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{super_jc_market}
\caption{\textit{Super JC Market’s shop (left) and buffet (right).}}
\end{figure}

Super JC Market is essentially a diversified corner shop, comparable to a bodega combined with a small eatery. It contains five different functions within one shop, with the space roughly divided in half. The main service is the three-aisle grocery/convenience store section shelving Brazilian groceries of all kinds. Despite many products being imported, these goods are reasonably priced. Towards the back of this section is a small butcher shop. Up front near the entrance, there is a Pontual Money Transfer booth against the wall for sending remittances to Brazil. The second half of the store consists of a buffet dining area, including a small \textit{padaria} (bakery) display shelf by the register. These five distinct services each have small businesses throughout Everett dedicated to just one of them – for example, bakeries, buffets, and money transfer services – but Super JC Market combines all of them for a one-stop experience. Additionally, the entrance area is occupied by smaller details that enrich the
usefulness of the store. These include a free newspaper rack, a small ice cream freezer, and an ATM. A bicycle hangs in the air on display here, the eventual prize of an ongoing lottery. In close proximity to the money transfer booth, a chalkboard displaying the Dollar-Real exchange rate is updated regularly. Super JC Market is notable as an example of the practicality Brazilians exercise in making resources available to each other.

Eustaquio explained he knew what products to initially offer through a familiarity with basic products under Brazilian brands that immigrants will recognize. From there, he has slowly expanded the selection based on “the community’s taste,” actively staying in tune with what local Brazilians express interest in purchasing. Choosing the restaurant’s offerings was just as easy. As he says, the buffet counter is lined with food options “every Brazilian would know,” which seems to include rice, barbecue, and the classic feijoada black bean stew. This parallels the practices within other immigrant storefronts. Christian Krohn-Hansen explains how Dominican bodega owners in New York City understand their customers. They “displayed and sold commodities that reminded people of the homeland.” Similarly, the shop owners also constantly listen to what products their visitors demand. Krohn-Hansen concludes, “A bodeguero’s practices are flexible and open. They are in the making. Above all, they are shaped by the surroundings” (2013, 131). Dominican-owned bodegas are thus very much organized to fulfill the needs of other Dominican immigrants first and foremost. They reveal a pattern in the practices of immigrant business owners, evident in the products that line the shelves of JC Market. Eustaquio’s store, however, distinguishes itself from the Dominican bodegas studied by Krohn-Hansen through its larger variety of services—namely, the second half of the store that fully functions as a Brazilian restaurant.

Despite its valuable arrangement of Brazilian goods and services, Super JC Market’s approach is not unique. In fact, Somerville has a popular corner shop that is very similar in its
value proposition. Mineirão One Stop Mart is a store that includes the same five key services offered by Super JC Market, all within one space. Its aisles were shelved with food of all kinds – fresh, frozen, boxed and dry, such as boxes of fruit, potatoes, crackers, and beverages. A container full of French rolls was regularly refilled with freshly baked new bread. Beyond food, the shelves also stocked toiletries and other health, hygiene, and beauty products like shampoo. Towards the front counter, some Brazilian clothing options like Havaianas sandals and team jerseys were on display, close to a banner for Pontual Money Transfer. On the open side of the store where there were no aisles, four tables were set up as a seating area for those enjoying the small buffet and padaria at the farther end of the rectangular space.

During my afternoon at Mineirão, I sat at one of these chairs and took notes on the daily activity within the store. Throughout my hour-long stay (from 4:30 to 5:30pm), several different customers came in for a range of purposes: A man and a young boy speaking in Portuguese buy meat at the butcher. A group of teenagers speaking amongst each other in English pick up soft drinks from the aisles and quickly leave. Although they do not use Portuguese, they could have been partially or entirely a group of Brazilians, as the later generation of immigrants use English more consistently. A middle-aged man sits down to eat dinner at one of the tables. He is likely Brazilian, as he stays for a while watching the TV above, tuned into the popular Brazilian TV channel Globo. A man and a woman come in together to peruse the aisles, and one of them buys a few fresh rolls of bread. Unlike the teenagers, who came in for a specific product, the two take their time scanning the shelves, apparently to see if any needed purchases come to mind. Mineirão truly lived up to its “One Stop Mart” name. These observations suggest the store plays an important role for Brazilians in Somerville as a reliable and familiar place to turn to for Brazilian-focused food, shopping, and entertainment.
The visible organization of community in Everett’s downtown square is a remarkable departure from the dynamics Margolis observed years ago in New York. In 1994, she wrote, “Brazilians in New York also lack a physical community, a distinctly Brazilian neighborhood or shopping district with which they can identify” (197). In contrast, Everett’s square is a strong example of a high spatial concentration of Brazilian-friendly services; the area is dense with Brazilian businesses, with a wide variety of different services within a few blocks of each other. Although Super JC Market is outside this downtown space, smaller shops throughout the square also combine different assortments of services. For instance, Mendes Travel Agency offers money transfer services coupled with a sizeable selection of clothing on display. Mendes is a small store, with the floor space mostly dedicated to racks of summer and beach attire, completed by a front desk for purchases and remittances. On this block of Everett, the Brazilian presence is powerful—at the Bank of America, the employees greet visitors immediately in Portuguese. Evidently, businesses throughout Everett work to facilitate the day-to-day lives of local Brazilian immigrants.

*Community-Building*

Local Brazilian businesses are not only providers of essential goods and services, but they are also active builders of the Brazilian social web in Greater Boston. An example of this manifestation is the informational materials distributed within stores. At the entrances to all four businesses I visited, there were racks for fliers, business cards, and newspapers. While I devote a more complete discussion of this later in the chapter, in this instance I will speak to their value towards building community. At Chriscilla’s Pizzeria in Everett, the entrance has a rack with local ads that alternate between English and Portuguese. While the business cards vary widely in content, the more compelling items on the rack were not quite business
advertisements. One flier features Bible verses and a discussion of the Gospel, but nothing else—no contact, business, or solicitation. A poster promotes a room available for rent in Saugus, another nearby city north of Boston. Similarly, another flier offers $400 a week payment for a live-in housekeeper to care for a teenager with special needs in Medford. These entranceways act as bulletin boards that animate the broadly-defined Brazilian “economic system” of Greater Boston, bringing Brazilians into contact with each other for a variety of purposes.

While in New York, Dominican _bodegas_ act as reliable platforms for socializing, I find that in Everett, Brazilian restaurants are a more popular space than corner shops for face-to-face community building (2013, 128). Chriscilla’s Pizzeria captures a snapshot of the energetic Sunday night crowd. Late night eateries like this benefit greatly from a major part of weekend life: church service. There are many Brazilian evangelical Protestant churches in the Greater Boston area, and Brazilians frequently hold service on Sunday nights instead of mornings. As a result, restaurants like Chriscilla’s receive an influx of customers coming straight from church at around 10pm, along with the usual crowd of customers looking for a bite on a night out. I spent a Sunday night observing the rush hour at Chriscilla’s. The restaurant has fewer than a dozen tables of varying sizes, but was nonetheless bustling with chatter, with most of the tables taken up. The groups at the tables displayed a wide range of ages. In one corner was a table consisting of three energetic young children being cared for by a couple. The children bounced in their chairs and shouted playfully as their guardians encouraged them to eat their pizza. At the table next to them was a group of people roughly in their twenties and thirties. A long table nearby was packed with young adult friends. This group certainly had just come from an evangelical church—I knew because I recognized some of them as my own acquaintances, who I had also met at church. A TV in the front seating area where I sat played a variety of US
sports highlights. In the second seating area of the restaurant towards the back, two tables were occupied by couples, one with a baby in its infant car seat. A long table was packed by a group of middle- to older-aged customers chatting in Portuguese, with two young boys about 10 years old. Their array of button-down shirts, slacks, and dresses at a casual pizzeria hinted they had also just come from church.

Although the role of religion in the Brazilian immigrant experience is prominent enough to merit its own chapter, I will speak partially to it here for its impact on the local economic system. Sociologist of religion Paul Freston observes, “Protestant churches are famously good at helping to overcome the difficulties of immigrant life” (2008, 260). He offers two reasons: the establishment of social networks often used to match immigrants with employment and the psychological instilling of a hard work ethic. First, the influence of religious life on social ties is clearly strong for Brazilians in the spaces I observed, even outside of busy Sunday nights. At Super JC Market, the employees wear matching t-shirts with the JC Market logo on the front, the Pontual Money Transfer logo on the lower back, and “Deus é Fiel” (God is Faithful) on the upper back. Second, Freston describes a motivational style of preaching strikingly catered to an audience of working immigrants. He identifies a “theology of the undocumented:” Brazilian evangelical pastors deploy a host of Biblical, historical, rational, and moral arguments to justify the undocumented status of their church members (265). These are familiar truths for the diligent store owner, Eustaquio—it turns out he doubles as a pastor for a local church and has utilized its social network to grow the store (this association manifests itself in other business decisions: regardless of demand, Eustaquio claims he refuses
to offer tobacco products in his store). Religious life thus plays a crucial part in facilitating the lives of Brazilian immigrants, with an important connection to economic activity.

**Negotiating Culture**

Finally, my observations of these businesses revealed a strategic navigation of culture, ethnicity, and race by Brazilians to facilitate their integration into the region. In her study of Brazilians in a low-income Newark neighborhood, anthropologist Ana Ramos-Zayas finds them “caught between a strategy of cultural excess in the commercialization of culture… on the one hand, and a quest for racial invisibility when faced with the U.S. racializing discourse which rendered them ‘closer to Hispanic,’ on the other.” She defines cultural excess, which she considers a manifestation of *jeitinho*, as “a strategic way of presenting oneself and performing one’s identity to meet specific, locally determined goals” (Ramos-Zayas 2008, 277-8). It involves the embrace of stereotypical notions of a rich foreign culture, which Newark Brazilians used to promote excitement for local Brazilian businesses among Anglo-Americans, as well as to distinguish themselves from bland American “whiteness.” At the same time, they attempted to escape associations with Hispanic identity, largely dodging the negative stigmas Anglo-Americans attribute to other Latin Americans. The cultural excess strategy was effective at creating a “racial invisibility” for Brazilians by evoking notions of racial democracy and a monolithic, cosmopolitan Brazilian national identity (276).

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8 Immigration status arises as a source of difficulty for Brazilian immigrants and their integration into Greater Boston. Eustaquio personally sounded uncomfortable with this reality, preferring to return to the more positive qualities that he believes overrides any unfortunate truths that characterize some Brazilians. However, it is telling that undocumented status was the only negative attribute he found worthwhile to mention: Eustaquio’s account of Brazilians’ reputation in Greater Boston is in line with the *Boston Globe*’s binary depiction of Brazilians as either industrious New Americans or victims to their immigration status. He views being undocumented as a barrier that holds back the positive traits Brazilians otherwise bring to the community, namely camaraderie and hard work. Once again, Brazilian immigrants are primarily understood in an economic light.
I argue that, to some extent, Brazilian businesses in Greater Boston use cultural excess advantageously. In other words, they utilize Anglo-American imaginaries of Brazilian culture to stimulate economic activity. By doing so, they also play into the immigrant narrative of the community-enriching ethnic entrepreneur, using it to bolster local Brazilian integration, interpretations of immigrant group “deservingness,” and favorable visibility. I return to the theme of invisibility to claim that Brazilians, by evoking agency through the strategy outlined by Ramos-Zayas, simultaneously increase visibility (under favorable immigrant narratives) and invisibility (becoming ethnically separate from other Latin Americans and their negative stereotypes). Ramos-Zayas says Brazilians work “to offer a unified national culture devoid of regional or racial specificity” based on “not only the stereotypes that dominant U.S. society has of Brazilians, but also the way Brazilians themselves construct their identities” (2008, 276). This ensures Brazilian spaces are recognized as spaces rich in fascinating culture and commercial potential (274). Brazilian local businesses thus improve the public reception immigrants receive.

Both Eustaquio and Luciano shared the culture they hope to showcase, and agreed that the Brazilian has earned a distinct reputation in the Greater Boston region, citing their businesses as examples of Brazilian achievements. They each explained what they believed factored into their business success. Luciano explains that his restaurant, Oasis, attracts non-Brazilian customers because of their interest in experiencing the exciting Brazilian cuisine and culture. These customers are drawn to the friendly employees and atmosphere that “makes

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9 Luciano bought Oasis from a prior owner in 2001 (interestingly, the same year that Eustaquio began his business). Prior to owning the restaurant, Luciano worked similar jobs to his fellow immigrants. Like Eustaquio, Luciano began working at Stop & Shop. He quickly transitioned into working at an American-style restaurant, where he says he got his green card (it is unclear through what immigration policy this was achieved). There, he met Jorge, his shift manager, who would go on to become his sócio. When the restaurant they worked at closed, the two men decided to apply their collective restaurant experience to run their own business. Luciano and Jorge bought Oasis Restaurant for $30,000 from its past owner, who had opened another restaurant in Lowell (Oasis Grill) and found it
them feel like they’re in Brazil.” The allure of Oasis is evident straight from its name, which evokes a lush tropicality. While Ramos-Zayas (2008, 272) imagines non-Latinos’ view of Brazil as merely “postcards of landscapes,” Luciano has literally covered one wall with a mural showcasing postcards of Brazilian scenery and landmarks. Luciano, who is white and dark-haired, migrated in 1995 from the state of Minas Gerais, the most common source of Brazilian emigration. The restaurant’s mural, however, does not give special tribute to his native region.

Meanwhile, Eustaquio boasted that his store has come to be seen as a landmark in the region, and one of the most notable in the city of Everett among *americanos*. He rationalized Brazilians’ positive reputation by comfortably summarizing Brazilian culture in a few adjectives. Although he is brown-skinned and also a native of Minas Gerais, his characterizations are absent any regional or racial distinctions:

The Brazilian is hardworking. They are brave, they are intelligent, they are happy people. The Brazilian is a captivating people… I see here, in the market, that people, they have that affection of family, friendship. They like to be together, they like to party, they like to cheer, to play with each other.
He says these innate admirable qualities are noticed by *americanos*, who consequently recognize Brazilians as a “different community,” presumably from other immigrant groups. *Americanos* are thus compelled to view Brazilian business activity as being led by reliable people with a remarkable quality to their work:

So, the *americanos* see us favorably because it is a different community. When it is said that someone is Brazilian, they say "wow, then they are good." They are a good dishwasher, a good butcher, a good chef, a good everything—a good carpenter, a good painter. So, everything the Brazilian does, the Brazilian does with professionalism. And that is what impacts—what is impacting our region today, understand?

That reputation for strong inner character is reflected outwards in public involvements. When asked what role he believes Super JC Market plays in his community, Eustaquio described the rich involvement JC Market maintains in the local community. The store contributes catering to community events like the annual Thanksgiving dinner festival in Everett, sponsors local sports (especially the teams of Everett schools), and supports churches. He affirms, “It’s not just a store. JC plays a very important role in the community.” Such a public economic influence may help shield Brazilians from associations with poverty, as they are rarely stigmatized as such regardless of the financial struggles they often endure (Ramos-Zayas 2008, 274).

Active distinction of Brazilian identity from both hegemonic whiteness and “Hispanic”-ness was evident in my informants’ use of language around ethnicity. The labeling of certain ethnicities warrants some clarification, as while we understood each other’s meaning in Portuguese, these titles are often contentious. Both informants used “*americanos*” to refer to people born in the United States who were not Brazilian and most likely white Anglophones. This is in distinction from the other residents of the Americas, including Brazilians themselves. No labels for explicitly “white” people were used in the interviews. This suggests that “American” is to a degree synonymous with “white U.S. citizen” to Brazilians. “Black” or
“African American” did not come up in conversation, but black identity may fall under *americano* as well. Regardless, the interviews did not indicate that Brazilians would connect with the “black” label. Non-white identities were usually distinguished by a more specific label, such as “*hispâno,*” “*asiático,*” or “*hatiano.*” This is noteworthy, as Eustaquio is brown himself, but did not identify color as a category of immediate relevance. Most importantly, Hispanic identity was repeatedly demarcated as more different than similar—the similarities mostly being that they are also an immigrant group. However, this point of similarity was not particularly unique, as all of the non-white identities that were noted were also closely associated with specific immigrant groups in the community. Brazilian entrepreneurs tend to consider themselves as contributors to a growing community, naturally situating their immigrant group in relation to others.

Related to cultural excess, I identify a process of transculturation occurring within these businesses. Brazilian-oriented stores and restaurants work to make themselves a familiar place to find Brazilian products, but at the same time, make efforts to welcome non-Brazilians. Anthropologist Fernando Ortiz defines transculturation as “the process of transition from one culture to another, and its manifold social repercussions.” This process consists of both embracing a new culture and losing a former one, and the “consequent creation of new cultural phenomena” (1947, 98). My field research indicates the businesses are undergoing this process, striving to maintain a Brazilian, Lusophonic culture while also making space for other cultures that come with their presence in the United States and hopes of integration. The result is a new environment that shares the traits of its parent cultures but is different from each of them.

This negotiation of culture was evident in my observation of Oasis, a Brazilian restaurant in Medford, and my conversation with its owner Luciano. Oasis combines the classic buffet-style setup of Brazilian restaurants with an additional sit-down menu. The restaurant’s
location in Medford, the city between Everett and Somerville, places it advantageously between
two areas with a high concentration of Brazilians. Oasis undergoes a balancing act of clientele:
it provides a transnational escape for Brazilians while offering a cultural experience for non-
Brazilians. Sociologist Peggy Levitt argues that transnational migrants “do not shift their
loyalties and participatory energies from one country to another. Instead, they are integrated,
to varying degrees, into the countries that receive them, at the same time that they remain
connected to the countries they leave behind” (2001, 5). In line with this assertion, Luciano
described Oasis Restaurant’s role in the community as essentially being a platform where transnationalism can be practiced:

“It’s a place for families to feel a little closer to Brazil… [it’s for people who say] ‘hey, let’s go eat some rice and beans, and hear Portuguese.’ When you get to Oasis, everyone who serves you is Brazilian. Many Brazilians sit by your side… you feel close to home. You see old friends that you can catch up with.”

At the same time, non-Brazilians are welcome and enjoy the space regularly. Luciano estimates
that while 60% of the customers are Brazilian, the other 40% are made up of “other races” (his
word choice is telling of Brazilians’ self-distinction). He lists hatianos, asiáticos, hispânos, and
americanos as key members of the clientele: non-Brazilians interested in authentic Brazilian
culture. Luciano likes to greet regulars by name, noting that the restaurant maintains a
bilingualism for its English-speaking customers. The faculty of nearby Tufts University also
contributes to the customer base. Luciano explains that he and his partner Jorge used their
experience in American restaurants to add new menu items that cater to a greater variety of
visitors. This mixture makes Oasis not only a space for transnationalism, but one where transculturation occurs as well. Luciano is thoughtful about food additions: he allocates only
20% of the menu to “American-style” recipes. The goal seems to be primarily to ease non-
Brazilian (and especially non-ethnic) entrance into the restaurant, engaging with cultural commodification while maintaining Brazilians’ authority.

I propose that language dynamics play a balancing role in the process businesses undergo of best situating their role in the community. Linguist Katia Mota notes that language, especially among bilingual speakers, can be used as a strategy of establishing exclusion: “by making use of language games of power, the minority language becomes a powerful tool for excluding others in public spaces, assuring the delimitation of ethnic territories in which there is an intentional inversion of dominance—the Anglo-American group becomes ‘the foreigner / the outsider’” (Mota 2008, 332). Perhaps without a conscious engagement in a game of power, Brazilian businesses naturally maintain Portuguese language as dominant, even while employing a fully bilingual staff that gladly welcomes Anglo-American monolingual customers. By doing so, they signal the primary function of their spaces: to prioritize the needs of Brazilian immigrants, thus maintaining their “original” mission statement.

The features and daily events of the businesses I visited displayed a persistent negotiation of language dominance. In JC Market, three banners advertising sandwiches hang above the bakery counter. They alternate between Portuguese and English. The languages correspond with the items they highlight: either Brazilian food (salgados) or US-recognized sandwiches. The register has a label that says “Please, Pay First” in English, but the t-shirt uniforms of the employees contain their Portuguese tagline: “Deus é Fiel.” At around 4pm on a weekday of my research, a man approaches the joint padaria-buffet register and makes an order in English. The cashier responds in English with a hint of a Brazilian accent. Shortly after, another man purchases a salgado in English. The cashier switches back and forth between

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10 The employees on my day of observation were mostly young women, except for the middle-aged male butcher and Eustaquio.
English and Portuguese, coordinating with her coworkers in Portuguese as she fulfills the customer’s requests in English. The man goes on to sit down and eat, and a few minutes later another interaction occurs between him and an employee. This time, the balancing of language goes less smoothly, as the employee seems unsure how to express something in English. She mumbles to herself “Como é que diz…” (how do you say…) then responds, “one moment, sir,” and returns to behind the counter, possibly to solicit help from her coworkers. The man is unbothered by this. The interaction suggests an implicit understanding between both parties that despite the restaurant’s genuine inclusion of non-Brazilians, English language mastery is not a job requirement because Brazilian immigrant identity retains authority in this space.

The handful of customers who spend time in this buffet seating area also juggle different languages. That afternoon, an older woman, young woman, and young girl come in together. Their comfort around each other suggested they are a family. The three sit and begin talking about the bike on display as a lottery prize. The youngest girl, around ten years old, speaks in English. The middle-aged woman speaks Portuguese to the younger two. The young woman speaks both languages, depending on who she is addressing, alternating between English towards the younger girl and Portuguese towards the older woman, seamlessly throughout the same conversation. Their dynamic is consistent with generational language research on immigrants: “the first generation learns only what is necessary for survival, the second generation uses the native language in home and in community group settings while using English [in environments] of American socialization, and only the third generation definitively adopts English” (Braga 2008, 307). The two girls drink Biofeel, the Korean probiotic soft drink that is popular among Brazilians, especially children. A half hour after this family’s interaction, a man on the phone paces around the seating area. He speaks “Portuñol” (a mixture of Spanish and Portuguese) in what sounds like an attempt to speak in Spanish to a
business partner or client, inserting Portuguese words in his gaps of Spanish knowledge. He wears a t-shirt that says Motors Auto Group. Above him, the buffet has a TV playing the Globo channel over the food on the wall. It covers both news from events in Brazil and in the United States in the same broadcast, delivered by the anchors in Portuguese.

The layout and product offerings of Santana’s, a Brazilian padaria in Everett, captured another process of cultural and linguistic negotiation. Santana’s compromises to a certain degree for English-speaking customers looking for food familiar to non-Brazilians. The breads shelf is labeled in Portuguese, as are all the foods. The dairy products are also either all in Portuguese or are Brazilian-favored products like farm cheeses, Biofeel soft drink, Nesquik and Toddyinho chocolate milk. Ketchup and mayonnaise tubes are set at each table, commonly used together as condiments for salgados, the savory deep-fried snacks that are the staple of padaria menus. The soft drinks fridge is the most US-friendly section, holding Nantucket Nectars, Mistic fruit juice, and the typical soda brands. The menu above the register is computer animated and written in English (although the menu items are recognizable to Brazilians). Pictures of each major item help with non-Brazilians’ understanding of Brazilian foods. For example, images are shown for the “X Santana” sandwich or the “Prestigio” (a brigadeiro chocolate cake). These names would be understandable to those familiar with Brazilian food even without an image (for example, the letter “X” is often used in the beginning of the names of Brazilian burger options, a play on how the pronunciation of the letter in Portuguese is phonetically similar to the pronunciation of “cheese”). During a Sunday night visit to Santana’s with my sister, we spoke to the cashier in different languages almost at the same time while making an order together. I used Portuguese, but my sister preferred to speak in English. Similar to the observed interactions at JC Market, our cashier comfortably bounced between the two languages depending on who she was responding to within this conversation.
Evidently, Santana’s has organized its customer experience to welcome both Brazilians and non-Brazilians.

Brazilian negotiations of culture and ethnicity in business spaces are informed by the familiar structural forces I have identified already. The Brazilian cultural excess strategy can be successfully deployed in the United States because it relies on tying Brazil to the United States as a similarly cosmopolitan, modern player in the global economy (Ramos-Zayas 2008, 282). This mythical global prominence was borne by Brazil’s Cold War economic transition. According to sociologist Ramon Grosfoguel, the U.S. involved itself in Latin American economies in search of “a symbolic showcase of the American capitalist model of development for the Third World.” This was done in pursuit of symbolic capital, which Pierre Bourdieu defines as “the power to impose upon other minds a vision, old or new, of social divisions depending upon the authority acquired in previous struggles” (Grosfoguel 2003, 103). Brazilians thus strategically draw from the very historical forces that triggered their migration in order to construct identities that facilitate their US integration, thereby “reassembling,” to a degree, the symbolic capital that had once been lost by Brazil in the eyes of post-Cold War United States.

Ultimately, Ramos-Zayas delineates the success of cultural excess and racial invisibility as limited by undocumented status. She remarks, “illegality marked the boundaries of the otherwise positive views of foreignness and cultural commodification” in the Newark neighborhood. Despite attempts to fully escape the stigmas of Latinidad, post-9/11 nativist suspicion crept into Brazilian life in Newark, and Brazilians “expressed great concern over deportation” (2008, 278). Immigration status proves to be a persistently challenging structural barrier for Brazilians to negotiate with even as they use the cultural strategies discussed. Although Eustaquio’s summary of Brazilians’ reputation was overwhelmingly positive, I asked
him if he could elaborate more on what, if any, negative perceptions Brazilians might have. After some hesitation, seemingly over the right choice of words, he shared what he considers the one problem in the Brazilian experience:

“Sometimes there are Brazilians who still don’t have a secure ‘situation’ in the country. So, they live more hidden, don’t appear very often, because of lack of documentation, things like that. And so there are people that you can’t interact with because of the difficulty they have. Some people are timid, you see, and don’t open themselves up. But the Brazilian that does have freedom, to work and to walk out on the street, they don’t depend on others. It’s like I said, 99% are good people.”

Eustaquio reveals that questions around legal status can hamper the positive reputation brought by cultural excess. Anxiety over status, he notes, can make some undocumented Brazilians too “timid” to embrace the public sphere with the culturally rich, entrepreneurial persona other Brazilians have worked to construct. Moreover, illegality may break the spell of racial invisibility, as it invites associations with foreigners coded as Hispanic. To deal with negative markers of foreignness that they would prefer not be revealed, immigrants can rely on a few impermanent physical tools for communication—in other words, ephemera.

**Ephemera as Resources for Immigrants**

At the entrance vestibules to the most popular shops, notably JC Market and Mineirão, there are spaces for posters, business cards, and newspapers [include pictures]. These modes of promotion reveal many more varieties of business in the region than my exploration of storefronts could capture. Legal and tax services, musical instrument lessons, Brazilian salesmen at car dealerships, English classes, house cleaning services, hair salons, cable TV packages including Brazilian channels, and local festivals were some of the products and services advertised through business cards and flyers. The ads were almost never for large businesses known outside Greater Boston, and instead almost always suggest a local Brazilian
business owner or entrepreneur created them. Beyond illustrating the diverse local Brazilian economy in Greater Boston, these entrance vestibules are also visual microcosms of the community overall, with announcements for church gatherings and other social events hand-in-hand with the contact information of entrepreneurs and house cleaning service providers. For a community with many undocumented, and consequently less visible, members, the entryways and their contents not only provide crucial evidence that a rich community exists, but also shed light on the ways in which it functions.

Ephemera are a major facet of the process of expanding access, community, and culture. Through business cards, newspapers, and fliers, businesses advertise heavily in the spaces where their customers are most likely to be found, especially within other businesses, making Brazilian restaurants and shops with social spaces highly concentrated holders of information. I turn to ephemera (and identify them as such) because of the structural challenges under which I am attempting to document Brazilian agency. If Brazilians face immigrant hurdles like language barriers, undocumented status, and unfamiliarity with US resources, then there will naturally be solutions organized to these problems that operate outside of “conventional” means of language communication, indicate a sensitivity to the undocumented, and offer immigrants alternative paths to resources. The business cards and newspapers I examined function in these ways. They are either written in Portuguese or can be understood without English proficiency. They point directly to Brazilians who more than likely understand the anxieties of other Brazilians. This is especially true for undocumented immigrants, who may fear certain interactions with *americanos* may compromise their status. Queer theorist Martin Manalansan says ephemeral evidence speaks to the “elusive experiences and processes of self-making” of its subjects (204, 105). As Brazilian immigrants work to ensure their survival in the
receiver country, ephemera provide evidence of how the local economic system assists them in their journey.

By their very nature, ephemera also allow further interpretation of Brazilian invisibility. Since they typically act as advertisements, the artifacts I collected might, at first glance, seem to primarily operate as augmenters of Brazilian visibility in Greater Boston. They are, after all, largely marketing efforts for Brazilian businesses. While this may hold truth, I posit that, based on their content and design, these ephemera do not make the same strategic choices towards integrating with *americanos* that corner stores and restaurants employ. They are instead tailored to fellow Brazilians. The announcements contained in them are best utilized by Brazilians, and are written by Brazilians who know their target audience. Because ephemera are often resources for immigrants who might prefer invisibility, they provide a window into these hidden immigrants’ daily lives. Queer theorist Jose Esteban Muñoz, whose writing guided my usage of the term, explained ephemera as “traces of lived experience and of performances of lived experience” (1996, 10). I use them as guides to piece together a socio-economic network that has been organized for immigrants, particularly undocumented ones. They are the paper trails of a community without papers.
Business cards are compact, information-dense artifacts: their succinct, collectible nature make them effective sources for understanding the local economy. Collectively between Everett and Somerville, I obtained the cards of about forty distinct businesses. They are all the standard size of 3.5 x 2 inches, but most of them go beyond a simple name, number and logo of traditional business cards. In fact, they feel more like miniature advertisements than contact cards—they almost always include images of the services they provide, sometimes even in lieu of an actual company name. For example, one card is simply titled “ELECTRIC FOR CAR” in blue letters at the top, features six stock images of parts of cars (e.g. keys, GPS, circuitry), includes a website URL and two phone numbers, all set against a yellow background; neither the name of the business nor the contact person are clearly identifiable. This card in particular contains the least amount of textual information out of all of them, but illustrates the dynamic, colorful, and content-dense nature of the cards. The most common industries among the cards are legal services, automotive, cleaning, media and telecommunications, health and beauty, and
international travel services. The business cards were almost all for companies and entrepreneurs located within the Greater Boston cluster of immigrant-heavy cities described earlier, including Everett, Malden, and Saugus, as well as Somerville.

Business cards are designed to be accessible to a Portuguese-speaking audience. The forty cards are split about evenly between English and Portuguese, with only nine featuring both languages. Most of the ones with English, however, are still relatively understandable to Portuguese-only speakers, whether through pictures of the product/service or words that are recognizable. For example, one card for Pro Car Sound & Security lists the features it can help install: alarm, DVD player, GPS, and more, all of which are terms familiar to Brazilians even when speaking Portuguese. Another one, Ferry St. Service & Auto Sales, includes pictures of the parts of a car it can assist with, while also including “Falamos Português” (We Speak Portuguese) on the bottom right corner of the card.

Over half of the cards contain the name and phone number of a contact, with either the language the card is written in or the name itself suggesting the contact is almost certainly a Brazilian. This is in line with an understanding of well-targeted advertising as having a distinct usefulness to immigrants, as they can signal businesses that are safe and reliable to access. I expect that Brazilians, whether because of language or status concerns, may be reluctant to call a company they are unfamiliar with, even if they need its service. Being able to directly speak to another Brazilian alleviates those concerns, as you will likely be speaking to someone who not only shares your language, but also may be more familiar with the preferences you might have regarding that particular service.

To illustrate further, I will spotlight one of the most commonly represented industries: tech/media/telecom, or specifically, advertisements highlighted cable, phone, and internet dealers. The eight cards in this category illustrate three things about the community: the
consistent importance of Portuguese-speaking contacts, the prevalence of entrepreneurship, and one manifestation of transnationalism in the United States. Unlike the automotive cards (discussed below) which tended to include company names like “John’s Auto Repair Gas Station,” many of these business cards did include a specific business name that would provide the service. Instead, the cards are usually dominated by the Portuguese- and Spanish-language television networks the dealer can provide, package details, and the contact’s name and number. Only one card in this category included a business name (*Absoluto do Cable*), and took the extra step of featuring the picture of an employee, presumably the owner, on the card. The designs of these cards once again emphasize the precedence of indicating a Portuguese-speaking contact that the customer can directly reach at the business. Secondly, the absence of company brand names on these cards indicate this is an entrepreneurial pursuit for the Brazilians behind them. For example, one card includes the name “*Madeira ‘O Cable Guy*” (*Madeira “the Cable Guy”). In contrast to *Absoluto do Cable*, which is an authorized Xfinity dealer with a storefront, Madeira is presumably arranging access to the service for his customers through a more independent operation (possibly cable theft) that may also be more affordable. Finally, these cable and telecom cards reveal transnational practices among Brazilians in Boston. All of these cards included the logo of Globo, the largest TV network in Brazil. Globo is a staple TV channel in the homes of Brazilian immigrants, allowing them to keep up to date with Brazilian news and enjoy Brazilian entertainment and culture, particularly telenovelas and talk shows. Other Brazilian channels like PFC, the soccer-focused channel, are also featured. Along with TV offerings, the cards offered phone plans, highlighting the included ability to make calls to Brazil. These two offerings help paint a picture of how Brazilian businesses both facilitate integration into daily life in the United States while also promoting transnational practices.
To explore the role of newspapers in the Brazilian community, I collected May and June 2018 issues from three Brazilian news publications. The newspapers are free and at least one of each was available at the entrance of the businesses I visited. Consequently, they are heavy with advertisements, almost entirely for Brazilian-owned local businesses (some of these are recurrent from my business card portfolio). These newspapers thus serve not only as sources of information in terms of national and local current events, but also as platforms that allow Brazilians seeking and offering services to come into contact with one another. These may be equally important types of information for Brazilian immigrants, as transnationalism is contingent upon maintaining connections to both the sender country (and its identity) and integrating successfully to daily life in the host country. Newspapers offer a window to understanding what news is most compelling to Brazilian immigrants, and furthermore, what we can learn from that about their situation in Greater Boston.

The *Brazilian Times*, one of the newspapers analyzed in Chapter 1, is remarkable in the way it constructs a Brazilian community across the New England region. I acquired physical copies of the May 23rd and June 1st, 2018 issues for my analysis. The *Brazilian Times* pages include three major categories of content: national news stories, Brazilian-specific community building, and ad space for local businesses. First, the *Times* does include a few major news stories in its issues. For example, in June 2018, the time of my field research, the immigrant family separation crisis was a major news story. The *Brazilian Times* copy I retrieved from June 1st features an article on the family separation crisis, but describing the involvement of one Brazilian organization, **Grupo Mulher Brasileira** (Brazilian Women’s Group), in a national day of action protesting the separation of parents and children. This article is notable because it highlights a major news story through the lens of Brazilian involvement in it. It is also generally indicative of the news priorities of the community, as most of the national news
stories chosen to be included throughout all three newspapers are related to immigration. The Brazilian Times is clearly conscious of its role as a news source primarily for immigrants.

Along with these national news updates, the Brazilian Times is an active creator of community in the Greater Boston region. It prioritizes stories about Brazilians that otherwise would not be features in non-Brazilian publications, thus building and maintaining a sense of social connection and community between Brazilians in the United States. For instance, the main front-page story (at the page’s center, largest in size) of the May 23rd, 2018 issue was about the death of a Brazilian man in New Hampshire. Surprisingly, the article does not mention the cause of death, other than that the man was found in his room. The article describes the man’s Brazilian hometown of Fortaleza, his lifestyle in the United States, his positive character and loved ones, and a URL where readers can help his family fundraise for the funeral proceedings. This story stands out as one distinctly worth reporting because of its importance to a tight-knit immigrant community. Another front-page story also employs concern for fellow Brazilian immigrants but does so once again in combination with national events. The story outlines the arrest and eventual release of a local Brazilian radio host by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The radio personality apparently had a deportation order out for him, revealing that he is most likely undocumented. Most of the article focuses on the success of his attorney in defending him, getting him released, and continuing to fight a legal battle for his client. According to the attorney, most of the details around this incident are not disclosable; the article does not elaborate on the radio host’s reputation or content either. Once again, this story demonstrates the Brazilian Times’ sensitivity to immigration news, but in this case applies that awareness to a Brazilian-specific incident.

A significant example that also depicts “deservingness” is the “Notable Brazilian Awards” section. The May 23rd issue’s “Advertisement” section contains a page titled “VIII
Annual Notable Brazilian Awards: *Lista Oficial dos Homenageados* (Official Nominee List).” It features 130 photos, names, and occupations of Brazilians organized by state, including most states on the East coast along with California and Texas. The majority of these men and women are entrepreneurs of various industries, but the selection includes musicians and artists, lawyers and activists, chefs, pastors, and other occupations. It is unclear if the *Brazilian Times* organized this list itself, or if it is an outside organization’s annual project. Regardless, this page was a powerful way to craft a Brazilian social network extending beyond Greater Boston.

The third major content category in the *Times* is advertising. As a free newspaper, the *Times* seems to generate revenue by including generous amounts of advertising spread throughout most of its pages, almost all of which are Brazilian-owned businesses. A few of these are even the same companies from which I collected business cards, such as *Absoluto do Cable*. What is perhaps most interesting, however, is the blurred line that seems to exist between advertisements and community-building stories. Several articles focus on Brazilian businesses or entrepreneurs, praising their success and/or describing the service they provide to the community. One particular story included on the May 23rd front page connects well to both the second and the third category of content. The story spotlights a Brazilian man who has distinguished himself as one of the top car salesmen in Massachusetts. The article goes on to describe the businessman’s career journey and values. It ends with the text: “Those interested in knowing more about this Brazilian’s success in the United States or learning about the cars he has available for sale, please access this Facebook page…” (translated from Portuguese). This is an example of an article that combines active community creation (via reporting the lives of fellow Brazilians) with the allocation of space for Brazilian businesses. These types of articles act as both publicity for the businesses and genuine instances of the paper informing Brazilians about each other’s social impact, crafting a portrait of “worthiness.”
Finally, one more variation of advertising content is seen in news articles announcing a product or service. The May 23rd issue includes an article describing the advantages of a special non-surgical butt lift technique targeted towards women, offered by a Brazilian cosmetic surgery clinic in Massachusetts. This article is placed early in the paper, in the “General News” section, and is notably next to advertisements for two different steakhouses on either side of it. The article is of similar length to the other news stories, but noticeably deviates from traditional “news” content. This story is not unique—the page immediately after features a similar type of article, promoting the “detox” service provided by a company called Raw Energética, making sure to include its contact information and location in Framingham, MA. Once again, this article is located in the “General News” section, blurring the line between news and advertising.

The June 1st, 2018 issue of Jornal dos Sports (“The Sports Newspaper”) that I retrieved did not actually have much sports content, and instead followed the same major categories as Brazilian Times. The front-page feature had the headline “Imigração” (“Immigration”) and referred to two stories of the week: the migrant family separation crisis, and a series of citizenship inspections conducted by border Patrol agents on a New Hampshire highway that led to the arrest of 17 undocumented immigrants. Like the Brazilian Times, the Jornal mostly alternates between national political stories, local news featuring Brazilians (e.g. a car crash), and ads for Brazilian-friendly businesses. Unlike the Times or The Brasilians (below), the Jornal contains no English words or phrases at all. It was also the most advertisement-dense of the three publications; some of the advertisements were for the same businesses as in the Times and those found in the business cards I collected, including an ad for Absoluto do Cable, the only cable TV business card that had a company name.
The Brasilians, the third newspaper I reviewed, took a different approach from the other two by being half in English, half in Portuguese, with both halves of the issue sharing the same news stories. Interestingly, The Brasilians also has fewer advertisements than the other two. As a result, the newspaper feels more like a bridge to non-Brazilians and second-generation Brazilians more comfortable with the English language and US culture. This different target audience might likely be less reliant on interpersonal ties to the local economy, more familiar with businesses they have at their disposal, and more comfortable reaching out to new places given their fluency in English. This inverse correlation between local advertising and English writing reinforces the idea that newspapers like the Times – and by extension, business cards – work to assist Brazilian immigrants who need increased access and understanding of the resources available to them.

To better illustrate the interplay of structural barriers and human agency that I hope to demonstrate, I will return to the issue of driving as a central example. Since many Brazilians are undocumented, their options for transportation become complicated by their inability to obtain a driver’s license. The Massachusetts legislature previously considered allowing undocumented immigrants the opportunity to apply for licenses with the Safe Driving Bill of 2016, but Republican governor Charlie Baker signed a law blocking this possibility in 2017 (Boston Herald). For undocumented Brazilians, especially those living in cities like Everett without reliable public transportation, daily life relies on driving, regardless of whether they have a license. Consequently, immigrants must risk having their status found out by police on a daily basis. Growing up in a Brazilian community, I often heard these concerns expressed, with some immigrants taking more roundabout commutes back home to avoid the risk of being stopped by police. Any slight car malfunction or driving malperformance that invites unwanted police attention thus becomes a serious danger. Furthermore, we can expect interactions at
automotive service businesses to invite unease and anxiety—for instance, what if the mechanic or dealership salesman asks to see a driver’s license?

Automotive services operated by Brazilians are not only an expected supply-side outcome (since working with cars is a skillset that better overcomes educational and language barriers when coming to the United States), but they also fulfill a demand-side need for sensitive attention to a particular relationship with driving. A Brazilian employee at an automotive service business will speak Portuguese, may avoid questions about licenses, may be able to explain the legal details of contractual agreements, and can even empathize with the unspoken fears that driving brings to his Brazilian client. This intersection of available skill and customer interest explain why automotive-related businesses were one of the two most represented industries among the business cards. The advantage that business cards have of offering a Brazilian contact’s name and number is thus an effective way to create access to such services.

Newspapers also step up to address this issue. Two of the front-page features I studied in my paper copies were related to driving. The first, in the *Jornal*, discussed a series of citizenship inspections conducted by border Patrol agents on a New Hampshire highway that led to the arrest of 17 undocumented immigrants. This acts as a clear warning to Brazilians of where they should stay away from while driving, implicitly speaking to the daily anxieties undocumented drivers have and providing them with crucial information. The other feature, in the *Times*, was the one on the Brazilian businessman who has become a prominent car salesman. While this story’s value could have been limited to spotlighting Brazilian excellence in the community, the inclusion of the salesman’s contact information, with the encouragement of asking about his selection of cars, can be seen as the paper highlighting a “safe” resource for
car purchases. Brazilian local businesses evidently work in tangent with each other, whether deliberately or not, to provide ways for immigrants to overcome major structural barriers.

**Conclusion**

Although “practice theory” is not a household term for Brazilians, it’s spirit is embodied quite accurately in the idea of the *jeitinho*. Regardless of the obstacles or scarcities surrounding them, Brazilians pride themselves on their ability to invent their own creative solutions to day-to-day problems. The structural barriers of the United States not only act against Brazilians, but are resisted and manipulated as they carve their own place in their community. I argue the economic system Brazilians have organized in Greater Boston is compelling evidence to this dynamic. Brazilian businesses provide the spaces for exchange of goods, services and information. Brazilians in these spaces negotiate social identities to their advantage, playing into favorable ideas of Brazil and immigrants while downplaying stigmatized labels. At the same time, they reinforce an environment where immigrants feel comfortable—*americanos* are welcome, but not dominant. Finally, for economic relationships that are more exclusive to Brazilians, customers and entrepreneurs use ephemera to make their lines of communication more exclusive, intimate, and safely untraceable. Undocumented Brazilians are therefore viable participants in a local economy made fit for them.
Conclusion

The Brazilian Story

Brazilians are but one in a collection of recent immigrants, yet simultaneously, their story is unique. Although caught in the same geopolitical winds that swept through the rest of Latin America, 1980's Brazil, a country that had been a destination for most of its history, found itself now experiencing dramatic emigration. While many eventually entered the country through the same means (the border) and legal status (undocumented) as other Latino immigrant groups, their reputation has still developed into a unique combination of labels. Brazilians carry a Portuguese colonial legacy, are less racialized by the public, are highly entrepreneurial despite their large undocumented population, and are negatively stigmatized mostly as exploitable “illegal” workers instead of through narratives of gangs, welfare, or poverty. Brazilians’ relationship with Latinidad is ultimately tenuous.

Structural forces like geopolitics, legislation, cultural axioms, and the economy ultimately dictate two things: what people think of immigrants and how they are treated. The social forces that have shaped Brazilian migration are clearly reflected in mainstream media. In reviewing the Boston Globe, the narratives that act as metrics for immigrant worthiness are evident. On the other hand, the Brazilian Times gives voice to the immigrant, confirming the hardships Brazilians face, shedding light on their self-perceived position in the community, and revealing the traits they most identify with, particularly in response to the mainstream narratives found in the Globe.

As practice theory indicates, people are not only subject to the influences of their social structure, but act to influence their social structure as well. In Greater Boston, the economic system Brazilians have constructed exemplifies this truth. With astute awareness of the
challenges they face as immigrants, Brazilians pull off their own jeitinho in Greater Boston through the use of various strategies to sustain a way of life. Brazilian businesses organize themselves spatially as platforms for efficient access to goods, services, and people that are beneficial to immigrants. Brazilians employ a strategic navigation of culture to negotiate racial, ethnic, and national visibilities in their favor. Lastly, as they exchange services with one another, Brazilians use ephemera to facilitate and make private their communications and connections, thereby obfuscating their language unproficiencies and undocumented status from non-Brazilians.

The stories of Eustaquio and Luciano, my two informants, bring together the themes of my two chapters. These two men each own a business in the region and represent the industrious entrepreneurs lauded in the Boston Globe and the Brazilian Times alike. Before owning Super JC Market, Eustaquio cleaned houses, and was able to grow his cleaning schedule to include a high number of homes worked on by a team of five cleaners, an achievement he recognizes as difficult. The workweek, consequently, was taxing after years of working two jobs at once, especially jobs that had him working “for other people.” He used what the Boston Globe would call a “soaring spirit” to leverage church, family, and local resources to start his own business, eventually becoming a community influencer by capturing the attention of non-Brazilians. In turn, Luciano points out two noteworthy things that boosted the growth of his Oasis restaurant after a difficult first year. First, he and his socio ran a local advertisement on Globo, increasing attendance by about 40% the same month. Second, their takeover of the restaurant coincided with the most intense period of Brazilian immigration to the United States. He claims their customer base grew from 2001 to 2005 because of this reason, and this timing is supported by my review of Brazilian immigration data. Both business owners relied on their resource networks to get their business off the ground. They then rose
to prominence by playing into American notions of exotic Brazilian culture and immigrant leadership. Their entrepreneurial success can thus be attributed to both a reliance on the local Brazilian economic system as well as the very social structures that economic system works to overcome. They have come to represent what their community recognizes as “deserving” immigrants, while simultaneously offering services to Brazilians who may be stigmatized as “unwelcomed.”

Brazilian identity’s relationship with Latinidad exposes its existing regimes of recognition. Maritza Cardenas challenges the limits of Latina/o Studies with her advocacy for Central American recognition. As figures existing outside the “tripartite model” of Mexican American, Cuban American, and Puerto Rican, Central Americans are rendered invisible in the imaginary of Latinidad. Similarly, Brazilians are perhaps even further removed from Latina/o identity’s parameters of qualification. The literature about Brazilians in the United States is limited, and yet their story deserves recognition. As Cardenas says, Latinidad “often recreates the invisibilities it seeks to contest.” A future that captures the rich complexity of Latinidad’s constituents requires further expansion of its defining dimensions. Brazilians must also do their part as voluntary participants in this project. But what can they contribute to Latinidad as a way of being? I return to Roberto DaMatta’s claim that the practice of *jeitinho* is “a mode of existence that, despite being founded in universal qualities, is exclusively Brazilian” (Tosta 2004, 580). Perhaps this claim can be just as easily reversed. The clever resourcefulness of *jeitinho*, while proudly Brazilian, can at the same time be located in the spirit of Latinidad.

Where is the Brazilian community heading? Both Luciano and Eustaquio had initially planned on returning to Brazil—their eventual decisions to stay in the U.S. exemplify a broader shift in Brazilians’ relationship with their host country. At the time of Margolis’s writing in the 1990s, her Brazilian informants almost universally expressed an intent to return to Brazil.
During those years, Luciano and Eustaquio would have said the same. Since then, however, many Brazilians, including these two men, have gotten married, had children, made long-term investments, and found their plans to return delayed further and further. Luciano’s responses reflect this current moment in the Brazilian immigration story. Like Eustaquio, he was optimistic about the future of the Brazilian community in the region. Describing them as ambitious, he predicts Brazilians will significantly grow their involvement in the region in the next ten years. He expects Brazilians to occupy key occupations; hair salons, car dealerships, and construction companies were some current Brazilian enterprises that he believes foreshadows future expansion. In terms of national recognition, Luciano did not believe Brazilians were well-known yet outside of Greater Boston, New Jersey, and Florida. He saw this in an optimistic light, however, placing Brazilians in comparison with other immigrant groups from US history, such as Italians. He explained that Brazilians are still learning to “crawl” in the country before they advance further on the national level. Luciano’s use of this metaphor affirms the Brazilian community is in an early stage of a deeper commitment to the country, implying in time, they will learn to “walk” and eventually “run” in the United States. His portrayal of Brazilians here demonstrates their perceived “invisibility” in the United States. Ultimately, however, he expects a bright, prominent future for the next generation.

What remains unclear in his optimism is how migration flows will fluctuate in the coming years. Luciano and Eustaquio both arrived during the historic swell of Brazilian emigration. During the prosperous years of the populist Lula administration, Brazil recovered quickly from the global Great Recession and emigration tapered. However, in the years since then, what appeared to Brazil to be a rise to glory on the international stage has collapsed into political turmoil and social unrest. The newly inaugurated right-wing president, Jair Bolsonaro, capitalized on this discontent to secure victory in the southeast and interior regions of Brazil,
its predominant sources of migration. Luciano himself, a native of a state that Bolsonaro won, expects immigration to decrease. He cites a combination of more restrictive U.S. policies and a Brazilian public hopeful of their new president. Bolsonaro’s election, however, is controversial, as his rhetoric has been caustic towards women, black and indigenous Brazilians, and the queer community. His presidency may instead signal a change in the demographics of who emigrates—traditional working-class Brazilians of the southeast may stay home for the promise of change, while the marginalized Brazilians he has alienated may flee the hostile national environment.

As we look into the future, we echo the stories of the past. Frances Aparicio claims, “ethnic alternative media... disseminate constructs of Latino/a immigrants as human beings strongly motivated to better themselves in this country...and as individuals who came to the United States to work hard, live the American Dream, and in the process contribute to the larger U.S. economy” (Aparicio, 66). Accordingly, non-Latino ethnic newspapers offer valuable perspectives of Brazilian integration, as they reveal how other minorities view this emerging community. In 2006, the Irish Reporter, a Boston Irish newspaper, expressed solidarity towards Brazilians: “the Brazilians... are today’s Bridgits and Marys cleaning the houses of the newly rich” (Keown). The Irish Reporter directly draws a parallel between the Irish’s immigrant history and the new Brazilian arrivals. The article suggests that, as foreshadowed by the American Dream, upward mobility will soon follow for Brazilians. History is, however, a work in progress. Brazilians’ immigration story demonstrates how migration contexts are both widely varied and deeply consequential. The result of the geopolitical, economic, and legal factors surrounding Brazilians in Greater Boston is still unfolding in the present. Only the future, and its successive generations, will reveal how closely this new immigrant group follows or diverges from the fabled trajectory of the American Dream.
References


