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BRAZILIAN EVANGÉLICOS IN DIASPORA IN SOUTH FLORIDA:

IDENTITY, ECCLESIOLOGY AND MISSION

BY

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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2021

To my wife, Angelie, and my children, Alana and Marcos

Abstract

Although there has been a rise in interest in the study of migrant churches in current World Christianity Scholarship, one of the gaps in scholarship today is Lusophone Christianity in the US. This is in part due to the fact that the latest in-depth studies of Latino Christianity in the US tend to overlook Brazilian congregations in their findings. In order to help address this gap in scholarship, this thesis explores the complex practical relationship between identity, ecclesial practices and mission among members of three Brazilian evangélico churches in South Florida. Its primary goal is to investigate the significance that Christianity has for Brazilian evangélicos living in diaspora in South Florida and the ways in which evangélico churches shape their mission and practices around this reality. It analyzes the variety of means employed within evangélico communities to aid Brazilian migrants from different generations in negotiating processes of reception, survival, and integration within the Florida context.

South Florida was chosen for this study because it is home to the largest community of Brazilian migrants in the US, and Florida also has the third largest concentration of Latinos in the country. This thesis is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted primarily on three church sites located in two of Florida's southernmost counties, namely Palm Beach and Broward. Although there is a historical element to this thesis, when it explores the history of the waves of Brazilian migration to the US (chapter 2) and the historical context of Brazilian Protestantism in Brazil (chapter 3), and of sociology of religion, when it investigates the socioeconomic context of Brazilian evangélicos, it is primarily a contemporary study of Brazilian Protestant Christianity in the US, illustrated by a number of case studies (chapters 3 through 6).

This thesis found that these Brazilian evangélico churches aid their congregants in navigating life as immigrants in the US first and foremost through the leadership of pastors, who are also immigrants themselves. Given the undocumented status of most evangélico church members, pastors face the challenge of how to deal with undocumented parishioners from both a theological and a practical standpoint. Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida form communities of support for evangélicos of different generations. These communities of support were explored through the theme of church as an extended family. The way in which the mission of these evangélico churches is both understood and practiced is the result of how a particular gathered church tradition, conservative in both theology and politics, is reinforced in both its strengths and its weaknesses by the collective experience of being a migrant minority in a kind of Promised Land that never quite fulfils its promise.

Lay Summary

Scholars of Latino Christianity in the US have largely overlooked Brazilian congregations in their studies. This thesis seeks to address this gap in scholarship by researching the complex practical relationship between identity, church practices and Christian mission among members of three Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida. Its main goal is to explore the significance that Christianity has for Brazilian Protestants living in South Florida and the different ways that Brazilian church communities shape their mission and practices considering this reality. In this process, the thesis studies the different methods used within Brazilian Protestant communities to help Brazilian Protestants from different generations to navigate the many challenges they face as migrants in the South Florida context.

South Florida was chosen for this study because it is home to the largest community of Brazilian migrants in the US, and Florida also has the third largest concentration of Latinos in the country. This thesis is based on fieldwork visits to three Brazilian Protestant churches located in two of Florida's southernmost counties, Palm Beach and Broward. Thus, this project is primarily a contemporary study of Brazilian Protestant Christianity in the US, illustrated by three case studies.

This thesis found that these Brazilian Protestant church communities support their parishioners to navigate life as immigrants in the US first and foremost through the leadership of pastors, who are also immigrants themselves. Most members of these Brazilian Protestant congregations are undocumented migrants. Therefore, Brazilian Protestant pastors are faced with the challenge of how to deal with the undocumented status of their parishioners from both a theological and a practical standpoint. Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida create communities of support for parishioners of different generations. These communities of support were explored through the theme of church as an extended family. The way that the mission of these evangélico churches is both understood and practiced is the result of how the strengths and weaknesses of a conservative church tradition, in both theology and politics, are reinforced by the collective experience of being a migrant minority in a kind of Promised Land that never quite fulfils its promise.

Acknowledgements

I have heard it said that it takes a village to raise a child, and now I have learned that it takes a village to finish a PhD thesis. Words cannot express the gratitude that I have for every member of my village who supported me through this entire process. I can honestly say that I would not have finished this project if it was not for their support. I am grateful for David Kirkpatrick who so graciously answered my e-mail asking him about the possibility of pursuing a PhD at the University of Edinburgh, and who connected me with Professor Brian Stanley, who became my supervisor. I also appreciate his advice and support during my application process. I am grateful for Myles Werntz, who encouraged me in the early stages of this project through transparency and openness when the project felt so overwhelming. I am also grateful for Ryan Gladwin, who helped me through various stages of this project through feedback and open conversations. Allen Yeh was also gracious to share of his time with me, and to help me focus some of my thinking. I am thankful to my colleagues, João Chaves and Rodrigo Serrão, scholars of the Brazilian diaspora who so openly shared their research with me while also encouraging me in my own.

I have received invaluable support from my PhD supervision team. I am grateful for Rev. Dr. Leah Robinson, who was my secondary supervisor during my first year of the PhD. Her support and guidance helped me to be successful in my end of first-year review board. I am also thankful for Rev. Dr. Alexander Forsyth, who was kind to step in as a replacement secondary supervisor when Rev. Dr. Leah Robinson had to return to the States. His feedback and guidance have improved many areas of this thesis. It is indeed hard to describe my gratitude to Professor Brian Stanley. From the early stages of this process, his graciousness and kindness have been a constant guiding force. He made himself available before I was even his student, promptly answering emails about the application process. In every supervision meeting, he provided me with insightful and specific feedback that enabled this thesis to arrive at its current stage. The quality of this thesis is a testament to his support.

My family has also supported me through this process. I am grateful for my mom and dad who supported us emotionally, and through prayers and finances. My mother-in-law also supported us in the same manner. I am thankful for my sister who always encouraged me as well. Lastly, but certainly most importantly, I am grateful for my wife and children. I cannot put into words what the support of my wife has meant to me during this entire journey. She supported me through many international moves during the two separate times that we lived in Scotland, one of which came about last-minute due to COVID-19 restrictions in early 2020. Her emotional support, her prayers, and her love have kept me going. My children have also been through a lot of changes over the past four years, and I am grateful for their flexibility and support.

To God be the glory!

Abbreviations

IPF	*Igreja Presbiteriana da Florida*
INW	*Igreja New Wave*
RCP	Renovation Church Portuguese
IBV	*Igreja Batista Videira*
ACS	American Community Survey
PCA	Presbyterian Church in America
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
PT	Workers' Party, *Partido dos Trabalhadores*
CCR	Catholic Charismatic Renewal
ICE	US Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ITIN	Individual Taxpayer Identification Number
CILS	Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction to Topic

The theme of religion and migration, more specifically Christianity and diaspora, has attracted the attention of scholars across a plethora of disciplinary fields.[1] Works such as *Global Diasporas and Mission*, edited by Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong, and *Church in an Age of Global Migration: A Moving Body*, edited by Susanna Snyder, Joshua Ralston, and Agnes M. Brazal, are prime examples of the type of literature being produced on the subject, the former focusing on missiological implications to global diasporas, while the latter explores ecclesiological ones.[2] Such works on Christianity and diaspora collate contributions from multiple scholars, many of them hailing from the majority world, in order to offer perspectives that are true to both local and global contexts symbiotically. These global movements of Christian diaspora are affecting geographical domains, with the Christianity of the global south increasingly influencing the Christianity of the global north through what many have termed "reverse mission," since many participants in these

[1] Migration refers simply to the movement of people from one region to another in search of different opportunities. Diaspora is more specific, as it implies a community that has scattered from one original homeland to different parts of the world, and which maintains an identity that is distinctively connected to the homeland. Thus, whereas migration relates to the geographical movement itself, diaspora refers to an identifiable migrant community that has expatriated and now exists amidst a host country.

[2] For a more complete list of works on Christianity and diaspora, please see *An Overview of Literature on Diaspora vis-à-vis Christian Mission* in Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong, eds., *Global Diasporas and Mission,* Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series, vol. 23 (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 11.

Christian migration flows sense a missional responsibility to the lands to which they have migrated. The old paradigms of "overseas missions" are no longer inescapably applicable, and what northern Christians have often referred to as "the mission field" now resides in their own backyard, as they do not need to travel to Latin America to encounter Latino Christianity, or to Africa and Asia, to find such local expressions of the faith. As Stanley Skreslet put it, "at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the reality of mission is exceedingly complex, with concealed social processes, political consequences, and complicated organizational dynamics, among other factors, complementing matters of theology."[3] One of these diasporic expressions of Christianity is the focus of this research, namely Brazilian Protestantism in the US.

In Portuguese, the term "evangélico" means "evangelical," but not with the same connotation it normally carries in the US. For Brazilians, as is the case with other Latinx communities, the term evangélico is a catch-all, and it carries much the same connotations as the terms "Protestant" in English and "*evangelisch*" in German because it serves to represent all Protestant churches and Christians. I will use the terms evangélico and Protestant interchangeably in relation to both individuals and churches, but with a preference toward the Brazilian term.

This thesis explores the complex practical relationship between identity, ecclesial practices, and mission among members of three Brazilian evangélico churches in South Florida. Its primary goal is to investigate the significance that

[3] Stanley H. Skreslet, *Comprehending Mission: The Questions, Methods, Themes, Problems and Prospects of Missiology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2012), 2.

Christianity has for Brazilian evangélicos living in diaspora in South Florida and the ways in which evangélico churches shape their mission and practices around this reality. Given the undocumented status of most evangélico church members, evangélico pastors also face the challenge of how to deal with undocumented parishioners from both a theological and a practical standpoint. This thesis analyzes the variety of means employed within evangélico communities to aid Brazilian migrants from different generations in negotiating processes of reception, survival, and integration within the Florida context.

Although there has been an explosion in interest in migrant churches in World Christianity scholarship, one of the gaps in scholarship today is Lusophone Christianity in the US. For all the interest in African, Chinese, and Hispanic churches in the US, little has been written on Brazilian churches from a theological and missiological standpoint, as will be explored in the upcoming subsection 1.2. on this thesis' relationship to existing literature. In 2008, the leading sociologist of Brazilian Protestantism, Paul Freston, argued that the research of religion in the Brazilian diaspora had only been attended to by a few studies, and that the Brazilian constituency had been neglected by researchers of Latino religious experiences in the US, as if Brazilians were not of said heritage.[4] The same remains true more than ten years later, as the latest in-depth studies of Latino Christianity in the US tend to

[4] Paul Freston, "The Religious Field among Brazilians in the United States," in *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga (Cambridge: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2008), 256.

overlook Brazilian congregations in their findings. In particular, studies of Brazilian Protestant congregations in the US remain few. In order to help address this glaring gap in scholarship, the thesis will focus its research on the identity, mission and ecclesial practices of the members of three Brazilian Protestant congregations in South Florida, one of the largest centers of Brazilian migrants in the US.

Since this study is concerned with Brazilian Protestants as a whole, and not focused on any specific tradition within that spectrum, it selects three churches that represent different streams of Protestantism so that it may investigate diverse styles of Brazilian Protestantism, as well as multiple generations of Brazilian Protestants. The criteria for the selection of the congregations were as follows:

- The congregations had to serve primarily a Brazilian constituency.
- The congregations needed to be located in South Florida, within three of its southernmost counties (Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade). Florida has the 3rd largest concentration of Latinos in the US according to the Pew Research Center.[5] These three counties comprise about 43% of Latinos in the state, and they made up the third largest metropolitan area in the US by Hispanic population in 2014.[6] Florida is also home to the largest

[5] Renee Steepler and Mark Hugo Lopez, "4. Ranking the Latino Population in States," Pew Research Center, accessed May 10th, 2018, https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2016/09/08/4-ranking-the-latino-population-in-the-states/.

[6] "Hispanic Population and Origin in Select U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 2014," Pew Research Center, accessed May 10th, 2018, https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/interactives/hispanic-population-in-select-u-s-metropolitan-areas/.

concentration of Brazilian migrants in the US at 20%, followed by Massachusetts at 17%.[7]

Brazilians are an immigrant minority in the US, a sometimes invisible one because of their academic disconnect with other Latinos,[8] and evangélicos have needed to learn how to exist and operate in this context of marginality. The thesis will examine the ways in which this marginal context shapes the identity of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, which in turn influences how they practice church and mission in their particular diasporic contexts. Although there will be a historical element to this research, it will be primarily a contemporary study of Brazilian Protestant Christianity in the US, illustrated by a number of case studies. The case studies that anchored this thesis supplied an ethnographic dynamic to it. Therefore, this study also contributes to the growing interest in the intersection of theology and ethnography. This field of ethnographic theology relies on interdisciplinarity, as it draws from history, ethnography, and theology. It necessarily involves certain elements of social scientific approaches. Interdisciplinarity has also become a key aspect of World Christianity studies, as recent standard works in the field such as *Relocating World Christianity:*

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[7] Álvaro Eduardo de Castro e Lima and Alanni de Lacerda Barbosa de Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos: meio século (re)fazendo a América (1960-2010)*, (Brasília: FUNAG, 2017), 55. For more on where South Florida ranks in terms of areas of Brazilian settlement in the US, see below, pp. 44-51.

[8] Ibid. Maxine Margolis has deemed Brazilian immigrants in the US an "invisible minority." See Maxine Margolis, *An Invisible Minority: Brazilians in New York City* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009).

Interdisciplinary Studies in Universal and Local Expressions of the Christian Faith[9] foster an academic conversation between historians, social scientists, and theologians, breaking away from the old Enlightenment rules of clear disciplinary separation that tended to be the case in western theological studies. In fact, this thesis sits on the disciplinary boundaries of practical theology and sociology of Christianity, with strong missiological dimensions. That is to say that although the bulk of the thesis is ethnographic in its methodology and approach, this is not a purely social-scientific enterprise, it is also a work in practical theology. This thesis is not a theologically neutral social analysis. Rather, it is a work that uses ethnographic and social scientific techniques to analyze a particular Christian community as a basis for reflection, and that reflection comes primarily at the end of the thesis.

John Swinton and Harriet Mowat rightly argue that the discipline of practical theology is complex and diverse, encompassing different research approaches such as "empirical, political, ethical, psychological, sociological, pastoral, gender-oriented, focused on disability and narrative based," and embracing the entire spectrum of Christian traditions.[10] This thesis approaches practical theology through Swinton and Mowat's definition of practical theology as "critical, theological, reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view

[9] Joel Cabrita, David Maxwell, and Emma Wild-Wood, eds., *Relocating World Christianity: Interdisciplinary Studies in Universal and Local Expressions of the Christian Faith* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

[10] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, Second Edition (London: SCM Press, 2016), 3.

to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world."[11] Furthermore, Swinton and Mowat argue that practical theology is also "theoretical enquiry, in so far as it seeks to understand practice, to evaluate, to criticize; to look at the relationship between what is done and what is said or professed."[12] This thesis engages primarily with the descriptive mode of practical theology as it offers an analysis of Lusophone Christianity in the US, paying careful attention to describe the symbiotic relationship between identity, mission, and ecclesial practices, that is to say, how Brazilian evangélico identity in South Florida is both impacted by, and impacts ecclesial practices and mission approaches. Nevertheless, although practical theology is approached in its descriptive mode for most of the thesis, toward the end, particularly in the conclusion, the thesis uses the foregoing description and analysis to offer some theological reflections and constructive suggestions as a way forward for these evangélico churches.

The main question this study seeks to answer is, what is the relationship between identity, ecclesial practices, and mission among Brazilian evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida? This main question, then, leads to three following sub-questions:

- How has the identity of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida been shaped by their socioeconomic status as immigrant minorities?

[11] Ibid., 7.

[12] Ibid., 11.

- How did Brazilian evangélicos perceive their identity in relation to other groups in the US, such as other Latinos, Brazilian Catholics, and Americans?
- What did the distinctive features of the worship and congregational life of evangélicos reveal about their sense of identity, and their understanding and practice of church and mission within their diasporic contexts?

These questions drove this research project, and they will be addressed in the upcoming chapters of the thesis. They are also the fruit of a process of evolution, which took place as the research progressed. In particular, it became clear that an explicit emphasis on the sociological dimensions of evangélico experience was necessary in order to investigate the complex practical relationship between identity, ecclesiology, and mission amongst them.

It is important to define the ways in which this study approaches the themes of identity, ecclesiology and mission in the lives of evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida. The thesis explores three different dimensions of identity: 1) the status of being a migrant community; 2) the particular issues faced by a Lusophone and non-Hispanic Latino community; 3) the Christian, and more specifically evangélico identity. As Brazilian migrants in a diasporic context, evangélicos are tasked with the journey of self-discovery of an ethnic identity that is deeply shaped by both their sending and host countries. As the thesis explores, these issues of identity are negotiated differently, and on a personal level by members of different generations, namely 1st, 1.5, and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants,[13] and evangélico churches

[13] 1st generation refers to foreign-born migrants who are the first generation in a family to have immigrated to a country. 1.5 generation, which is a term coined

possess an important role in the reflection and shaping of this ethnic identity. Thus, this thesis analyzes the impact that Protestant Christianity had on the lives of evangélicos as a Latin American minority group in the US, and conversely, the impact that their realities as migrants had on their faith. A consideration of ecclesiology requires the study of the lived religious experiences of Brazilian evangélicos, which means that this study aims to research evangélicos within the context of their church lives and worship experiences. The thesis, then, investigates the close practical relationship that the identity of evangélicos had with the lived reality of their ecclesial practices and worship. In terms of mission, this study follows the World Council of Churches' definition of mission that views it in more holistic and practical terms:

> 'Mission' carries a holistic understanding of the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the gospel by word (kerygma), deed (diakonia), prayer and worship (leiturgia), and the everyday witness of the Christian life (martyria); teaching as building up and strengthening people in their relationship with God and each other; and healing as wholeness and reconciliation into koinonia—communion with God, communion with people, and communion with creation as a whole.[14]

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by Rubén G. Rumbaut in his studies of Cuban and Southeast Asian youths in the 70s and 80s (See Rubén G. Rumbaut, "Ages, Life Stages, and Generational Cohorts: Decomposing the Immigrant First and Second Generations in the United States," *The International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 1166), serves to describe the children of 1st generation immigrants who migrate during or before their early teenage years, thus alluding to the in-betweenness nature of their migrant experience and identity. 2nd generation immigrants are the children of 1st generation immigrants who were born in the new country.

[14] Jacques Matthey, ed., "Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today," in *You are the Light the World: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches, 1980-2005* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005), 64.

As a second aim, therefore, the thesis is interested in uncovering and analyzing the various ways in which evangélicos viewed and practiced mission toward others in the South Florida diasporic context, and in exploring the significance that their ethnic identity had for their understanding and practice of mission.

The concept of assimilation into American society will form a recurring theme throughout this thesis. Thus, it may be helpful at this point to indicate how this concept has been the subject of both development and contestation. American theories of assimilation and their application to immigrants changed after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which produced a shift in migration patterns to the US from predominantly White, European migrants to non-White Hispanics and Asians migrants. Robert Erza Park (1886-1944), one of the founding fathers of early assimilation theories, was the first to use the term "assimilation" in his "race relations cycle" model.[15] Park believed that immigrants were "incorporated into a given society in four stages: contact, conflict, acculturation, and assimilation," and that although immigrants struggled at first in their host country, eventually they are "able to shed their ethnic identities and conform to the normative climate of the dominant group in society."[16] Park believed that this would be true of both European and non-European migrants, and he argued that "in the United States an immigrant is ordinarily considered assimilated as soon as he has acquired the language and the social ritual of the native community and can

[15] David G. Embrick, "Assimilation," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, ed. William A. Darity, Jr. (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008), 189.

[16] Ibid.

participate, without encountering prejudice, in the common life, economic and political."[17] However, Park's theory worked better for European than non-European migrants, because, as David G. Embrick put it:

> Although many European ethnic groups that immigrated to the United States in the 1800s faced racial and ethnic discrimination and prejudice, eventually they were able to integrate into American society as "whites." Groups that were unable to pass as whites because of skin color, phenotype, or even accent remained largely excluded from full assimilation into American society.[18]

Milton Gordon expanded on Park's theory with a more complex model based on "two main stages along a mostly linear path to assimilation: acculturation and social assimilation."[19] Gordon believed that the second stage would eventually lead to total assimilation, which may not happen until the second migrant generation. In his seminal work, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, Gordon proposed three different modes of assimilation that resulted from the interaction of migrants with the dominant culture, namely "Anglo-conformity," "the melting pot," and "cultural pluralism":

> In preliminary fashion, we may say that the "Anglo-conformity" theory demanded the complete renunciation of the immigrant's ancestral culture in favor of the behavior and values of the Anglo-Saxon core group; the "melting pot" idea envisaged a biological merger of the Anglo-Saxon peoples with other immigrant groups and a blending of their respective cultures into a new indigenous American type; and "cultural pluralism" postulated the preservation of the communal life and significant portions of the culture of the later immigrant groups within the context of American citizenship and political and economic integration into American society.[20]

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[17] Quoted in Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 1964), 63.

[18] Embrick, "Assimilation," 188-189.

[19] Ibid., 190.

Anglo-conformity was evident after the First World War as part of the "Americanization" movement, which sought to force the immigrant to denounce their culture in an effort to become "an American along Anglo-Saxon lines."[21] Gordon argues that during this time people became especially concerned with the intentions of German-Americans, leading citizens to become fearful of the "hyphenated American," which caused them to look to extinguish displays of German culture and to demand full allegiance from any foreigners.[22] Critics of Gordon's theory point out his model's limitations, which only analyzed the relationship between the minority and the dominant ethnic groups rather than also exploring the relationship between two minority groups, a relationship worth exploring considering the many ethnic groups present in American society.[23] As we will see in subsection 4.2.2.1., Brazilian immigrants also develop their ethnic identities in relationship to Hispanics, another minority group in the US.

As noted, theories of assimilation changed post-1965 due to the new racial composition of migration waves to the US. Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou's theory of segmented assimilation has become one of the most influential assimilation theories from this time period. Developed in 1993, "segmented assimilation refers

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[20] Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, 85.

[21] Ibid., 99.

[22] Ibid., 100.

[23] Richard Alba, and Victor Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," *The International migration review* 31, no. 4 (1997): 830.

to the idea that there are multiple routes to assimilation and that these routes are not necessarily positive in their outcomes."[24] This differs from the linear path to assimilation proposed by pre-1965 theorists. Portes and Zhou argue that "depending on their national origins, wealth, skin colors, phenotypes, accents, social networks, and opportunities, some groups may be able to assimilate more quickly or easily than other groups."[25] As this thesis will show, this is true of Brazilian immigrants, especially members of the 1.5 and 2nd generations. The ones who are fair-skinned and English proficient have better opportunities to blend into the dominant culture as "White," while darker-skinned migrants and those who have limited English proficiency do not have such choices available to them. Portes and Zhou also point out that "adopting the outlooks and cultural ways of the native-born does not represent, as in the past, the first step toward social and economic mobility but may lead to the exact opposite."[26] This is more of a challenge for darker-skinned migrants who may assimilate into other minority cultures, such as Hispanic or Black, and thus may find themselves facing some of the same societal challenges as the members of those groups. This issue can also be experienced by migrants who move into inner cities and integrate themselves with native-born minorities due to a

[24] Embrick, "Assimilation," 190.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Alejandro Portes, and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530, no. 1 (1993): 81.

shared lack of financial means. "Segmented assimilation" describes three different forms of adaptation into US society:

> One of them replicates the time-honored portrayal of growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle-class; a second leads straight in the opposite direction to permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass; still a third associates rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity.[27]

Nevertheless, these options are still limited by the aforementioned factors of "national origins, wealth, skin colors, phenotypes, accents, social networks, and opportunities."

Over the last few decades, scholars have grown critical of assimilation theories. Richard Alba and Victor Nee, in their trailblazing article titled, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," argue against these scholars by defending their approach to assimilation for "its utility for understanding the social dynamics of ethnicity in American society, as opposed to its past normative or ideological applications."[28] They hold,

> As a state-imposed normative program aimed at eradicating minority cultures, assimilation has been justifiably repudiated. But as a social process that occurs spontaneously and often unintendedly in the course of interaction between majority and minority groups, assimilation remains a key concept for the study of intergroup relations.[29]

Alba and Nee ultimately claim that assimilation is still the best term to refer to these studies of immigration and the interactions between ethnic groups. They view

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[27] Ibid., 82.

[28] Alba and Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," 827.

[29] Ibid.

assimilation at the group level as "the decline, and at its endpoint the disappearance, of an ethnic/racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it."[30] At the individual level, assimilation is viewed as "changes that make the individuals in one ethnic group more like, and more socially integrated with, the members of another. When assimilation implicates both majority and minority groups, the assimilation of individuals of minority origins involves changes that enable them to function in the mainstream society."[31]

As we have seen, there have been multiple conceptualizations of assimilation, some of which can appear contradictory. For instance, assimilation can either be seen as positive, as enabling one to better navigate the host country, or as negative, as stripping a migrant of their ethnic identity and of anything that resembles their migrant culture in order to take on the dominant White culture as an issue of racial supremacy. As this thesis will show, limited English proficiency and participation in an ethnic church can become obstacles to assimilation, which could also portray assimilation negatively. Nevertheless, although these aspects of assimilation can appear contradictory in the narrative presented in this thesis, the apparent contradiction is integral to the ambiguity that is inevitably present in the whole subject of assimilation. Neither extreme – full assimilation or none – is healthy, thus there is bound to be an ambiguity somewhere in the middle. It is in this in-between, ambiguous space that Brazilian evangélicos find their ethnic identity, which hangs in

[30] Ibid., 863.

[31] Ibid.

the balance of a migrant being both Brazilian and American at the same time. Thus, this thesis chooses to refer to this ethnic identity as "Brazilian-American."

When this thesis refers to assimilation, it borrows from Alba and Nee's definition that sees the assimilation of minority individuals as "the changes that enable them to function in the mainstream society." It also draws on Gordon's cultural pluralism model, which defines assimilation as "a point of view which offers legitimization of the preservation of sub-national communal life and some cultural differences for the nation's various ethnic groups, and justifies the result as providing a more democratic, more interesting, and more dynamically fruitful culture for all Americans than one in which uniformity was the norm.."[32] Thus, in this thesis assimilation is not defined as the loss of one's ethnic identity by absorption into the dominant White culture, but rather as the complex process of learning how to function well in the mainstream society while still preserving one's ethnic cultural distinctives.

1.2. Relationship to Existing Literature

As the thesis places itself on the boundaries of practical theology and sociology of Christianity, the disciplinary map followed is one of ethnographic theology with strong missiological dimensions. Therefore, it relates to works in contextual theology, ethnographic theology, and migrant Christianity, more specifically Latino Christianity in the US. This section will survey these fields and situate this study in relation to current scholarship, as well as demonstrate how this

[32] Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, 13.

project presents an original contribution to academia by addressing a current gap in scholarship, namely that of the study of Lusophone Christianity in the US.

In 1985, Robert Schreiter argued in his seminal work *Constructing Local Theologies* that there had been "an important shift in perspective in theology in recent years," where more attention was being given to how Christians expressed their faith in their respective contexts, and how these contexts influenced the shaping of their faith.[33] Another important work in cementing this shift toward contextualization is Stephen Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology*, where Bevans argues for the centrality of contextualization for the theological enterprise, calling it a "theological imperative."[34] This new shift toward a richer understanding of the contextualization of theology called into question older theological paradigms that saw Western theology as the proper form of theology, which simply needed to be translated into local contexts. Bevans puts it well, "the time is past when we can speak of one, right, unchanging theology, a *theologia perennis*. We can only speak about a theology that makes sense at a certain place and in a certain time."[35] This shift toward contextualization also corroborated the authenticity of local expressions of faith, such as that of Brazilian evangélicos in the US.

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[33] Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 30th ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2015), 1.

[34] Stephan B. Bevans*, Models of Contextual Theology*, Revised and Expanded Edition, Faith and Culture Series (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 15.

[35] Ibid., 4-5.

Another important aspect of contextualization raised by Schreiter is regarding the question of "who is a local theologian?" Schreiter gives weight to the role of the community in the theological process, calling it "the prime author of theology in local contexts."[36] Schreiter's view of the role of the community undermines any assumption that theology is the sole property of a scholarly elite.[37] This different understanding of theology is in line with the kind of practical theology this study will investigate. It does not seek to analyze the products of academic reflection found in theological monographs. Instead, it is more interested in analyzing the theology being expressed and developed on the ground, within specific Christian congregations, as the community of Brazilian evangélicos theologizes in their specific diasporic contexts in South Florida.

As Schreiter demonstrates in *Constructing Local Theologies*, the contextualization of the Christian faith requires careful attention to one's culture, which introduces the need for theologians to engage more closely with the social sciences. This engagement with the social sciences has led to another shift in theology, which is the turn to ethnography. This shift has been well explored by scholars associated with the Network for Ecclesiology and Ethnography, founded in 2007, which publishes a scholarly journal, *Ecclesial Practices: Journal of Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, and has issued two books in a series titled Studies in Ecclesiology

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[36] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 19.

[37] Bevans raises a similar argument, seeing the theological process as originating from the community, and being refined by trained theologians through a dialogue between both parties. In *Models of Contextual Theology*, 17-18.

and Ethnography.[38] The first volume, *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, reflects theoretically on the need to participate in a research that is both theological and ethnographic in order to develop an ecclesiology that is more faithful to the lived realities of the congregations being researched.[39] The second volume, *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, builds upon the arguments laid out by the first while offering empirical examples of the partnership between theology and ethnography.[40] These two volumes are important for this thesis because they expand on the ethnographic methodology that is to be employed by it. They also raise concerns about the need for a true immersion in congregational life in order to depict it more faithfully, something that this researcher had to do in order to explore the Brazilian Protestant congregations that were researched in this study. This concern for a commitment to learn from the field is also expressed in another important volume in the area of ethnographic theology, namely Christian Scharen and Aana Marie Vigen's *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*.[41] In this monograph, Scharen and Vigen also warn those wanting to engage in ethnographic theology to have a high level of flexibility between their research objectives and

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[38] See "About the Network for Ecclesiology and Ethnography," The Network for Ecclesiology and Ethnography, accessed May 12th, 2018, https://www.ecclesiologyandethnography.net/about/.

[39] Christian Scharen, ed., *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, Studies in Ecclesiology and Ethnography (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012).

[40] Pete Ward, ed., *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012).

[41] Christian Scharen and Aana Marie Vigen, eds., *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2011).

their fieldwork, allowing what is found in the field to reshape and perhaps even change some of the original research questions. As they put it, "the goal (of ethnographic theology) is decidedly not to confirm or prove a given hypothesis; rather it is to explore and describe as fully as possible what is—what is seen, heard, witnessed, experienced."[42] This is also true of this study, which has endeavored to remain flexible and open to evolve its research questions in order to depict more faithfully the lived reality of evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida as it emerged from the field work conducted.

There are several examples of studies that take ethnography seriously. Two of them worth mentioning because of their focus on migrant communities are Janice McLean-Farrell's *West Indian Pentecostals: Living their Faith in New York and London*[43] and Mark Gornik's *Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City*.[44] McLean-Farrell's research, although primarily sociological, raises important questions about the role of the church in the identity-shaping process of migrant Christians in diasporic contexts. McLean-Farrell also investigates how the church's mission takes a new shape in the diaspora, an important question for the study of migrant Christianities such as that of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida. Gornik's work is more theological, as he offers an in-depth reflection on the church

[42] Ibid., xxii.

[43] Janice A. McLean-Farrell, *West Indian Pentecostals: Living Their Faith in the Cities of New York and London* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

[44] Mark R. Gornik, *Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011).

life of three distinct African congregations in New York City, which is viewed through the motif of journey. The motif of journey is relevant to all migrant Christian communities, who find themselves as foreigners in their host countries.

When it comes to the study of Latino Christianity in the US, several works stand out. Timothy Matovina's *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church* focuses on the Latino Catholic constituency, analyzing how Latino Catholics shape and are shaped by the Catholic Church in the US.[45] Matovina's work also brings to the fore important issues on the relative merits of an autonomous national Hispanic church versus integrating into Anglophone services, and the importance of passing on a Latino faith to the next generation of Latinos. Juan Martinez's latest book, *Latinos Protestantes: Historia, Presente Y Futuro En Estados Unidos* (Latino Protestants: History, Present, and Future in the United States), although chiefly a historical monograph, presents some of the more salient challenges faced by Latino Protestants in the US today, such as documented/undocumented immigration, racism, discrimination, marginality, and lack of political representation and power.[46] Mark Mulder, Aida Ramos, and Gerardo Marti's *Latino Protestants in America: Growing and Diverse* is primarily a social scientific introduction to the diverse aspects of Latino Protestantism in the US.[47]

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[45] Timothy Matovina, *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[46] Juan F. Martinez, *Latinos Protestantes: Historia, Presente y Futuro En Estados Unidos* (Salem: Publicaciones Kerigma, 2017)

[47] Mark T. Mulder, Aida I. Ramos, and Gerardo Martí, *Latino Protestants in America: Growing and Diverse* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

Their research identifies the diverse ways that Latinos worship, shape an identity, and engage their civic contexts. They also offer an important warning against making generalizations when classifying Latino Protestantism, especially of the racial stereotyping kind.

Nevertheless, all these works on Latino Christianity in the US understate the presence of Brazilians in its milieu. Matovina includes immigrants from Brazil under the category of US Hispanics from South America,[48] which is an incorrect classification, but that is the only mention of Brazilian constituents in his work.[49] Mulder, Ramos, and Marti differentiate correctly between the terms Latino and Hispanic,[50] with the former encompassing Lusophone constituents and the latter focusing only on Hispanophones; yet, all of their research was aimed around the Spanish language and its use. There was no mention of any interaction with a single Lusophone congregation in their monograph. Martinez mentions the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus) in a few lines while reporting on Pentecostal churches that have connections with church movements in Latin America.[51] The only other mention of Lusophone churches by Martinez is in a survey done by Clifton Holland, which Martinez used as a current

[48] Matovina, *Latino Catholicism*, 31.

[49] Matovina mentions Brazilian priest José Marins' efforts in San Antonio, Texas to expand basic ecclesial communities in the US, but he does not indicate the presence of a Brazilian constituency in the area. In *Latino Catholicism*, 100.

[50] Mulder, Ramos, and Martí, *Latino Protestants in America*, 13.

[51] Martinez, *Latinos Protestantes*, 191.

and accurate picture of whether Latino churches worship in Spanish or English.[52] In this survey of 23,189 Latino congregations in the US, it was found that 14,400 (62%) churches were Hispanophone, 8,676 (37%) Anglophone, and only 49 (<1%) Lusophone. This could explain why Martinez focused his historical research primarily on Hispanophones; however, these numbers are not representative of the presence of Lusophone congregations in the US. In my initial research, I found that the Brazilian consulate in Miami reported at least forty-nine Brazilian Protestant congregations in South Florida alone, and subsequent investigation suggested that this figure is itself an underestimate.[53] In 2006, Freston conservatively estimated approximately 800 Brazilian Protestant churches in the US, which leads one to believe that the actual numbers are much higher today.[54] Thus, the figures Martinez used seriously underestimated the presence of Brazilian evangélicos in the US, pointing to the need of a more accurate portrayal of Brazilian Protestantism as part of the larger umbrella of Latino Protestantism in the US, which is a need this thesis hopes to fill.

As it has been argued, the works that focus on evangélicos in the US are few. They also tend to be specific to one strand of Protestantism or another, rather than looking at Protestantism as a whole, and are not primarily theological or with a

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[52] Ibid., 178.

[53] "Igrejas com Serviços em Português," Ministério das Relações Exteriores - Consulado Geral do Brasil em Miami, accessed May 9th, 2018, http://miami.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-br/igrejas.xml. For a more accurate estimate, see below, pp. 148-149.

[54] Freston, "The Religious Field among Brazilians in the United States," 262.

focus on ecclesial practices and mission. João Chaves' PhD thesis, entitled "Disrespecting Borders for Jesus, Power, and Cash: Southern Baptist Missions, The New Immigration, and The Churches of the Brazilian Diaspora," is a historical study of the transnational movement that led to the formation of Brazilian Baptist churches in the US, beginning from the Southern Baptist missionary efforts in Brazil.[55] Chaves also focuses on the role played by Southern Baptist missions in the forming of the denominational identity of Brazilian Baptists in the US, an identity intricately influenced by the challenging minority context Brazilians face in the US. A portion of Chaves' PhD thesis will be published as a monograph entitled *Migrational Religion: Context and Creativity in the Latinx Diaspora*,[56] where he goes beyond a historical account and dedicates the final chapter of his monograph to exploring the conceptualization by evangélico pastors of incipient contextual theologies that were developed out of their diasporic context, and in light of the undocumented status of many of their parishioners. Donizete Rodrigues' *Jesus in Sacred Gotham: Brazilian Immigrants and Pentecostalism in New York City* is an anthropological study of Brazilian Pentecostalism in the New York metropolitan area.[57] Through ethnographic research of a neo-Pentecostal church in New York City, Rodrigues

[55] João Chaves, "Disrespecting Borders for Jesus, Power, and Cash: Southern Baptist Missions, The New Immigration, and The Churches of the Brazilian Diaspora" (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2017).

[56] João Chaves, *Migrational Religion: Context and Creativity in the Latinx Diaspora* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, forthcoming October 2021).

[57] Donizete Rodrigues, *Jesus in Sacred Gotham: Brazilian Immigrants and Pentecostalism in New York City* (Great Britain: Amazon Publishing, 2014).

looks at different aspects of the church's beliefs, its rituals, liturgy, and its place in the identity shaping of Brazilian immigrants chiefly through an anthropology of religion lens. His research also differs from this study because it examined only one congregation rather than three.

Of the few existing works on Brazilian Protestantism in the US, only one other PhD thesis besides this current one focused on evangélicos in South Florida, which was Rodrigo Serrao's "Winning "Americans" for Jesus?: Second-Generation, Racial Ideology, and the Future of the Brazilian Evangelical Church in the U.S."[58] This is a sociological work focused on "how issues of race and ethnicity are entangled with religion in the context of multigenerational immigrant churches."[59] Serrao concentrated his research on two Brazilian Pentecostal churches in South Florida, one Lusophone and one Anglophone, and one Lusophone Brazilian Pentecostal church in Central Florida. He argues that "different macro-level national and racial ideologies that have developed in Brazil and the U.S. influence the day-to-day practices of the church (meso-level) and inform members' understandings of themselves (micro-level) and the larger society."[60] Some of these racial ideologies studied by Serrao were racial democracy and colorblind racism, and he looked at how evangélico communities impact these ideologies. Serrao's dissertation differs

[58] Rodrigo Serrao, "Winning 'Americans' for Jesus?: Second-Generation, Racial Ideology, and the Future of the Brazilian Evangelical Church in the U.S." (PhD diss., University of South Florida, 2020).

[59] Ibid., 3.

[60] Ibid.

from this current one because it is primarily sociological with a focus on the relationship between issues of race and multigenerational evangélico communities, whereas this thesis is primarily concerned with the interrelationship between identity, ecclesial practices and mission from a contextual and practical theology standpoint. Serrao's dissertation was also written at almost the same time as this one, thus limiting this researcher's ability to engage with Serrao's findings. There is also an older anthropological study of Brazilian immigrants in South Florida, not specifically evangélicos, which is Rosana Resende's PhD dissertation entitled, "Tropical Brazucas: Brazilians in South Florida and the Imaginary of National Identity."[61] Resende's dissertation focused on the national identity-shaping process of Brazilians in South Florida. She explored how Brazilians relate and express ideas of self amidst a migrant context on the way to becoming *Brazucas*, a term used by some academics to refer to Brazilian immigrants in the US.[62] Although this term has been used widely by some academics, it was never mentioned in conversations by evangélicos in South Florida; thus, this researcher has chosen not to impose this nomenclature, but rather to refer to the community by their preferred categorizations of Brazilians and evangélicos. Nevertheless, Leticia J. Braga and

[61] Rosana Resende, "Tropical Brazucas: Brazilians in South Florida and the Imaginary of National Identity" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2009).

[62] According to João Chaves in *Migrational Religion*, this term was first coined by José Victor Bicalho in his autobiographical work about his experiences as a Brazilian migrant in the Boston region entitled, *Yes, Eu Sou Brazuca ou a Vida do Imigrante Brasileiro nos Estados Unidos da América* (Governador Valadares, Fundação Serviços de Educação e Cultura, 1989). [I have been given sight of a pre-publication version of Chaves's work]

Clémence Jouët-Pastré's definition of the term is worth mentioning, as it alludes to the hybridity of the ethnic identity of evangélicos that this study is exploring:

> Brazuca: even the spelling of the word is representative of an immigrant group in the process of simultaneously forming its identity and feeling an identity imposed upon itself by the host society: should the "b" be capitalized if representative of nationality, as in English, or be a lower-case letter as in Portuguese? Is the root Brazil or Brasil? Whatever the choice, the word represents a combination that is at once both languages and neither one, echoing the sentiment of many Brazilians in the United States who struggle to define themselves; it should probably remain malleable in its spelling so that each person can foreground whichever part of her or his identity is most meaningful to them.[63]

It is precisely this ambiguous journey of self-identification that the thesis is researching, a journey toward the discovery of a hybrid identity that is negotiated on a personal level, and that gives each Brazilian migrant the autonomy to choose how much of each part of their identity they want to cling to.

The study will also explore the interrelationship between concepts of identity, ecclesial practices and mission amongst 1.5 and 2nd generation evangélico youngsters in diaspora in South Florida. The study of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants is another subject that has been under-researched. The pioneer of the study of the Brazilian diaspora in the US, sociologist Maxine Margolis, argues in her latest book on the subject, *Goodbye, Brazil: Émigrés from the Land of Soccer and Samba*,[64] that her earlier monographs, *Little Brazil: An Ethnography of Brazilian*

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[63] Leticia J. Braga and Clémence Jouët-Pastré, "Introduction: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Becoming Brazuca," in *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2008), 16-17.

[64] Maxine Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil: Émigrés from the Land of Soccer and Samba* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013).

Immigrants in New York City[65] and *An Invisible Minority: Brazilians in New York City*[66] did not include much on Brazilian migrant youth because her respondents in the early 1990s were mostly single, and many that were married did not have children.[67] Sociologist Ana Cristina Braga Martes shared similar findings from her fieldwork in Massachusetts in the 1990s, claiming that only half of her informants had children, and some of those children lived with relatives in Brazil.[68] Consequently, her monograph *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos: Um Estudo sobre Imigrantes em Massachusetts* (Brazilians in the United States: A Study about Immigrants in Massachusetts) did not analyze 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants. Kara Cebulko's research on the legal status of 1.5 generation Brazilian migrants has produced a book entitled *Documented, Undocumented, and Something Else: The Incorporation of Children of Brazilian Immigrants,*[69] and other sociological analyses have appeared as chapters in edited volumes.[70] Serrao's PhD dissertation

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[65] Maxine Margolis, *Little Brazil: An Ethnography of Brazilian Immigrants In New York City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1994.

[66] Maxine Margolis, *An Invisible Minority: Brazilians in New York City* (Boston, Mass: Allyn and Bacon, 1998).

[67] Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil*, 225.

[68] Ana Cristina Braga Martes, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos: Um Estudo sobre Imigrantes em Massachusetts* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1999), 51.

[69] Kara B. Cebulko, *Documented, Undocumented, and Something Else: The Incorporation of Children of Brazilian Immigrants*, The New Americans: Recent Immigration and American Society (El Paso: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2013).

[70] See Teresa Sales, "Second-generation Brazilian Immigrants in the United States," in *The Other Latinos: Central and South Americans in the United States,* ed. José Luis Falconi and José Antonio Mazzotti (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 195-211. An updated version of Sales' chapter appears in Teresa Sales

researched a recently established 2nd generation Anglophone Brazilian Pentecostal church in South Florida that was an affiliate of a 1st generation Lusophone evangélico church.[71] However, as already noted, his dissertation is primarily sociological in approach, with a focus on the relationship between issues of race and multigenerational evangélico communities. It is thus apparent that none of these existing studies have investigated the practical relationship between identity, ecclesial practices and mission among 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants in evangélico churches from a practical theology standpoint. This observation suggests that this thesis has a valid claim to be an original contribution to academic research.

1.3. Research Methods

To properly research the interrelationship between concepts of identity, ecclesial practices and mission amongst Brazilian evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida, and to answer the research questions that shaped this thesis, this researcher utilized an interdisciplinary research methodology with a primary focus on ethnography. The focus on ethnography was necessary because the bulk of the research arose from an immersion in the lives of the selected Brazilian

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and Marcia Loureiro, "Between Dream and Reality: Adolescents and Second-Generation Brazilian Immigrants in Massachusetts," in *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies: 2008), 287-311. See also Katia Maria Santos Mota, "Two Languages at Play: Language Boundaries in the Speech of Second-Generation Brazilian Immigrants," in *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies: 2008), 313-337.

[71] Serrao, "Winning Americans for Jesus," 117.

congregations in South Florida. Nevertheless, the researcher also relied on a variety of other research methods and sources to supplement this study, such as historical analysis of Brazilian Protestantism and its migration patterns, census and survey data, and other forms of library research.

An immersion in the lives of the selected Brazilian congregations was only made possible through the researcher's dedication to study one congregation at a time, instead of trying to attend to multiple sites simultaneously. Accordingly, the researcher spent a minimum of two months in each of the congregations, which allowed him to compile the necessary congregation-specific research notes for the study and to engage in several forms of participant observation. The aspects of church life that were attended included church services, prayer meetings, youth services, special events, and social engagements. Furthermore, because this thesis is focused on lived theology, and not just practices but also understandings of church and mission, personal interviews were central to different chapters of this thesis, namely chapters three through six. These fieldwork chapters relied heavily on personal interviews to describe the histories of the churches and their leaders, as well as the way in which evangélico communities impacted the interrelationship between identity, ecclesial practices and mission among evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida. The researcher conducted formal interviews with thirty-five evangélicos, nine of them being pastors, one interview with a Catholic priest, and countless informal interviews with dozens of other evangélicos. Out of the thirty-five formal interviews with evangélicos, there were: Six 1st generation females; twelve 1st generation males; five 1.5 generation females; five 1.5 generation males;

three 2nd generation females; and four 2nd generation males. Most formal interviews of 1st generation Brazilian migrants were of couples (husband and wife) who were contacted at the suggestion of the church pastors, while other formal interviews of male church members were sought out by the researcher himself. All informal interviews that took place during church activities were initiated by the researcher without any external suggestions. Given the conservative Brazilian evangélico culture, which has a strong view of male leadership, the researcher did not attempt to interview female parishioners on their own, as such a request would have been culturally inappropriate and would have risked the researcher's freedom to operate in these churches. One of the inevitable but unfortunate consequences of this cultural limitation on the researcher's freedom to operate is that the researcher only interviewed about one-third as many women as he did men. Although the researcher attempted to include female congregants' voices in the thesis as much as possible, the conclusions of this thesis may have an element of gender imbalance to them. All interviews were then coded through NVIVO, where the researcher was able to analyze the themes that developed from the fieldwork and became the main source of the fieldwork chapters of this study.

Since this research involved minors, and given the vulnerability of these research subjects, the researcher filed a Full Ethics Review Form level 2 with the School of Divinity Ethics in Research Community at the University of Edinburgh. Participants under the age of 16 were never interviewed alone as per the requirements of University of Edinburgh. Therefore, two focus groups were conducted with the presence of their respective youth pastors. Although the youth

pastors were present during group interviews, there is no evidence that they interfered or curtailed the freedom of the youngsters to say what they wished since the pastors observed the interviews from a corner of the room, and they did not interject at all during the interviews. All youth respondents were assured in their consent forms that their participation was voluntary, and that if at any point either during or after the interview they would like to remove themselves from the study, they could have done so. All consent forms by participants under 18 were also signed by their parents. Participants were made aware that their contributions were made under the condition of anonymity, and that their identities were protected through the agreed use of pseudonyms in place of real names. Consent forms were also made available in both English and Portuguese to ensure that all participants and their parents, in the case of minors, were able to fully understand the nature and purpose of the interviews.

In terms of qualitative research methods, the thesis followed the guidance of several works such as the already mentioned *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography,* and *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics.* Another important handbook on qualitative research methods is John Swinton and Harriet Mowat's *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, second edition,[72] which gives a detailed description of the integration of practical theological reflection and qualitative research methodologies that is both theoretical and practical, using case studies grounded on qualitative research. This

[72] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, Second Edition (London: SCM Press, 2016).

monograph shows that it is not only possible but ultimately necessary to engage in comprehensive qualitative research to achieve a faithful analysis of lived theology in ecclesial contexts such as the one this study is exploring.

1.4. Research Skills

I am a 1.5 generation evangélico who has lived in the US since I was fourteen years old. As a Portuguese speaker, I was ideally positioned to conduct the ethnographic research in the Brazilian Protestant congregations, and to access Lusophone printed sources. All Portuguese language in this thesis is italicized for ease of differentiation from English even if it was not originally italicized. The translations into English of interviews and other sources in Portuguese are the sole responsibility of the researcher, including any accompanying errors.

My positionality as an evangélico enabled me to have honest and casual conversations with most of my interviewees. On occasion, my interviews took place in the respondents' homes, and it was held over *café com pão* (coffee and bread), the staple afternoon meal of Brazilian homes that showed the level of openness and hospitality I received as a researcher. My own experiences as a 1.5 migrant also made me somewhat of an insider with evangélico youngsters. I lived as an undocumented migrant for part of my youth, which directly impacted many areas of my life, and gave me an insider perspective into some of the struggles that many undocumented migrants live through, especially young ones.

However, I was also an outsider in many ways. At the time of my research, I had not attended an evangélico church for over twelve years, as I worshipped in an Anglo church with my wife and children. My wife is a 2nd generation Panamanian-

Venezuelan migrant. Having married outside my ethnicity adds to the complexity of my own ethnic identity, as my US-born children are a mix of Brazilian, Panamanian, Venezuelan, and American. My status as a PhD student also distanced me from the evangélico community since some of the questions I was asking were not common among insiders. Nevertheless, my interviewees did demonstrate some assumptions about my own identity as an evangélico through their expectations that I would agree with them in some of their opinions. This was not always the case, however, since my own identity is shaped by many different factors, such as the years I spent in evangélico churches, the years I spent in Anglo churches, my experiences as an undocumented migrant, and the theological education I have received in Anglo institutions.

Although being an insider was beneficial to me as a researcher, my positionality as an evangélico did bring an auto-ethnographic element to this research that presented certain potential pitfalls, namely that of allowing my own prior knowledge and pre-conceptions of the subject to influence the direction of the research project. I tried to avoid these pitfalls by allowing the insider-outsider tension to force me to better analyze the research findings rather than to rely on any past assumptions, and to be open to allow the research to dictate the narrative of the study. There is no such a thing as a neutral observer, but I tried to be as neutral as possible in depicting the lived realities of these Brazilian evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida. From time to time, I will draw where appropriate from my own experience and that of my family in the thesis, but always remembering that my own experience is not necessarily representative of that of all within the evangélico

population in South Florida. Though it may be representative in certain aspects when I am speaking of my own experiences and illustrations, I can only be definitive about my own experience, not the experience of others. For instance, although I know what is like to live as an undocumented migrant and I can relate to some of their struggles, my experience happened under a different American presidency and political climate, thus I cannot speak for the experience of currently undocumented evangélicos. Rather, I will let them speak for themselves.

1.5. Outline of Chapters

In order to answer the questions that shaped this project, and to research the interrelationship between identity, ecclesial practices and mission of Brazilian evangélicos in their diasporic contexts in South Florida, the thesis is divided into five chapters, which are preceded by this introduction (chapter 1) and followed by a conclusion (chapter 7).

Chapter 2 will explore the realities experienced by Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida as immigrant minorities in the US. It will focus on immigration issues such as documented versus undocumented migration, lack of a voice in society, lack of political representation, and the discrimination and oppression suffered by immigrant minorities. This chapter will rely on ethnographic fieldwork to share real life stories of what it is like to live as a member of an immigrant minority group in the US, and how one's identity is shaped by that reality. It will also serve to create the socioeconomic backdrop against which the lives of evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida may be better understood.

Chapter 3 will introduce each of the case studies that anchor this study and underscore their differences in the areas of interest to the thesis, namely geographical location, denomination, and use of language. It will offer a brief historical account of these congregations, making references where appropriate to the history of their denominational tradition in Brazil, and it will introduce the leaders of these congregations, the evangélico pastors. This chapter will also examine the broader context of Brazilian Protestantism in South Florida by looking at some distinctive features of its landscape in the region. It will then look at the different practices of mission of evangélicos, and how language is used to develop missional and evangelistic strategies. Chapter 3 will also examine the relationship between Brazilian evangélicos and Brazilian Catholics, and how that relationship has changed from Brazil to the diaspora in South Florida. Lastly, this chapter will provide a brief description of the factors that may lead some Brazilian evangélicos to transition to Anglo churches.

Chapter 4 will explore the role of evangélico churches in South Florida in reflecting and developing the Brazilian-American identity of 1st generation Brazilian migrants. It will look at some specific features of 1st generation migrants, such as a desire for permanence in the US and their concepts of 'home' in relation to Brazil or the US. This chapter will also explore other identity-shaping factors, such as ethnicity, discrimination, and issues within the 1st generation Brazilian migrant community, before exploring specific challenges faced by undocumented migrants. At the same time, it will examine how such factors relate to the mission of these Brazilian churches, such as looking at how pastors deal with the issue of the

presence of many undocumented parishioners in their churches, both theologically and pragmatically. This chapter will seek to identify to what extent evangélico churches in diaspora in South Florida are able to recognize those traits, and to form their ministry and mission around them.

Chapter 5 will explore the ways in which evangélico churches in South Florida relate to the quest for Brazilian-American identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants. It will look at how some of the identity-shaping factors that affect 1st generation migrants are experienced distinctively by members of later generations, and it will also address some challenges that are unique to the 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrant experience, such as the concept of "ethnic homelessness," a concept that will be initially explored in section four of chapter 2, then further examined in chapter 5. This chapter will also explore the way that evangélico churches respond to these challenges by building a friendship community where evangélico youngsters can find common ground in their struggles, and guidance to overcome them.

Chapter 6 will explore the various ways in which the concept of church as an extended family shapes the character, activities and missional outlook of evangélico churches in diaspora in South Florida. It will look to identify the ways in which Brazilian Protestant churches take on the role of an extended family for parishioners in the diaspora primarily through the physical, emotional, and practical care provided. This care is especially expressed by the leaders of the family, the pastors who assume expanded roles beyond that of a typical pastor in order to ensure that all members of the family are cared for. Chapter 6 will also assess the

strengths and weaknesses of using the concept of the church as family when it comes to the church's mission and evangelism before looking at how evangelism and mission fit into the concept of church as an extended family as a way to expand the family.

Chapter 7 will bring the thesis to a conclusion first by examining the answers that this study has provided to the main research question, and consequently to the sub-questions posed in this introduction. It will then look at what it means to belong to an evangélico community in diaspora in South Florida, and how that association impacts the lives of evangélicos. This concluding chapter will also look at the ways that evangélico churches practice holistic ministry toward their congregants through ecclesial and pastoral support before addressing the opportunities for additional support that were raised in chapters 4 through 6. It will then explore how the study of evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida relates to other studies of migrant churches in world Christianity, and it will also address possible avenues for further research. The chapter will end by comparing the trajectory of evangélico churches in South Florida with other migrant churches in the US in order to suggest some possible future trajectories for these diasporic churches.

Chapter 2. Brazilian Immigration to the US: History and Current Realities

Introduction

The Brazilian diasporic community in the US is multifaceted and complex, and the prototypical Brazilian immigrant does not exist. Brazilian immigrants often fight to break away from stereotypes of Latino immigrants in the US, as they work to forge their own identities as a distinct community. This journey of self-discovery is a laborious one, as notions of identity are both fluid and are influenced by a plethora of factors, thus creating several possibilities for the forming of one's identity as a Brazilian immigrant in the US. This chapter will unearth some of the factors that go into the identity-shaping process of Brazilians as an ethnic minority in the US, and it will look at issues that affect their self-identity.

This will be done by focusing first on the history of Brazilian immigration to the US and the specific factors that influenced each of the migration waves to America. Understanding this history of the Brazilian immigration to the US will create the backdrop to understanding how Brazilian immigrants have shaped their identity in the US and continue to do so to this day. After this brief overview of the history of the Brazilian immigration to the US, this chapter will turn its focus to the history of Brazilian immigration to South Florida specifically, the area where the fieldwork for this thesis was performed. This part of the chapter will examine the different waves of migration to Florida, assess the size of the Brazilian community in Florida in comparison to the rest of the US, and describe some of the dynamics of the

Brazilian community in South Florida based upon a few studies conducted in the area. After looking at the history of Brazilian immigration, this chapter will then present the current issues of identity of the Brazilian diasporic community in the US and explore the different factors that influence how Brazilian evangélicos conceive their identity in the diaspora in South Florida. The factors to be explored are as follows:

- Do they understand themselves to be Latino, Hispanic or neither? Issues of race and ethnicity in the US.
- Documented versus undocumented status: How residency status impacts one's life in the US.
- What is home, Brazil or US? Transnationalism and the different ways that Brazilian immigrants view their stay in America.
- The role of ethnic churches in the diaspora.

These identity-shaping factors also affect how Brazilian evangélicos understand their mission and how they practice it within their specific diasporic contexts. In terms of race and ethnicity, some Brazilian evangélicos may have a narrower focus of mission that is aimed exclusively toward other Brazilians, while others may extend their mission to include Americans as well. There are also Brazilian evangélicos who worship in Anglo churches and whose missional focus may be aimed exclusively at Americans. When it comes to residency status, undocumented immigrants may feel more limited in how they can publicly express their faith and practice their mission due to the fear of deportation. An ethnic transnational identity may also influence the missional focus of Brazilian evangélicos, and it will

be necessary to assess the extent that one's concept of home affects his or her missional focus and practices. Lastly, ethnic churches also play a large role in the identity-shaping process of Brazilian evangélicos in the US by reinforcing their ethnic identities and transnational connections to Brazil, and by aiding in their adaptation into US culture. These different identities that are formed in the diaspora, as well as their effects on the concepts of mission of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, will be explored not only in this chapter but also in the ones to come.

2.1. Brazilian Immigration to the US

During its first century and a half of existence as a nation state, Brazil was a nation of immigration rather than emigration. According to Lima and Castro, from 1822 to 1949, Brazil received approximately 5 million immigrants, most of them being Italians, Portuguese, and Spaniards, while some were German, Japanese, Polish, and Syrian-Lebanese.[1] It was not until the mid- to late twentieth century that Brazilians began emigrating to countries like the US, Japan, Portugal, and some European countries.[2] This Brazilian diaspora reached its peak as a result of the financial crisis of the 1980s, considered by many to be Brazil's "lost decade." Brazil had experienced a military coup in 1964, which led to a military dictatorship that

[1] Álvaro Eduardo de Castro e Lima and Alanni de Lacerda Barbosa de Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos: meio século (re)fazendo a América (1960-2010)* (Brasília: FUNAG, 2017), 13.

[2] Maxine Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil: Émigrés from the Land of Soccer and Samba,* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 17.

lasted until 1985. These were tumultuous years for Brazil as the military exercised control over free speech and free expression, causing hundreds of artists, academics, and political figures to flee the country, some of them exiled.[3] Brazil's financial crisis of the 1980s also increased the nation's levels of crime and violence,[4] and it shattered Brazil's lower and middle classes.[5] Maxine Margolis, the pioneer anthropologist of the Brazilian diaspora in the US, depicts well the financial crisis that affected Brazil in the 1980s:

> Over an eighteen-month period beginning in 1987, the real income of the Brazilian middle class declined by 30 percent, as rents soared by 800 percent, the price of newspapers often doubled overnight, and canned goods in grocery stores were thick with price stickers, stuck one on top of the other, as store owners frantically changed prices trying to keep up with inflation.[6]

This hyperinflation was accompanied by a high level of unemployment, low wages, a high cost of living, and an economic recession, evidenced by the fact that during this period Brazil went through four different currencies, five freezes of salaries and prices, and nine government programs that attempted to stabilize the economy.[7]

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[3] Ibid., 4.

[4] Cristina Rocha and Manuel A Vásquez, "O Brasil Na Nova Cartografia Global Da Religião," *Religião & Sociedade* 34, no. 1 (2014): 17.

[5] Rodrigo Serrao and James Cavendish, "The Social Functions and Dysfunctions of Brazilian Immigrant Congregations in 'Terra Incognita,'" *Review of Religious Research* 60, no. 3 (2018): 369.

[6] Maxine Margolis, *Little Brazil: An Ethnography of Brazilian Immigrants In New York City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 6.

[7] Lima and Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos,* 15.

The many reasons why Brazilians migrated in large numbers to the US in the 1980s were complex and varied. Some motivators for migration were family ties,[8] the lack of opportunity for Brazilians with higher education to land jobs in their fields,[9] and the disillusionment with the government and Brazil's inability to provide a hope for the future.[10] In comparing the future prospects in Brazil to those that beckoned in the US, Brazilian anthropologist Rosana Resende argued, "if the United States was the land of Manifest Destiny, Brazil was the land of un-manifest[ed] destiny."[11] The motives for immigration were not all negative, however. The allure of the American lifestyle depicted by Hollywood movies[12] and the attraction of the adventure of exploring a new country and learning a new language also became significant stimuli for Brazilians to immigrate to the US.[13] There were also religious motives, as some Brazilian evangélicos migrated to the US primarily as missionaries. Therefore, it cannot be said that the mission of Brazilian evangélicos in South

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[8] Antonio Luciano de Andrade Tosta, "The Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World: Latino, Eu? The Paradoxical Interplay of Identity in Brazuca Literature," *Hispania* 87, no. 3 (2004): 578.

[9] Maxine Margolis, *An Invisible Minority: Brazilians in New York City* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 10.

[10] Rosana Resende, "Tropical Brazucas: Brazilians in South Florida and the Imaginary of National Identity" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2009), 27.

[11] Ibid., 28.

[12] Leticia J. Braga and Clémence Jouët-Pastré, "Introduction: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Becoming Brazuca," in *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2008), 7.

[13] Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil*, 17.

Florida is simply the direct byproduct of economic migration because while most evangélicos have migrated to the US for a better life, some have left a better life behind and migrated to fulfill a divine command, as will be seen in the case studies in the chapters to come. Nevertheless, the ways that these Brazilian evangélicos conceive of their mission from Brazil to the US, a chief concern of this thesis, vary. Similarly to how Protestants, most of them coming from the US, in the past had to conceive of their mission to immigrant—and occasionally indigenous—communities in Brazil, Brazilian evangélicos have needed to develop their mission from Brazil to the US in kind. These varying approaches to Protestant mission are dependent upon whether the focus is to evangelize immigrant or indigenous communities, or possibly both. Toward this end, the choice of language becomes crucial, as was the case with early Protestant missions to Brazil. The ones that chose to hold their services in English limited the reach of their mission to immigrant communities, while the ones that decided to change to the vernacular were able to extend their mission toward the indigenous inhabitants. Thus, it is essential to examine in what ways Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida use language to conceive of their mission from Brazil to the US.

Although it is not known where the first Brazilian immigrants settled in the US, there are accounts as early as the mid- to late-1960s of Brazilian enclaves in New York City, the Catskill Mountain region of New York State, Newark, New Jersey, Boston, and California.[14] The records show that 22,310 Brazilians were legally

[14] Margolis, *An Invisible Minority*, 2.

admitted into the US between 1966 and 1979.[15] Nevertheless, the first significant wave of Brazilian immigration to the US only occurred only in the mid- to late-1980s,[16] when the more significant Brazilian diaspora began. The majority of these first immigrants came from the city of Governador Valadares, in the state of Minas Gerais.[17] *Valadarenses*, as they are called, have a long-standing relationship with the US, with roots that date as far back as World War II. That is when Americans went down to parts of Minas Gerais and to Governador Valadares to work in the mining of mica, an important material for war, and to provide health services for American workers. These Americans, then, began hiring *Valadarenses* as household servants and paid them in US dollars, which were worth a lot in Brazil's currency at the time.[18] They also paid for other services and food with US dollars, often leaving the change behind. This influx of American money sparked interest in the minds of Brazilians, leading them to imagine America as a land of abundance. Therefore, when these Americans returned home and invited some *Valadarenses* to come work for them, many of the *Valadarenses* eagerly accepted. The pioneer immigration of people from Minas Gerais, who are called *Mineiros*, and more specifically

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[15] Ana Cristina Braga Martes, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos: Um Estudo sobre Imigrantes em Massachusetts* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1999), 47.

[16] Donizete Rodrigues, "The Brazilianization of New York City: Brazilian Immigrants and Evangelical Churches in a Pluralized Urban Landscape," in *Ecologies of Faith in New York City: the Evolution of Religious Institutions,* ed. Richard P. Cimino, Nadia A. Mian, and Weishan Huan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 123.

[17] Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil*, 9.

[18] Margolis, *An Invisible Minority*, 2-3.

Valadarenses, was so significant that they became the initial prototype of a Brazilian immigrant to the US.[19] Although Brazilian immigration turned into a national phenomenon at the start of the 1990s and into the 2000s attracting people from many different areas of Brazil, *Mineiros* and *Valadarenses* still make up a significant portion of the Brazilian community in America—especially in Boston—and in the sites of study for this thesis in South Florida.

The preferred destinations for Brazilian immigrants changed from the 1980s to the 1990s and beyond. In the 1980s, California and New York held more than one third of the Brazilian population in the US, with only 12% of Brazilians living in Florida and Massachusetts together.[20] In 1990, immigration flows began to change toward Florida and Massachusetts, then holding 23% of the Brazilian diaspora, while the Brazilian population in California and New York went down to 32%.[21] In 2000, Florida became the favorite state for Brazilians with 21% of the Brazilian population.[22] The emergence of Florida as one of the preferred destinations for Brazilian immigrants can be attributed to several factors. Starting in the 1980s, a few Brazilian companies such as VASP, TAM, Odebrecht, and Banco do Brasil, transferred some of their workers to Miami.[23] This new influx of Brazilian

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[19] Margolis calls Governador Valadares "the emigrant capital of Brazil," in *An Invisible Minority*, 3.

[20] Lima and Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos,* 55.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Alex Guedes Brum, "A história da Imigração de Brasileiros para o Sul da Flórida," *Revista de História Regional* 23(2) (2018): 249.

immigrants generated the need for an additional group of compatriots to take on supporting roles such as drivers, babysitters, house cleaners, and so on, adding to the number of Brazilian immigrants in the area. In 1990, the economic plan put in place by president Fernando Collor opened more doors to Brazilian immigration to the area because it generated more business between Brazil and the US, which reached its peak in 1994 when there was a temporary parity between the American dollar and the Brazilian *real*.[24] The last major factor influencing the flow of Brazilian immigration to Florida was the improved US economy in the early 2000s, which coupled with the low cost of living in parts of South Florida, attracted many members of Brazil's immigrant working class to the area.[25] In reports from 2014, Florida remained the largest concentration of Brazilians in the US at 20%, followed by Massachusetts at 17%, California at 10%, New Jersey at 9%, and New York at 7%.[26] These five states combined hold more than half (63%) of the Brazilian diaspora community in the US, and in terms of cities, Florida has five out of the ten with the largest concentrations of Brazilians.[27]

But just how big is this community exactly? In 2014, Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministério de Relações Exteriores* – MRE), also known in Brazil as

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[24] Ibid., 250.

[25] Ibid., 251.

[26] Ibid. These estimated figures are based on the report on the Brazilian Diaspora community in the US sponsored by Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs titled, *Brasileiros Nos Estados Unidos: Meio Século (re)fazendo a America (1960-2010)*, which came out in 2017.

[27] Brum, "A história da Imigração de Brasileiros para o Sul da Flórida," 246.

Itamaraty, estimated the Brazilian population in the US to be between 800,000 and 1.3 million people, a number based on their inquiries to Brazilian embassies and consulates,[28] with other unofficial estimates going as high as 1.5 million.[29] However, US census data offers a very different picture, with the American Community Survey (ACS) of 2014 showing a modest Brazilian population in the US of 336,000.[30] One of the main reasons for such a discrepancy in population sizes presented by these two bureaus is the issue of undocumented migration. Margolis points out that in 2007, an estimated 63% of Brazilians were living without documentation in the US, and that by 2009 Brazil became one of the top ten countries to send undocumented migrants to the US.[31] Lucia Ribeiro's figures are even higher, estimating that 70% to 80% of Brazilians in the US are undocumented.[32] Most of these undocumented Brazilian migrants arrived in the US by plane on a tourist visa and overstayed their visas, thus becoming undocumented, while others attempted the treacherous and even deadly crossing of the Mexican border.[33]

Undocumented migrants are less likely to fill out census forms through either fear of repercussion or a lack of interest in the benefits offered by a census count.

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[28] Lima and Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos,* 54.

[29] Jouët-Pastré and Braga, *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, 4.

[30] Lima and Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos,* 52.

[31] Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil*, 6.

[32] Lucia Ribeiro, "Religious Experiences Among Brazilian Migrants," *REMHU—Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana* 28 (2007): 73.

[33] Rodrigues, "The Brazilianization of New York City," 123.

Undocumented status also affects how migrants live in the US, their perception of themselves as immigrants in the US, and their concepts of mission and expressions of Christianity in the diaspora, issues that will be looked at more in-depth in a later section. Another issue that affects the low census count is the lack of a settled identity for Brazilian immigrants in the US, evidenced in the absence of a specified category for Brazilians in both the 2000 and 2010 US Census questionnaires. Nevertheless, the very fact that we cannot arrive at hard statistics about the size of the Brazilian community in the US itself points to some of the issues of ambiguous identity that this community faces. This very lack of clarity or settled identity is one of the ingredients this thesis will wrestle with and discuss in the upcoming chapters. Chapters 4 and 5 will inquire to what extent the churches may be meeting the needs created by this ambiguity of ethnic identify for Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida.

2.2. Brazilians in South Florida

As has been observed, the oldest Brazilian settlements in the US were found in the northeast part of the country in New York, Newark and Boston, and also in the southwest region in California. There were very few Brazilians who settled in Florida at the beginning of the first wave of the Brazilian diaspora to the US in the 1980s. However, the flow of migration changed, making Florida the largest community of Brazilians in the US today, validating South Florida as an ideal locale to conduct fieldwork on the Brazilian diaspora in the US. The unofficial estimates of

the Brazilian population in Florida vary between 200,000 and 300,000,[34] with official ACS numbers showing a population of 66,000 in 2011.[35] The state of Florida is divided into 67 counties, and Brazilians have settled primarily in its three southernmost ones, namely Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade (Figure 2.1).[36]

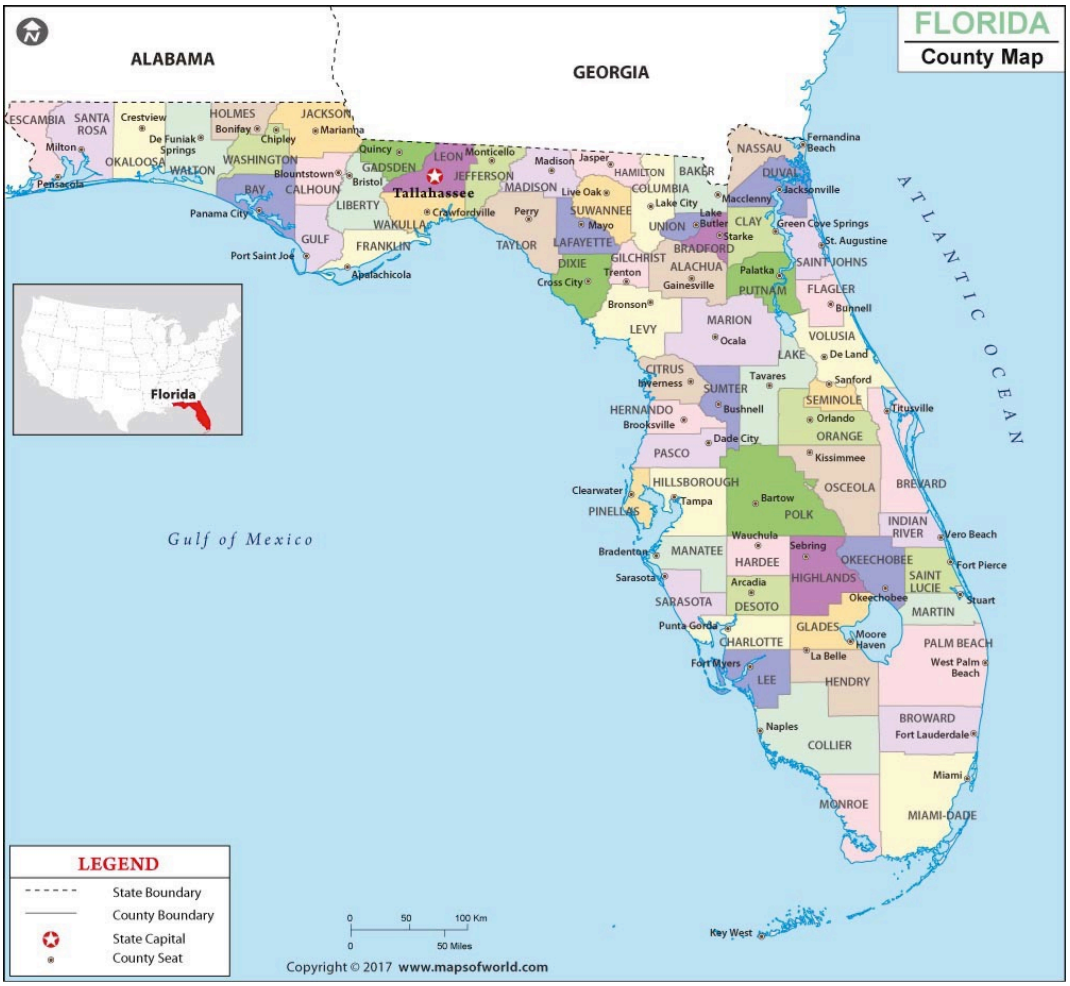

Figure 2-1. Florida county map showing all 67 counties in the state and important cities. Retrieved May 25th 2019 from https://www.mapsofworld.com/usa/states/florida/florida-county-map.html

[34] Jose Claudio Souza Alves and Lucia Ribeiro, "Migração, Religião e Transnacionalismo: O Caso Dos Brasileiros No Sul da Florida," *Religião e Sociedade* 22(2) (2002): 66.

[35] Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil*, 93.

[36] Brum, "A história da Imigração de Brasileiros para o Sul da Flórida," 244.

Most Brazilian immigrants are found spread out across a corridor stretching southwards along Interstate 95 from Boca Raton (Palm Beach County) to Broward County, with the highest concentrations to be found in the cities of Pompano Beach and Deerfield Beach in Broward County (Figure 2.2).[37]

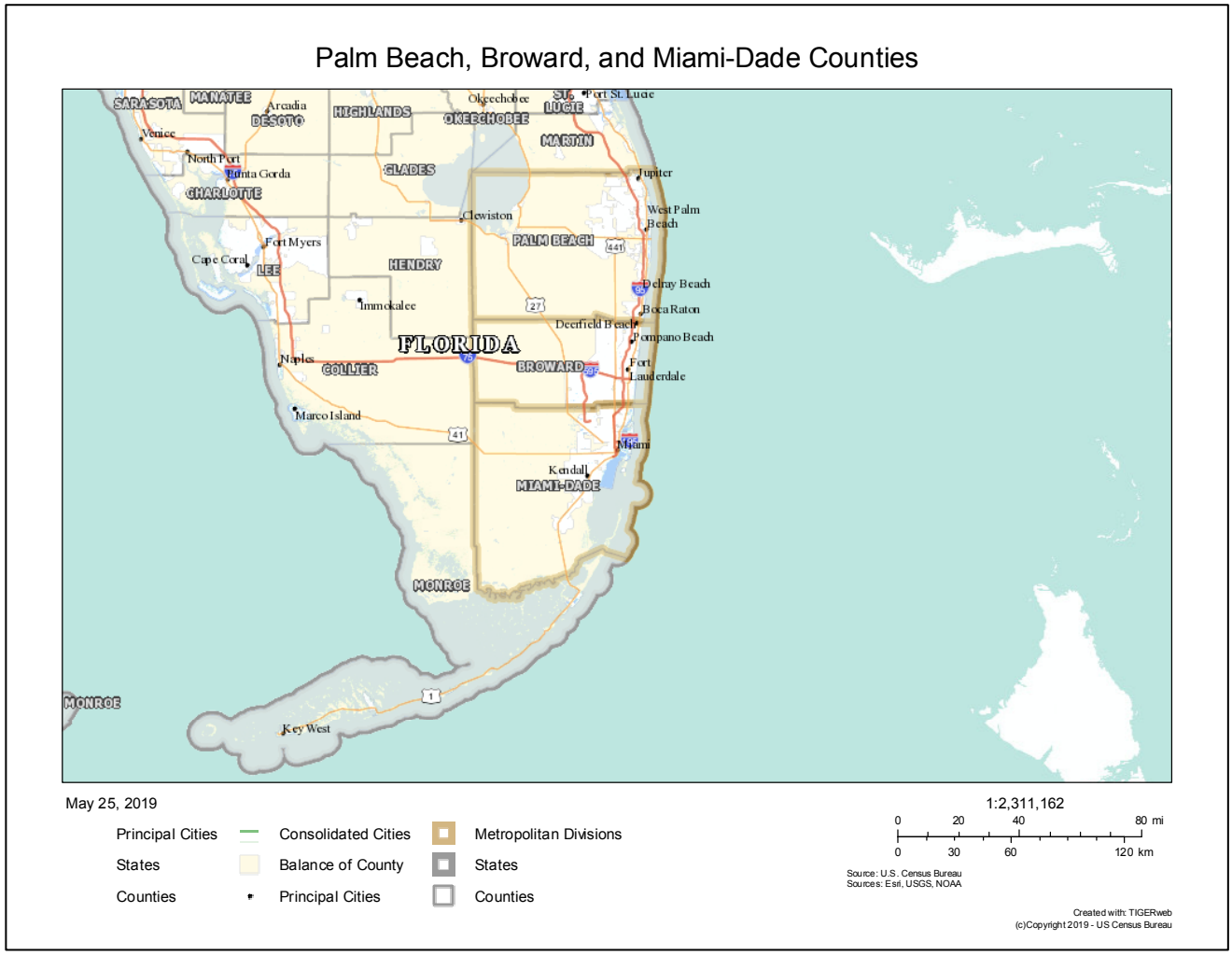

Figure 2-2. Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties highlighted, with major cities of Brazilian concentration (Boca Raton, Deerfield Beach, and Pompano Beach) shown alongside Interstate-95. Retrieved May 25th 2019 from https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerwebecon/

[37] Manuel Vasquez, "Beyond Homo Anomicus: Interpersonal Networks, Space, and Religion among Brazilians in Broward County," in *A place to be: Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican immigrants in Florida's new destinations*, ed. P.J. Williams, T.J. Steigenga, and M. Vasquez (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 41. See also Resende, 39.

Brazilian immigrants settled in these cities because of the lower cost of living in comparison to wealthier cities such as Miami and Fort Lauderdale.[38] Unlike in other Brazilian enclaves in Boston and New York, where public transportation is both efficient and readily available, Brazilians in South Florida (with the small exception of downtown Miami) do not enjoy such accessibility to public transport. Also, given how spread out these cities in South Florida are, Brazilians must rely on the ability to drive a car in order to get around, something that can be problematic for undocumented migrants who are unable to obtain a driver's license.[39]

There are also smaller communities in the northern part of Florida in cities such as Tampa and St. Petersburg, and a significant community in Orlando, which is in Central Florida, but such communities fail to come even close to the ones found in South Florida in terms of size.[40] Orlando, however, is a very significant area for Brazilians in terms of tourism because of its theme parks, more specifically Disney World. A trip to visit Disney World is in the 'bucket list' of large numbers of Brazilians, and it is a journey that is taken by many of them on a yearly basis, if not multiple times in a year. Just in terms of numbers, a study performed in 2011 showed that in the first nine months of that year, an estimated 1.1 million Brazilians spent $1.6 billion in the state of Florida. The Brazilian infatuation with visiting

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[38] Brum, 'A história da Imigração de Brasileiros para o Sul da Flórida', 251.

[39] Manuel Vasquez and Lucia Ribeiro, "A Igreja é Como a Casa da Minha Mãe: Religião e Espaço Vivido Entre Brasileiros no Condado De Broward," *Ciencias Sociales Y Religion/Ciências Sociais e Religião* 9(9) (2007): 17.

[40] Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil*, 93.

Florida is so great that Brazil is second only to Canada among foreign nations in the number of visitors it sends to the state, primarily tourists.[41]

Researchers suggest that the Brazilian migration to South Florida happened in three separate waves. The first wave (1980s-1990s), which took place mainly in the 90s, brought primarily members of the middle classes who had lost their hope in Brazil's economic future, and who were no longer able to afford a middle-class lifestyle because of Brazil's out-of-control inflation rates. The second wave happened in the 2000s, and it brought in members of the working class who were in search of job opportunities. The third wave has been happening more recently in the 2010s, and it is bringing in members of Brazil's elite who are seeking more financial stability in the US.[42]

The Brazilian diaspora community in South Florida has been the subject of a few fieldwork-based research projects. Manuel Vasquez and Luciana Ribeiro, whose fieldwork focused on the cities of Pompano Beach and Deerfield Beach in Broward County between 2001 and 2004, conducted one of these projects.[43] Vasquez and

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Brum, "A história da Imigração de Brasileiros para o Sul da Flórida," 248.

[43] Ribeiro, "Religious Experiences Among Brazilian Migrants," 73. Vasquez and Ribeiro's findings were the source of the four aforementioned publications: Vasquez's book chapter, "Beyond Homo Anomicus: Interpersonal Networks, Space, and Religion among Brazilians in Broward County;" Ribeiro's article, "Religious Experiences Among Brazilian Migrants," and her joint effort with Jose Alves, "Migração, Religião e Transnacionalismo: O Caso Dos Brasileiros No Sul da Florida;" and Ribeiro and Vasquez' joint article, "A Igreja é Como a Casa da Minha Mãe: Religião e Espaço Vivido Entre Brasileiros no Condado De Broward." All four of these publications provide valuable insights regarding the Brazilian diasporic community in South Florida that are essential to this thesis. See also Rosana

Ribeiro's survey results corroborated the Brazilian diaspora migration flow to South Florida that has been presented thus far, with 92% of respondents having moved to the US after 1990, and 41% after 2000.[44] The demographic results were also consistent in terms of the origin of these migrants, with Minas Gerais (28%) coming in first, followed by Rio de Janeiro (23%).[45] Vasquez and Ribeiro's research also sheds light on how intensive these migrants' work schedules were:

> Survey respondents told us that they work an average of 43.3 hours per week. However, 48 percent of our respondents indicated that they work more than 40 hours per week, and 17 percent work more than 60 hours. With Brazilians often working multiple jobs six days a week, the only opportunity to visit public spaces where they can relax and interact affectively with other compatriots comes during lunch or on Saturdays and Sundays.[46]

Thus, a busy schedule is indeed a key component of the lifestyle of Brazilian immigrants in South Florida, and it has a direct impact on their ability to socialize with one another or to engage in different ecclesial or mission practices. Those interviewed by Vasquez and Ribeiro complained about a lack of a sense of community among Brazilians in South Florida.[47] If we combine these busy work schedules that often only allow for Brazilians to rest on Sunday with the sense of a lack of community, it can be argued that evangélico churches, whose main services

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Resende's PhD dissertation, "Tropical Brazucas: Brazilians in South Florida and the Imaginary of National Identity."

[44] Vasquez and Ribeiro, "A Igreja é Como a Casa da Minha Mãe," 14.

[45] Ibid., 15.

[46] Vasquez, "Beyond Homo Anomicus," 43.

[47] Ibid., 34.

are on Sunday, could very well fill in that communal gap for these migrants. Brazilian migrants in Florida also tend to perform different jobs than they did in Brazil, some of them more manual in labor, albeit for a better pay than they received in Brazil.[48] Therefore, a busier, more arduous workweek may also have an effect on church attendance and activities in general. Freston is right to contend that religion both expands and contracts when it is transplanted into the diaspora.[49] It contracts because of the busy schedule of most immigrants who may not be able to attend multiple organized activities in a week, but it expands in the services it provides, such as "familial, sociocultural, linguistic (preservation of the language), economic, political (representation and organization), medical, and other functions."[50] Thus, although these church activities have to be scaled back, the wider social significance of belonging to a church expands in the diaspora. It will also be important to evaluate to what extent these Brazilian churches in South Florida are changing their strategies and frequency of services in order to adapt to the diaspora.

Having briefly described the history of Brazilian immigration to the US, this chapter will now turn its focus to current issues of identity of Brazilian immigrants in the US. The issue of identity will now be looked at in terms of the labels employed in the US of Hispanic and Latino, the issue of undocumented migration,

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[48] Vasquez and Ribeiro, "A Igreja é Como a Casa da Minha Mãe," 16.

[49] Paul Freston, "The Religious Field among Brazilians in the United States," In *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga, (Cambridge: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies: 2008), 258.

[50] Ibid.

transnationalism and visions of home, and how the ethnic church plays a role in the identity-shaping process of migrants.

2.3. Current Issues of Identity for Brazilian Immigrants in the US

2.3.1. Latino, Hispanic, or Neither? Issues of Race and Ethnicity in the US

In her seminal ethnographic work on the Brazilian diaspora in New York City entitled *Little Brazil: An Ethnography of Brazilian Immigrants in New York City*, Margolis called the Brazilian immigrant community in the US "an invisible minority" because of their lack of settled identity as a separate community in the US. Such lack of identity begins with the ambiguous racial and ethnic categorizations employed by the US census, which serves to reinforce a feeling of exclusion experienced by Brazilian immigrants in the US, whose self-identity is deeply rooted in their perceived uniqueness as "Brazilians" rather than in their participation in pan-ethnic categories such as Latinos or South Americans. In the 2010 US Census, individuals were asked to self-identify under two categories, namely Hispanic origin and race. The first question asked, "Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin," which was accompanied by the following instructions: "Please answer both question 8 about Hispanic origin and question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races."[51] The first possible answer was "no," followed by multiple "yes" options, each with individual boxes for the following categories: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and lastly, "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin," with a space

[51] "United States Census 2010," U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, accessed March 7th, 2019, https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/2010questionnaire.pdf.

to write-out the specific origin.[52] After answering the question about Hispanic origin, respondents were given several choices for race.[53]

It is important to understand the terms used by the US census in order to realize where the problem lies. The terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "Spanish" can be somewhat confusing because of how they are often used interchangeably, even though they are not synonymous, and belonging to one group does not mean belonging to all. For example, people born in Mexico are considered Hispanic for linguistic reasons—being Hispanophone—and Latino because of their geographical placement in Latin America. On the other hand, people born in Spain are Hispanic linguistically but not Latino because their geographical placement is in Europe. When it comes to Brazilians, they are Latinos geographically, because they also come from part of Latin America, but they cannot be classified as Hispanic linguistically because they are Lusophone. One of the problems lies in the fact that in the US, "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably, and often synonymously, with Hispanic being the more common term. For instance, although the US census questionnaire inquires if the person is of "Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin," the instructions state that the question is about "Hispanic origins," rather than Hispanic and/or Latino origins, as the questions implies. Also, the report produced on the

[52] Ibid.

[53] The US Census 2010 categories for race were the following: White; Black, African Am., or Negro; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian Indian; Chinese; Filipino; Other Asian (with a space to fill in); Japanese; Korean; Vietnamese; Native Hawaiian; Guamanian or Chamorro; Samoan; and other Pacific Islander (with a space to fill in).

data is titled "The Hispanic Population: 2010,"[54] thus excluding Lusophone Latinos terminologically. This report continues the perplexing trend of ambiguity by using Hispanic and Latino synonymously, as seen in how it defines someone who is of Hispanic or Latino origin: "'Hispanic or Latino' refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race."[55] Brazilians can become even more baffled with the addition of South American in the categorization, where Brazilians would certainly fit given that Brazil is South America's largest country, and yet the US census fails to recognize them even when they have tried to subscribe to such categorization. This was the case in the 2000 US Census, where Brazilians who self-identified as "Other Hispanic/Latino/Spanish" and wrote "Brazilian" in the specific origin box were recorded as "not Hispanic."[56] The aforementioned 2010 US Census report on the Hispanic population also failed to list Brazilians, even though every other South American country of origin was listed.

In order to better understand how Brazilian immigrants interact with the racial taxonomy in the US, it is important to understand how race and class

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[54] Sharon R. Ennis, Merarys Ríos-Vargas, and Nora G. Albert, "The Hispanic Population 2010," United States Census Bureau, May 2011, accessed March 7th, 2019, https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Jorge del Pinal and Dianne Schmidley, "Matched Race and Hispanic Origin Responses from Census 2000 and Current Population Survey February to May 2000," United States Census Bureau, December 1st, 2005, accessed March 7th, 2019, https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2005/demo/POP-twps0079.html#table6.

discrimination are constructed in Brazil. Since the 1930s, Brazil has been viewed by many scholars as a racial democracy, that is, a racial ideology that has escaped racism and discrimination by allowing their constituents to self-identify somewhere along an ambiguous color line rather than utilizing a more structured system, such as in the US, where racial and ethnic lines are more rigid.[57] This system proposes "skin color, rather than race, as the marker of difference and has sought in the endless gradations of skin color the key to national identity.[58] In Brazil, the census categories are *branco* (White), *preto* (Black), *pardo* (brown or mestizo), *amarelo* (yellow or Asian), and indígena (indigenous)[59] In practice, however, Brazilians use many more ways to describe themselves along the color line. A subsequent question asks Brazilians to identity their ethnicity, but no categories of their ethnicity are specified. A 1976 survey showed that subjects offered more than 190 different terms in response to this open-ended question requesting self-identification.[60] This fluidity is skewed toward "whitening," which is "epitomized by the paradigmatic

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[57] Livio Sansone, *Blackness Without Ethnicity: Constructing Race in Brazil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 2.

[58] Rebecca Reichmann, "Introduction," in *Race in Contemporary Brazil: From Indifference to Inequality*, ed. Rebecca Reichmann (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 7.

[59] "CD 2010 Questionário Básico," Censo Demográfico 2010, IBGE, accessed March 5th, 2019, https://censo2010.ibge.gov.br/images/pdf/censo2010/questionarios/questionario_basico_cd2010.pdf.

[60] Edith Piza and Fúlvia Rosemberg, "Color in the Brazilian Census," in *Race in Contemporary Brazil*, 38.

expression 'money whitens.'"[61] Gladys L. Mitchell, in her study on racial identity in Brazil, found that Afro-Brazilian respondents identified different ways of "whitening," such as through association with whites or "through their way of thinking."[62] Mitchell argues that Afro-Brazilian men and women who favor "whitening" and who do not identify as *negro* because of the miscegenation between African and Portuguese that happened during Brazil's colonization fail to consider the violent history between Portuguese men and African and indigenous women that engendered the miscegenated.[63]

This history of miscegenation began in the mid-sixteenth century, when Portuguese colonizers began to bring African slaves to work in the production of sugar. At the end of the slave trade in the mid-nineteenth century, Brazil had brought 3.6 million slaves from Africa,[64] which was "seven times as many Africans as their North-American counterparts."[65] The early Portuguese colonizers were encouraged to marry with the natives in order to better populate the colony, but the union between White colonizers and blacks or mulattos was forbidden by both the crown and the Catholic church.[66] This did not stop the Portuguese from engaging in

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Gladys L. Mitchell, *The Politics of Blackness: Racial Identity and Political Behavior in Contemporary Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 135.

[63] Ibid., 134-135.

[64] Edward Eric Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 25.

[65] Ibid., 1.

such unions, especially given the prohibition of Portuguese women from migrating. Nevertheless, Edward Telles argues that:

> given the racial hierarchy imposed by the slave-based economy, relationships between the white colonizers and nonwhite Brazilian women were highly unequal. White men frequently raped and abused African, indigenous, and mixed-race women. Indeed, mixed-race Brazilians were largely spawned through sexual violence throughout the period of slavery…[67]

This racial hierarchy integral to this colonial context impacted racial relations and class discrimination throughout Brazil's history. In the late nineteenth century, the elites began to worry about Brazil's future, as they viewed "miscegenation as degenerate and leading to Brazil's backwardness,"[68] and they "equated blackness with unhealthiness, laziness, and criminality."[69] Thus, they turned to eugenics to try and progress "the human race physically and mentally by manipulating genetic traits, primarily through controls on the act and context of procreation."[70] Eugenics presented a racist attempt to "whiten" Brazilian society "through the mixing of whites and nonwhites" with the hopes of eliminating the black population.[71]

Miscegenation began to be seen in a positive light again by the 1930s, "as a positive value and proof of Brazil's 'racial democracy.'"[72] Nevertheless, recent

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[66] Ibid., 25.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 24.

[69] Jerry Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness: Race and Social Policy in Brazil, 1917-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 6.

[70] Ibid., 24.

[71] Telles, *Race in Another America,* 28.

scholars have challenged Brazil's myth of a racial democracy by indicating the ways that race relations have led to social inequality.[73] One study has found that "white children show significantly faster rates of progression through school than do *pretos* and *pardos*, and these differential rates of school achievement contribute to Brazil's profound racial inequality."[74] A 1995 survey performed by Datafolha, a Brazilian polling institute, showed signs of racism in Brazilian society when it found that "89 percent of those self-identifying as white agreed that whites harbor racial prejudice against blacks, but only 11 percent of the whites admitted to being prejudiced themselves. The contradiction...is a perfect statement about how the Brazilian public privately draws the color line while affirming the ideal of racial democracy."[75] Thus, the myth of a society free from racism and discrimination is no longer tenable, with one scholar claiming that "Brazil, with its very large black population, which in the past was depicted as a racial paradise, is now seen as a racial hell."[76] In an attempt to remove racial discrimination by allowing people to self-identify by skin color alone, Brazil's racial democracy ultimately engages in colorblind racism that favors white elites, as Rodrigo Serrao put it:

> This ideology, however, suffers from three fundamental shortcomings usually disguised in color-blind rhetoric. First, it values miscegenation as long as it serves to whiten the population…Second, it vilifies and erases black

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[72] Ibid., 24.

[73] Piza and Rosemberg, "Color in the Brazilian Census," 38.

[74] Reichmann, "Introduction," 30.

[75] Ibid., 2, citing Datafolha, *300 anos de Zumbi: Os Brasileiros e o preconceito de cor* (São Paulo: Datafolha, 1995), 2.

[76] Livio, *Blackness Without Ethnicity*, 9.

> identity in favor of white or *morena/o* identity…Finally, it neutralizes antidiscrimination strategies…by ignoring structural and racial inequality among the black and brown populations...[77]

Serrao argues that this racist aspect of Brazil's racial democracy becomes more evident when light-skinned Brazilians emigrate to the US, where they are "required to navigate a racial system that is not just different, but to a certain extent, opposite to what they recognize and have experienced."[78] Although some scholars claim that the US is headed toward colorblindness and Brazil is headed toward the multiculturalism experienced in the US, Serrao claims that the racial relations in both countries remain "mirror images of one another,"[79] a point well demonstrated by Helen Marrow who claims that:

> In the USA blackness has been defined and solidified historically by the one-drop-of- blood rule of hypodescent, so that anyone with any African ancestry at all is defined as 'black', or at least 'not white', whereas in Brazil blackness has been defined by a different 'one drop' rule, so that anyone with any European ancestry at all is defined as 'potentially white', or at least 'not black.'[80]

The Brazilian immigrant, then, goes through a process of interpreting race and ethnicity through a new framework that is shaped by both their sending and host countries. Lighter-skinned Brazilians may experience racism and discrimination for the first time, while darker-skinned Brazilians may continue in their process of

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[77] Rodrigo Serrao, "Winning 'Americans' for Jesus?: Second-Generation, Racial Ideology, and the Future of the Brazilian Evangelical Church in the U.S." (PhD diss., University of South Florida, 2020), 34.

[78] Ibid., 35.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Quoted in Serrao, "Winning 'Americans' for Jesus?," 36.

"whitening" in the hope of assimilating into the dominant culture in the US rather than into the Black minority culture. This dynamic can ultimately lead to the reinforcement of colorblind racism between light-skinned and dark-skinned Brazilians, perpetuating the racial relations experienced in Brazil.

Nevertheless, most 1st generation Brazilian migrants in the US still view both their ethnicity and race primarily in national terms, since in Brazil they are simply "Brazilians" of different skin tones, causing them to often write down "Brazilian" for both their ethnicity and race in the census forms. The ethnolinguistic classification of Latino is largely unknown to Brazilians in Brazil, and it is something they only encounter upon migrating to the US, where the government has established such categories. Margolis rightly argues that being Brazilian in Brazil is completely different than being Brazilian in the US, where one goes from being identified as part of a nationality to being reduced to an ethnic group, and from being the majority to becoming the minority.[81] This phenomenon thrusts members of the Brazilian diaspora into an ever-present struggle for self-identity. As Resende puts it:

> The consolidation process by which one acquires the skin of the immigrant calls into question…the notion that multiple identities exist simultaneously, rather than as an ongoing process. The immigrant's identity is called into question not only by others but also by the self, thus this differentiation is not only an assertion of the identity of the self, but an active engagement in the process of self-discovery.[82]

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[81] Maxine Margolis, "Becoming Brazucas: Brazilian Identity in the United States," in *The Other Latinos: Central and South Americans in the United States*, ed. José Luis Falconi and José Antonio Mazzoti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 213.

[82] Resende, "Tropical Brazucas," 176.

This struggle for self-discovery is negotiated differently by members of different generations, namely the 1st, the 1.5, and the 2nd generation of Brazilian immigrants in the US. 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilians have a more acute struggle staking their claim for self-identity. Having spent most, if not all of their lives in the US, members of these generations may struggle to be accepted as a Brazilian by their relatives in Brazil who may view them as a *gringo(a)*, especially if they speak Portuguese with an accent. When it comes to the US, they may also struggle to be accepted as an American because of their Brazilian heritage, regardless of whether they are US citizens or not. Research shows that later generation Latinos are more disconnected from their heritage than foreign-born ones.[83] Thus, a unique dynamic appears when these later generation Brazilians still face the struggles of being part of a minority, even though they may not see themselves as such. This creates a phenomenon that I would call "ethnic homelessness," which speaks to the inability of feeling "at home" as either a Brazilian or an American. Milton Gordon's research, though dated and expressed in non-inclusive language, explored some issues relating to ethnic homelessness in his description of the "marginal man," which are pertinent to Brazilian migrant youth:

> The individual who engages in frequent and sustained primary contacts across ethnic group lines, particularly racial and religious, runs the risk of becoming what, in standard sociological parlance, has been called 'the marginal man.' The marginal man is the person who stands on the borders or

[83] "Foreign-Born and Second-Generation Hispanics Feel More Connected to Family's Country of Origin," Pew Research Center, accessed March 8th, 2019, https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2017/12/20/hispanic-identity-fades-across-generations-as-immigrant-connections-fall-away/ph_2017-12-20_hispanic-identity_11/.

> margins of two cultural worlds but is fully a member of neither. He may be the offspring of a racially mixed or interfaith marriage, or he may have ventured away from the security of the cultural group of his ancestors because of individual personality and experience factors which predisposed him to seek wider contacts and entry into social worlds which appeared more alluring. In the latter case, most frequently he is a member of a minority group attracted by the subsociety and sub-culture of the dominant or majority group in the national society of which he is a part.[84]

It is this type of ethnic self-identity struggle that this thesis is seeking to explore, especially as it pertains to how Brazilian Protestant churches fill this gap for later generations of evangélicos in the diaspora in South Florida.

In terms of the self-acceptance of ethnic labels, research shows that Latin Americans in general prefer to self-identify by nationality rather than by the more encompassing terms of Latino and Hispanic.[85] In the 1990 US Census, which did not have the addition of the Latino nomenclature, 91 percent of Brazilian respondents self-identified as "not Hispanic."[86] One of the reasons that Brazilians reject the label of Hispanic is because of the longstanding prejudice associated with the term in the US.[87] Nevertheless, 1.5 generation Brazilians are more likely to embrace Latino and/or Hispanic as a label given their higher level of acceptance of the US racial and ethnic taxonomy, especially where there are benefits for taking on a minority labels, such as in certain applications for jobs, schools, or scholarships.

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[84] Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 1964), 56-57.

[85] Helen Marrow, "To Be Or Not To Be (Hispanic or Latino)," *Ethnicities* 3 (4) 2003: 440.

[86] Margolis, "Becoming Brazucas: Brazilian Identity in the United States," 219.

[87] Tosta, "The Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World," 579.

Margolis points out that much of ethnicity is built upon the attempt to differentiate one's own ethnic group from another's.[88] By claiming, "we are not like them," members of an ethnic group seek to distinguish themselves from all things associated with other groups, and thus they try to establish their own identities over and against another's. However, in the case of Brazilians vis-à-vis Hispanics, this self-identification operates to the detriment of Hispanics because Brazilians often contribute in the perpetuation of negative US-given stereotypes of Hispanics in general.[89] Brazilians also utilize "we are not like them" to conceptualize their identity vis-à-vis other Brazilians, where "the other" are often Brazilians of a lower class.[90] This could also affect the missional focus of some Brazilian evangélicos in the diaspora who may still hold on to such negative social stratification. Resende found this to be a prevalent issue in South Florida, causing her to change the focus of her study from how Brazilians related to Hispanics to how Brazilians related to each other.[91] For instance, Resende found that Miami-based Brazilians tended to view those who lived in cities like Pompano and Deerfield as inferior, claiming they were of a lower class and less educated.[92] Martes' research discovered that in Boston "the others" were the *Mineiros* and *Valadarenses* who were considered "peasants" and "ignorant," as is seen in the statement given by one of her informants who claimed

[88] Margolis, "Becoming Brazucas: Brazilian Identity in the United States," 214.

[89] Tosta, "The Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World," 580-583.

[90] Margolis, "Becoming Brazucas: Brazilian Identity in the United States," 214.

[91] Resende, "Tropical Brazucas," 44.

[92] Ibid., 47.

that "the majority of Brazilians (in Boston) are ignorant and come from the backwoods."[93]

In general, members of Brazil's society are also ranked by place of birth. Natives of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are among the elite in terms of geographical location, followed by people from the south of the country, who are of European descent owing to the German and Dutch settlements in the area. Other regions such as the north and northeast are seen as inferior due to the native Indian and African heritage that makes up the people of those regions, while people in Brazil's countryside, such as *Mineiros and Valadarenses*, are discriminated against because of their country lifestyle, which sometimes translates to a lower level of education. This type of colorblind racism of country dwellers has been a part of Brazil's so-called "racial democracy" for a long time, as seen in a 1914 essay by the Brazilian intellectual J.B. Monteiro Lobato which:

> introduced the character *Jeca Tatú ("*hillbilly''). *Jeca* was *sertanejo* (from the interior) and epitomized all that was wrong with Brazil's racially mixed underclasses: ''[He] exists merely to hunker; he is incapable of evolution and is immune to progress.'' The openly racist essay depicted the backwoodsman as the cause of the nation's economic and political weaknesses.[94]

One of the subsidiary objectives of this research will be to assess whether these hierarchical differences still hold inside Brazilian Protestant communities, or

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[93] Ana Cristina Braga Martes, "Citizenship and Solidarity: The Construction of Identities among Brazilian Immigrants in Massachusetts," paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association Conference, Chicago, quoted in Margolis, "Becoming Brazucas: Brazilian Identity in the United States," 215.

[94] Jerry, *Diploma of Whiteness,* 29.

whether these racial and discriminatory walls are broken down, a theme that will be further explored in subsection 4.3.

2.3.2. Documented vs. Undocumented: How Residency Status Impacts One's Life in the US

As we have seen, researchers estimate that between 60-70 percent of Brazilians in the US are undocumented, with some estimates as high as 80 percent. The lack of proper documentation to work and live in the country directly impacts the immigrant's quality of life. For the most part, undocumented migrants perform low-paying, undesirable jobs, and run the risk of not being paid. This happens predominantly in the construction and house remodeling industries, where oftentimes undocumented immigrants are told that a job was not done properly and therefore they are not being paid. This is all done with the knowledge that undocumented immigrants will not be able to take legal action against their offenders without risking further problems of their own.

Leisy Abrego argues that both the US media and public discourse work to dehumanize Latino immigrants, regardless of documentation status.[95] Media coverage often depicts undocumented immigrants being treated in the same manner as potentially dangerous criminals, being carried away in handcuffs.[96]

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[95] Leisy J. Abrego, "Latino Immigrants' Diverse Experiences of 'Illegality,'" in *Constructing Immigrant 'Illegality': Critiques, Experiences, and Responses*, ed. Cecilia Menjívar and Daniel Kanstroom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 140.

[96] Ibid.

Whenever a high profile crime is committed by an undocumented Latino immigrant, his or her documentation status is highlighted by some media sources in order to push a negative narrative of undocumented migrants, and to call for stricter border control, when in most cases the criminal's undocumented status had no influence in the crime committed. Abrego points out that although this narrative is powerful and compelling, official records show the opposite, indicating that most undocumented immigrants that have been deported do not possess a previous criminal record.[97] When it comes to deportation, immigration laws have grown tougher since the attacks of 9/11, and the fear of deportation is something that is ever present in the lives of undocumented immigrants. Things became worse in that regard after Donald J. Trump was elected president in 2016. Trump's presidential campaign was filled with anti-immigrant rhetoric geared toward Latinos, but against Mexicans more specifically. At one point, Trump vowed to deport the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants, and he promised to build a wall along the US-Mexico border in the hope of curbing undocumented crossings. Trump's administration also increased the number of deportations when it changed the policies in the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, better known as ICE, from arresting and deporting only serious crime offenders to arresting and deporting any violator of immigration laws, whether or not they had ever been convicted of another crime. ICE has performed raids in businesses and neighborhoods that have a large presence of undocumented immigrants all over the US, apprehending and deporting thousands of them in the process. It is in this milieu of fear and insecurity that

[97] Ibid., 141.

Brazilian undocumented immigrants are living in, a state of mind that can affect many areas of one's life. According to Abrego, undocumented immigrants are more likely to bypass reporting a crime committed against them because they fear being asked about their status in the US, which puts undocumented immigrants in a very vulnerable position in US society.[98]

Kara Cebulko's research on the 1.5 generation of Brazilian immigrants also sheds light on the struggle that undocumented Brazilian youngsters face when trying to integrate themselves into US society. Gabriela, a twenty-two-year-old informant, reported "[Being undocumented] puts you on a lower social status than everyone else**,"** and Tatiana, an eighteen-year-old informant who is also undocumented, argued, "Here, you're like nobody."[99] The 1.5 generation of Brazilian immigrants experiences being undocumented differently than 1st generation immigrants. Abrego argues that 1st generation migrants feel a higher responsibility for the undocumented migration journey, have worse working conditions, and experience a lower level of assimilation. Thus, they have a greater fear of deportation than the 1.5 generation.[100] However, Cebulko points out that, on the other hand, the thought of deportation can be scarier for the 1.5 generation because they would be returning to a country that they have little or no recollection of living in, and they would most likely lack the language skills to be successful in school or in

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[98] Ibid., 142.

[99] Kara Cebulko, "Documented, Undocumented, and Liminally Legal: Legal Status During the Transition to Adulthood for 1.5-Generation Brazilian Immigrants," *The Sociological Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2014): 152.

[100] Abrego, "Latino Immigrants' Diverse Experiences of 'Illegality,'" 145.

the job market.[101] The 1.5 generation of Brazilian immigrants has a lot to contend with in the US, especially those who are undocumented. It will be important to explore how Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida are supporting the 1.5 generation of Brazilian immigrants in terms of their identity and their expressions of mission and Christianity.

Being undocumented can also negatively affect the immigrant's ability to integrate into certain aspects of US society, as we can see by one of Resende's informant's description of how her life changed once she obtained the proper documentation to live in the US:

> I hated it here, I hated it, I couldn't see anything positive about being here, about the system, because I did not participate, I did not partake legally. It was so hard to raise small children, I felt I had no opportunities here, and I thought I should have had everything, I had all my life ahead, I had the youth of my 28 years, I had the will, the desire, but I was nothing because I could not participate legally. Today my view of life here is completely different. ... First off, because today I am documented. So, I feel as if I am part of the American system. I contribute, I work, I pay taxes, you know? I'm active. ... I pray a lot, you know, I can't believe I'm telling you this, because I used to want to drop a bomb on this place, and today I pray to God for this [place] to be kept as it is.[102]

Being unable to participate in activities in America had a very negative impact on this informant's self-identity in the US. This anecdote also goes to show how undocumented immigrants prefer to keep a low profile and often try not to draw much attention to themselves because of the fear of deportation. With this environment in mind for undocumented immigrants, a few questions arise for this

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[101] Cebulko, "Documented, Undocumented, and Liminally Legal," 148.

[102] Resende, "Tropical Brazucas," 168.

thesis: To what extent does the residency status of immigrants affect their participation in church life and mission in the diaspora? Would undocumented Brazilian evangélicos shy away from public evangelistic outreach to maintain a low profile? Are undocumented immigrants more likely to worship in Brazilian churches rather than in American churches? How does one's undocumented status impact their daily lives in the South Florida? These are some of the questions on the issue of undocumented migration that will be explored in chapters 4 and 5 as they pertain to different generations of migrants, namely 1st generation, and 1.5 and 2nd generation respectively.

A final consideration that must be made regarding undocumented immigrants is how evangélico churches and pastors address this issue in their congregations. Vasquez argues that religion can provide a safe haven for immigrants in a society that seeks to vilify them by labeling them as "illegal aliens" and "lawbreakers."[103] Ethnic churches can help undocumented Brazilian evangélicos to feel as if they belong somewhere, and it can also give them a sense of unity with other members of society, under God, in a way that they cannot be officially. Ethnic churches can help undocumented immigrants to find a place they can be seen by one another while remaining unseen by society as a whole, thus serving as a tool of survival for these immigrants. Ribeiro also posits the idea of undocumented migrants seeing their presence in the US as the fulfillment of a "sacred mission" by God to lead people into salvation. She argues that such an understanding would

[103] Ribeiro, "Religious Experiences Among Brazilian Migrants," 84.

cause undocumented migrants to no longer think of themselves in terms of illegal aliens or lawbreakers, but as those who are commissioned and protected by God.[104] Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong add that "for Christians who participate in God's redemptive purposes, the migration of people, whether forced or voluntary, should be viewed not as accidental, but part of God's sovereign plan."[105] Paul Freston has suggested that Brazilian Protestant churches in the US are in need of what he calls "a theology of the undocumented" in order to address the large presence of undocumented parishioners in their congregations.[106] Out of interviews and other sources, Freston bases this theology of the undocumented on three distinct arguments: the theological, the historical, and the pragmatic. The theological argument holds that since God created the world without borders, such man-made restrictions do not necessarily have to be upheld. In this argument, Jesus is presented as an illegal immigrant in Egypt, the migration motif in the Bible is highlighted, and the Old Testament command to take care of the foreigner is invoked. The historical argument is based on the fact that the US was built on multiple migration waves, and the only people who could claim an inalienable right to America as "my country" are Native Americans. Therefore, how can the descendants of other immigrants keep new immigrants from coming in? On this

[104] Ibid., 79-80.

[105] Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong, *Global Diasporas and Mission*. Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series, v. 23 (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 148.

[106] Freston, "The Religious Field Among Brazilians in the United States," 264.

subject, a Brazilian pastor's question is a thought-provoking one: "Which is better, to come from São Paulo on a tourist visa and overstay your visa, or to come from Britain in 1690 on a boat when nobody had to have a visa, kill a few Indians and steal their land?"[107] Lastly, the pragmatic argument focuses on the idea that Brazilian immigrants are not undocumented by choice, and that if there was a pathway to documentation they would take it.[108] Freston also points out that such a theology of the undocumented is an important one for Brazilian Protestant churches who are generally known for their moralism, and for always striving to follow the law, which can make it challenging for pastors to address from a theological standpoint the issue of undocumented evangélicos breaking immigration laws.[109] Nevertheless, Freston concludes that most pastors are willing to work with undocumented migrants in their current situations rather than shaming them for their status, albeit while encouraging members to become documented.[110] The different ways that pastors approach the subject of undocumented parishioners, both theologically and pragmatically, are of great interest to this thesis.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 265.

[109] Ibid., 264.

[110] Ibid., 265.

2.3.4. What is home, Brazil or US? Transnationalism and the different ways that Brazilian immigrants view their stay in America

The question of how migrants relate to their host as well as their sending country is an important one for any study of diasporic communities. A migrant's concept of what is "home," or *pátria* (homeland), will directly influence how they relate to their diasporic context. Nevertheless, the advent of globalization and the current technological advancements have changed the landscape of migration. Now, more than ever before, the world has become smaller, with people being able to move about quickly and much more affordably than in the past. People are also able to connect with family and friends all over the world via the internet through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, and WhatsApp. This fluid movement of migrants has given rise to the phenomenon of transnationalism. Margolis identifies transnationalism as "the name given to a process in which international migrants maintain their ties to the home country—despite its geographical distance—while living in the country of settlement."[111] Transnationalism, then, creates a third alternative to the question of what is "home," offering a hybrid identity that is forged in the in-betweenness of sending and host countries. Margolis points out that transnational migrants refuse to ascribe the idea of home to one country because they see value in both, as each nation provides them "valued resources, identities, and social relations."[112]

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[111] Margolis, "Becoming Brazucas: Brazilian Identity in the United States," 221.

[112] Ibid.

Vasquez' fieldwork in South Florida indicates that the majority of Brazilians in Pompano Beach and Deerfield Beach are transnational migrants despite the fact that they do not travel to Brazil as often as their wealthier Miami compatriots.[113] Their transnational ties are accomplished through different avenues. According to their survey, 71 percent of respondents called Brazil at least once a week, while 46 percent sent emails to Brazil on a weekly basis.[114] The other indicator of strong ties to their country of origin was the sending of money to Brazil, as seen in the results of their survey:

> 60 percent of our respondents send remittances at least once a month. Fifty-seven percent sent between $1 and $250 per month. Slightly more than 86 percent send their remittances through Brazilian agencies, while 85 percent of those remittances go to families back home, once again indicating that Brazilians draw from their own networks to circulate goods and capital from household to household, across national borders.[115]

Besides the sending of money, the survey also showed other avenues of transnational ties that Brazilians maintain in the following categories:

> 43.4 percent receive news about Brazil from Brazilian friends frequently or very frequently;
> 38.0 percent read Brazilian newspapers frequently or very frequently;
> 35.1 percent read news about Brazil from the Internet frequently or very frequently;
> 31.3 percent watch Brazilian TV frequently or very frequently;
> 27.8 percent receive news about Brazil from their churches; and
> 21.6 percent attend events organized by people coming from Brazil specifically for the event.[116]

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[113] Vasquez, "Beyond Homo Anomicus," 39.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid., 40.

[116] Ibid.

This transnational, hybrid identity that is carved out in the in-betweenness of host and sending country is precisely the ethnic identity this thesis seeks to explore. Thus, it will be important to assess to what extent residency status, generation, and church participation, whether in ethnic or Anglo churches, influences transnational identity, which will be done in the chapters to come.

Peggy Levitt also points out that religion plays an integral role in connecting migrants to their home countries through transnational religious practices.[117] Ribeiro found that Brazilian Protestant pastors in South Florida often visited their churches or mission works in Brazil and in other countries in Latin America.[118] Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida also invited pastors from Brazil to preach in their churches, thus reinforcing the transnational identities of their parishioners.[119] There were also churches that were established as a congregation from a church in Brazil. These congregations still maintain strong ties with the "mother" church in Brazil through the sending of money, traveling back and forth of pastors, and reinforced church rituals or events that get transplanted to the diasporic community.[120]

The crafting of a transnational identity also comes with its challenges, however, as it can easily deter one's process of assimilation into the host country.[121]

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[117] Peggy Levitt, "Redefining the Boundaries of Belonging: The Institutional Character of Transnational Religious Life," *Levi* 65, no. 1 (2004): 5.

[118] Alves and Ribeiro, "Migração, Religião e Transnacionalismo," 65-90.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Levitt, "Redefining the Boundaries of Belonging," 5.

Serrao and Cavendish explored the ways in which ethnic churches can hinder integration, even as they try to promote Brazilian culture.[122] In a way, ethnic churches can actually generate new modes of exclusion for migrants, a very important point that will be further explored in subsection 4.2.3. The same is true of Brazilian businesses, where immigrants can get most, if not all their needs met in Portuguese, allowing Brazilian immigrants to forgo learning English, and thus lessening their chances of assimilation. Margolis poses an important question that must be considered on "whether international migrants can, indeed, assimilate while still retaining fluid transnational identities."[123]

As this thesis seeks to assess the ways in which the notions of home held by Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida impact their ecclesial and missional practices in their diasporic contexts, a few guiding questions arise:

- To what extent does identifying either Brazil or the US as home affect how Brazilian evangélicos understand their missional focus regarding people inside and outside their ethnic group?
- In what ways does participation in either an ethnic or Anglo church influence how Brazilian evangélicos understand their missional focus regarding people inside and outside their ethnic group?

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[121] Lima and Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos,* 24.

[122] Serrao and Cavendish, "The Social Functions and Dysfunctions," 14.

[123] Margolis, "Becoming Brazucas: Brazilian Identity in the United States," 223.

- How far does one's generation, whether 1st, 1.5, or 2nd, affect how Brazilian evangélicos understand their missional focus regarding people inside and outside their ethnic group?

2.3.5. The Role of Ethnic Churches in the Brazilian Diaspora

Undocumented immigrants have limited access to local community resources due to their fear of deportation. Therefore, ethnic churches play a vital role on the very survival of undocumented immigrants in the diaspora. According to Vasquez and Ribeiro's survey in South Florida, the highest need that most Brazilians listed was that of community in light of their desire to connect to each other, which, perhaps surprisingly, ranked higher than the need for proper documentation.[124] Rodrigues points out that given these circumstances of the need for connectedness in the diaspora, religion becomes more important and takes on a revitalized role in the lives of immigrants.[125] In the diaspora, the church now serves as a hub for the crafting and reshaping of an ethnic identity vis-à-vis the diasporic context. Sheringham's research on the Brazilian diaspora in London showed that having services in Portuguese and providing a friendly atmosphere were indispensable ingredients for the success of Brazilian immigrants in that community because it helped them to deal with the daily struggles associated with living abroad as an

[124] Vasquez and Ribeiro, A Igreja é Como a Casa da Minha Mãe, 18.

[125] Rodrigues, "The Brazilianization of New York City," 121.

immigrant.[126] She also argued that just as immigrants must be flexible in order to succeed in the diaspora, so do churches and their leaders.[127] The very transnational nature of the church brings with it a new set of challenges specific to each environment, and church leaders must be able to adjust to their environments. This echoes Freston's claim that churches both contract and expand in the diaspora. In the case of Sheringham's London church, it began to offer a practical course in how to survive in London, in addition to English classes.

Evangélico churches in South Florida serve to create spaces of sociability, collective identity, and mutual support. Vasquez and Ribeiro ascribed four main functions to the Brazilian churches they researched in South Florida:

> 1) they offer a network of self-help with many different resources that range from the availability of information and phone numbers to actual physical help; 2) they provide a social place for leisure and emotional support; 3) they provide a space for the collective affirmation of one's national identity; and 4) they offer interpretative frameworks to live out the process of migration and to increase one's self-esteem vis-à-vis the sacred.[128]

Out of these four functions, they see the provision of a space for the affirmation of one's national identity as the most important one. This is in line with Serrao and Cavendish's findings from their fieldwork in Texas that was conducted in 2013. They argued, "one of the most common functions of ethnic congregations, aside from their primarily spiritual function, is to provide settings in which immigrants

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[126] Olivia Sheringham, "Brazilian Churches in London: Transnationalism of the Middle," in *The Diaspora of Brazilian Religions*, ed. C. Rocha and M. Vasquez (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 84.

[127] Ibid., 70.

[128] Vasquez and Ribeiro, "A Igreja é Como a Casa da Minha Mãe," 19-20.

can remember and re-experience their homeland, maintain their ethnic identity, and forge bonds with their co-ethnics."[129] The use of Portuguese is one of the main ways that these ethnic churches maintain and reaffirm ethnic identity. This also raises questions about one's understanding and practice of mission, and the use of language for that purpose. How is language used in church services? How does the choice of language shape ecclesial practices and mission? What happens if there is a mix of both Portuguese and English? How does language impact the daily lives of Brazilian evangélicos? Also, how do these churches account for the different needs of the 1.5 and 2nd generations in terms of the reaffirmation of an ethnic identity? How is language used with the 1.5 and 2nd generations? These are all important questions when considering the use of language by evangélico churches and its impact in the diaspora, and they will be answered in chapters 3, 4 and 5. However, there is one more identity that gets reshaped in the diaspora, namely the Christian identity.

Andrew Walls identifies two principles in Christian history that lie in tension with one another, namely the indigenizing principle and the pilgrim principle.[130] On the one hand, the indigenizing principle refers to one's desire to connect to his/her society as a Christian, to make the faith "a place to feel at home."[131] On the other hand, the pilgrim principle reminds Christians that they have no abiding city

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[129] Serrao and Cavendish, "The Social Functions and Dysfunctions," 9.

[130] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 8.

[131] Ibid., 7.

because aligning with Christ will inevitably mean a misalignment with society, "for that society never existed, in East or West, ancient time or modern, which could absorb the word of Christ painlessly into its system."[132] Walls also contends that Christians possess dual citizenship, and their allegiance to the family of faith surpasses any other allegiance they may have by nature.[133] Diasporic communities of faith could present a great example of what it means to live within this tension presented by Walls because, on the one hand, they want to fit into their host country, but on the other, they are still viewed as the "other," or pilgrims in a foreign land. Suzanna Snyder, however, argues that the church as a whole should identify itself as a pilgrim community because the church is "inherently 'mobile' or shifting': the Body of Christ is not a static institution but rather a moving body—alive and changing, vulnerable and strong, always dying and growing."[134] She goes on to add that current migrant communities, such as the Brazilian evangélico diaspora, can bring this concept of a moving church to the forefront of our reflection, and that these migrant communities can share with us their insights,[135] allowing us to rediscover the concept of the church as a "pilgrim community (called to transgress boundaries), a kingdom community (called to challenge injustice), and an inclusive

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid., 9.

[134] Susanna Snyder, Joshua Ralston, and Agnes M. Brazal, *Church in an Age of Global Migration: A Moving Body* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 9.

[135] Ibid.

community (called to be neighbors to the 'other')."[136] Nevertheless, the question arises: How has the tension of living in the in-betweenness of two cultures in the diaspora shaped them as Christians? Im and Yong call attention to the notion that one's Christian identity progresses through the cycles of migration and dispersion.[137] Therefore, it will be important to examine the ways the Christian identity of Brazilian evangélicos has evolved in the diaspora, a theme that will be further explored in chapter 7.

Conclusion

The journey of self-identification and self-discovery as an ethnic minority is an arduous one for Brazilian immigrants in the US. This complex process is very nuanced, and each Brazilian immigrant experiences it on a personal level. That is to say that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the question of ethnic identity, and although there is some overlap in responses, each individual has a unique perception of their own ethnicity based on personal experiences. This is not to say that similarities cannot be traced, or that overlapping themes are not important. It just means that one must always be aware of the individual dimension of the complex aspect of identity. This chapter has explored several factors that have shaped the ethnic identity of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, starting with the history of Brazilian immigration to the US and Florida, to the different factors that

[136] Ibid., 7.

[137] Im and Yong, *Global Diasporas and Mission*, 5.

affect one's perception of self in the diaspora. As these identify-shaping factors were explored, additional questions appeared that warrant further research:

- In what ways do Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida use language to conceive of their mission from Brazil to the US?
- In what ways does participation in an ethnic or Anglo church influence how evangélicos understand their missional focus regarding people inside and outside their ethnic group?
- To what extent does the residency status of immigrants affect their expressions of Christianity and mission in the diaspora?
- In what ways do pastors, whether in Anglo or ethnic churches, approach the subject of undocumented parishioners, both theologically and pragmatically?
- To what extent does identifying Brazil or the US as home affect how evangélicos understand their missional focus regarding people inside and outside their ethnic group?
- How far does one's generation, whether 1st, 1.5, or 2nd, affect how evangélicos understand their missional focus regarding people inside and outside their ethnic group?
- In what ways do ethnic churches impact the ethnic identity of Brazilian evangélicos across different generations, whether positively or negatively?
- In what ways has the Christian identity of Brazilian evangélicos evolved in the diaspora?

These questions will focus the exploration of the upcoming fieldwork chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 3. Brazilian Evangélicos in South Florida: Three Case Studies

Introduction

In order to examine the themes of identity, ecclesial practices and mission amongst Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, this thesis is anchored in three case studies, comprising three Brazilian Protestant congregations in South Florida, which were the sites of the researcher's fieldwork. The fieldwork required an immersion into the day-to-day dynamics of these case study sites. Therefore, the researcher spent two months in each church site performing ethnographic research that consisted of attending weekend services, compiling participant observation notes, and interviewing the pastors, as well as a select number of congregants from each church. The primary requirements for the case study sites were that they served mostly a Brazilian constituency, and that they would be located within the 3 southernmost counties in South Florida, namely Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach. Thus, geographical location was of importance when selecting these church sites, more specifically where they were located in relationship to what may be called the "Brazilian hub," which are the cities of Pompano Beach and Deerfield Beach that together hold the largest concentration of the Brazilian population, businesses, and churches in South Florida.[1] In order to provide a rich analysis of the

[1] See **Figure 2-2.** Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties highlighted, with major cities of Brazilian concentration (Boca Raton, Deerfield Beach, and Pompano Beach) shown alongside Interstate-95. Retrieved May 25th 2019 from https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerwebecon/. (p. 51).

diverse make up of Brazilian evangélicos in the region, the congregations selected differ in several respects, chiefly geographical location, denomination, and use of language.

This chapter will serve to introduce each of the case study sites, and to explore the distinctive features of the religious landscape of Brazilian Christianity in South Florida. It will describe how each of these congregations started, referring where appropriate to the history of their denominational tradition in Brazil. It will also introduce the main leaders of these congregations, the senior pastors, whose responsibilities tend to go beyond what is typically expected of a pastor, as will be seen more in-depth in chapter 6.

After introducing each congregational case study, the chapter will identify the distinctive contours that shape the landscape of Brazilian Protestantism in the area, such as the unique challenges faced by these pastors in the Brazilian diaspora in South Florida, and the ways that evangélicos regard the US as a model Protestant country. Second, it will explore the different practices of mission expressed by Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, which are primarily targeted at other Brazilians based on the evidence of how they use language to develop missional and the evangelistic strategies. Third, it will examine the relationship between Brazilian evangélicos and Brazilian Catholics in South Florida, which is a significantly different one from the historical animosity that still characterizes Christian life in Brazil itself. Fourth, it will look to shed light on a small, yet noteworthy portion of the Brazilian Protestant constituency that worships in Anglo churches. The chapter will conclude by exploring some of the issues found within Brazilian communities

and churches that have led to this transition, as well as other motives that have caused Brazilian evangélicos to worship in Anglo churches rather than in Brazilian congregations.

3.1. Case Study Introductions

3.1.1. Igreja Presbiteriana da Florida[2]

Located in Boca Raton, *Igreja Presbiteriana da Florida* (IPF) was situated at the very end of Palm Beach County, but close enough to the center of the Brazilian hub, as it neighbors the city of Deerfield Beach. IPF was one of the few Reformed churches in South Florida, and it was first established as a church in June 2011, two years after it began conducting smaller gatherings while searching for a pastor. It was then that pastor Miguel was brought in to oversee IPF. As a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), IPF received the support of a neighboring American PCA church, as well as one of PCA's mission organizations when it was first getting started. In February 2019, IPF had a total of 167 members, made up of 49 males, 54 females, 38 youth, and 26 children. In terms of language used, IPF's services are rendered in Portuguese, while the youth gatherings are a mix of Portuguese and English, depending on which youth leader was speaking.

[2] In the interest of the protection of the participants in this study, all names of churches, pastors, and interviewed participants have been replaced by pseudonyms through mutual agreement. Any and all similarities with real names of churches or people are mere coincidences.

Presbyterianism first arrived in Brazil through the work of Rev. Ashbel Green Simonton, who came to Rio de Janeiro on August 12th 1859.[3] The Presbyterian Church in the US had just undergone a schism over the issue of slavery that led to the creation of two separate churches, PCUSA in the north and PCUS in the south, both of which would send missionaries to Brazil at different times.[4] Simonton performed his first service on May 19th 1861, and on January 12th of the following year, he baptized his first converts.[5] Simonton's work in Brazil did not last long, however, as he became ill and died on December 8th 1867.[6] Yet, in the short span of eight years, Simonton was able to accomplish a lot with the help of his colleagues: The foundation of a church in Rio de Janeiro (12/1/1862); the creation of the first Protestant newspaper in Brazil, *Imprensa Evangélica* (5/11/1864); the establishment of the first presbytery, in Rio de Janeiro (16/12/1865); and the foundation of the first theological seminary, also in Rio de Janeiro (14/5/1867).[7] The PCUS mission to Brazil started after the Civil War, when the wave of southern migrants created the colony of Santa Barbara. The first missionaries sent by the PCUS to Brazil were George Nash Morton and Edward Lane

[3] Júlio Andrade Ferreira*, História Da Igreja Presbiteriana Do Brasil: Em Comemoração Ao Seu Primeiro Centenário* (São Paulo: Casa Editora Presbiteriana, 1959), 9.

[4] Duncan Alexander Reily, *História Documental do Protestantismo no Brasil* (São Paulo: Aste, 1993), 117.

[5] Émile G. Léonard, *O Protestantismo Brasileiro: Estudo de Eclesiologia e História Social*, trans. Linneu de Camargo Schützer (São Paulo: Aste, 1963), 55.

[6] Ferreira*, História Da Igreja Presbiteriana Do Brasil,* 60.

[7] Reily, *História Documental do Protestantismo no Brasil*, 117.

in 1867.[8] They established a community in Santa Barbara on June 26th 1870, and another in Campinas on July 10th 1870.[9] These two missions of the Presbyterian churches maintained separate works until 1888, one year prior to Brazil becoming a republic, when they merged powers under the first Presbyterian synod, a national expression of the church that is now called *Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil*,[10] and that became "one of the earliest church unions accomplished in the mission field."[11] At the time of the establishment of the first Presbyterian synod, the Presbyterian Church was the largest Protestant church in Brazil,[12] with "churches and congregations in twelve of the twenty provinces of the Brazilian Empire, and had approximately 3,000 communicant members distributed across sixty-one churches; of these, thirty-four were located in the Province of São Paulo."[13] Nevertheless, the Presbyterian church experienced financial difficulties, which caused a shortage in paid clergy, placing the bulk of the daily church responsibilities on the laity.[14] David Martin put it well:

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Léonard, *O Protestantismo Brasileiro*, 75.

[10] Zwinglio M. Dias, Elisa Rodrigues, and Rodrigo Portella, eds., *Protestantes, Evangélicos e (Neo)Pentecostais: História, Teologias, Igrejas e Perspectivas* (São Paulo: Fonte Editorial, 2013), 113.

[11] Erasmo Braga and Kenneth G. Grubb, *The Republic of Brazil: A Survey of the Religious Situation* (London: World Dominion Press, 1932), 61.

[12] Antonio Mendonça, "A History of Christianity in Brazil," *International Review of Mission* LXXXV, no. 338 (1996): 383.

[13] Pedro Feitoza, "Experiments in Missionary Writing: Protestant Missions and the Imprensa Evangelica in Brazil, 1864–1892," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (2018): 6.

[14] Ibid.

"Brazilian Presbyterians gained their organizational independence from the United States in 1888, responding to and expressing the rising current of nationalism, but like the Brazilian nation at large, they found economic independence less easy to achieve."[15]

When I first visited IPF in August 2018, the church was meeting at the cafeteria of a local school, but they soon moved to a brand-new church building, which they rented from an American PCA church. The new church building was a much nicer upgrade over the school cafeteria. It was located adjacent to another school, but it was its own free-standing building. As I walked through the main doors, I came into a foyer where many people were engaged in lively conversation. I was greeted very warmly by different members of IPF. Through the foyer, there were double doors that led to the auditorium. The décor in the auditorium was very contemporary, and there was a large screen that showed a 5-minute countdown in Portuguese. The worship was done fully in Portuguese, and it was a mixture between older and more contemporary songs. Many children were present in the pews, since they were only released to their service just prior to the start of the sermon, unlike the other two church sites whose children services started at the beginning of the regular service. Pastor Miguel came in and led the children in a prayer before sending them to their service, which was repeated by the children in Portuguese.

IPF's main church gatherings took place on Sunday nights. Like most other Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida who do not have their own church

[15] David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 63.

building, renting a building from an American church usually means being limited to the activities that the church can provide. Given the fact that White American churches in South Florida usually only have Sunday morning services, these empty buildings become available to Brazilian churches, as well as to other ethnic churches for Sunday evening gatherings. IPF also had youth gatherings on Friday evenings, small group meetings during the week, and Sunday Bible School before services on Sunday evenings. Pastor Miguel mentioned that he would prefer to have both the Sunday Bible School and the church services on Sunday morning, if he had the option. During one of the services, Pastor Miguel underscored the need for financial support from the members for the purchase of their own building:

> We need to invest in each other's lives. The more we plant, the more we will sow. God does not need your money; he wants your heart. But the more we give to the Lord, the more we can see God's kingdom come into play. For those of you who dream about an expansion, our own building, a better kids' department, and Sunday School, you need to invest so that we can expand.[16]

This is a prime example of the desire expressed by many Brazilian Protestant pastors in South Florida to have their own buildings so that they could have greater access to church facilities. Much of the fundraising for the purchasing of buildings is done via the selling of food after services, which serves the dual purpose of building community and of raising money for church projects. IPF struggled at first in their new building because the church they were renting from did not allow food to be eaten inside the building, as opposed to the freedom they had in the school cafeteria prior to moving. However, Pastor Miguel was able to work things out with the

[16] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday evening service, February 17th, 2019.

American church, and to get permission to resume selling food at the church's parking lot as long as it was not consumed inside the building, another example of the hurdles Brazilian Protestant pastors must go through given their lack of autonomy when renting church buildings.

As aforementioned, IPF was one of the few Brazilian Reformed churches in South Florida, making their constituents a double minority, as both an ethnic minority in the US and a denominational minority among other Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida. Miguel was well aware of the specific challenges this creates:

> The Presbyterian church is not very popular primarily because of the matter of infant baptism. So, most of the churches do not agree, they do not accept infant baptism. But from both a liturgical and practical point of view, even objectively speaking, they are similar to other churches.[17]

He also argued that Pentecostal churches have a greater lure to them in terms of emotional appeal. "People want emotions," he said, "they want to go to services where they can express themselves more," he added.[18] Nevertheless, Pastor Miguel believed that there were many Reformed evangélicos attending other Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida, perhaps unaware of IPF's existence. Thus, he had aspirations of extending the influence of Presbyterianism in Florida by opening other Reformed churches in Pompano Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, and in other regions in the state that did not have a Reformed church yet.

Miguel is a native of Minas Gerais, the Brazilian state with one of the largest rates of emigration to the US, as observed in chapter 2. He started his journey as a

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[17] Personal Interview by author, August 22nd, 2018.

[18] Ibid.

pastor in Brazil, leading a church for five years after finishing his seminary education in São Paulo. At the invitation of a former seminary colleague, Miguel moved to the US to pastor a Brazilian Presbyterian church in South River, New Jersey, a city that had a small Brazilian population at the time, with only about three or four Brazilian Protestant churches to serve its community. He came to the US with his wife and two children, a boy and a girl. In New Jersey, the family received the addition of another boy. Miguel was part of a network of Brazilian Presbyterian pastors in the US, an organization with about twenty pastors in fourteen churches in the states of New Jersey, Boston, Florida, and Connecticut. It was through this network that he was first connected to the budding Presbyterian community at IPF, which he eventually came to pastor. In 2011, Miguel, along with his wife and three children made the move from New Jersey to Florida to pastor IPF. Miguel mentioned that the move was difficult for his children at first, who had made strong friendships in New Jersey, but he also said that his family is well adapted today, as the ministry of IPF has developed, and he has embraced the several challenges of being a pastor to a Brazilian diasporic community, some of which we will see later on in this chapter when we look at the landscape of Brazilian Protestantism in South Florida.

3.1.2. Igreja New Wave

Igreja New Wave (INW) was located in the heart of the Brazilian hub, in the city of Deerfield Beach. INW was a non-denominational, charismatic church, which had its roots in Baptist theology. Lucas, INW's lead pastor, chose a neutral name for the church in an attempt to be as welcoming as possible to Brazilian evangélicos of

different denominations. He believed that although church members are aware of the church's Baptist roots, which stem from Lucas' church formation in Brazil—he converted to Christianity and first attended services in a Baptist church in Brazil—INW "does not preach denomination,"[19] a decision that came to him as a revelation from God:

> Because I am a Baptist, in the beginning I said, well, as a Baptist, let us setup a Baptist Church, and let us put up a sign, 'The Baptist Church.' Then God said, it is all wrong. No, I am not Baptist. No, everything is wrong. You will close the doors here. You have to open the doors; the church's door has to be open to everyone. This was very difficult (for me). That is why the name is New Wave, because it is a neutral name, a place of life. (In this church) we have Baptists, Assembly of God, Presbyterians, Methodists, and we have people here that came from the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, Maranatha, House of Prayer. We have people here that came from different church formations. So, then I understood it. They are immigrants, they are outside of their country. They will come here, and they do not have a House of Prayer (church), or they do not have an Assembly of God (church), or they do not have a Presbyterian (church), there is no Universal church. So why am I going to put up a sign at the church's door that would impede people from other denominations from coming?[20]

Although INW was charismatic, Pastor Lucas did not stress glossolalia as the primary evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit, which differentiated him from classical Pentecostalism. In our conversation about the different beliefs for the need of glossolalia, he argued, "Now, it (glossolalia) is very important, but is it essential? Do you know of anyone more full of the Holy Spirit than Jesus? And did he speak in tongues?" he asked. INW started in 2008 as a small group of fifteen people who met together at Pastor Lucas' house. The group doubled in size within three months,

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[19] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[20] Ibid.

prompting him to search for a bigger location where they could host their gatherings. Since then, INW has met in eleven different buildings, the current one having been recently purchased by the church in June of 2019. In June of 2019, INW had a total membership of 563, comprising 147 males, 176 females, 120 youth, and 120 children. It is important to note that INW had the largest youth group of any Brazilian Protestant church in South Florida at the time of the researcher's fieldwork in 2019, with the number of young people fluctuating between 120 and 189.

The Baptist denomination in the US, much like the other mainline denominations, split over the issue of slavery, which led to the establishment of the Southern Baptist Convention in Augusta, Georgia, on May 8th 1845.[21] The Southern Baptists had wished to establish their mission in Brazil from as early as 1850;[22] however, it was not until 1860 that they sent their first missionary to Brazil, Thomas Jefferson Bowen.[23] The board failed to take into account his precarious health, which made Bowen's mission to Brazil short-lived. Given Bowen's failure, the board of missions decided to lay their hopes for Brazil aside in 1861, with their attention now turned to the American Civil War that had just begun and was poised to drain their resources.[24] The next Baptist attempt to establish their mission in Brazil came

[21] Reily, *História Documental do Protestantismo no Brasil*, 128.

[22] Dias, Rodrigues, and Portella, *Protestantes, Evangélicos e (Neo)Pentecostais*, 157.

[23] J. Reis Pereira, *História Dos Batistas No Brasil (1882-1982)* (Rio de Janeiro: JUERP, 1982), 10.

[24] Ibid.

well after the end of the Civil War when the board decided to send missionaries William Buck Bagby and Ann Luther Bagby to São Paulo in 1881.[25] Missionaries Zachary and Kate Taylor followed them a year later.[26] The Bagbys arrived in São Paulo to initially work with southerners in the colony of Santa Barbara.[27] The colony already had an established Baptist church, which had been founded ten years earlier, on September 10th 1871.[28] This church had 23 members, and it was pastored by one of the colony's members, Richard Ratcliff.[29] This was the first Baptist church founded in Brazil, but it was an Anglophone congregation that catered to an immigrant constituency.[30] In Santa Barbara, the Bagbys and the Taylors were introduced to Antonio Teixeira de Albuquerque, a former priest who had been baptized and ordained as a Baptist minister in the colony.[31] It is believed that the former priest was the first Brazilian Baptist convert.[32] Bagby kept busy, preaching in the two churches of the colony while he was learning Portuguese.[33] After several

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[25] H. B. Cavalcanti, "The Right Faith at the Right Time? Determinants of Protestant Mission Success in the 19th–Century Brazilian Religious Market," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 3 (2002): 431.

[26] Reily, *História Documental do Protestantismo no Brasil*, 134.

[27] Cavalcanti, "The Right Faith at the Right Time?", 431.

[28] Pereira, *História Dos Batistas No Brasil*, 13.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Dias, Rodrigues, and Portella, *Protestantes, Evangélicos e (Neo)Pentecostais*, 157.

[32] Pereira, *História Dos Batistas No Brasil*, 20.

trips to nearby cities, the Bagbys, the Taylors, and Albuquerque headed toward Salvador da Bahia, where they would establish a church.[34] The church was founded on October 15th 1882, only a year after the Bagby's arrival.[35] The Bagbys, the Taylors, and Albuquerque adopted the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, and they set up the church in a room that could accommodate around 200 people in a central area of the city.[36] The Baptist church in Brazil began experiencing a steady growth. By 1889, there were eight Baptists churches in Brazil, with approximately 312 members.[37] By 1895, the number of churches had doubled to eighteen, and the membership was up to 784. In 1907, the number of churches grew to eighty-three.[38] This was the same year that the Brazilian Baptist convention was created, and membership was reported at an approximate 4,000 members all over Brazil.[39]

INW was a bilingual church, offering simultaneous translation into English through an interpreter who stood next to the speaker at the podium,[40] for both their

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[33] Reily, *História Documental do Protestantismo no Brasil*, 134.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Cavalcanti, "The Right Faith at the Right Time?", 431

[36] Dias, Rodrigues, and Portella, *Protestantes, Evangélicos e (Neo)Pentecostais*, 157.

[37] Clara Mafra, *Os Evangélicos* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2001), 27.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Mariana Maciel Silva, "A Chegada do Protestantismo no Brasil Imperial," *Protestantismo em Revista*, v. 26 (2011): 120.

[40] In Portuguese, the more appropriate term to refer to the whole front area of the church from which the service is led would be *púlpito* or "pulpit." The words

regular church services and youth gatherings. When I first attended INW in February 2019, they had not yet transitioned to their purchased church building, and they met in a commercial building-turned church, which was located inside of a shopping plaza, also in Deerfield Beach. Several marks of their bilingual culture, as Pastor Lucas called it, were very much on display during my church visits. I recall seeing signs held up by members of the church as I made my way from the parking lot and into the church. One sign read, "Welcome Home," in English, while another was written in Portuguese with the same saying, "*Bem Vindo*." As I walked through the church's door, I noticed that all the signs in the foyer were in English: "Kids' check-in, Welcome Center;" there was even a banner that said, "Welcome Home, Igreja NewWave.com (which was the church's website)." As I made my way into the seating area, I noticed the word "countdown" in English on the screen, as a 3-minute countdown for the service had started. The worship songs alternated between English and Portuguese, with lyrics on display on the screens in both languages for most of them. The worship style was very lively and contemporary, the stage was lit up in multiple colors coming from different strobe lights, and the screens showed live scenes from the worship experience, filmed in high quality cameras. Pastor Lucas walked onto the stage saying in English, "come on church, lift your hands," which was simultaneously translated into Portuguese. He then joined the worship team by singing a few verses with them before going back to speaking with the congregation, this time in Portuguese.

"stage" and "platform" could be used, but the term "podium" was chosen to avoid any theatrical associations.

INW's manner of translating services was quite different from what was experienced in most Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida, where translations were done though an unobtrusive interpreter usually placed in the back of the church or in a separate room, which was then transmitted to RF receivers connected to earphones, a system previously used by Pastor Lucas as well. He mentioned that the decision to transition to simultaneous translation from the podium came after a conversation he had with American members of the church who had come to attend INW through their marriage to a Brazilian spouse. The American congregants told him that when they used the RF transmission devices, they felt like church visitors rather than members of the church. However, when the translation was done simultaneously from the podium, they understood better what was being said, and thus felt more comfortable, which also gave them the opportunity to invite friends to the church. Lucas also underscored the importance of bilingual services for members of the youth who did not speak Portuguese well, a point that will be further explored in chapter 5. Nevertheless, he admitted that while some people were not fond of simultaneous translation from the podium, claiming that it was confusing, or that it prolonged the service, he mentioned that the number of people who enjoyed it was greater. As a Brazilian-American who is fluent in both Portuguese and English, I found the simultaneous translation from the podium to be impressively accurate, especially when it came to biblical terms, which are not so easily translated from one language to another.

INW was one of the few Brazilian Protestant Churches in South Florida that owned their church building, which allowed them to have more autonomy on their

choice of the time and frequency of church services. INW's new church building was slightly smaller than the one they previously met in, and the parking was limited, which led them to transition to two Sunday morning services, at 9 am and 11 am, when they moved to their new location in June 2019. INW had several church activities during the week. On Mondays, they had prayer meetings at the church; on Wednesdays, they held small group meetings in homes; and on Thursdays, they hosted the Institute of Christian Formation, which was their substitute for Sunday Bible School. Although INW was located in Deerfield Beach, their geographical reach of congregants expanded much further, as one of their small groups met in Boynton Beach, a city situated in the middle of Palm Beach County, and about a 25 to 30-minute drive from the church. Pastor Lucas said that his goal with the small group meetings was to make church more convenient during the week for his congregants:

> If someone arrives home from work at 6 pm, and they live 30 to 40 minutes away from the church, by the time they shower to come to church, they will be tired, and they will be far from the church. So, what I did was, I brought the church to their neighborhood. The small group meetings, then, are an extension of the church. There are pastors and leaders who are well prepared. I have multiple small group meetings in the area, so people either have one in their neighborhood, or they can drive 5 minutes and get to one. Then, they attend it because it is a more informal meeting, an oasis in the middle of the week.[41]

Pastor Lucas' understanding of the different challenges faced by Brazilian immigrants in diaspora was shared by many other Brazilian Protestant pastors in South Florida, as will be explored in the upcoming subsection 3.2.1.

Pastor Lucas was born in Espirito Santo, a state just north of Rio De Janeiro, and east of Minas Gerais. Born in a family of eleven children, Lucas grew up in a

[41] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

humble environment. At age 16, Lucas took an interest in music and began to play the acoustic guitar, which led him to join a rock band. At the age of 17, Lucas met his wife, Laura, who was a member of a Baptist church. It was then that he converted to Christianity and began to get more involved in the church. Given his affinity for music, Lucas joined the worship team at his church. He also became a youth leader, and wished to enroll in seminary, but unfortunately the Baptist church of which he was a part could only send one person at a time to seminary, and they had sent someone already. This led Lucas to enroll in law school, and five years later he graduated, passed Brazil's bar exam, and began practicing law. He was a lawyer for ten years in Brazil, and during this time he continued to perform with his former rock band members, who were now part of a Christian band. Lucas recalls hearing from God in 2000 that the time had come for him to go into church ministry. He had already visited the US, but now he felt that God was calling him to minister there. Therefore, in 2001, Lucas, along with his wife and their two daughters emigrated to Florida so that he could fulfill God's calling in his life. At this point in his life, Lucas was a well-known lawyer in his region, and his wife was an auditor at a bank. Both had to leave their careers behind in order to fulfill what they believed God was calling them to do. Once in America, he was finally able to attend seminary at a Christian university. His wife received a degree in psychology at the same time, which equipped her to work as a counselor in the church. Lucas joined a Brazilian Baptist church in South Florida, where he was ordained a minister. Unfortunately, the church closed its doors in 2006, prompting Lucas to return to Brazil for four months. Sometime after returning to the US, Lucas started INW in 2008.

Pastor Lucas had a very unique life-changing experience in America, which he believes prepared him to pastor Brazilian immigrants in South Florida. He faced an immigrant's worst fear when he was arrested by immigration officers, placed in jail for forty-four days, and almost deported to Brazil over a mistake made by his immigration lawyer. Pastor Lucas informed me that he had always lived in America as a documented migrant. He started off with a work visa in 2001, which was supposed to lead into a Green Card application, but because of an issue with his sponsor, he decided to return to Brazil in 2006. Then, he received an invitation from a church in Boston to co-pastor a new church they were starting in Florida. This church was a Presbyterian church, and although Lucas' background was charismatic, the lead pastors believed that he could be a good candidate to help pastor the new church in Florida, so they applied for his religious worker visa. However, the church leaders changed their mind and withdrew their invitation, removing themselves as his visa sponsors. Lucas was able to hire another lawyer to have his documentation process transferred to a new sponsor. He was under the impression that everything was going fine, until all of a sudden, he was surprised by a knock on his door, and several immigration agents and police officers surrounding his house. The officers took him into custody, stating that he would be deported because he missed a court hearing. He was able to prove that this was a mistake on his lawyer's part, and he was released from jail forty-four days later. Pastor Lucas shared parts of his experience with his congregation many times during the services I attended, an experience with which other Brazilian immigrants can closely identify. He credits this experience with building not just his character but also his

identity as a pastor of Brazilian immigrants in the diaspora, as he struggled to comprehend what he was going through:

> One of the questions I asked God in this moment of crisis, both ministerial and existential in 2011, was that I did not understand why these things were happening. The word that came into my heart was that in order for me to be a pastor of immigrants I needed to feel the pain of immigrants, and perhaps the greatest pain an immigrant can experience is to be arrested in an immigration jail, awaiting to be deported from the country. Yet, all of this has helped me to understand and to live through a small portion of what some men and women of God have lived through in history. Therefore, today we understand what it is like to be a church of immigrants in this country. So, I believe this is one of our secrets, that INW has the ability of looking at people, and instead of having high expectations of them, we understand that they are here, they are immigrants, and they also carry all of this weight.[42]

Pastor Lucas was imprisoned for forty-four days in an 8" x 10" cell, with three bunk beds that had to be shared by five prisoners. He has kept a sense of humor about the situation, jokingly saying during a service, "I only had very few orange clothes to wear. Anytime I can wear something else, I praise God, such as this sports coat I am wearing now."[43] Pastor Lucas shared that he was used by God while in prison, claiming that there were more than 1,000 conversions to Christianity and 60 baptisms that took place while he was incarcerated. Overall, this experience drastically changed his outlook on life as a Brazilian immigrant, and it gave him a unique compassion toward other Brazilian immigrants in the US diaspora. He once declared in church, "there was a pastor Lucas before prison and another one after. The desert changed me."[44]

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[42] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[43] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday morning service, June 2nd, 2019.

[44] Ibid.

3.1.3. Renovation Church Portuguese

Renovation Church Portuguese (RCP) was the Lusophone campus of Renovation Church, a multicultural, multi-sited American church in Palm Beach County. Located in Palm Beach Gardens, a city in the north end of Palm Beach County, between West Palm Beach and Jupiter,[45] RCP was quite far from the Brazilian hub in Broward County. Unlike most Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida, RCP had an unusual setup in that they were actually a part of an American church, rather than simply renting a church building from one. This configuration came with its specific benefits and challenges, which will be identified in this chapter and in the upcoming ones. RCP's first official service was in January 2017, the culmination of Pastor Samuel's journey that brought him into connection with Renovation Church. The congregation, however, originated much earlier than that as a small group of Brazilian evangélicos who gathered inside of a different American church. Thus, RCP had no origins in Brazil.

Pastor Samuel's unique journey was directly connected with the history of RCP because he started this congregation independently prior to joining Renovation Church. A native of the city of Governador Valadares, in Minas Gerais, Samuel emigrated to the US in February 1994 at the age of 18 for a chance at a new life. Once he arrived in the US, Samuel, who was not a Christian at the time, became involved with the wrong crowd, which led him to a life of drinking and drugs. At age

[45] See **Figure 2-2.** Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties highlighted, with major cities of Brazilian concentration (Boca Raton, Deerfield Beach, and Pompano Beach) shown alongside Interstate-95. Retrieved May 25th 2019 from https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerwebecon/. (p. 51).

19, Samuel was invited by a construction co-worker to attend a Brazilian church service in Boca Raton. It was then that he had his first encounter with Christ during a prayer time at the end of the church service. Samuel stated that when he closed his eyes, he saw two movies flash before him. In one, he saw how good of a person he was, and how he had emigrated to the US to start a new life there, but in the other, he saw his life wasted on drugs. Although he did not know much of the Bible at the time, Samuel claimed that his life was marked by this first encounter with God. He did not know how to explain it then, but he credits this experience with changing his life for the better. He started attending church services, brought his then girlfriend over from Brazil, got married, and moved to the city of West Palm Beach. It was there that he started attending a Brazilian Assemblies of God church in 1996, and he converted to Christianity. He then began feeling a calling to Christian ministry, as he started to share the testimony of his conversion at church. In June 2000, Samuel saw the beginning of his formal ministry when he decided to help another pastor to open a small Brazilian church in the area. He went on to help this pastor as a worship leader and associate pastor, but his labor was always voluntary because Samuel had a lucrative job at the time, which made it difficult for him to transition into being a full-time pastor. He was conflicted between what he perceived to be his calling and the financial security provided to him by his job, which led him to remove himself from the Brazilian community in order to reset his life:

> Then, when 2008 came around, I saw that I was working a lot, I had a very good job, I had health insurance, my financial life was doing well, I decided to go to an American church. I was not going to be in this Brazilian milieu

> anymore because I knew that God had a calling in my life. I needed some time to think.[46]

Samuel started attending an American mega-church in Palm Beach Gardens, the city that he lived in, and the same city where RCP would eventually be located. Although Samuel was participating at an American church without any ministerial duties, he knew that this period would not last long. "When you have a calling, you cannot hide from God," he said.[47]

It was inside this American church that a small group of Brazilian evangélicos started meeting under Samuel's leadership, a group that would eventually become RCP. He told the story of how he would sit in the church's coffee shop after services with his wife, and how they would attract the attention of other Brazilians who would hear them speaking Portuguese. He began to bring his acoustic guitar to the coffee shop, and to sing Brazilian worship songs at what became informal Brazilian Protestant gatherings after services. The American church took notice of Samuel's small group of Brazilians, and they offered him a room to conduct his meetings. The room had a capacity of fifteen people, and Samuel said that they filled it up in their first meeting. The church then offered them a second room, which they quickly filled up as well. Samuel mentioned that they would meet in this room during one of the church's multiple Sunday services, and the group would then attend the subsequent American service as well. Here they were, a group of Brazilian evangélicos having dual church services in Portuguese and in English, inside of an American evangelical

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[46] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

[47] Ibid.

mega-church. The group continued to grow, and when they reached fifty people, the American church approached Samuel and told him that they had become too large for a small group meeting. They offered him two options: Samuel could split up the group into three smaller groups, assigning other leaders to oversee them, or he would have to find another place to meet at because the church had no plans to start a Brazilian congregation at the time (they did have a Spanish one). Samuel had a difficult choice to make. He said that since within this group, nineteen people had recently been baptized, and the group already looked to him as a pastor, he decided to rent a church space for their meetings. In this new rented space, the church grew to about eighty members who met on Sunday mornings. When the building reached its capacity, Pastor Samuel was forced to move his services to Sunday evenings, which created a conflict with his full-time job. He was faced with yet another challenge. The only way for him to move the church services to Sunday evenings was for him to quit his job and become a full-time pastor. He knew that he had reached his ceiling as a bi-vocational pastor who was still working a full-time job outside the church, and that he needed to decide which direction to take going forward. Reflecting on his experience, Pastor Samuel said:

> The reality is that I was a volunteer because I did not receive a salary from the church, since I was doing something that I love on Sunday mornings. But I only had two options. I could do what other Brazilian pastors have done, which is to receive a salary from the church, leave my job, and to rent a church building, but I would have to be responsible for all areas of church life, and I would have to build a children's ministry. I decided not to do it. I said, I want to be an American church, I do not want to be alone, I do not want to be a burden on this 80 people. It was then that I heard about

> Renovation Church and their ministry through a Brazilian pastor who works for them leading a Hispanic congregation.[48]

Pastor Samuel mentioned that he was very interested in Renovation Church's concept of "neighborhood churches," where Renovation Church offered full administrative support to pastors so they could open local congregations, or what they would call "campuses" of Renovation Church. The only caveat was that they asked Samuel to leave his job and to become a full-time pastor. Now with a family of four, with two daughters born in the US, Samuel struggled to leave behind a better paying job, but after making some financial adjustments in his life, he accepted Renovation Church's offer and integrated his congregation into Renovation Church, which became Renovation Church Portuguese. Pastor Samuel appreciated the support he received from Renovation Church:

> This is what they do, they remove all of the weight off your shoulders, and they enable you to be the church's pastor. So then, I do not pay rent, I do not have to fix the air conditioning system. If my sound board breaks today, I can send an e-mail and they will take care of everything for me, they will have it put in for me by Sunday. I am the church's pastor, so it was the best thing that I have done. Thus, our church is an American church that speaks Portuguese.[49]

RCP's identity appeared to be rooted in Samuel's words, "an American church that speaks Portuguese," a saying that was similar to the greetings I heard echoed on every service I attended: "Welcome to Renovation Church, a church that speaks Portuguese in Palm Beach Gardens."[50] When this researcher first heard this phrase,

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday evening service, September 6th, 2019.

he, as a Brazilian-American evangélico, was very intrigued. What did it really mean to be an American church that speaks Portuguese? In what ways was the church American? Did that mean that the church was no longer a Brazilian church? The researcher set out to discover the answer to these questions in his interview with Pastor Samuel and in his participant observations from church services. He discovered that this identity was not exercised to the detriment of RCP's Brazilian roots. Rather, it was found in the balance between these two cultures, of being both Brazilian and American, as Samuel's words about RCP's identity pointed out:

> (RCP) is American in the administration, it is American in its theory, in its vision, in how things are done, and it is Brazilian in its warmth. Every now and then we say, RCP is a small piece of Brazil in Palm Beach Gardens.[51]

When it came to how things were done, Pastor Samuel believed that RCP's shorter services of 1.5 hours reflected an Americanized model, since many Brazilian services could go on for longer hours, an experience he claimed that he had in the Pentecostal churches he was a part of before. This is a point to which we will return when discussing the Brazilian evangélicos who have moved on to American churches. As Samuel mentioned, these time constraint disparities could be related to both denominational differences as well as ethnic ones. Renovation Church was a non-charismatic Baptist church, and although Samuel's Pentecostal background had influenced the worship at RCP, he affirmed that RCP was non-charismatic:

> What I brought with me from the experiences I had in a more revived (charismatic) church, we get to maintain (conserve at RCP)…the church's participation in the worship is very good because many of us came from a revived (charismatic) church, so we are able to follow the Baptist theology, but inside of us we participate more, but not in exaggeration…but if you come here and you want to speak in tongues (glossolalia), if you want a more

[51] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

> revived church in this sense, let me know and I will tell you about three churches with good pastors in Boca Raton and Pompano Beach, and I will help you to transition. If you want to stay in our church, we have a specific vision.[52]

Pastor Samuel's vision was the aforementioned desire to replicate Renovation Church's organization and theology, but to balance it with characteristic Brazilian warmth.

By September 2019, RCP had grown to a membership of 103, comprising 45 adults, 19 youth, and 39 children.[53] In terms of language, RCP's main services were fully in Portuguese, but its children's services and youth gatherings were done in English. RCP's main services were on Sunday evenings, with children and youth gatherings happening concurrently with the main services. They also had Bible study on Wednesday nights and prayer meetings on Thursday nights. In 2019, RCP held its church services in a large room on the second floor of the American church's building. Although they did not have to pay rent for the church building, RCP's choice of service time was also limited to evenings because they shared the space with the American congregation. The church's building was inside a commercial plaza. During my church visits, I recall seeing signs outside by the parking lot pointing upwards toward the second floor of the church's building, indicating that services were being held in Portuguese on Sunday evenings. As I walked up the stairs, I could see a few people by the church's outside door, waiting to open it for me. Once inside, three more people were lined up to welcome me, one who shook

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Unfortunately, RCP did not keep a membership record based on gender; therefore, the number of adults has been reported together.

my hand, the other who handed me a bulletin, and the third who offered me some mints. The foyer was a long hallway that led to the room where the services were held. This hallway served as a gathering place after services, where free coffee and cakes were a weekly occurrence. The room was usually set up to seat around 100 people, but ushers would bring in more chairs if the crowd became larger, as was the case in a baptismal service. The meeting room was very contemporary, with a blue lit-up cross in the middle, Christmas lights on the background, and two TV screens on the sides. There were no strobe lights on the stage, but there was a light display on the ceiling. A 1-minute countdown came on the screens with the words, "please be seated" in English. All services started off with contemporary worship, which mainly comprised American worship songs that had been translated into Portuguese. Pastor Samuel mentioned that this also spoke to their "American church in Portuguese" approach. RCP's song selection came from the main church's set list, apart from a few Brazilian classic worship songs that they incorporated into services on occasion. Pastor Davi, who was RCP's worship leader and youth pastor, told me that the worship style and selection of songs enabled Renovation Church to create a sense of familiarity amongst its different campuses, which in turn helped Brazilian evangélicos to feel more at home whenever they participated in events in other campuses, whether Anglo or Hispanophone.

The preaching was another area that displayed RCP's vision of being an American church in Portuguese. The sermon outline for each sermon preached by Pastor Samuel was the same one used by every other Renovation Church pastor. It was what Renovation Church termed "multisite preaching," where all pastors were

preaching the same message every single church service. The pastors came together a few times a year to select which series would be preached throughout the year, and during weekly meetings they would go over that specific week's outline. The manner in which the sermon was delivered, however, could very much be tailored to the Brazilian congregation, as Pastor Samuel had the liberty to add illustrations that were applicable to Brazilian immigrants, which he always did. However, this rigid preaching schedule did not allow for guest speakers to preach at the church, a common feature of many Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida, and a way by which these churches strengthened the transnational ties of Brazilian evangélicos in diaspora, as will be seen in chapter 4.

RCP had a unique structure compared to other Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida. "When you come to our church, you will hear Portuguese, but you will say, this church is American, because all of its style is," said Pastor Samuel to me during our interview.[54] This was apparent in more ways than the areas of worship, preaching, and church organization. There were several ways that the members of RCP connected with the mother church, Renovation Church. The promotional videos that circulated the American campuses of Renovation Church were subtitled in Portuguese and shown at RCP. In many of this researcher's church visits to RCP, he saw messages from the senior pastor of Renovation church about a new preaching series, church news, and the church's vision for the upcoming future that were displayed with Portuguese subtitles on the screens at RCP. Pastor Samuel believed that many Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida created unhealthy attachments to

[54] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

their pastors, which sometimes led to the demise of churches when the pastor moves on for different reasons. He mentioned that he worked diligently to change the mindset of these Brazilian evangélicos who may have been used to referring to the church they attended as "Pastor Samuel's church," to rather refer to it by the church's name, RCP. He said that if for any reason he was no longer the pastor of RCP, he believed that Renovation Church would find him a suitable replacement, and that RCP would continue on.

Another way that Renovation Church ensured that all of its campuses maintained a connection with the main church was through what they called a "leadership rally." The leadership rally took place twice a year, and it was a time when all campuses under Renovation Church's network came together to worship in one place. In 2019, Renovation Church had a total of twelve campuses in its network of churches, nine of which were Anglophone, two that were Hispanophone, and one that was Lusophone. One of the leadership rallies took place while this researcher was conducting his fieldwork at RCP, which allowed him to attend it. This took place at Renovation Church's main campus, a much larger church building than where RCP met at. The worship was very vibrant, and it was also ethnically eclectic, as the worship leaders from the different campuses sang together. A few songs were sung in English and Spanish, and one song was partially sung in Portuguese. The multilingual singing displayed Renovation Church's ability to connect with multiple cultures, and it reinforced Renovation Church's motto of "one church in many languages." RCP also participated in a similar hybrid worship experience, but this time only with the Hispanophone campuses. The event was called *Noche de Louvor*

(night of worship), a mix of Spanish and Portuguese respectively to denote the bilingual nature of the event. It brought together worship leaders from the Portuguese and Spanish campuses, and they took turns singing together in their native languages. The first pastoral greeting of the night was *boa noite* (good evening) in Portuguese, but the Hispanophone pastor could not speak much Portuguese, so he continued to welcome the participants in Spanish. Pastor Samuel, on the other hand, went back and forth between Portuguese and Spanish when it was his turn to speak. This type of connection with other American and Hispanic Protestants was only present in RCP, and not in either of the other case study churches during the time of this researcher's fieldwork.

3.2. The Landscape of Brazilian Protestantism in South Florida

3.2.1. Different Land, Different Church

Pastor Antonio, a Brazilian Protestant pastor in Broward County, informed the researcher that "to pastor immigrants is different than to pastor Brazilians in Brazil. It is totally different, completely."[55] In chapter 2, it was proposed that being a Brazilian in the US is different from being a Brazilian in Brazil, and the same can be said of being an evangélico in the diaspora in South Florida. As Freston has pointed out, churches in the diaspora contract in the number of church gatherings due to the busy schedules of immigrants, but they expand on the types and the significance of the assistance they provide.[56] The question then arises, to what extent are these

[55] Pastor Antonio, personal interview by author, August 20th, 2018.

Brazilian churches in South Florida changing their strategies and frequency of services in order to adapt to the diaspora? The answers are varied. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will deal with this issue in more detail, as they will explore how Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida play a role in the process of shaping ethnic identity among adults and the youth, as well as the different ways that these diasporic churches minister to their constituents. Nevertheless, this chapter will serve to introduce some of the themes that make up the backdrop of where these churches operate in South Florida.

One of the issues reported by many of the Brazilian Protestant pastors interviewed in South Florida was the lack of autonomy they experienced when worshipping in a building that their church did not own. Pastor Eduardo, a Brazilian Baptist pastor in Broward County, described some of the ways that this affected his church before they were able to move into their own building:

> In reality, we had no liberty. We had to ask for permission for everything. If you forgot a piece of paper on the floor, the next day you were receiving a call from the American (pastor) ringing your ears because you left a piece of paper. You could not leave anything out of place, absolutely nothing. If you forgot any small details, you would receive a call.[57]

There are different respects in which this lack of autonomy impacted Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida. IPF's initial inability to sell food at the church is one of them, and the restricted choice of night services experienced by both IPF

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[56] Paul Freston, "The Religious Field among Brazilians in the United States," in *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga (Cambridge: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies: 2008), 258.

[57] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2018.

and RCP is another. In the current US Protestant culture, Sunday morning services are more popular than evening ones. In Brazil, the opposite is true, as most churches hold Sunday Bible School in the mornings, and the main church service in the evenings. Most Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, perhaps as a sign of their accommodation to American rather than Brazilian cultural patterns, preferred Sunday morning services. Some would argue that this is primarily the result of busy work schedules, but Pastor Miguel believed that it could also stem from a desire to have leisure time on Sunday evenings. He argued that since many evangélicos would still go out to dinner after evening services, this suggested that they were not so preoccupied with going home early because of work the next day. Regardless of the reason why Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida preferred Sunday morning services, the fact is that they did. Pastor Eduardo's church was able to offer both morning and evening services on Sundays because they owned their church building, but he did mention that the morning service had a lot higher attendance than the evening one. Even though Pastor Miguel suggested other reasons why evangélicos would want to attend church services in the morning, he still wished that IPF could have offered morning services to better serve their community of believers. Pastor Samuel echoed the same desire to have Sunday morning services, and although he had the support of an American church, finances were also the reason why he was not able to do so, since it was more economical for Renovation church to have RCP share a building with one of their Anglo campuses rather than renting one out exclusively for RCP to have Sunday morning services.

Another issue mentioned by these Brazilian Protestant pastors was that the Brazilian Protestant community in South Florida as a whole was not united. Pastor Miguel felt even more disconnected because of IPF's less popular Reformed theology. Pastor Vitor, INW's youth pastor, mentioned that some smaller churches may avoid contact with other larger churches because they may feel threatened that their members could be poached as part of the occasional "sheep stealing" that was reported by many pastors.

The lack of religiosity displayed by many immigrants was also a point of contention raised by the Brazilian Protestant pastors interviewed. Some pastors believed that the financial security attained by Brazilian immigrants in the US could cause them to forgo church attendance. Pastor Samuel claimed that "a Brazilian in Brazil goes to church because he needs to…A Brazilian in the United States does not go (to church) because he does not need to."[58] By this he meant that on the one hand, one's lack of financial stability in Brazil may cause them to be more attracted to the networks of support found inside churches, while on the other, the financial independence gained in the US removes the need to attend church for financial support. It is true that some lower-class Brazilian immigrants may find Christianity out of financial need through the many community services that churches provide in the diaspora, but it is also true that for many upper-class Brazilian immigrants who are wealthier, Christianity may not hold the same appeal. There is also the fact that a significant portion of Brazilian immigrants are transient, and their lack of

[58] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

commitment to remain in the same place for a long period of time will usually lead them to not settle into a church community.

Pastors also mentioned that evangelism methods take a very different shape in the diaspora because of the different social and legal contexts in America. The difference most frequently cited by the pastors interviewed was that the methods of street evangelism and of open-air preaching through public address systems that were common in Brazil did not work in the US. This is primarily because Brazilians in the US are dispersed through different neighborhoods. Other than reaching the small number of Brazilians who may be eating at a Brazilian restaurant or shopping at a Brazilian store, which a small number of churches attempt to do, Brazilian Protestant pastors would not know where to focus their evangelistic efforts if they wanted to do street evangelism or open-air preaching. Pastor Samuel mentioned that Renovation Church would usually send Easter invitations in the mail to homes and apartments in local neighborhoods, but he was unable to follow their example. This is because although he knew of a few neighborhoods that had a small presence of Brazilians, he would not be able to find out the specific homes or apartments where to send the invitations.

One of the ways that these pastors have coped with the inability to engage in street evangelism or open-air preaching is through the use of social media, which has brought in a few congregants to each of the churches in this study. Murilo, for instance, mentioned that he found RCP through a simple search on Facebook for the words, “a church that speaks Portuguese,” which actually happens to be RCP’s slogan that was repeated every Sunday at the opening of each service: “Welcome to

RCP, a church that speaks Portuguese in Palm Beach Gardens."[59] Pastor Davi shared that RCP's two main methods of evangelism were through relationships and personal invitations to church, and through the use of social media.[60] In 2019, all three churches had Facebook pages, but only INW and IPF used theirs to broadcast live services. Pastor Miguel once introduced a new family to church and mentioned that they had found the church through its Facebook page. During a service at Pastor Vicente's Assembly of God church, the preacher greeted those who were watching the service "from all over the world,"[61] and at INW, Pastor Lucas often spoke specifically to those who were watching over the internet, even once saying: "God is showing me people watching on the internet, wiping their tears."[62] Pastor Lucas celebrated the baptism of one of the church's "virtual sisters," as he called her. Edna was the sister of a deaconess at the church, and she watched the services online from Brazil. Lucas said that once she found out they were baptizing some church members, she decided to fly to the US just to be baptized in person in the church.[63] Overall, social media allowed Brazilian pastors to extend their missional reach, and it provided parishioners with the opportunity of experiencing a church service, though virtually, before committing to attending the church.

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[59] Ibid.

[60] Personal interview by author, January 22, 2020.

[61] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday morning service, July 11th, 2018.

[62] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday morning service, June 2nd, 2019.

[63] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday morning service, June 9th, 2019.

It is also evident based on these evangelism strategies that all evangelism is focused on the Brazilian population, and there is no overt effort of reaching any other ethnic group, a subject that will be considered in greater depth in the upcoming subsection 3.3.1. Another reason why Brazilian evangélicos do not engage in open-air street evangelism is due to the fear of getting in trouble with the law. Pastor Eduardo told a story of a time when his church was celebrating the purchase of some land for expansion, so they set up a public address system on top of a flatbed tow-truck that was owned by one of the church's members and held an open-air service at their church property. The festivities were short-lived because a police officer came to their property to stop the service due to a noise complaint filed by one of their neighbors. Evangelism, then, becomes more relational in nature for the Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, a theme that will be explored more in depth in chapter 6, when we look at how these Brazilian Protestant churches evangelize in the diaspora.

All these challenges must be well understood by Brazilian Protestant pastors to ensure any chance of establishing a successful church in the diaspora in South Florida. Pastor Antonio, a non-denominational Brazilian pastor who has worked in Broward County since the mid-1990s, mentioned that many successful churches in Brazil failed to plant churches in South Florida because they did not properly understand what it was like to pastor immigrants. He argued that these churches thought that they could use the same strategies they employed in Brazil to run their churches in America, but they failed miserably, losing a lot of money in the

process.[64] Pastor Lucas also mentioned that many Brazilian churches in the area have failed because they were focused primarily on numerical growth rather than on pastoral care toward their parishioners.[65]

3.2.2. The US as a Model Protestant Country

Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, for the most part, held an idealized vision of the US as a model Protestant country. Most of the interviewees shared an appreciation for American society and the fact that the legal system seemed to work more equitably in the US than in Brazil, where corruption abounds. This indebtedness to the US as a model has its history in the 19th century, at the birth of Brazilian liberalism and nationalism after the nation's independence from Portugal. Liberalism, one of the byproducts of the Age of Enlightenment, had become the driving force behind the American Revolution of 1776 as well as the French Revolution of 1789. Ryan Gladwin defines liberalism in 19th century Latin America as a political ideology "firmly embedded in the philosophical thought of Europe's Enlightenment. It affirmed certain civil rights and liberties and a commitment to the formation of liberal representative democracies."[66] Gladwin adds that "liberals in Latin America desired the formation of new, liberal societies while conservatives were reticent to make a clean break with the old order and sought to preserve the

[64] Personal interview by author, August 20th, 2018.

[65] Personal Interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[66] Ryan Gladwin, *Streams of Latin American Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 15.

social stratification of Latin American society and the hegemonic role of the Catholic Church."[67] Enlightenment ideals cost the Roman Catholic Church some of its space in the Brazilian colonial society, and liberalism, with its anti-monarchist principles, also brought challenges to the Catholic Portuguese crown. Antonio Mendonça argued that Protestant nations, such as the US, a country that had established itself as a liberal democracy, began to be looked at as examples of liberalism by some of the elite in Brazil who wanted to lead their country in the same path.[68]

Although one could expect the effects of secularization to weigh heavy on the minds of Brazilian evangélicos, especially the ones who have lived in the US for a significant amount of time, thus deconstructing the idea of America as a model Protestant society, this is not the case. Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, in many ways unbeknown to them, subscribe to the idea of "American religious exceptionalism," an idea that sees the US as "a special case in the spiritual history of humanity,"[69] and a topic that has been heavily debated by three main schools in the sociology of religion over the last few decades, namely the Secularization Thesis, the Rational Choice, and the Multiple Modernities.[70] This debate is usually evaluated in relationship to the juxtaposition between a "more religious US" and a "more secular"

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[67] Ibid., 16.

[68] Mendonça, "A History of Christianity in Brazil," 384.

[69] David Bebbington, "Evangelicalism and Secularization in Britain and America from the Eighteenth Century to the Present," in *Secularization and Religious Innovation in the North Atlantic World*, ed. David Hempton and Hugh McLeod (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 66.

[70] David Hempton and Hugh McLeod, eds., *Secularization and Religious Innovation in the North Atlantic World* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.

Europe, which is partly reviewed in *Secularization and Religious Innovation in the North Atlantic World*, a recent monograph that provides a systematic comparison of the religious trajectories of the US and other countries in Western Europe.[71] Scholars such as Steve Bruce, who is committed to the view that secularization is the grand narrative of modernity, and that ultimately you will find it anywhere, argue that the US is not immune to the effects of secularization, "but that because of specific historical factors this has happened more slowly than in Europe."[72] Proponents of the contrasting 'rational choice' theory argue that, on the contrary, the higher level of religiosity in the US serves as proof that religion flourishes when people are able to choose between different "religious products" instead of being dominated by a state religion.[73] This view is espoused primarily by conservative, largely Christian scholars in the Southern US, such as Rodney Stark and Roger Fink, whose book *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* presents America as the ideal Protestant free-market society where religion flourishes, and where free market principles apply to religion. Stark and Fink argue that a combination of Christian values and right-wing conservative values is what has kept America distinct and enable it to resist the secularizing trends that have happened in Europe, thus creating the case of an 'American religious exceptionalism.' Scholars in the "Multiple Modernities" school, unconvinced by the "rational choice" argue that Europe offers "one model of the

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., 7.

[73] Ibid.

relationship between religion and modernity, not *the* model."[74] David Bebbington, a critic of 'American exceptionalism,' argues that evangelicalism in Britain and America in fact developed along broadly similar lines until the late 19th century, with the similarities between both countries outweighing their differences, and maintains that "the degree of difference created by American disestablishment has been exaggerated, the revivalism of the age was far more similar in the two lands than has been supposed, and a process of democratization took place in many quarters in Britain as well as in America."[75] Brian Stanley's *Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History*, offers a sensible view on the argument of secularization in Europe and America based on a different comparison between Christianity in Scandinavia and the US. Stanley argues that while some American churches have been successful at transforming themselves to face the challenges of modernity, "the blatant nature of some of their adaptations prompted others to mount counteroffensives against the encroachments of secularism on American intellectual life, including the life of the churches themselves."[76] Stanley rightly concludes that the American case can actually be seen as an example of "the paradox

[74] Ibid.

[75] Bebbington, "Evangelicalism and Secularization in Britain and America from the Eighteenth Century to the Present," 78.

[76] Brian Stanley, "Contrasting Patterns of Belonging and Believing: Scandinavia and the United States," in *Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 124.

that societies may in fact be deeply religious and profoundly secular at the same time."[77]

As it has been stated, most Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida viewed the US as a model Protestant country. Their expressed views on what makes America special, such as its foundation as "a Christian nation," and the civil religion expressed in politics and in various facets of public life, have caused many of them to align themselves very strongly with the views expressed by the proponents of "American religious exceptionalism" in the above-mentioned argument. Brazilian evangélicos, in general, are inclined to overlook the many ways that American society is deeply secular and resistant to Christian values because for them, Brazil is more secular in many ways, especially in terms of the media and in politics. Thus, the US is still seen as an oasis. The political aspirations of right-wing Evangelicals in America to "reclaim the US for God" were also seen in a positive light by many evangélicos, creating an interesting conundrum where several Brazilian evangélicos supported President Trump's administration, even though it had been publicly outspoken against immigrants. Pastor Lucas admitted that the political landscape in America is a difficult one because he said that although Republicans support Christian values, the Bible is clear that governments should never oppress the migrant.[78]

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[77] Ibid.

[78] Personal Interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

A revealing example of the mixing of Christianity with politics that was also present in the Brazilian Protestant milieu in South Florida was a conference organized by Brazilian Protestant pastors in 2020 with the title, "Americans and Brazilians: Reclaiming Florida For Christ – When Principles and Values Have to Speak Louder." As the title suggested, the conference featured both American and Brazilian speakers. The themes of the conference were the following:

- (A) Prophetic word for America.
- How to stop the moral decline of our nation.
- The importance of the 2020 elections.
- Biblical worldview.
- Tools to help our nation get 'back 2 God.'

The advertisement for the conference read:

> This event is the first of a series (of events) with the purpose of connecting the Brazilian and the American communities, educating our Brazilian community about the principles and values that must guide our political-social posture. The agenda of conservative values and principles is not lost, even when living in another country, in this case being the US.[79]

The focus on conservative politics and the emphasis on the US presidential election of 2020 were evident in the themes and description of the conference. The mixing of Christianity and politics was also shown in the biography of one of the pastors who

[79] APEB Associacao de Pastores da Florida, Facebook post, January 16th, 2020, accessed April 20th, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/186511258496597/photos/a.188905031590553/771355336678850/.

spoke at the conference, a Cuban-American who was listed as being part of Trump's political campaign advisory.

Another aspect of Christianity in America that was admired by the Brazilian evangélicos encountered in this research was the civil religion expressed particularly in American politics, something that many Brazilian evangélicos wished was also a part of Brazilian politics, as observed in Pastor Miguel's words:

> You see, for instance, what happens today in the White House morning briefs, which are the breakfast-with-a-prayer meetings.[80] The government officials pray, they seek the Lord, they have a moment of intercession, or we can call it 'a service,' because all of the presidents with the exception of one or two were Protestants. Most of them are, even Trump says he is a Christian, but what I want to emphasize is this aspect of the American formation being a formation with a Christian base. This makes an enormous difference. Today we see a very modern political system. Look at the current state of politics in Brazil. I believe there are similar characteristics in Bolsonaro. You see an attempt of having Christian principles in the government, in society, in school, and in families.[81]

Brazil's president in 2019, Jair Messias Bolsonaro, whose presidential campaign slogan in 2018 was "Brazil above everything, God above everyone," had elicited some critical comparisons in the media to then-US president Donald Trump because of his tough, and some would say, extreme conservative approach, earning him the moniker of "the Trump of the Tropics."[82] Bolsonaro, a Roman Catholic who was baptized in the Jordan River by a prominent Brazilian Pentecostal pastor in 2016, garnered the support of evangélicos in Brazil through an appeal to religious themes

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[80] Pastor Miguel must be referring to the National Prayer Breakfast, a yearly event held in Washington D.C. on the first Thursday in February.

[81] Personal interview by author, June 19th, 2019.

[82] Filipe Domingues, "Brazil's Hard-Right Turn: What Role Did Religion Play in Bolsonaro's Election?", *America* 219, no. 13 (2018): 15.

throughout his campaign, culminated in his words at his victory speech, "I have been seeking (answers) in what many call the 'toolbox to repair the man and the woman,' which is the Holy Bible."[83] Researchers argued that Bolsonaro declared himself "a defender of conservatism"[84] and "the protector of the Brazilian family,"[85] ideals that resonated with Brazilian evangélicos, most of whom were conservatives, and who feared the perceived attack on these ideals by Brazil's political left, led primarily by the Workers' Party (PT), whose candidate came in second place in the presidential election of 2018. According to Eduardo Lima, Bolsonaro "blamed PT politicians for the 'moral decay' of Brazilian youth, focusing on the school system's sex education classes and the teaching of gender 'ideology' to teenagers."[86] Altair Germano, an Assembly of God pastor, was asked the reasons why Brazilian evangélicos aligned themselves with Bolsonaro, to which he answered, "abortion, deconstruction of the family, and sexual indoctrination of children in schools."[87] Bolsonaro promised to return Brazil to a more conservative era in an attempt to "make Brazil great 'similar to the (nation) we had 40, 50 years ago,'"[88] an allure to a "better past" that is similar

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Paul Antonopoulos, Daniel França Ribeiro, and Drew Cottle, "Liberation Theology to Evangelicalism: The Rise of Bolsonaro and the Conservative Evangelical Advance in Post-Colonial Brazil," *Postcolonial Interventions: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Postcolonial Studies* Vol. V, Issue 2 (2020): 262.

[85] Eduardo Campos Lima, "Brazil's New President Begins Term with Support of Conservative Christians," *The Christian Century* 136, no. 3 (2019): 14.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Lima, 14.

[88] Domingues, "Brazil's Hard-Right Turn," 15.

to Trump's 2016 presidential campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again," and that is seen by many Brazilian evangélicos as "a reaction to the advances we have seen since the 1960s in discussions about the family, the place of women, youth and sexuality. It is a Christian morality that tries to recover an idealized past."[89] Researchers suggest that as many as 70% of Brazilian evangélicos voted for Bolsonaro in the 2018 presidential election in Brazil.[90] In South Florida, many Brazilian evangélicos publicly supported Bolsonaro's election campaign in 2018[91] with the hopes that Bolsonaro could also establish Christian principles in Brazil's government, as Pastor Miguel indicated. Needless to say, the political attitudes of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida were both complex and varied. While many supported Bolsonaro, Trump, and the US Republican Party in the political scene from 2016 though 2020, Pastor Lucas mentioned that some members of his church supported the Democratic Party in US politics during that time. Although there were no statistics on the percentage of Brazilian evangélicos that were Democratic Party supporters given the fact that undocumented immigrants cannot vote, Trump's anti-immigration rhetoric before and during his presidential term could be seen as the major reason for the support of the Democratic Party by some Brazilian evangélicos. To that end, it is also important to note that the Brazilian evangélicos in the US who

[89] Ibid.

[90] Antonopoulos, Ribeiro, and Cottle, "Liberation Theology to Evangelicalism," 261.

[91] There were many displays of public support for Bolsonaro by Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida during his election bid in 2018, such as mass gatherings in parks and social media posts of support for his candidacy on different social media platforms.

supported Trump, or at least his perceived aura of respect for conservative Christian values that he diligently cultivated in his administration, may have needed to come to terms with the knowledge that his policies on immigration had made the lives of some in these Brazilian congregations more difficult. Furthermore, if Trump's immigration policies were to be fully implemented, they could have jeopardized the future of these ethnic congregations by stemming the flow of Brazilian immigrants. These types of tensions and inconsistencies in the lives of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida lie at the heart of this thesis, and they will continue to be explored in this chapter and in the subsequent ones.

3.2.3. Gender Dynamics vs. Generational Differences

The gender breakdown in the adults of the three case study sites did not seem to be significantly different from what it was amongst Brazilian evangélicos in Brazil, where the 2010 Census showed that a slightly higher percentage of women (24%) than men (20%) identified themselves as evangélicos, a pattern that has been on the increase in the past few decades.[92] If anything, there were perhaps more men present in Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida than one might guess on the basis of similar studies. What emerged from the fieldwork as a more salient theme was the generational difference between older evangélicos and the youth—

[92] "Brazil's Changing Religious Landscape," Pew Research Center, July 18th, 2013, accessed April 24th, 2020, https://www.pewforum.org/2013/07/18/brazils-changing-religious-landscape/.

the 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilians. Therefore, this thesis has a chapter on youth differences (chapter 5), but not one on gender.

3.3. Practices of Mission

The missional focus of Brazilian evangélico churches in South Florida is very inward-looking. This is partly derived from their Pentecostal and Baptist church traditions that have a very strong sense of the church as a gathered community. For evangélicos, the gathered church comprises members of the church family, and there is a strong sense of who is in the family and who is not. This chapter will show that the theology of mission of these evangélico churches is holistic, but only within certain limits, primarily within the limits of the congregation, and that the framework of these evangélico churches is strongly pastoral and ecclesiocentric. As the remainder of the thesis will show, evangélicos' needs are met pragmatically and on an individual level, with societal issues being largely ignored.

3.3.1. Mission Primarily Toward Other Brazilians in South Florida

> It is very rare for you as a Brazilian, even if you preach in fluent English, it is very difficult for an American to submit himself (or herself) to the leadership of an immigrant. This is part of the American culture, they are very proud, and they are unable to differentiate immigrants between a Brazilian, an Arab, a Haitian, or a Mexican. They think that all immigrants speak Spanish, and they are all the same, and the ones that do come (to attend the church), they come because of relationships.[93]
>
> — Pastor Lucas

[93] Ibid.

Brazilian evangélicos' missiological views, both in theory and in practice, were varied; however, one thing they mostly shared was that their efforts were geared primarily toward other Brazilians. In chapter 2, the question was posed of whether a migrants' transnational identity in terms of whether they ascribed 'home' to be Brazil or the US affected their missional focus in regard to people inside and outside their ethnic group. Most respondents ascribed 'home' to be the US, while a few still saw Brazil as their 'home' for reasons that will be explored in the upcoming chapter in subsection 4.1.1. Yet, all shared that their missional focus was toward other Brazilians, answering the question in an emphatic way that the missional focus of Brazilian evangélicos was toward those inside their ethnic group regardless of whether they ascribed 'home' to be the US or Brazil. The respondents' transnational identities did affect their perceptions of life in America, however, a subject that will be further explored in chapters 4 and 5. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the tension between the consistent way that the majority of these Brazilian evangélicos regard the US rather than Brazil as their 'home,' and the fact that without exception they continue to describe themselves as 'Brazilians' in contrast to 'Americans.' These forms of hybridity, of ambiguity of identity, are actually integral to the 1st and 1.5 generation migrant experience. There is no hard-fast rule, however, on what it means to be Brazilian or American as a 1st, 1.5, or 2nd generation immigrant in the US. People may be inconsistent in their own usage of these terms, or they will be inconsistent when compared to other people's usage of them. This apparent inconsistency gets to the heart of the ambiguity of migrant identity that will be unpacked in chapters 4 and 5.

Another question posed in chapter 2 on the respective impacts that participating in either an ethnic or an Anglo church service had on one's missional focus also regarding people inside and outside their ethnic group became of greater prominence. On a personal level, the Brazilian evangélicos interviewed who participated in ethnic services mentioned the difficulty of bringing an American person to church because of how that person could feel out of place inside an ethnic service. In terms of church strategies, all three pastors of the case study sites mentioned that their church missional focus was primarily toward other Brazilians. The reasons for such a focus differed, however. One of the issues mentioned was the sometimes apparently irreconcilable cultural differences between Brazilian immigrants and Americans, especially regarding the ways that Brazilians tend to relate to each other in general. Pastor Eduardo mentioned how he believed that Americans are more reserved than Brazilians, who tend to be louder, and to be more flexible in their relationships:

> Brazilians call each other any time of the day, they call each other at 11 pm or midnight, while for an American, you have to set up a time to call them. Brazilians knock on each other's door, while for Americans it does not work like that.[94]

Americans were also perceived as proudly patriotic, and perhaps unwilling to submit themselves to the leadership of an immigrant, as seen in Pastor Lucas' aforementioned words that the few Americans who have come to attend INW have done so via marriages and other personal relationships.

[94] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2018.

There were few instances of Brazilian churches that held services in English and Spanish, such as an Assemblies of God church in Broward County, but the former were mainly attended by 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilians, while the latter tended to have a rather small number of attendees. The exception to this was the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, the Brazilian neo-Pentecostal powerhouse that has established many churches among lower-income Hispanics in the US, though these churches were not transnational ethnic churches in the same sense as the ones being studied in this thesis.[95] Pastor Eduardo's Baptist church attempted to establish an Anglo service at one point, but it did not work out. They also attempted to establish one in Spanish, but it dissolved after the pastor who was leading it moved on to pastor a Brazilian church elsewhere. Pastor Eduardo believed that the key to having a successful ministry in a different language lied in choosing the right leader. Pastor Vitor suggested that in order for Brazilian churches to be truly multicultural, they would need to have ethnic pastors leading services for their respective ethnicities, rather than trying to establish services in English or Spanish led by Brazilian pastors who may be fluent in those languages. In essence, this would be similar to Renovation Church's "one church in many languages" model, but with the Brazilian church as the mother church. Pastor Lucas, however, cautioned

[95] Eric Kramer argues that the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) differs from other transnational ethnic churches in that in the UKCG, "there are no institutional spaces to affirm cultural values and ties between the faithful and their communities of origin. The UKCG does not exist in the function of an immigrant community, but around the immediate and individual needs of a Hispanic person who has recently migrated," (translated by author). In Eric W. Kramer, "A Expansão Da Igreja Universal Do Reino De Deus Nos Estados Unidos," *Civitas—Revista De Ciências Sociais* 3, no. 1 (2002): 74.

that introducing services by additional ethnic pastors could split up the church's vision, and he also believed that parishioners would prefer to hear from the church's senior pastor rather than from an associate pastor. Yet, he also mentioned that he wished to host separate services entirely in English and in Spanish in the future, though without describing how these services would take place. This difference of opinions demonstrated how there was no consensus on how or whether these churches should extend their missional reach outside their ethnicity in theory. The reality, on the other hand, is that although there were a few Brazilian Protestant churches that have established services in English and in Spanish, and some others that have expressed a desire to do so in the future, in practice, the missional focus of these churches in South Florida was geared chiefly toward other Brazilians. The reason for such a focus could be attributed to the manner in which evangelism is done, which is primarily relational, as we will see in more detail in chapter 6, and that Brazilian evangélicos, in general, relate better with other Brazilians in the diaspora, with the exception of those who have distanced themselves from the Brazilian enclave and have transitioned to worship in Anglo churches for the different reasons that will be explored in the upcoming subsection 3.5.

The missiological focus of these Brazilian churches in diaspora in South Florida was very similar to the missiological focus of early Anglican and Lutheran settler communities in Brazil, or that of early settler German Lutheran and Dutch Reformed churches in the US. There is indeed a long history of migrants establishing their own settler churches primarily as a ministry to their own communities, and as a way of enabling their own migrants to feel at home, which was a very strong

theme within the growth of American religion in the 19th century. Mark Noll's *History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* describes the experiences of European ethnic enclaves and some of their cultural and linguistic evolution in the US, starting with the Dutch Reformed, which produced the Reformed Church of America and the Christian Reformed Church, and the German Lutherans, whose many smaller church bodies have evolved to create the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in what Noll refers to as "the prime example of Protestant evolution."[96] Many of the schisms seen in these earlier settler churches were on the basis of disagreements over the maintenance of linguistic and ethnic distinctiveness, especially in the case of the Reformed Church of America and the Christian Reformed Church, while others were on theological or biblical interpretation grounds. Nevertheless, one cannot underestimate the impact these migrant churches had in the cultivation of an ethnic identity for their congregants, as Regina Donlon points out:

> The role of the immigrant church in the second half of the nineteenth century is virtually impossible to measure. The immigrant church was the 'lynchpin' of ethnic identity, but it was also the driving force behind the formation of ethnically distinct groups, the preservation of the culture and traditions of the homeland, and the emergence of culturally aware immigrant communities. It was integral in forming communal infrastructures and social

[96] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, (London: SPCK, 1992), 483. For more on the cultural and linguistic evolution of early settler churches in the US, please see Judith Meyer, "Ethnicity, Theology, and Immigrant Church Expansion." *Geographical Review* 65, no. 2 (1975): 180-197, and Robert Schoone-Jongen, "Churches Bigger Than Windmills: Religion and Dutchness in Minnesota, 1885-1928," in *Going Dutch: The Dutch Presence in America, 1609-2009*. Brill EBook Titles 2008, ed. Joyce D. Goodfriend, Benjamin Schmidt, and Annette Stott (Leiden, Boston: Brill), 2008.

> networks, and provided a haven where the most exclusive elements of immigrant culture could be fostered and preserved.[97]

This is also evident in these Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida. It can also be argued that given their missiological focus of primarily reaching people within their own ethnicity, these historical settler churches have had very little influence on their host countries, as Noll pointed out: "American Lutherans have not yet contributed to American public or religious life in proportion to their numbers."[98]

The majority of the early Protestant missionaries to Brazil hailed from America, which means that historically speaking, the Protestant tradition of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida goes back to American missionary initiative. Therefore, when these Brazilian evangélicos emigrate to the US, the country that was chiefly responsible for implanting Protestantism in their homeland, one could expect to find in these churches a rhetoric of reverse missions, where the country that was initially the recipient of missionary efforts has reversed the process by sending missionaries back to re-evangelize the initial sending country. Afe Adogame notes, "'reverse mission' or 'reverse flow of mission' is increasingly becoming a buzz phrase in academic, mission circles, media and among Christians from the two-thirds world. The (un-) conscious missionary strategy and zeal by churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America of (re-) evangelizing the West is a relatively recent

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[97] Regina Donlon, *German and Irish Immigrants in the Midwestern United States, 1850–1900* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018).

[98] Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 485.

one."[99] Jehu Hanciles pointed out that in the Edinburgh 1910 conference, "few Western missionaries could have anticipated (or welcomed) the possibility that churches over which they sought or exercised paternalistic control would in time exceed the old heartlands in growth and dynamism, much less produce reverse missionary movements that recast the West as a missionary field."[100] This rhetoric of reverse mission is found often in literature about African churches in Europe, where at least part of the rhetoric is that of re-evangelizing the dark continent of Europe, as described by Adogame:

> The rationale for reverse mission is often anchored on claims to divine commission to 'spread the gospel'; the perceived secularization of the West; the abysmal fall in church attendance and dwindling membership; desecralization of church buildings; liberalization; and on issues of moral decadence.[101]

Nevertheless, this rhetoric of reverse mission is not found in these Brazilian Protestant churches in diaspora in South Florida, contrary to what one might have suspected. Perhaps the main reason for this lack of a reverse mission rhetoric for Brazilian evangélicos is that the US is still seen as a predominantly Protestant country, with surveys indicating that in 2017, at least 49% of the US adult population self-identified as Protestants, while Catholic adherence was listed at

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[99] Afe Adogame, "Reverse Mission," in *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 169.

[100] Jehu Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), 135.

[101] Adogame, "Reverse Mission," 169.

23%.[102] Pastor Miguel explained the mindset of most Brazilian Protestant pastors in South Florida, whose missiological focus is primarily geared toward other Brazilians:

> Most of the pastors here have the same objective of serving the immigrant community. It is a little bit different than, for instance, when there are Christian migrants in a country where the gospel has not been implanted yet, as it was the case with Brazil in the 19th century. Then, it is common for you to have to extend your missional investment to everyone, because you are implanting the gospel in that place. In the US, it is a little bit different because the US is the birthplace of Christianity (to Brazil?). It sends many missionaries to a lot of different places. The Presbyterian church in Brazil started as the result of the work of an American missionary. When I, for instance, went to the (US) consulate, they asked me what I was going to do (in the US)? I answered, I am going to pastor a church. He said then, but are there not a lot of pastors in the US already? I said, that is true, but there are not enough pastors for Brazilian churches, I am going to pastor Brazilians.[103]

3.3.2. Use of Language in Church Services

As it has been shown, the use of language differed amongst the three case study sites. IPF and RCP conducted services in Portuguese only, while INW offered simultaneous English translation, thus hosting a bilingual church service. The youth services also differed, with RCP having their gatherings primarily in English, and both IPF and INW having a mixture of English and Portuguese. The varied impact that the use of language has on Brazilian evangélicos' identities will be explored in chapters 4 and 5. Nevertheless, the use of language also affects these churches' practices of mission, a topic of interest in this chapter.

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[102] Frank Newport, "2017 Update on Americans and Religion," Gallup, December 22nd, 2017, accessed April 26th, 2020, https://news.gallup.com/poll/224642/2017-update-americans-religion.aspx.

[103] Personal interview by author, January 16th, 2019.

As already observed, evangélicos focus their missional efforts primarily toward other Brazilians, which was evidenced in their use of language and in how the churches' translation services were configured. For instance, IPF and RCP offered translation services through RF transmitters for the occasional guests. In IPF's case, they did not have any Americans attending services during this researcher's fieldwork in 2019, so the equipment was not being used. RCP had more occasional American guests in attendance during the researcher's fieldwork in 2019, which included an American man who was at one of the services with his Brazilian wife, and a group of American students who were visiting from a local university, so they put their equipment to use more often. However, they only had six transmitters, a small number that was chosen for a reason, as Pastor Samuel explained:

> This is what happened when I had too many Americans coming to RCP. I had ten to twelve people coming and only six devices. So, I talked to the administrative pastor at Renovation Church and asked him what we should do, and whether we should buy more devices. The pastor asked me, what is the name of your church? I said, Renovation Church Portuguese. Then he said, this is your goal, direct these (American) people to the American Church.[104]

Pastor Samuel mentioned that he would have the same response if Hispanic Protestants visited his church in large numbers. He would direct them to the Hispanic campus of Renovation Church.

Overall, none of these congregations had a sizeable presence of Americans in their services. INW had the largest consistent presence of Americans, which was four, a small number for a church of 563 members, and all were there through

[104] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

marital relationships. Thus, even though INW offers bilingual services, in actuality, this is not done primarily as an evangelistic tool, but rather as a way to connect with Anglo spouses of Brazilians. Nevertheless, the bilingual services have a deep impact on the identity shaping process of congregants, especially the youth, which will be further explored in chapters 4 and 5.

3.4. Brazilian Evangélicos and Brazilian Catholics in South Florida

The Christian history of Brazil is one marked by animosity and distrust between Brazilian Protestants and Brazilian Catholics, as these two expressions of Christianity have continuously wrestled for religious spaces in Brazil's society. Roman Catholicism has been a part of Brazil's history since its "discovery" by the Catholic Portuguese crown. The close relationship between church and state, a perennial mark of the Christendom era, meant that the "discovery" and colonization of Brazil became as much a matter of territorial expansion as a religious one. The Portuguese experienced a strong sense of messianism during this time, which led them to believe that theirs was the responsibility to expand Christianity through the Christendom model.[105] The cross and the sword went hand in hand, which is evidenced in the first name given to Brazil of Vera Cruz (True Cross).[106] This name was later changed to Santa Cruz (Holy Cross) by the Portuguese king Dom

[105] Mendonça, "A History of Christianity in Brazil," 373.

[106] Daniel P. Kidder and James C. Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians: Portrayed in Historical and Descriptive Sketches,* New Edition Revised and Enlarged (London: Sampson Low, and Maston, 1866), 48.

Emanuel,[107] before the eventual change of name some time after 1502 to Brazil.[108] The cross made its first appearance in Brazil just a few weeks after Pedro Alvarez Cabral's discovery. It was Easter week when Cabral arrived in Brazil in 1500, so he asked Fray Henrique de Coimbra, a Franciscan who was on board, to perform mass on Easter Sunday before they disembarked the ship.[109] A few weeks later, on the 1st of May, a second mass was performed, but this time on land and in the presence of native "Indians," who are said to have imitated the gestures performed by the Portuguese.[110] At this Mass, the close ties between church and state were once again in full display, as the Portuguese raised a large wooden cross, which received the company of the Portuguese emblem by its side.[111]

Although Franciscans, such as Fray Henrique de Coimbra, had already been present in Brazil from its early colonial years, Mendonça argues that the arrival of the first Jesuit mission in 1549, which happened soon after the first religious appointments in 1534, marks the inauguration of the history of Christianity in

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[107] Mendonça, "A History of Christianity in Brazil," 373.

[108] Kidder and Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians*, 49. Kidder and Fletcher expand on where the name Brazil came from: "As the most valuable part of the cargo which Americus Vespucius carried back to Europe was the well-known dyewood, *Caesalpinia Braziliensis*, - called, in the Portuguese language, *pau brazil*, on account of its resemblance to *brazas*, 'coals of fire,' - the land whence it came was termed the 'land of the brazil-wood;' and, finally, this appellation was shortened to Brazil, and completely usurped the names Vera Cruz or Santa Cruz." In Kidder and Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians*, 49.

[109] Mendonça, "A History of Christianity in Brazil," 373.

[110] Kidder and Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians*, 48.

[111] Ibid.

Brazil.[112] The Jesuits comprised six men that came under the leadership of Ignacio de Loyola, chief among the order's founders.[113] These first Jesuits came as spiritual guides for Governor Thomé de Sousa, who was sent by Portuguese king João III to reestablish order in the colony and to found a capital city.[114]

The Jesuits were very disciplined in their approach, and they began their work by analyzing the conditions of Brazil. Unlike the colonizers who were only concerned about what they could get out of Brazil in the present, Jesuits began planning with the future in mind. Upon exploring the conditions of Brazil, the Jesuits began to support and train the native "Indians."[115] Their real opposition came from the early settlers, who were primarily criminals, deserters, and adventurers, and who were accustomed to the lawlessness experienced during the first years of the colony.

Brazil received a total of twenty-eight Jesuit expeditions between 1549 and 1604.[116] The Jesuits were involved with several aspects of Brazilian life, and according to Mendonça, they were responsible for two significant things: "the establishment of missions and the organizing of Indians in villages around them; and the founding of schools, with humanist orientation, that established the

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[112] Mendonça, "A History of Christianity in Brazil," 374.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., 26.

[115] Harlan P. Beach, *Protestant Missions in South America* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1900), 59.

[116] Mendonça, "A History of Christianity in Brazil," 375.

foundation of the colonial culture."[117] Sadly, the *Bandeirantes*, a group of gold-seekers who made their way through the south of Brazil, destroyed these Indian villages. The Jesuit missions to the Amazon led to the eventual Brazilian territorial advances in that area, which makes the Jesuits important figures in Brazil's expansion.[118] The Jesuits were also strong opponents of the enslaving and the killing of native Indians, putting them directly at odds with the colonizers, and causing them to find themselves at the wrong side of the sword oftentimes.[119] A vivid depiction of the dilemma faced by some of these Jesuit missionaries in Brazil can be seen in the 1986 film, *The Mission*. However, the Jesuits also played a part in persecuting, defeating, and expelling the first attempts of Protestant missions in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The first Protestant attempts in colonial Brazil came by way of territorial expansion, first by the French in the 16th century, followed by the Dutch in the 17th century. These early Protestant missions were based on the same Christendom model employed by the Roman Catholics coming from Portugal and Spain, where state and church joined forces over mutual interests, except this time the struggle for religious spaces took place within branches of Christianity itself, namely between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Early Protestants believed that theirs was a "pure religion," which needed to be brought into the Americas.[120] This zeal

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[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid., 376.

[120] Beach, *Protestant Missions in South America,* 76.

motivated early Protestant missionaries to endure the strenuous journey into the New World, only to be thwarted by the same forces that got them there in the first place, because as the territorial expansions failed for both the French and the Dutch, so did their religious ones.

Christianity was mixed in with political interests for both Protestants and Roman Catholics in colonial Brazil, and it was Catholics who maintained control of the Brazilian religious landscape of that time. Riolando Azzi argues that it was in the name of Christianity that Roman Catholics collaborated with the state to expel the French and the Dutch.[121] This collaboration was first led by Portuguese Jesuit priest Manuel da Nóbrega and the Spanish Jesuit missionary José de Anchieta, who became some of the most influential figures in Brazil's colonial history. During the French invasion, it was Nóbrega who petitioned the Portuguese crown to send troops to help expel Villegagnon and the Huguenots. When it came to the Dutch, it was Jesuit priest and remarkable diplomat, Father Viera, who opened up a rival company to the Dutch West India Company in order to thwart Dutch endeavors in Brazil. Roman Catholics fought for the religious control of Brazil during the colonizing years, and they were successful. For a period of over 150 years after the Dutch expulsion, there were no signs of any Protestant mission to Brazil. Nevertheless, the animosity and distrust that characterized this period carried over into the 19th century and beyond, when Protestantism was successfully implanted in Brazil. Protestants have looked for ways to disassociate themselves from Catholics in Brazil to the point that

[121] Riolando Azzi, ed., *A Vida Religiosa No Brasil: Enfoques Históricos* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1983), 12.

they have taken sole ownership of the name "Christian," referring to only themselves as "Christians," and to Roman Catholics as just "Catholics." Two personal anecdotes may corroborate the disconnect between Brazilian Protestants and Brazilian Catholics that exists in Brazil. My father, who grew up in the north of Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s was taught to cross the road to avoid sharing the sidewalk with someone who was Catholic. My mother once asked me inside St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh whether the church was Catholic or Christian.

Although Protestantism has been on the rise, especially in its Pentecostal form, Brazil is still largely a Catholic country, with figures from the 2010 census placing Catholic affiliation at 65% of the population, while Protestants made up 22%.[122] The US, on the other hand, is primarily Protestant, as seen in the aforementioned surveys, which revealed that in 2017 at least 49% of the US adult population self-identified as Protestants, while Catholic adherence was listed at 23%.[123] Thus, the question arises, does the way that Brazilian evangélicos interact with Brazilian Catholics in the US mirror the animosity and distrust that marked their relationship in Brazil? This section sets out to examine the relationship between Brazilian evangélicos and Brazilian Catholics in South Florida.

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[122] "Brazil's Changing Religious Landscape," Pew Research Center, July 18th, 2013, accessed April 25th, 2020, https://www.pewforum.org/2013/07/18/brazils-changing-religious-landscape/.

[123] Frank Newport, "2017 Update on Americans and Religion," Gallup, December 22nd, 2017, accessed April 26th, 2020, https://news.gallup.com/poll/224642/2017-update-americans-religion.aspx.

3.4.1. The Migration of Protestantism vs. Catholicism

> Pentecostalism is a translatable religion and not at all territorial, being based neither on a national church structure of dioceses and parishes, which is very difficult to uproot and transplant, nor on shrines and places of pilgrimage, which are also difficult to uproot. As a nonterritorial religion, Pentecostalism is very flexible.[124]
>
> — Paul Freston.

Freston has argued that Protestantism, especially in its Pentecostal form, is significantly more mobile than Catholicism.[125] He points out that researchers on global Pentecostalism refer to it as "a religion made to travel, as in many ways an ideal religion for transnational migrants."[126] This is certainly true of the Brazilian diaspora in South Florida, where there is a great discrepancy between the number of evangélico churches and Catholic parishes. The researcher was not able to conduct his own survey of the number of Protestant churches in these three counties, but an estimate of approximately 140 evangélico churches in the three-county area that is the focus of this study, namely Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade was supplied by Pastor Antonio, who is a reliable source with extensive contacts in the evangélico community through his work with the association of evangélico pastors.[127] On the other hand, Padre Manoel, a Brazilian priest who is one of the leaders of the Brazilian Catholic community in South Florida, reported

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[124] Freston, "The Religious Field among Brazilians in the United States," 261

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] For these estimates, Pastor Antonio was reached through a third-party who was the manager of the main evangélico bookstore serving these three counties.

that there were only seven Catholic parishes serving those three counties.[128] The Protestantization of Brazilian Christianity in the diaspora in South Florida is an interesting phenomenon that could be explored in more detail than the scope of this thesis allows. Nevertheless, a minimum understanding of it is necessary in order to explore what its ramifications are for Brazilian evangélicos, especially as to how they relate to Brazilian Catholics in South Florida.

The main reason for the large discrepancy in the number of Catholic and evangélico churches is the lack of priests. There are seven Catholic priests in the counties of Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade, which is enough to cover the seven parishes but challenging for expansion. Padre Manoel, who used to pastor in parts of South America prior to moving to the US, stated that the Brazilian Catholic presence in South Florida has declined over the past ten years, a fact that he attributed to the difficulties of finding priests to pastor the community:

> The priest's profile must be analyzed for him to be able to come here (to the US). It is another language. For instance, when I was in other places, in other missions in other countries (in South America), we did not have this difficulty because the language (Spanish) was easier. It was easier to relate to others. The church had less requirements.[129]

Brazilian Protestant pastors, on the other hand, are able to migrate more easily because of the less structured nature of Protestant churches in general. Freston's words ring true: "and why is Pentecostal supply so localized? Largely because it is a lay religion, not dependent on religious specialists who may be in scarce supply

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[128] Personal interview by author, May 1st, 2020.

[129] Ibid.

locally."[130] It is also true that while the Catholic church must train and approve of its priests prior to sending them, many Protestant pastors are immigrants first, becoming pastors only in the diaspora, as was the case with Pastor Samuel. Others have come at the invitation of local churches, such as Pastor Miguel and Pastor Lucas. Padre Manoel also mentioned that the financial autonomy that many pastors achieve in South Florida is a motivating factor for them to emigrate to the US in larger numbers. "The (evangélico) pastor, he can create a community and maintain himself economically with it, so it is more attractive to do this," he said.[131]

3.4.2. Catholic Migration to Protestant Churches

The Protestantization of Brazilian Christianity in the diaspora in South Florida has also led to the migration of many Catholics to Protestant churches. Padre Manoel listed three reasons why he believed Brazilian Catholics in South Florida were flocking to evangélico churches. The first reason was the availability and proximity of such churches in South Florida, an issue of which Padre Manoel was well aware:

> It is hard to travel one hour to attend mass and one hour in the week to participate in the prayer meeting. It is too far, so the distance makes it difficult. There are too few priests, and it is too far to arrive at a church that speaks Portuguese.[132]

[130] Freston, "The Religious Field among Brazilians in the United States," 261

[131] Personal interview by author, May 1st, 2020.

[132] Ibid.

The second reason that Padre Manoel listed was the charismatic appeal of many evangélico churches. Paul Freston has argued that Brazil can consider itself to be the "world capital of Pentecostalism."[133] From its early beginnings, Brazilian Pentecostalism has grown significantly. By comparison, these numbers offered by Laura Premack show how much Pentecostalism grew over mainline churches in the period between 1900 and 1970:

> In 1900 there were no Pentecostals in Brazil; in 1930 there were 44,311; and by 1970 there were 1,418,933. To put this into perspective, consider that in 1900 there were 4,582 Baptists, 19,108 Presbyterians, and 5,596 Methodists; in 1930 there were 41,090 Baptists, 46,032 Presbyterians, and 15,480 Methodists; and by 1970 there were 295,295 Baptists, 244,030 Presbyterians, and 58,591 Methodists.[134]

As of the 2010 Brazilian Census, Protestants occupy 22.2 percent of the population,[135] which is significantly higher than the 15 percent registered in the 2000 Census.[136] The 22.2 percent is taken up primarily by Pentecostals, whose 25.3 million adherents make up 13.2 percent of the overall population, and out of that

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[133] Paul Freston, "The Future of Pentecostalism in Brazil: The Limits to Growth," in *Global Pentecostalism in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 63.

[134] Laura Premack, "'The Holy Rollers Are Invading Our Territory:' Southern Baptist Missionaries and the Early Years of Pentecostalism in Brazil," *Journal of Religious History* 35, no. 1 (2011): 5.

[135]Paul Freston, "History, current reality, and prospects of Pentecostalism in Latin America," in *The Cambridge History of Religions in Latin America*, ed. Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Paul Freston, and Stephen C. Dove (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 443.

[136] Zwinglio M. Dias, Elisa Rodrigues, and Rodrigo Portella, eds., *Protestantes, Evangélicos e (Neo)Pentecostais: História, Teologias, Igrejas e Perspectivas* (São Paulo: Fonte Editorial, 2013), 170.

category, the Assemblies of God is the leading church with 12.3 million members, or 6.4 percent of the overall population.

Padre Manoel mentioned that the Brazilian Catholic community in South Florida was very charismatic, making the transition to charismatic evangélico churches an attractive one. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) in Brazil is by far the largest in Latin America. The movement started off through the influence of two American Jesuits and a Brazilian priest in 1969 and it experienced exponential growth, starting with an adherence of ten thousand in 1970 and reaching as many as thirty-three million adherents by 2008, according to the estimates of some scholars.[137] Padre Manoel's third reason given was the social work being offered by evangélico churches, something that was very surprising to him. Padre Manoel mentioned that the Brazilian Protestant pastors from the communities he had worked with in Chile and on the Mexican side of the US-Mexico border used to come to him for help, but Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida did not. "Today, evangélicos have an excellent reputation in the area of social work for the Brazilian community (in South Florida)," he said. This Catholic migration to Protestant churches was seen in all three case study churches, as all pastors mentioned having

[137] Todd Hartch, "The Heartland of Charismatic Catholicism," in *The Rebirth of Latin American Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 113. For a more in-depth treatment of the CCR in Brazil, please see Edward L. Cleary, "Brazil: The Charismatic Giant," in *The Rise of Charismatic Catholicism in Latin America*, 96-131 (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2011). See also Silvia Fernandes, "The Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the Catholicism that Remains: A Study of the CCR Movement in Rio De Janeiro." *Religions* 10, no. 6 (2019): 1-21.

many Catholic members that had transitioned to their churches. Nevertheless, this is not to say that all Brazilian Catholics have become Protestants in the full sense of the word, meaning some of them still held ties to the Catholic Church. Padre Manoel and Pastor Samuel both mentioned knowing a few Brazilian Catholics who still participated in the Catholic sacraments whenever possible, even though they attended an evangélico church most of the time.

3.4.3. Reduced Confessional Animosity and Ecumenism

The animosity and distrust that was and remains a mark of the relationship between Protestants and Catholics in Brazil is not present in the diaspora, for the most part. This is primarily because Brazilian evangélicos are the majority in terms of the number of churches in the diaspora in South Florida, and given their strong social support of immigrants, there is less competition for religious spaces between them and Brazilian Catholics. “The Catholic here is not a threat to our church,” said Pastor Samuel. “I am not worried that the (church) members will leave because they (the local Catholic church) have a revived (charismatic) service,” he added. This leads to a more amicable relationship between Brazilian evangélicos and Brazilian Catholics in South Florida.

Brazilian Protestant pastors in South Florida were well aware of the presence of Brazilian Catholics in their church services. Although all the pastors interviewed believed that there was a need to “convert” Catholics to Protestantism, the manner in which they attempted to proselytize Brazilian Catholics was more subtle, as Pastor Vitor pointed out:

> Our relationship with Catholics is very good, because as I was saying, we expose (the truth), we do not impose (the truth), unlike in Brazil where there is a civil war between Catholics and evangélicos.[138]

Evangélico pastors also spoke of this higher level of ecumenism that occurred in the diaspora, which differs from Brazil. Pastor Antonio mentioned that in 2019, the Brazilian consulate in Miami had a council for issues pertaining to Brazilian immigrants that included Padre Manoel and himself, a Brazilian priest and a Brazilian Protestant pastor working alongside each other.[139] Many of the Brazilian pastors interviewed believed that this higher ecumenism was a result of the shared migrant status that Brazilian Protestants had with Brazilian Catholics. It is true that the need to help one another can make friends out of people, but Padre Manoel perceived things somewhat differently from his perspective. He believed that there are two types of ecumenism, namely neighborliness and tolerance. He argued that although Brazilian evangélicos and Brazilian Catholics invite one another to community gatherings and celebrations, there are no real joint initiatives. For instance, his interview took place during the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, and Padre Manoel pointed out that there had not been any kind of joint action between Brazilian Protestant churches and the Brazilian Catholic church to address the COVID-19 pandemic at that time. Padre Manoel is right to suggest that in some ways, the ecumenism between Brazilian evangélicos and Catholics is more about tolerance than actually working together, because it is easier for Brazilian evangélicos to

[138] Personal Interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

[139] Personal interview by author, August 20th, 2018.

tolerate Brazilian Catholics in South Florida given the fact that they are a majority, and after all, Brazilian Catholics are not a "threat."

3.5. Brazilians in Anglo Churches

There is a sizeable portion of Brazilian evangélicos who have left Brazilian Protestant churches and have transitioned to worship in Anglo churches. It is difficult to gauge how many evangélicos have made this shift especially because many of them have done it to assimilate more into the US culture, or to remove themselves from the Brazilian community, among many reasons, which makes them harder to track. Nevertheless, the simple fact that Pastor Samuel was able to gather fifty Brazilian evangélicos who were worshipping in one Anglo church, which led to the founding of an evangélico church, goes to show that the numbers are significant enough.

3.5.1. Issues within Brazilian Churches/Communities

There were many issues that evangélicos raised during interviews about the Brazilian community in South Florida in general, and about the churches more specifically. Some interviewees complained about the fact that some Brazilian migrants who have been in the US longer have taken advantage of newcomers' naivety and their lack of documentation by exploiting them at work and paying them unfair wages. Pastor Lucas shared his own painful experiences as a new immigrant during one of the services:

> I know what it is like to clean four houses a day, to be exploited as a helper, to be paid 20 dollars a day. To lay bricks all week and to go and ask for my paycheck, only to have the boss say, the first week is on the house.[140]

Pastor Miguel also stated that he knew of Brazilian businessmen who should have paid their Brazilian employees $200 for a job but instead paid them $80 just because they had recently arrived from Brazil, and he criticized these businessmen for subjugating the new, undocumented migrants, as if these businessmen were in a position of superiority.[141]

Another issue that was mentioned about some evangélico churches was that they lacked organization and time constraints. The complaint was that some Brazilian churches had very sporadic preaching, with no thematic connection from week to week, as many different guest speakers took the stage. In terms of time constraints, many of the evangélicos interviewed complained about the length of some services. Pastor Samuel said that one of his church visitors noticed the difference between his 1.5 hour service and some other Brazilian Protestant services, saying: "I went to other Brazilian churches where they call on a lot of people to sing, a lot of people to share a testimony, and the service takes three to four hours."[142] The researcher had his own personal experience with a long Brazilian church service that he attended during his fieldwork, which was outside of

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[140] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday morning service, August 4th, 2019.

[141] Personal Interview by author, June 19th, 2019.

[142] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019

the three case study sites, where the service started at 10:30 am and did not finish until 2:15 pm.

Gossip was another issue mentioned by some evangélicos in interviews. Attending any small church usually means that congregants get to know each other well, but some evangélicos complained that in some Brazilian Protestant churches, certain people were always trying to talk poorly of others, usually making negative comments about someone's appearance, especially if they had gained weight, for instance. Pastor Samuel stated that many of the evangélicos he knew who attended American churches mentioned the desire of being at a church where people did not know much about their personal lives.

3.5.3. Motives for Transition

These various issues that Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida have reported about Brazilian Protestant churches, and the Brazilian communities as a whole, have played a role in causing some evangélicos to transition to American churches. Many of these Brazilian evangélicos have chosen to distance themselves from the Brazilian Protestant communities because they have been hurt by people inside them, as Pastor Lucas pointed out: "The first thing that has distanced Brazilians from Brazilian churches was the disappointment with Brazilian leaders."[143]

[143] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

The motives that have led Brazilian evangélicos to transition to American churches are not all negative, however. Some have transitioned because of their children. Juliana, a mother of two teenage girls, mentioned that her daughters asked her to be able to attend church with their school friends who attended an American church. Therefore, rather than dropping her children off by themselves at the American church and continuing to attend a Brazilian church herself, Juliana decided to transition to the American church with her husband as well so that the family could attend services together.[144]

Another motive for transition was assimilation. Many Brazilian evangélicos wanted to get more involved in the American culture and to learn the language better, and a great way for them do so was by attending an American church, a place where they could find community. Pastor Lucas said that evangélicos who transitioned to better integrate into US culture could still maintain ties with Brazilian churches if they chose to because most of them who found themselves in this category did not leave the evangélico church on bad terms.

The last motive for transition that is worth exploring is marriage. Although some Brazilian evangélicos who marry outside their ethnicity are able to continue attending Brazilian Protestant churches with their spouse through the aid of translation services, many end up transitioning to American churches because of cultural differences. I, myself, am an example of this category. I attended evangélico churches growing up in Florida until my early 20s, when I started attending an American church. It was there that I met my wife, a second-generation Hispanic, and

[144] Personal conversation with author after church service, August 18th, 2019.

I have continued to attend American churches since then. We now have two children, and I could not see myself attending an evangélico church because of the cultural differences my wife and children would face.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced each of the case study sites that anchored this thesis by giving an account of how each of the churches started, where they are located, the types of church services provided, and the demographic make-up of each church. It also looked at the choice of language for church services at each church site, a direct expression of how these evangélico communities conceive of and practice their mission in diaspora in South Florida. These church introductions also included introductions to their leaders, the evangélico pastors whose pastoral work in the diaspora usually goes beyond what is typically expected of a pastor. The chapter noted where they came from, and how their journeys brought them to pastor evangélico churches in South Florida. It also defined the context of Brazilian Protestantism in which these evangélicos churches exist by exploring some of the distinctive challenges that evangélico pastors face in South Florida. One of these challenges is the issue of church autonomy, which affects evangélicos' abilities to practice church and mission. For this issue, the three case studies provided an interesting contrast. RCP had the least autonomy of the three churches explored because it was a part of an Anglo church. It was followed by IPF, whose lack of a church building impacted their ability to host church services and activities. In contrast, INW owned their church building, thus they were able to provide as many

services as they desired. Another important aspect of the landscape of Brazilian Protestantism in South Florida that was explored was the view evangélicos held of the US as a model Protestant country and how it affected their dispositions toward the idea of American religious exceptionalism and right-wing politics.

This chapter also examined the relationship between Brazilian evangélicos and Brazilian Catholics in South Florida, exploring the causes and the effects of the phenomenon of the Brazilian Catholic migration to Protestant churches that occurs in the diaspora in South Florida, and seeking to explain the general lack of antagonism between the two migrant Christian communities, in contrast to historical experience in Brazil. This relationship is distinctively shaped by the large presence of Brazilian Catholics in evangélico communities, and by the newfound sense of identity for evangélicos who are now the dominant religious expression in South Florida. The chapter also introduced the small, yet noteworthy portion of the evangélico community that worships in Anglo churches, and it concluded by exploring the different factors that have caused evangélicos to worship in Anglo rather than ethnic churches.

We will now shift our attention to chapter 4 and to exploring how evangélico churches affect the identity of 1st generation Brazilian evangélicos.

Chapter 4. The Brazilian-American Identity of 1st Generation Migrants in South Florida and the Role of Brazilian Protestant Churches in Reflecting on and Developing Dual Identity

Introduction

> There is no way for someone to beat their chest and say, 'no, I am Brazilian, but I feel American.' They cannot say that, there is no way. This is pride, if I say that, it is pride, because a Brazilian is Brazilian (even though) he may have grown up here, or he may be living here (in the US).[1]
>
> — Pastor Lucas

Pastor Lucas' words speak directly to the issue of the ambiguous ethnic identity experienced by many Brazilians in the US. The labels of 'Brazilian' and 'American' were often viewed by respondents in exclusive terms, as if belonging to one group meant not belonging to the other, even when used inconsistently, as was the case with another of my interviewees, Pastor Samuel. When comparing himself to me in terms of our generational differences, him a 1st generation immigrant and I being a 1.5, Pastor Samuel called himself Brazilian and me "more American" because English was my first language, he claimed. However, later in the interview, while discussing concepts of 'home,' he said: "I am American. Although I came here after the 1.5 generation because I moved here at age eighteen, I have lived eighteen years in Brazil but twenty-five in the US," citing that he often missed many of the commodities he was used to in the US whenever he visited Brazil.[2] This lack of

[1] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[2] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

consistency points to the complexity of the identity-shaping process that Brazilian immigrants face in the US. Nevertheless, the transnational hybrid identity of Brazilians immigrants in the US should not be seen in terms of uncertainty about whether one is exclusively Brazilian or American. In actuality, its essence lies in the fact that one is both Brazilian and American at the same time. Elisa Tsariki rightly argues that transnational communities possess "dual or at times multiple (identities), since they are connected to two countries."[3] The inconsistencies seen in the way Brazilians self-identified are the result of a migrant trying to find his or her identity in one country or the other rather than embracing their dual identity that is deeply shaped by both. Thus, the term "Brazilian-American" becomes a more fitting ethnic identifier because it encompasses the duality of one's transnational identity.

This chapter will examine the role of Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida in the reflection and development of the Brazilian-American identity of 1st generation Brazilian migrants. This will be done first by looking at some distinctive features of 1st generation Brazilian migrants, such as a desire to establish themselves in the US, and their concepts of 'home' as it relates to Brazil or the US, which will serve as a backdrop to analyze these members of the Brazilian migrant community. The chapter will then explore other identity-shaping factors, such as ethnicity, discrimination, and issues within the 1st generation Brazilian migrant community before looking at specific challenges faced by undocumented migrants, all the while examining how such factors relate to the ecclesial practices and

[3] Elisa Tsakiri, "Transnational Communities and Identity," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (2005): 102.

mission of these Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida. Exploring the many factors that shape the Brazilian-American identity of 1st generation Brazilian evangélicos will enable this chapter to examine to what extent these churches recognize those traits and form their ministry and mission around them.

Ethnic churches play an important role in the lives of immigrants by providing them a safe haven in the diaspora, a place where they can be heard and accepted in ways that could not be done by the host country. Brazilian pastors are immigrants themselves; thus, they possess the ability to understand many of the struggles faced by their parishioners, and to help them overcome such challenges. As argued in chapter 3, to pastor a Brazilian church in the US is very different from doing so in Brazil, and churches must adapt in order not only to reflect the identity factors of the Brazilian-American migrant identity, but also to improve relationships and issues within those difficulties and identity factors in the lives of their parishioners. Nevertheless, although Brazilian Protestant churches are in many ways shaped by these Brazilian-American identity factors while adapting to serve a diasporic, transnational community, they also have a role in reflecting, sustaining, and enriching said identity. Brazilian Protestant churches are also transnational entities themselves, striving to find a balance between two cultures. Thus, these Brazilian churches have the potential to help evangélicos to understand themselves as Brazilian-Americans by looking for ways to express the church's own existence as a transnational entity through its engagement in both cultures. In relation to that point, Tsakiri has argued that transnational groups, such as a diasporic Brazilian Protestant church, "link the country of origin to the country of residence and

promote participation in both spaces, while taking into account the societal system put in place by the countries of residence."[4] This is precisely the social role of the Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida, to affirm the Brazilian side of their members' ethnic identity without negating their reality as Americans.

4.1. Here to Stay: A New Kind of Immigrant

> The situation of the Brazilian (immigrant) began to change a little, because what used to happen before was that the Brazilian (immigrant) would come (to the US) with the intention of returning to Brazil. (They would come to the US) just to raise money to buy a business in Brazil, or to build a house or something and then they would return there. Today, that is no longer the case. Today, the Brazilian immigrant has a new mindset already, which is something that has made things easier for him.[5]
>
> — Pastor Eduardo

One common thread throughout the interviews conducted by the researcher was that this latest wave of Brazilian immigrants to the US comprises a new kind of immigrant, one that has arrived in the US in the hopes of finding permanence in the country. This is consistent with our findings in chapter 2 that described the third wave of Brazilian immigrants (2010s - onward) as members of Brazil's elite who came to the US in order to seek more financial stability. The researcher interviewed many members of this third wave of Brazilian immigration, some documented and some undocumented, and they did hold in common this idea of coming to the US for a better future, especially for their children, even though they enjoyed some sense of financial security in Brazil before emigrating. Murilo, for instance, had a house, a

[4] Ibid., 102.

[5] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2019.

decent job, and a paid-off car in Brazil, yet he complained about the lack of a better future in Brazil: "In Brazil you can maybe live well but you cannot improve your standard of living…we were living but not advancing."[6] Pastor Samuel mentioned a couple who had recently arrived at his church in 2019 and declared that they had no desire to go back to Brazil: "they came and already said, Brazil never again."[7] When comparing himself, a member of Brazil's working class who had arrived during the second wave of immigration in search of job opportunities,[8] to this new kind of immigrant, Pastor Samuel said:

> They are coming over (to the US) differently. They sell everything they own (in Brazil) then they come here. It is not the same as when we arrived here, maybe how your parents arrived here also, we arrived here broke. They come, they have money, they buy a car, rent a house, go to live on their own, then they find a job, but they have enough money to survive six months to a year (even without a job). This one lady arrived here two months ago, and she sent her son to the church's camp to spend a week there. She spent U$400 for a week at a camp. She came to be an American.[9]

Pastor Samuel's assumption is correct when it comes to my own family. We arrived in the US at the end of 1999 with no more than U$1,000, just enough to buy a used car to get us around, but not enough to rent our own place, so we had to share an apartment with my uncle and his family, who had invited us to migrate to the US, and who helped us until we were able to establish ourselves financially. This stands in stark contrast with the experience of many members of this latest wave of

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[6] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

[7] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

[8] For more on the three waves of Brazil immigration see above, p. 53.

[9] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

Brazilian immigrants who have the financial means to purchase a car, and even sometimes a home, upon arriving in the US, thus having a more immediate financial independence, as Pastor Samuel pointed out. Nevertheless, regardless of which wave of immigration they were a part of, all respondents expressed a desire to live in the US permanently. It is also interesting to note that in Pastor Samuel's anecdote, he correlated the woman's permanent move to the US with her perceived desire to be an American, even though she was in fact attending a Brazilian church. This example continues to shed light on the seemingly inconsistent ways that the terms Brazilian and American are used, an ambiguity that lies at the heart of the hybrid ethnic identity that this thesis is exploring.

4.1.1. Brazilian-American Identity and Concepts of Home Amongst 1st Generation Migrants

Another point of contention in the crafting of a hybrid ethnic identity is the concept of 'home' or '*pátria*' (homeland). The place that the immigrant sees as their 'home' often becomes their new reference point, a place that becomes ingrained in their hearts as their 'forever' place. When speaking with my respondents about this subject, I would use myself as an example. I am a 1.5 generation Brazilian immigrant who has lived more of his life in the US than in Brazil. When I traveled to Edinburgh to pursue my PhD and engaged in conversations about healthcare, jobs, and other facets of society, I always found myself comparing the way things were done in Scotland to the way things were done 'back home' in the US. The US had become my point of reference, my 'home.' Pastor Vitor, who arrived in the US at age twenty-three and had lived in the country for almost twenty years at the time of his

interview, mentioned referring to Florida as 'home' when in conversation with others during his time at seminary in Texas,[10] and Pastor Lucas also mentioned seeing the US as 'home' because of how long he had spent in the country:

> After nineteen, twenty years here, I am forty-nine years old now, so that is practically half of my life here. I have been very enculturated, you know. It is a lot easier for me to speak today of what I live here, of my reality here (in the US) because in the last twenty years, all that I have needed, the benefits, they were from this country: health, safety, education, and the quality of life. So, for me today it is easier to talk about what I live here and my (point of) reference is what I live here.[11]

Although Vitor and Lucas have lived in the US for about twenty years each, seeing the US as 'home' is not necessarily tied into the length of stay in the country, especially when one takes into consideration the attitudes of members of the latest wave of Brazilian immigrants. For instance, Murilo, a 1st generation immigrant who had only been in the US for 7 months at the time of his interview, claimed that he could already "leave Brazil aside" and see the US as his 'home,' even jestingly saying: "the day that I learn to speak English I want to stop speaking Portuguese."[12]

Not all Brazilians ascribed the US as 'home,' however, even though they had no desire of going back to live in Brazil. Guilherme mentioned that although he has learned much from the American culture, especially when it comes to the area of education, if someone were to ask his opinions about his own culture, he would still talk about his experiences in Brazil. Guilherme saw his idea of 'home' as deeply

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[10] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

[11] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[12] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

entrenched in his own identity, claiming: "After all, it is difficult for us to fully let go of who we are. Whether we like it or not, we were part of a culture (in Brazil) for forty years, living within a certain context, which is the product of the values of a certain society."[13] Gustavo also saw value in identifying Brazil as 'home,' a love for Brazil that he has passed on to his children:

> I would call Brazil 'home.' We do not consider going back to live there, but a person that has no past does not have a future either…Brazil is my *pátria* (homeland). It has a lot of wonderful things, a wonderful people, a hospitable people. So, we are aware of this (past). Our children's first language is English but all of them speak Portuguese and they love Brazil.[14]

Guilherme and Gustavo's choice to still see Brazil as 'home' rather than the US even though that is their country of residence suggests stronger ties to Brazil on their part. Nevertheless, these different motives for how one sees their 'home' as either the US or Brazil continue to demonstrate how the questions of ethnic identity and of one's relationship to their host as well as sending country are personal ones, thus creating several possibilities for the way that one chooses to craft his or her identity as a Brazilian-American.

4.1.2. New Land, New Mindset: How Churches Help 1st Generation Migrants to Adapt to Life in America

> I think that the Brazilian (immigrant) must develop a first-world mindset because (sometimes) he lives in a first-world country with a third-world mentality…There are Brazilian (immigrants) that want to live here (in the US) as if they were living in Brazil, and it does not work. Here (in the US) the law works, there are set authorities. If they try to bribe a police officer, they will have serious problems. If they do not pay their taxes, they will have

[13] Personal interview by author, February 13th, 2019.

[14] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

> serious problems. So, I think Brazilian needs to get into the rhythm of a first-world country so they can be successful (in the US).[15]
>
> — Pastor Eduardo

Brazilians, in general, are known for the *jeitinho Brasileiro* (Brazilian way), which is the mindset that one can usually find a solution to an issue even at the cost of circumventing common social norms, or through bending rules. It is often a harmless concept, but when it comes to bending the law, serious repercussions can occur, as Pastor Eduardo mentioned. The *jeitinho Brasileiro* often does not work in the US, and new Brazilian immigrants need to be made aware of that. This is just one example of the many ways that Brazilian immigrants must adapt to life in the US, which is very different from life in Brazil. Pastor Lucas mentioned that Brazilian immigrants must be willing to learn how things work in the US because "one cannot benefit from a country or from a culture if they do not know how the culture works."[16] He also argued that the renewal of one's mindset helps them to better understand the different seasons of their lives as immigrants in the US.[17]

These Brazilian Protestant churches in diaspora in South Florida offer Brazilian evangélicos a place where they can learn not just how to survive in the US, but how to thrive as well. This information is accessed through relationships with pastors and other evangélicos who have lived in the US for a significant amount of time and have learned many of the intricacies of living life as a Brazilian immigrant,

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[15] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2018.

[16] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[17] Ibid.

especially an undocumented one. Affirming the need to adapt one's mindset due to the different way things are done in America not only recognizes that Brazilian evangélicos live between two cultures, but it re-enforces the need for them to shape their identities in a way that will be able to relate to both. This is another way that Brazilian Protestant churches help to shape the transnational Brazilian-American identity of evangélicos who find themselves living between these two cultures. Pastor Miguel summarized this tension well:

> I am of the opinion that we have to unpack our luggage. If you are here (in the US), unpack your luggage, get involved with the culture, learn English, respect the laws of the country, but that does not mean losing your identity, the essence of your formation, your upbringing. We get to keep that.[18]

4.2. Ethnicity and the Brazilian-American Identity of 1st Generation Migrants in South Florida

4.2.1. Lack of Settled Identity

The lack of settled identity experienced by Brazilian immigrants in the US that was explored in chapter 2, and which led Margolis to describe the Brazilian immigrant community in the US as an "invisible minority," is very much a reality in the lives of 1st generation Brazilian migrants in South Florida. This begins as a result of the absence of a proper ethnic identifier for Brazilians in the US, as shown in how Brazilians can be classified as Latinos but not Hispanics, and how there is no consensus in how these labels are used in the US by Americans or Brazilians. These ambiguous labels lead to ambiguous and unsettled identities, which shape the daily lives of Brazilians in South Florida.

[18] Personal interview by author, June 19th, 2019.

The ethnic labels of Latino, Hispanic, and South American are self-disclosed, thus creating a plethora of ways that Brazilians can self-identify in the US. This was evident in the diverse ways that interviewees answered questions about how they identified themselves racially and ethnically in the US. When asked about how they answered questions of race and ethnicity in government documents, some saw both their race and ethnicity as Brazilian, such as Felipe and Helena, a couple at RCP, while others classified themselves as Latinos, but not Hispanics, leaving the answer for race or ethnicity blank if the option for Latino was not provided. Pastor Eduardo believed that Brazilians need a more appropriate ethnic label: "They must find a solution for Brazil because they can ask you, are you American? I can say that I am also American because I am South American, I am just not North American. They must find a way to fix it."[19] Some Brazilians such as Murilo, a member of RCP who has lived in the US for less than a year, did not know the difference between the terms Hispanic and Latino, while others struggled to explain it.

The problem of labels goes beyond self-identification, however, as it also affects how Brazilians are viewed in the US and the language services they are provided. "In my point of view, they (Americans) do not understand. They consider everyone to be just one (ethnic group), everyone is Hispanic, so they do not understand that we are Brazilians, it is totally different," complained José, a member of INW, when asked how Americans categorized Brazilians in the US.[20] When told

[19] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2018.

[20] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

about the lack of representation of Brazilian communities in academic writing about Latinos, Pastor Samuel added, "to them (Americans), everyone is Mexican."[21] Although these statements do not represent the view held by all Americans with regard to Brazilians, the lack of proper ethnic labels for Brazilians does not aid in the process of overcoming these incorrect categorizations. In terms of language services provided, many companies utilize over-the-phone Portuguese interpreters to aid Brazilians who do not speak English, but when it comes to forms and documents, many of these are offered just in Spanish. Murilo mentioned a difficult experience he had at the airport when he was asked by an immigration officer to fill out a form that was written in Spanish. "There are words that you read and imagine what they are, but they are not that,"[22] said Murilo. The many similarities between Portuguese and Spanish can make it possible for a Brazilian to understand a significant percentage of what is written in Spanish, but when it comes to governmental forms or other important documents, misunderstanding a question can be rather problematic, therefore Brazilians would benefit from receiving important forms and documentations in their native language.

[21] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

[22] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

4.2.2. Discrimination

> Go home, he said to me. Then I asked him, 'where to'? 'To Mexico,' he replied.[23]
>
> — Mauro, a member of RCP

Xenophobia toward racial and ethnic minorities has been an issue in the US since its inception. Given the long-standing relationship between the US and its Latin American neighbors, especially its closest one Mexico, the discrimination toward Latinos in the US is not a recent phenomenon, and if anything, the damaging rhetoric of the vilification of Latino immigrants was only exacerbated by the Trump administration, which was the current administration during the researcher's fieldwork in South Florida in 2018-2020. Latino immigrants are often portrayed as criminals, lazy, as taking advantage of the welfare system, or as stealing jobs from Americans. This creates an "Us vs. Them" environment, where Latino immigrants are often asked to "go home," as if the US could no longer receive any new immigrants, or as if Latino immigrants did not contribute to the success of the US economy and society as a whole, thus making it their "home" as well. This xenophobic concept is paradoxical, to say the least, when juxtaposed to the fact that America was built by immigrants, many of whom took advantage of the evil economic system of slavery while appropriating lands that belonged to native Americans. Nevertheless, Brazilians are not exempt from such rhetoric. Mauro, a member of RCP who is a US citizen, was told to "go home…to Mexico" by a driver

[23] Personal conversation with author after evening church service, September 22nd, 2019.

who became frustrated with him in traffic. In another driving incident, Mauro shared that someone waved a small US flag at him, while making angry gestures.[24]

While many of the Brazilian evangélicos interviewed shared that they had been victims of discrimination in the US, most mentioned not being impacted by such treatment. Murilo, on the other hand, claims that he never experienced discrimination in the US, something he credits to his light skin color: "I never particularly suffered prejudice here in the United States. I do know a few people that have suffered it, but generally they are people that…how can I say it? Not generalizing it, but the color, the color I believe that it influences Americans a little more."[25] Murilo is transferring to the US context assumptions carried over from the racial hierarchy of Brazil discussed in chapter 2, since he is White, while perpetuating Brazil's racial hierarchy that he is familiar with. This is not a simple case of a homogenous group of migrants reacting to a potential racism in their new country. They have their own form of racist assumptions that influence their own interpretations of viewing racism in the US. In his research on Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, Rodrigo Serrao investigated the ways that "racial systems collide, are reconstructed, and finally reinterpreted in ways that attempt to maintain the racial hierarchies intact" in the diaspora.[26] Drawing from the work of Tiffany

[24] Ibid.

[25] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

[26] Rodrigo Serrao, "Winning 'Americans' for Jesus?: Second-Generation Racial Ideology, and the Future of the Brazilian Evangelical Church in the U.S." (PhD diss., University of South Florida, 2020).

Joseph,[27] Serrao argued that light-skinned "white identifying" Brazilian migrants viewed racism in the US as an issue stemming primarily from Black Americans, and suggested that this was a product of White migrants' attempt to maintain the supremacy afforded to them in Brazil's racial democracy vis-à-vis Black Americans:

> white identifying Brazilian immigrants' (mis-) understanding of race and racism, as well as their colorblind rhetoric, often lead them to categorize racism as a problem that is caused and perpetrated largely by African Americans. Brazilian immigrants' views on race and racism are greatly shaped by the racial anxiety that they feel from their downgraded status as immigrants in the U.S. Moreover, these anxieties are exacerbated by Brazilians' expectations for showing "respect" not being met by black Americans.[28]

This means that most 1st-generation light-skinned Brazilians will not follow Portes and Zhou's proposed segmented assimilation of integrating into other minority subcultures, either Black or Hispanic, due to their efforts to disassociate themselves from both and integrate into the more dominant White culture, or they will strive to form their own subculture that is "not-Hispanic."

Although it is true that some light-skinned Brazilians may not appear to be Latinos because of their European ancestry, thus initially shielding them from the discrimination they could have received for being Latinos, their ethnicity may be easily disclosed through their names, or perhaps if they lack English proficiency. For

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[27] See Tiffany D. Joseph, "How Does Racial Democracy Exist in Brazil? Perceptions from Brazilians in Governador Valadares, Minas Gerais." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 10 (2013): 1524–1543; Tiffany D. Joseph, *Race on the Move: Brazilian Migrants and the Global Reconstruction of Race* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015); and Tiffany D. Joseph, "Latino, Hispanic, or Brazilian: Considerations for Brazilian Immigrants' Racial Classification in the U.S.," in *Migrant Marginality: A Transnational Perspective*, ed. P. Kretsedemas, J. Capetillo-Ponce and G. Jacobs (New York: Routledge Press, 2013), , 275-292 .

[28] Serrao, "Winning 'Americans' for Jesus?," 55.

instance, José and Elizabeth, a couple from INW, mentioned how an airport worker once mistook them for a Hispanic-American couple, greeting the wife in English and the husband in Spanish. Elizabeth, who is light-skinned, mentioned that her American name may have also led the worker to mistake her for being American, while her husband, who is dark-skinned and has a Hispanic name, was mistaken for being Hispanic.[29] It is possible that Elizabeth, who had been in the US for five years and arrived at age twenty-three, would have exposed the fact that she was Brazilian if a conversation had ensued, but given the circumstances, she was seen as a White American, while her husband was seen as a Black Hispanic. Thus, while it is possible that some light-skinned Brazilians may face less discrimination based on their skin complexion, there is an added level of prejudice experienced by darker-skinned Brazilians, especially in light of the racism experienced by Blacks in the US in general, a point that was confirmed by José as well.[30]

Nevertheless, it is important to note that not all Americans are prejudiced against Latinos, and to think otherwise only deepens the divide that exists between Latinos and Americans in the "Us vs. Them" environment, causing Latinos to become prejudiced against Americans as well. Pastor Vitor spoke of a life-changing experience he had while attending seminary in Texas, which helped him to deconstruct some of his own prejudice toward Americans:

> When I went to do my seminary in Texas, I started to attend an American church and I became the youth pastor there, which for me was a breaking down of my own prejudice. In Texas, the American culture is very strong, and

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

> despite there being a large Hispanic community, primarily Mexican, the Texan culture is very strong, it is very traditional, you know? We use this expression, hillbillies and rednecks, you know? However, I went to pastor inside a redneck church, and I was so well received that they even gave me the position of youth leader with another guy who was Mexican. This happened to me and my wife, and we are Brazilians. So, to me this was, using the expression, a slap in the face. I said to myself, you think they judge you this way, that they think like this, but in the end, I was received as family.[31]

Vitor's realization was an important one, and his experience in the American church he worked at in Texas offers some hope that the issue of the discrimination of Latinos and other ethnic minorities in the US can be overcome.

Another thing that was mentioned by a few of the Brazilian evangélicos interviewed was the fact that they often felt insulated from discrimination while inside the Brazilian hub, where they did not feel the effects of being part of a minority group in the US. When asked whether she perceived herself to be part of a minority group in the US, and whether this had any impact in her daily life, Mariana, a member of IPF who has lived in the US for almost twenty years, mentioned that this was not the case for her:

> No, I think that maybe I do not feel it because in the first place, there are a lot of Brazilians where I live. It is very rare for you not to encounter a Brazilian everywhere you go. If you go to the mall, you meet a Brazilian, if you go to a restaurant, you will always hear someone speaking Portuguese. Sometimes when I arrive at a place, I even find it strange because I did not expect to hear so many people speaking Portuguese. There are a lot of Brazilians in the area that I live, but it was not so in the beginning. Whenever I used to hear someone speaking Portuguese, I would look at them curiously, but not anymore. I never felt like I was part of a minority.[32]

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[31] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

[32] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

Ana, on the other hand, saw herself as a minority in the US because of the limitations she had living away from the Brazilian hub and relying only on the church for social networking.[33] Mariana and Ana's opposing views serve as evidence that issues of ethnicity in the US are understood in a variety of ways by Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, many of them on a personal level. Although this Brazilian community in South Florida was impacted by the lack of settled identity in the US, the impact was felt on different levels by different members of this community, as they strived to forge their identities in their respective diasporic contexts.

4.2.2.1. Brazilian Discrimination Toward Hispanics

> When it comes to Brazilians and Americans, the prejudice is big, it is enormous. It is from the American toward the Brazilian, but the Brazilian as well, he discriminates. He discriminates the Haitian, the Brazilian discriminates the Hispanic, because the same thing that an Americans does toward a Brazilian because he sees himself as a part of a dominant culture, the Brazilian does it with others because he thinks that he is part of a dominant culture (as well).[34]
>
> — Pastor Lucas

As explored in chapter 2, Margolis argued that ethnicity is primarily built in exclusive terms and through attempts to differentiate one's own ethnicity over and against another's.[35] When it comes to Hispanics, many Brazilians perpetuate the

[33] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

[34] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

[35] Maxine Margolis, "Becoming Brazucas: Brazilian Identity in the United States," in *The Other Latinos: Central and South Americans in the United States*, ed. José Luis Falconi and José Antonio Mazzoti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 214.

negative US-given stereotypes of Hispanics as they attempt to create their own identity as Brazilians, rather than as Latinos. Pastor Samuel mentioned that Brazilians do not like to be spoken to in Spanish, and they do not like to be considered Latinos. When asked whether "not" being Latino or "not" being Hispanic was part of the Brazilian identity in the US, he answered, "(the Brazilian) has his own identity."[36]

Unfortunately, this "we are not like them" identity vis-à-vis Hispanics is often constructed from a place of perceived superiority, as Pastor Lucas pointed out. Pastor Eduardo believed that this sense of superiority may stem from the fact that Brazilians live in the largest country in South America, they have one of the largest cities in the world, São Paulo, and they have won the FIFA Men's World Cup a record five times, causing them to prefer to identify themselves as "a people almost isolated from the rest."[37] Brazilians sometimes viewed themselves as more intelligent and more entrepreneurial than their Latino neighbors, as seen in this story shared by pastor Samuel:

> I have a friend of mine in (the city of) Pompano Beach who owns a large company with more than thirty employees. He said that he does not employ any Brazilians because the Brazilian is very intelligent. He worked installing marble. The Brazilian learns (the trade), and he advances, he is more outgoing, but the Latino, the Hispanic, Guatemalan, Mexican, they are humbler. So, if he (the Hispanic) is working and receiving his check, he is happy because he came from a humbler place than us. The Brazilian has a desire to grow. So, the guy said, I do not employ Brazilians because when you

[36] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

[37] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2019.

> teach a Brazilian, he opens his own business to compete with you and to take your clients.[38]

Pastor Vicente argued that this Brazilian pride that leads to a sense of superiority over Hispanics is wrong. He said that when Brazilians do not want to be associated with Hispanics, they are "being ignorant," failing to understand and appreciate Hispanic culture, and often times failing to distinguish humble people from the countryside with well-educated people from larger cities, such as Mexico City.[39] Nevertheless, he did point out that Brazilians in Brazil like Hispanics, and they often try to participate in foreign missionary trips to nations like Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, and Chile.[40] Thus, it is possible that one of the reasons Brazilians try to disassociate themselves from Hispanics in the US is because of the negative stereotypes ascribed to Hispanics, or perhaps due to this perceived sense of superiority, but the fact remains that they perpetuate such negative stereotypes in the process, and that the majority of these evangélico communities end up distancing themselves from their Latino counterparts.

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[38] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

[39] Personal interview by author, August 16th, 2019.

[40] Ibid.

4.2.3. Language Barriers and Lack of Assimilation

> Language is everything. I like to say that language is more important than documentation because there are people who are documented but they do not speak English, so they end up working in manual labor.[41]
>
> — Pastor Vitor

English proficiency was mentioned by many respondents as one of the most important keys to living a successful life in the US. However, 1st generation immigrants who did not learn English in Brazil faced the added challenge of arriving in the US as adults and having to learn a new language in that stage of life. "We arrived here, we started studying, but I am already forty years old, it's harder for our brains (to learn the language)," mentioned Ana, who claimed that she constantly prayed asking God to help her learn English.[42] Ana also mentioned having limited work opportunities because of her language barrier. She divided her time between a job as a nanny to a Brazilian-American couple and house cleaning, but she mentioned missing out on several house cleaning opportunities because they needed someone who spoke English. Murilo, Ana's husband, mentioned struggling often at the supermarket because of not being able to communicate properly in English, claiming that the lack of English proficiency has been a "barrier to our growth in the US."[43] This struggle is more acute for Ana and Murilo because they live

[41] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

[42] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

[43] Ibid.

further away from the Brazilian hub and the many Lusophone amenities it provides. To that end, members of INW have a dual advantage, they live closer to the Brazilian hub and are exposed to English in their church services through the simultaneous translation. Although Pastor Vitor warned that the church cannot become a substitute for an English school, he agreed that parishioners are at least able to improve their English vocabulary while participating in church services at INW.[44]

While respondents placed the lack of language proficiency as the chief obstacle to assimilation in the US, proximity to the Brazilian hub can also become a hindrance to their assimilation because the access to many day-to-day life activities in Portuguese, such as work, food, doctors, and church can cause migrants to have less of a need to speak English well. Many of the respondents who lived near the Brazilian hub acknowledged that their adaptation to life in the US had been easier because of the large number of Brazilians living nearby. In Guilherme's words, his adaptation to South Florida was easy because it is "very similar to Brazil."[45]

Participating in an ethnic church can also become an obstacle to assimilation, as argued in subsection 2.3.4. Pastor Vitor mentioned that there were a few parishioners who had been living in the US for over ten years and still had not learned English.[46] Ana complained about the lack of access to resources and to the American population in general because her only relationships in the US were based

[44] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

[45] Personal interview by author, February 13th, 2019.

[46] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

in the church. “We need to go visit other churches so that we can meet more people because I feel that I am living in a small world since we only have contact with people inside the Brazilian church,” said Ana.[47] She clarified that this did not mean that she no longer wanted to attend a Brazilian church, but that she felt the need to expand her connections, even possibly to Americans in order to help her learn English better. It is interesting to note, however, that Ana felt the negative impact that participating in an ethnic church could have on one’s assimilation in the US even though she lived away from the Brazilian hub, where one would expect her assimilation to be accelerated by the limited access to amenities in Portuguese. This goes to show that in many ways, much of the responsibility for assimilation (if that is desired) lies with the individual who must find avenues of assimilation, such as learning the language and interacting more with Americans in their daily lives, in order to ensure that their lives in the US are not limited to only the things they are able to accomplish through the Brazilian community.

4.2.4. Church and the Reinforcement of the Brazilian Side of 1st Generation Migrants’ Ethnic Identity: A Piece of Brazil in South Florida

> From the moment you walk inside the Brazilian church, it is like you were in Brazil.[48]
>
> — Murilo, a member of RCP

One of the most important aspects of the church’s role in the transnational identity shaping process of 1st generation Brazilian evangélicos is how the church

[47] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

[48] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019

reinforces the Brazilian part of the immigrant's transnational identity, which was accomplished through several avenues in the churches visited for this study. The more obvious way was through the use of Portuguese. This had less of an impact for evangélicos at INW and IPF, who were a lot more exposed to Portuguese in the Brazilian hub, than it did for those at RCP who were limited to hearing Portuguese only at church. Pastor Samuel shared the story of a Brazilian woman who found RCP by chance, and who was drawn to the fact that the church held services in Portuguese. This woman had been living in the US for quite some time, spoke English fluently, and attended a local American church with her eight-year-old son. One day, she found a business card for Renovation Church on the church's floor after a service. She became curious and decided to visit the church's website and was pleasantly surprised to see that there was a Portuguese congregation of Renovation church. According to Pastor Samuel, who spoke to this lady after the church service, she mentioned wanting to come back: "I want to be here because I loved hearing my language and being around my people."[49]

Food was another way that these Brazilian churches re-enforced the ethnic ties of Brazilian evangélicos. INW had Brazilian barbecues, IPF sold traditional Brazilian dishes after services as a fundraiser, and Pastor Samuel ordered famous Brazilian snacks, such as *coxinha* (dough mixed with shredded chicken and deep fried in the shape of a drumstick) and *pão de queijo* (cheese bread), and served *guaraná*, a Brazilian soda made from the guarana fruit to celebrate the opening of the new youth space after one of the services attended by the researcher. The

[49] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

passion for Brazilian *futebol* (soccer) and the *seleção* (Brazil's men's national squad) also united Brazilian evangélicos, especially during the FIFA World Cup tournament. During the 2018 edition of the World Cup, which was held in Russia, the researcher was able to attend Brazil's game against Mexico at *Igreja Batista Videira* (IBV), a local Baptist church in the city of Deerfield Beach, and the Brazilian vibes were everywhere. The game was broadcasted on the church's big screen, people filled the seats in their Brazil jerseys, and the exhilaration was felt across the room when shouts broke out after Brazil scored their first goal. Brazilian snacks and drinks were available for sale at half-time, and everyone cheered when the game finished, and Brazil won. It is interesting to suggest that although evangélicos have an identity that is both Brazilian and American, had Brazil played the US in soccer, which has happened in other international tournaments and in friendly games, congregants would have sided with Brazil. IBV is also known for their celebrations of Brazilian holidays, such as Brazil's Independence Day, and their strong desire to keep Brazilians connected with their ethnic roots in South Florida, offering programs for children that teach them Portuguese and Brazilian history. "When it comes to patriotism, IBV leads the way," said José.

Brazilian pastors also made sure that their congregants were up to date with current events in Brazil. During one of the researcher's church visits to IPF in 2019, for instance, Pastor Miguel called a female parishioner to pray about the Brumadinho dam disaster, which took the lives of 270 Brazilians in the city of Brumadinho, in the state of Minas Gerais. "We are here but we are Brazilians. Our hearts are Brazilian. Be with that place and with our president, that he may be used

by you," prayed the female parishioner.[50] Pastor Miguel commented that he believed it was important to bring news about Brazil to parishioners because they still had ties to Brazil due to having relatives there.[51] Pastor Lucas looked to strengthen ethnic ties by praying for Brazil and its elections during services. "We pray for our country, politics, and the elections. We participate actively because we believe that even though we are here, we believe that a government can help to change the history of a country," he argued.[52] In addition to staying in touch with current events in Brazil, evangélicos' ties to their sending country were also strengthened through church visits of Brazilian pastors from Brazil. Pastor Miguel mentioned being able to bring two of the highest regarded Presbyterian theologians in Brazil for a conference at IPF that took place in 2019.[53] INW also had one guest speaker from Brazil preach during one the researcher's church visits in 2019. Given RCP's 'Americanized' preaching schedule, there was no room for guest appearances of Brazilian pastors from Brazil.

There are many ways that these Brazilian churches play a role in the transnational identity-shaping process of Brazilian evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida. This is primarily done through the strengthening of ethnic ties, which re-enforce the Brazilian part of the hybrid Brazilian-American identity of evangélicos in

[50] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday evening service, January 27th, 2019.

[51] Personal interview by author, June 19th, 2019.

[52] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[53] Personal interview by author, June 19th, 2019.

South Florida. However, there are also ways that ethnic churches can re-enforce the American part of this dual identity as well. This can be done through the fact that ethnic churches are transnational institutions themselves, having to contend with the merger between traditions and customs from their sending country and those of their host country. These churches also help evangélicos to overcome the challenges faced by immigrants in the US by teaching them how to have the proper mindset to adapt to life in America not only through sermons, but through relationships with other members of the churches as well. Therefore, Brazilian Protestant churches in the diaspora have a unique opportunity to aid evangélicos in shaping their Brazilian-American identity by providing them with avenues to strengthen either part of their hybrid identity, thus enabling them to discover what it means to be both Brazilian and American in their own terms. Brazilian-American identity can be understood as a spectrum, with the Brazilian and American sides located at opposite ends. Thus, an evangélico immigrant navigates to one side or the other of the spectrum through the choices she or he makes of language, church attendance, relationships, and proximity to the Brazilian hub. She or he is choosing which part of their identity to strengthen, and to what degree, while remaining aware of both sides, which will always be held in tension with each other. For some immigrants, however, the field of choices is not entirely open, as Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou point out: "the process of assimilation depended largely on individual decisions to leave the immigrant culture behind and embrace American ways. Such an advantage obviously does not exist for the black, Asian, and mestizo children of today's

immigrants."[54] These limitations to one's agency are certainly present for Brazilian immigrants, especially those of darker skin tone and the ones with limited English proficiency; however, other cultural issues are also at play in the process of choosing which part of the hybrid identity an immigrant wants to strengthen, and to which degree. For 1st generation Brazilians, especially those who have recently arrived in the US, their Brazilian ties will most likely be stronger, but many of them may be looking to strengthen their American ties, as was the case with Ana. When it comes to the 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian immigrants, their ties to the US will most likely be stronger, especially if they have lived in the US for most, if not all of their lives, but their desire to strengthen their Brazilian ties certainly provides an area of need within these Brazilian congregations. The way that these Brazilian ethnic congregations help to reflect and develop the Brazilian-American identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants will be the subject of chapter 5.

4.3. Issues within the 1st Generation Brazilian Migrant Community in South Florida

> (Brazilians) err because they do not unite as a community. If you look at a Cuban, for example, they are very united, they are very strong. I believe that Brazilians still need to develop this idea of uniting themselves more.[55]
>
> — Pastor Eduardo

[54] Alejandro Portes, and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530, no. 1 (1993): 76.

[55] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2019.

As discussed in chapter 2, researchers Vasquez and Ribeiro indicated that many Brazilians in South Florida complained about the lack of unity within their community.[56] Thus, Pastor Eduardo's words echo not only the sentiment of evangélicos, but that of members of the Brazilian community as a whole. Although as argued in subsection 4.2.2.1. that Brazilians in general strive to disassociate themselves from Hispanics in the US, when it comes to having a strong community, Hispanics become the model to be emulated, as José pointed out:

> Our race is unfortunately very disunited. We can learn a lesson from Hispanics. We can speak ill of Hispanics, but they are the ones that are fighting for immigration (reform), for the (immigration) laws. Where are the Brazilians when it comes to these issues?[57]

Most of the Brazilian evangélicos interviewed had some form of grievance to make about the Brazilian community in South Florida. These issues affected how Brazilians evangélicos related to each other in the diaspora, and they created divisions that weakened the new community that Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida strive to create, as it will be explored in further detail in subsection 4.3.1. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize these issues in order to have a better understanding of the community where these Brazilian evangélicos live and attend church. Respondents mentioned discrimination toward other Brazilians, the exploitation of undocumented Brazilians by other Brazilians, and the feeling of

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[56] Manuel Vasquez, 'Beyond Homo Anomicus: Interpersonal Networks, Space, and Religion among Brazilians in Broward County,' in *A place to be: Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican immigrants in Florida's new destinations*, ed. P.J. Williams, T.J. Steigenga, and M. Vasquez (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 34.

[57] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

exclusion experienced by documented Brazilians as some of the main issues that lead to the lack of unity within the 1st generation Brazilian community.

As discussed in chapter 2, Brazilians also utilize "we are not like them" vis-à-vis other Brazilians, where the "others" are usually people of lower economic status or those born in less desired areas of Brazil, such as the northeast and the countryside of Brazil. Although shared migrant status in the US can break down some of the place-of-birth discrimination that is prevalent in Brazil, many Brazilians in the US still define themselves over and against other Brazilians, especially the *Valadarenses*, those who hail from the city of Governador Valadares, in the state of Minas Gerais, who were once considered the prototypical Brazilian immigrant because they made up a large part of the first waves of Brazilian immigration to the US, and continue to arrive in the US in high numbers, as seen in chapter 2.

The question was posed in chapter 2 of whether these hierarchical differences still hold inside Brazilian Protestant communities, or whether these racial and discriminatory walls are broken down. Gustavo, a member of IPF, believes the latter is true:

> Here in the United States our church is more miscegenated than in Brazil. The church there in (the Brazilian city of) Goiás comprised mainly of people from (the Brazilian state of) Goiânia. It is not the same here in the United States. We have people from all regions in our church, so this is something that we have inside of us, it is something that we speak of often. We have studied this theme in our small group meetings maybe at an even greater length than we would have in Brazil, about this question of us being different but also being the same, this unity within diversity. I believe this is well talked about between us.[58]

[58] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

When asked about the possibility of hearing negative things about *Valadarenses* in Brazilian churches, Gustavo mentioned that he had never heard anything personally, but he believes that this may exist in isolated instances. When it comes to the churches visited for this study, the evidence is mixed. On the one hand, the example of Pastor Samuel, a *Valadarense* himself, serves to break down the stereotype that *Valadarenses* are "peasants" or "ignorant" because he is a successful Brazilian pastor who had a prosperous job prior to transitioning to a full-time pastoral position. He also did not shy away from using his own experiences in Brazil as a way to become more relatable to other Brazilian immigrants:

> Let me tell you a true story. I am from Governador Valadares and we would watch the river. If it got too high, we would get a truck and move our stuff away and go stay at a neighbor's house. What happened is that God opened the doors and brought me to the US, and now I don't have to watch for the flooding anymore.[59]

Pastor Samuel also used a few colloquialisms from the countryside of Brazil to connect with his congregation. Pastor Lucas, on the other hand, made several jokes about *Valadarenses* during services, drawing laughter from the congregation at the risk of perpetuating negative stereotypes about this specific group of Brazilians. He also used *Valadarenses* as the preferred group when sharing stories about immigrants during services. When speaking about Isaac in the Bible and connecting his experience to that of Brazilian immigrants, pastor Lucas once said: "Isaac was an immigrant. Am I speaking to immigrants today? If you are from (Governador) Valadares, you are an immigrant. I am speaking to a lot of immigrants today."[60] On

[59] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday evening service, August 11th, 2019.

[60] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday morning service, June 16th, 2019.

another occasion, while speaking about the better life that Brazilian immigrants have in the US, he made the following comparison: "You were lost in the countryside of Governador Valadares, without any expectations, now you are an American citizen."[61]

Chapter 2 explored the phenomenon of colorblind racism in Brazil, and how the racial relations experienced in Brazil have been perpetuated in the diaspora. When it comes to evangélico churches in the diaspora, Rodrigo Serrao has argued that they "perpetuate similar colorblind racist ideologies for not providing a space for affirming diversity in the church…making discussions of issues of race a taboo."[62] It is important to note the racial demographics of the churches selected for this research project, where most congregants varied between *pardos* (brown) and *branco*s (White), with very few *pretos* (Blacks). This can be attributed to the social inequalities of Brazil, where skin color often correlates to wealth and social class, and how migration patterns will reflect those differences in wealth and social class within Brazil itself. Thus, the racial makeup of these churches is predominantly of individuals who would classify themselves as "not-Black," favoring place of birth as a primary identifier, as seen in Gustavo's comments that "we have people from all regions in our church."

The researcher did not experience any conversations engaging racism or place-of-birth discrimination during his church visits, thus confirming Serrao's claim

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[61] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday morning service, June 2nd, 2019.

[62] Rodrigo Serrao, "Winning 'Americans' for Jesus?: Second-Generation, Racial Ideology, and the Future of the Brazilian Evangelical Church in the U.S." (PhD diss., University of South Florida, 2020), 63.

that evangélico churches in the diaspora exclude these types of discussions as taboo, and hence perpetuate the colorblind racism experienced in Brazil by darker skinned Brazilians. Furthermore, Serrao argues that the colorblind racism, coupled with the ideology of a Christian identity that surpasses ethnic identity propagated by these churches creates "a safe space for white Brazilians and Americans to navigate free of accountability and unchallenged of their "not racist" assumptions."[63] This issue affects primarily darker skinned Brazilians and those from the less desired areas of Brazil, who, as Serrao pointed out, are often expected to go along with racialized jokes and to abide by the hierarchical racial structures of Brazil.[64] Thus, as we have seen in this study, the Brazilian church experience is in some ways changing what it means to be Brazilian-American by its existence, but in other ways it is reinforcing some of the prejudices from the past. This apparent perpetuation in church communities of the longstanding Brazilian prejudice toward some of their compatriots, such as the colorblind racism and the place-of-birth discrimination – specifically toward *Valadarenses*, creates a key issue of pastoral theology and missiology that will be further explored in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

The issue of newcomers being exploited by Brazilian immigrants who have lived in the US longer was a common topic of conversation during interviews. These newcomers, most of them undocumented, often get taken advantage of by documented Brazilians when it comes to jobs, as observed by Pastor Eduardo:

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[63] Ibid., 92.

[64] Ibid.

> Brazilians have to stop exploiting others. You see a lot of things here that are absurd, especially for those who are just arriving and do not have a lot of experience. It depends on whose hands they fall in, but they could face a lot of difficulties unfortunately…This happens really, Brazilians exploiting others, not paying (them) because they are undocumented.[65]

Instead of helping their fellow countrymen who have just arrived in the US, some older Brazilian immigrants exploit their undocumented status and continue the cycle of discrimination and poor working conditions that many undocumented Brazilians face in the US, a topic that will be further explored in the upcoming subsection 4.4.1.2. This leads to a great distrust between newcomers and older immigrants, causing many new Brazilian immigrants to avoid working for other Brazilians, if at all possible.

The area of jobs is not the only one where undocumented Brazilians have issues with their documented compatriots. A few of my documented respondents also reported feeling excluded when trying to give advice to undocumented Brazilians because they were told that since they had documents, they could not relate to the situation of undocumented Brazilians. Arthur, IPF's youth pastor who is documented and works in IT, mentioned that he had been questioned before how come he did not work in a laborious job like many other Brazilian migrants, with the implication that he did not share in the struggle of Brazilian migrants because he did not perform a physically demanding job.[66] Elizabeth, who arrived in the US as a documented migrant, mentioned feeling prejudiced when trying to share

[65] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2019.

[66] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

information with undocumented Brazilians: "In our group, we suffer this type of prejudice, we cannot share our opinion on anything. (They say) oh, you have papers? You do not know anything; you have not gone through anything."[67]

4.3.1. Church as a New Community

Vasquez and Ribeiro's research in South Florida, which was discussed in chapter 2, found that Brazilians listed a need for community as their highest perceived need, ahead even of documentation status.[68] This lack of community amongst Brazilians in South Florida provides evangélico churches with a unique opportunity to fill that void by offering Brazilian evangélicos a new community, one where they can have a true sense of belonging. The Brazilian churches visited for this study had several forms of community building, which was done primarily through their greeters who were quite attentive to the presence of newcomers. In every church service attended by the researcher, visitors were asked to stand up and were greeted by the church, some of them with welcome packets that included information about the church. After the church services, senior pastors would often be found introducing themselves to visitors, which, according to Pastor Samuel, is perceived as sign of honor for Brazilians.[69] Pastor Samuel also mentioned that he

[67] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

[68] Manuel Vasquez and Lucia Ribeiro, "A Igreja é Como a Casa da Minha Mãe: Religião e Espaço Vivido Entre Brasileiros no Condado De Broward," *Ciencias Sociales Y Religion/Ciências Sociais e Religião* 9(9) (2007): 18.

[69] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

would personally send a text message to each visitor on the Monday after the church service to follow up with them.

Evangélico churches in South Florida also built community through small group meetings that took place during the week. These informal meetings, most of them in the homes of a host family, allowed Brazilians to dialogue with each other about mundane aspects of daily life, which also provided them with an extended support system that went beyond the pastors and church workers. In the case of RCP, the community provided by the church gained a greater degree of significance given the church's distance from the Brazilian hub. Members of RCP, unlike their fellow evangélicos at INW and IPF, did not have direct access to Brazilian amenities, which made the church community their primary source of contact with other Brazilians. Pastor Samuel mentioned that a lady who was visiting the church for the first time was surprised to learn that three other families from the church lived in the same apartment complex as her, so he made sure to connect her with them.[70]

4.4. Residency Status and Life in the US for 1st Generation Brazilian Migrants

The issue of residency status is one of the most impactful ones in the lives of 1st generation evangélicos in South Florida. Given the estimates that anywhere between 60-80 percent of Brazilian immigrants are undocumented, it is more than likely that the majority of the Brazilian congregations in this study are composed of undocumented Brazilian immigrants. Therefore, it is important to examine some of

[70] Ibid.

the specific challenges faced by undocumented Brazilian evangélicos in these communities before exploring how one's documentation status impacts one's Christianity, and how these evangélico pastors provide guidance to their undocumented parishioners.

4.4.1. Challenges Faced by Undocumented 1st Generation Brazilians

4.4.1.1. Tougher Laws

One of the issues mentioned by several Brazilian evangélicos interviewed was that US laws have changed drastically over the last two decades, beginning with 9/11, which has made the lives of undocumented immigrants harder each day. The fear of deportation was an ever-present one, especially under President Trump's administration in 2019, where ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) had increased its deportation activities, as discussed in chapter 2. Pastor Vitor, who arrived in the US in 2000, shared some of the changes that had occurred in the span of the nineteen years he had been in the US at the time of his interview:

> I came here undocumented in 2000, and you used to be able to get a driver license. This was before Bin Laden's situation (9/11). So, I came here and got a driver license for ten years. So, I was not illegal in the sense of not having an ID here. I applied for and received an ITIN number.[71] I have always paid my income tax here…In 2013, I received my Green Card, so I did not suffer like the majority of people that come here (today). They come without

[71] "Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)," IRS, accessed August 5th, 2020, https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/taxpayer-identification-numbers-tin. According to the IRS website, "An ITIN, or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, is a tax processing number only available for certain nonresident and resident aliens, their spouses, and dependents who cannot get a Social Security Number (SSN). It is a 9-digit number, beginning with the number "9," formatted like an SSN (NNN-NN-NNNN)."

> anything, unfortunately, since there is no driver license today, there is no ITIN number, there is nothing, you know?[72]

Vitor's experience depicts some of the different ways that US laws have become stricter especially when it comes to obtaining a driver license, one of the most essential documents for immigrants in these South Florida cities, where public transportation is not readily available.

Undocumented Brazilians are constantly looking for ways to obtain proper documentation status in the US, and oftentimes, they solicit the aid of an immigration attorney to help guide them in this process. Unfortunately, this places Brazilian immigrants in a very vulnerable position, having to blindly trust their attorneys at the risk of severe consequences if any mistakes are made, all the while spending large amounts of money with the hopes of gaining documented status in the US. As narrated in the previous chapter, Pastor Lucas, for instance, was arrested and placed in an immigration detention center owing to a mistake done by his immigration attorney. José mentioned that there was once a Brazilian immigration attorney who used to charge a U$ 15,000 fee per person to initiate a fraudulent process for Brazilian immigrants in the early 2000s. This lawyer was arrested and deported, along with many Brazilian immigrants that entrusted him with their immigration processes.[73] José also mentioned having to pay an additional U$11,000 and having to wait two and a half years more than the rest of his immediate family to receive his Green Card because his immigration attorney forgot to submit his

[72] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

[73] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

physical examination along with his application. His Green Card arrived just before his 21st birthday, when he would have become ineligible to receive one through this process on grounds of age.[74] These tougher immigration laws have certainly been a difficult challenge for undocumented Brazilian evangélicos to overcome while living in South Florida.

4.4.1.2. Hard Working Conditions

> The (Brazilian) immigrant works a lot (in the US), many hours, sometimes two jobs, sometimes three jobs, he does not have a defined workload like he did in Brazil, Monday to Friday, from 9 am to 5 pm. No, here he works whatever hour and whatever day there is: Friday, Saturday, Sunday, morning, evening, or overnight. He has a job, and he must pay his bills, and because he is an (undocumented) immigrant, he gets paid under the table, does not have any pension benefits, he does not have anything (as far as job benefits). He has an hourly salary that he earns, and he has to figure out a way to maintain himself in this country.[75]
>
> — Pastor Lucas

Undocumented Brazilian immigrants, for the most part, are hard workers who often get exploited by their employers, some of them other Brazilians, since they lack the ability to fight for any type of compensation or justice for wrongdoings because of their undocumented status and fear of deportation. This vulnerable position creates an imbalance of power that enables employers to pay lower wages, mistreat employees, and even deny payment for services done, because they know that undocumented immigrants most likely will not hold them accountable. Some may argue that undocumented immigrants should simply be happy that they have a

[74] Ibid.

[75] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

job and an opportunity to benefit from living in the US without contributing to the wealth of the country by paying taxes. However, contrary to popular belief, many undocumented immigrants pay income taxes through the aforementioned taxpaying document (ITIN), or through fraudulent social security numbers. One of the main reasons that undocumented immigrants pay income taxes is because they hope to one day be able to qualify for a documentation process, and if and when that happens, they want to have a history of paying taxes to submit with their applications. However, most, if not all, of the money that gets placed into the Social Security fund for retirement is not claimed by these immigrants even if they become documented because they would then receive a new US social security number, unrelated with the ITIN document. Thus, in actuality, undocumented immigrants often contribute to the US government without reaping many of the retirement benefits it provides its taxpayers.

Documented Brazilians are aware that they have certain privileges that are not afforded to their undocumented compatriots. Guilherme, a member of IPF who moved to the US on a work visa and was soon to receive his Green Card at the time of his interview, acknowledged that he was privileged to have been able to work in his field of engineering rather than having to perform manual labor.[76] "When undocumented immigrants come here, they do not have a lot of options. It is either construction, house cleaning, landscaping, painting, these types of laborious jobs," said Guilherme.[77] The limited job field for undocumented immigrants also creates

[76] Personal interview by author, February 13th, 2019.

[77] Ibid.

an interesting dynamic of commonality between Brazilians who previously held more prestigious jobs in Brazil and other blue-collar Brazilian workers, who may be less educated as well. "In some ways, those who arrive here undocumented, who are the great majority, we end up finding ourselves in the same level (with each other) because of the circumstances that we live in. For instance, someone that may only have a primary education in Brazil is going to work alongside someone who has a college degree,"[78] said Gustavo. Murilo was a pharmaceutical salesman in Brazil, had a home and a new car, but he felt that he had no real prospects of career advancement in Brazil, so he decided to emigrate, even at the risk of doing so undocumented. Murilo now works as a carpenter, but he said that he made the move primarily for the sake of his kids, in order to secure a better future for them.

Another aspect brought out by one of the Brazilian evangélicos interviewed was the impact that the hard-working conditions of immigrants has on their children. Mariana, a member of IPF who has lived in the US for almost twenty years, shared some of the struggles she faced when trying to cope with a demanding work schedule and raising two children:

> (The hard-working schedule of immigrants) affects married people with children. It affects you somewhat in regard to raising your children. Things become rather distant because the one who ends up raising your child is the babysitter or the school, especially when someone has just arrived here, and they have to work a lot. Today, when I see a couple that has just arrived with a child, and has come here to stay, the advice I give them based on my own experience is to seek a simpler life in the beginning so that the mother does not have to work, or to try to do something that would not affect the time that the child could have been with the mother at home. This is the advice that I give (them), not to come here and for both of them to just work, work, work and forget about their children. I speak from my own experience. When I came here my son was two years old, and until he turned six, which

[78] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

> was the time that he was not in school yet, I do not have a lot of memories with him because he stayed with the babysitter all day. We had a lady who was a friend of ours, and someone that we trusted, and she has a lot of stories to tell about him, more than even myself. I think this is an important stage in the life of the child, and I do not think that it is worth it for you to miss out on it.[79]

Mariana's story resonates with many Brazilian immigrant mothers whose arduous work schedules create an additional challenge for child rearing. When asked if the church had services in place to aid Brazilian immigrant mothers who may find themselves in this situation, Mariana responded, "No. They can help in the sense of community, of one of us (mothers) guiding another, but not the church (itself)."[80] This need for support that Brazilian immigrant mothers have points to questions of pastoral theology and missiology in these Brazilian Protestant communities, which will be taken up in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

4.4.1.3. Busy Schedules and New Church Strategies

As discussed in chapter 3, evangélico pastors are aware that to pastor a Brazilian church in the US is different from pastoring a Brazilian church in Brazil because of the many challenges faced by Brazilian evangélicos in the diaspora. One of these challenges is the harder working conditions experienced by Brazilian evangélicos, especially undocumented ones. This has led evangélico churches to reduce the amount of church services and to focus more on the more informal small group meetings. Pastor Lucas mentioned that in September of 2019, INW had

[79] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

[80] Ibid.

around 300 to 400 people who attended these small group meetings during the week but did not attend regular church services on Sundays.[81]

Another way that these churches adjusted to the busy schedule of Brazilian immigrants was by ensuring that no church activities were scheduled for Saturdays as a way to encourage parishioners to spend more time together with their families. "Saturdays are to always be spent with family," said Pastor Lucas.[82] He also mentioned that any evening church services were scheduled as early as possible in consideration of parents with school-aged children who needed to have them in bed early because of school schedules.

4.4.1.4. Renting, Buying, and Financing

The lack of documentation also affects Brazilian evangélicos when they rent or buy houses, and when they finance cars as well. Murilo and his wife Ana mentioned having a difficult time finding an apartment complex that accepted applications without requiring a social security number. Oftentimes, the lack of a social security number also prevents undocumented Brazilians from buying cars or financing houses, and when they find a lender willing to finance them, it usually comes at a cost, as Gustavo pointed out:

> Things are a lot easier with documents, in all aspects, like when you go to buy a house, when it comes to the interest, or even with buying the house itself. If you go to buy a car, you may pay around U$120 a month if you have documents, but if you do not have documents, you will be paying three or

[81] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[82] Ibid.

> four times that amount. So, whoever has documents does not feel as much of an impact as the ones who do not have documents.[83]

Pastor Vitor also mentioned having to pay a higher interest rate when buying a car, as well as being unable to buy a house while he was undocumented.[84]

Navigating life in the US as an undocumented immigrant is not an easy task, and right information is one of the most valuable things that undocumented immigrants can possess. This need for guidance places extra pressure on pastors to serve as much more than just spiritual care takers in order to aid undocumented Brazilian evangélicos to overcome many of the challenges they face in diaspora in South Florida. The many ways that these Brazilian Protestant pastors address the physical and emotional needs of their communities will be further explored in this chapter and in the ones to come, more specifically in chapter 6 when we look at the expanded role of pastors in these Brazilian Protestant communities in South Florida.

4.4.1.5. Lack of Access to Affordable Health Care

As discussed in subsection 4.4.1.1, the US government has enacted tougher laws that directly impact the life of undocumented immigrants. Such laws are used by many countries as a deterrent to undocumented immigration, and unfortunately the same tactics are used when it comes to the healthcare system in the US.[85]

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[83] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

[84] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

[85] Karen Hacker et al., "Barriers to Health Care for Undocumented Immigrants: A Literature Review," *Risk Management and Healthcare Policy 8* (2015): 175.

Several laws have been passed to curb the flow of undocumented migrants by ensuring that these migrants do not have access to public resources and funding for healthcare.[86] Notable amongst these laws are the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act* and the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act*, which were enacted in 1996 and essentially prohibited undocumented immigrants from accessing public healthcare programs such as the Child Health Insurance Program, Medicaid, and Medicare.[87] The *Affordable Health Care Act* of 2010 was put into place to provide access to affordable insurance coverage in the US, but it also excluded undocumented immigrants from obtaining health insurance.[88]

Given all these healthcare related laws, undocumented immigrants often find themselves without access to affordable healthcare. There are also several individual barriers that prevent undocumented immigrants from obtaining proper healthcare, such as "fear of deportation, communication ability, financial resources, shame/stigma, and knowledge about the health system."[89] Hospitals or clinics that serve undocumented immigrants are hard to find. Rafael, an undocumented member of IPF, shared that he considered it a miracle to have found a clinic that could treat his medical condition, information he had gathered from another

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[86] Sheida M. Aboii, "Undocumented Immigrants and the Inclusive Health Policies of Sanctuary Cities," *Harvard Public Health Review 9* (2016): 6.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Hacker et al., "Barriers to Health Care for Undocumented Immigrants," 176.

[89] Ibid., 178.

undocumented member of the church.[90] In Rafael's example, we find another way that being a part of a church community can help Brazilian evangélicos overcome the challenges that go together with their undocumented status by accessing vital information through the relational networks provided by these churches.

4.4.1.6. Living Without a Driver License

Another challenge brought on by these tougher US laws aiming at curbing the presence of undocumented immigrants is the inability to obtain or maintain a driver license. As Pastor Vitor mentioned, in the early 2000s, Brazilian immigrants who came to the US on a tourist visa were able to obtain a driver license that would be valid for ten years, allowing them to have some form of valid documentation long after they had overstayed their visas. However, since the laws have changed, Brazilians who come on a tourist visa only have their license valid for the duration of their visa stay, which is capped out at 6 months. Meanwhile, those who arrive in the US by crossing the US-Mexico border do not have the ability to obtain a driver license, even if just for six months.

At the time of his interview in 2019, Murilo's driver license had just expired, something he realized while attempting to rent a car:

> Yesterday I went to rent a car because we were given a couch, and I ended up being unable to rent the car because my driver license had expired. So, with the license expired, the immigrant can only have it for 6 months, and after it expires, you cannot renew it anymore. Then, with regard to my ID, today mine is expired, and there are a few condominiums that I cannot go into. I

[90] Personal conversation with author after evening church service, January 13th, 2019.

> have to show my ID from Brazil, and they end up accepting the one from Brazil. However, now this is a great problem, the driver license.[91]

Murilo's inability to rent a car and the difficulty he faced attempting to enter a condominium are only a few of the challenges undocumented Brazilian immigrants face without the ability to maintain a valid driver license in the US.

The lack of a valid driver license or proper identification also causes undocumented Brazilians to fear the police. "I feel very fearful, very fearful of being stopped by the police because of the driver license, but when it comes to the driver license, what can we really do?" said Ana, Murilo's wife. The fear of being questioned by the police and possibly deported is not just present when driving, however. Elizabeth mentioned that in the Brazilian church she attended prior to INW, there would be police officers parked outside the church to provide added security during church services, which ended up scaring some evangélicos and keeping them from coming to services. "We would have to tell them: guys, the police car is here but there is no problem, you guys can come," said Elizabeth.[92] José added that this is a challenge for Brazilian Protestant churches when they want to use police services for security or to direct traffic after services.[93] Churches would benefit from taking into consideration the fears of undocumented Brazilian immigrants when it comes to the police, and how that could affect their church attendance.

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[91] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

[92] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

[93] Ibid.

Nevertheless, not all Brazilian evangélicos are fearful of the police. Pastor Eduardo believes that this is mainly determined by one's personality:

> I realized that it depends a lot on the person, on the individual's personality. Some (Brazilian immigrants) are more fearful, withdrawn, but there are many here in the church that carry on with life as usual. They drive here and there. I will not tell you that they do not have their worries. I think they do, sure, but I think they have more of a mindset of 'whatever happens will happen.' They travel, they go on vacations, so I think it depends a lot on the individual.[94]

José also jestingly said that some undocumented Brazilians live a better life than him who is documented. Although he applauds their bravery, José said that he would have been too scared to live in the US undocumented himself. Pastor Samuel mentioned that he often cautions undocumented evangélicos to err on the side of caution when it comes to making decisions that could increase their risk of being pulled over by the police:

> (I tell them) to just drive what is necessary, follow the laws, have insurance, and to have everything right not to draw any attention, because if you leave a club at 2 am, you are drawing attention. The probabilities of you being pulled over at 2 am and of you being pulled over during the day when everyone is working are completely different. Then, someone tells me, 'I am going to Orlando.' There are a lot of people that disobey and go. I advise them not to go, (or) to wait until another family can go together with them. You are going to put yourself at risk by driving two to three hours in a trip on the highway. Do not go, do not draw attention. So, this is how we help people in this sense, advising them.[95]

Pastor Samuel's recommendations demonstrate another example of how these Brazilian Protestant pastors provide practical guidance to aid Brazilian evangélicos

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[94] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2019.

[95] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

in navigating their lives as immigrants in South Florida, particularly undocumented ones.

4.4.2. Theological Perspectives and Practical Pastoral Approaches to Undocumented Evangélicos

Several questions were posed in chapter 2 with regard to the relationship between undocumented immigration and Christian faith inside these Brazilian Protestant communities in South Florida, both theologically and pragmatically. In terms of theological reflection, how do these pastors perceive and address the issue of undocumented immigration? What is their theological understanding of God's response to this issue? When it comes to pragmatic approaches to undocumented immigrants participating in the lives of these churches, to what extent does being undocumented affect one's expression of Christianity and mission in the diaspora? What are some practical implications for the manner in which these pastors minister to undocumented worshippers? This section will look to address how these pastors perceive and address the issue of undocumented immigration, both theologically and pragmatically, and examine the impact that being undocumented has on one's expression of Christianity and mission in the diaspora.

4.4.2.1. Theological Perspectives on the Issue of Undocumented Evangélicos

As Vasquez argued, Brazilian churches can provide undocumented immigrants with a safe place where they can be protected from much of the discrimination faced in a society that so often seeks to vilify them. These churches offer undocumented parishioners a place to be seen and accepted. As discussed in

chapter 2, Freston introduced three different arguments that shape what he termed "a theology of the undocumented," namely the theological, the historical, and the pragmatic.[96] However, as Freston pointed out, Brazilian Protestant churches in general are known for their moralism, and for always striving to follow the law, which can make it challenging for pastors to address the issue of undocumented evangélicos breaking immigration laws from a theological standpoint.[97] This quandary is evident in the response of Pastor Vitor to the theological argument, which suggests that man-made borders may not necessarily have to be upheld if one holds that God created the world without borders. "Although you can look at it biblically and say that God owns the world so there are no borders, the Bible also tells us in Romans that we must follow the laws instituted by men. So, we have to obey as well, which makes this more of an excuse," he argued.[98] The theological argument also highlights the migration motif in the Bible, presenting Jesus as an illegal immigrant in Egypt. The understanding of this motif by Pastor Miguel, IPF's lead pastor, in relationship to the life of undocumented Brazilian immigrants also highlights the tension posed by Freston. Miguel argued that although the Bible has several stories of migration, such as Ruth's and Abraham's, and it also chastises those who oppress the disadvantaged, such as migrants, this does not give

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[96] Paul Freston, "The Religious Field among Brazilians in the United States," in *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga (Cambridge: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies: 2008), 264.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

evangélicos the right to break the laws of the country they are in. He suggested that undocumented immigrants ought to seek to become documented should a pathway become open for them. He does recognize, however, that a part of the oppression faced by undocumented immigrants is the fact that the government chooses not to provide a pathway to documentation for them.[99] Pastor Miguel ultimately acknowledged that arriving at a theological response to the dilemma of evangélicos breaking immigration laws by living in the US undocumented is not an easy task:

> We are sensitive to the reality of undocumented evangélicos, and speaking sincerely, they suffer with this situation. They would like to not be in this situation, and sometimes they ask me, 'Pastor, am I in sin because I am in this (undocumented) condition?' This is a very sensitive question. It cannot be answered with a simple yes or no because a person can be undocumented and be living in sin, or a person can be undocumented and be seeking to live righteously before God. Therefore, each case is different, but there is an awareness of the leadership and of the pastors that the church is made up of people that are undocumented.[100]

Pastor Lucas offered the most comprehensive theological reflection on the dilemma of undocumented evangélicos of all the Brazilian pastors interviewed. This is perhaps unsurprising, given his unique experience when he was placed in an immigration detention center due to an error committed by his immigration attorney, something that shaped his ministry toward undocumented evangélicos: "After this experience, I came back with a new ministerial vision. It changed 100 percent."[101] Pastor Lucas shared that he received a revelation from God after much

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[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

prayer and research to try to understand how to deal with the dilemma of undocumented evangélicos and the breaking of immigration laws:

> The issue of ministerial ethics was a difficult one for me to understand, how to deal with this situation. The person broke a law, broke a principle, and are they in sin because they overstayed (their visa)? Do I have to advise them to return to Brazil because they do not have a (documented) status? How do I deal with this? But if the person has no (documented) status, they are illegal, can I receive their tithes and offerings with no problems? How does it work? So, for me this was a very delicate question, and one that I needed to seek discernment for. Then, God showed me clearly in the word, the difference between transgression and sin. When a transgression breaks a spiritual principle, it is a sin. Thus, you can feel guilt and condemnation from a spiritual point of view because you have transgressed a spiritual principle. Now, when you transgress a human principle, a natural (man-made) one, it is not a sin, but you are subject to the natural (man-made) law.[102] So, if a person overstayed (their visa), their time had come to leave but they did not leave. Is that person in sin? No. They transgressed a (human) principle. What is that person subject to? To be arrested and deported. This is similar to someone driving in a highway and the speed limit is 70 (miles) per hour. If the person is driving 80 (miles) per hour, is that person in sin? No, of course not. If they die of an accident there at 80 (miles) per hour, will that person go to hell because they were driving at 80 (miles) per hour and the speed limit was 70? No. They transgressed a natural (man-made) principle but not a spiritual one, it does not interfere with their spirituality. Now, if a police officer pulls them over and hands them a citation, they will have to pay that citation, there are consequences. I do not share this with everyone because not everyone will understand this, but I understood it clearly because otherwise you cannot pastor (undocumented immigrants).[103]

Pastor Lucas' distinction between transgression and sin attempted to provide a way to cope with the moral quandary expressed by Freston because it looked to remove the sinful aspect of breaking immigration laws by making it simply a "human

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[102] In here, Pastor Lucas is debating the difference between spiritual laws and human-made laws, though his use of the words "natural law" can be a bit confusing. When he says "natural law" he really means to say "positive law," or laws that are enacted by society or the state.

[103] Ibid.

transgression" subject to human consequences, thus despiritualizing the undocumented migration process. These different views espoused by these Brazilian evangélico pastors demonstrate the complexity of the moral issue of how to negotiate the problem of the large presence of undocumented congregants in this Brazilian Protestant milieu. This is a constant challenge for Brazilian pastors who serve a migrant community in the US, and a telling example of how Brazilian evangélico migrants deploy theology to negotiate their distinctive situations in South Florida.

In chapter two, we discussed how Ribeiro expressed the idea that some Brazilian evangélicos may see their presence in the US as a fulfillment of a "sacred mission" by God to lead others into salvation.[104] This view was held by a few of the evangélicos interviewed, and it was usually attested by the claim that God was showing his desire to have them in the US by ensuring that their migration process was a successful one. Guilherme's story, for instance, demonstrates how some Brazilian evangélicos see their emigration from Brazil to the US primarily in spiritual terms:

> I think that the fact that we came here, if I were to tell you how things happened you will see that in fact it was God's plan for us to come here. It was nothing supernatural, but in the way that things developed, we were able to see step by step that God was in fact directing and approving our journey here, because we didn't want to come at first. We had a very good life there, but with all of this I see that it was God's plan for us to come, and since we are here, I think God has plans for us here in this community. So, the fact that we came from there to here also has this spiritual context. It was not just to be able to work and to have a better life, I think if God put us here it is because he wants us to do something for the community here in the US. So,

[104] Lucia Ribeiro, "Religious Experiences Among Brazilian Migrants," REMHU—*Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana* 28 (2007): 79.

> this issue of the diaspora, for example, in the sense that we left and became immigrants here, I also think that there is this spiritual context, that God wants us to have a role here.[105]

Guilherme, who was a university professor in Brazil, sees teaching as part of his God-given role in the US, something that he has been able to do at a local Bible college. He also believes that God sent him to help Pastor Miguel to strengthen the teaching department at IPF. Beatriz, Guilherme's wife, also commented that although she did not want to move to the US at first, she believes that God's role for her life in the US was affirmed when she was placed in charge of the children's ministry at IPF. "I was part of a large church (in Brazil) that had a structure set in place already. It is true that you can be useful anywhere, but over there I was just another person, and here I feel more important," said Beatriz.[106] Her story also demonstrates how Brazilian churches in South Florida have the ability to affirm a more spiritual meaning to the emigration of Brazilian evangélicos from Brazil to South Florida.

Although evangélico pastors acknowledged that Brazilian migrants suffer from some form of oppression from the US government because of the lack of pathways to documentation, they did not address this issue from a justice standpoint. The issue of undocumented status was seen primarily as a practical pastoral issue of how to help people through this predicament, as will be explored in the upcoming subsection 4.4.2.2., and pastors were not publicly outspoken on these

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[105] Personal interview by author, February 13th, 2019.

[106] Ibid.

issues. Freston rightly argued that there are not many systematic or explicit expositions of his proposed rudimentary theology of the undocumented in public settings amongst Brazilian evangélicos in the US,[107] and the same holds true in the Brazilian Protestant churches that were a part of this study in South Florida. While most pastors were able and willing to discuss these matters in interviews, their theological understandings of this subject were never explicitly shared with their congregants during church services. The possibility of finding explicit ways to incorporate these theological reflections in pastoral teaching in order to assist undocumented Brazilian immigrants to come to terms theologically with their undocumented status as evangélicos is a pastoral theology concern that will be further explored in the concluding chapter.

The tendency to approach the issue of undocumented migration simply as a pastoral issue is symptomatic of a wider tendency to ignore a public theology that addresses the issues of society as a whole. A number of factors can be identified as contributing to this tendency. First, given the ecclesiology of the church as a gathered community that is present in these churches, the pastoral care of individuals facing these issues takes precedence over wider justice issues, as those fall primarily outside the inner circle. Second, evangélicos form part of a majority conservative tradition in Brazil; in the US context, they are likely to view immigration and justice issues as "left-wing" or "political" questions, and therefore may choose not to become involved. As shown in chapter 3, evangélicos are very

[107] Freston, "The Religious Field Among Brazilians in the United States," 265.

involved in conservative politics in Brazil. A recent monograph edited by Eric Miller and Ronald J. Morgan titled *Brazilian Evangelicalism in the Twenty-First Century: An Inside and Outside Look*[108] depicts "evangelical engagement in Brazilian public life."[109] In this monograph, Paul Freston examined the Brazilian religious field and politics, and Eric G. Flett investigated the social engagement of evangélicos in Brazil. Both authors emphasized that while the lack of political and public involvement of evangélicos in the Brazilian society is not monolithic, the conservative majority dominates.[110] Flett noted the complaints of progressive evangélicos that:

> Jesus was being used by members of the conservative, evangelical/Pentecostal church to advocate for a vision of salvation that is human-centric, highly individualistic, moralistic, and pietistic in nature. While this Jesus has been successful in improving individual virtue and community among its members, it has not fostered the social virtue and public engagement desperately needed by a democracy learning anew the responsibilities of citizenship. The result was a lack of participation in the structures of the public square by this largest segment of the Christian church. If any social engagement did take place from among these groups, the posture was accusatory, not participatory; and the issues of concern usually revolved around the idiosyncratic, moralistic issues of a specific group.[111]

This lack of involvement with issues of social injustice was seen as "a sign of theological anemia" by progressive evangélicos.[112] My own research suggests that

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[108] Eric Miller and Ronald J Morgan, *Brazilian Evangelicalism in the Twenty-First Century: An Inside and Outside Look* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[109] Ibid., 2.

[110] For more on the development of evangélico involvement in Brazilian politics, see Joanildo Burity, "The Brazilian Conservative Wave, the Bolsonaro Administration, and Religious Actors," *Brazilian Political Science Review* 15, no. 3 (2021): 1-19.

[111] Miller and Morgan, *Brazilian Evangelicalism in the Twenty-First Century,* 209.

the weakness of public theology among the majority of evangélicos in Brazil has been further accentuated by the migrant context of conservative evangelical politics in the US, particularly in South Florida. Third, as we have noted, most evangélicos are undocumented and would prefer to not draw attention on themselves from police or ICE officers. Therefore, it would be difficult to imagine that evangélicos would participate in any public protest against unfair immigration laws organized by pastors due to their fear of facing repercussions.

4.4.2.2. Practical Pastoral Approaches to Undocumented Evangélicos

Given the large presence of undocumented Brazilian immigrants in the US, it is important to examine how these pastors address the presence of many undocumented parishioners in their congregations in practical ways. Several questions arise: Are there any restrictions to their expressions of faith and mission because of their undocumented status? Are opportunities for involvement in church leadership limited by one's undocumented status? In the case of RCP, does belonging to an American church introduce any different dynamics regarding undocumented parishioners? We shall look first at the ways that being undocumented restricts the expressions of Christianity of evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida.

Being undocumented typically means that immigrants will try to stay under the radar, to be as discreet as possible in their daily lives in order to avoid drawing the attention of ICE and possibly being deported. It was mentioned in chapter 3 that

[112] Ibid., 210.

Brazilians evangélicos tend to avoid any type of open-air street evangelism because of the fear of getting in trouble with the law. However, in the same manner that some undocumented Brazilians are less fearful of the law when it comes to driving, the same is true when it comes to public evangelism. Ana mentioned that she would not have concerns about her undocumented status if she were invited to a public evangelism outing, but she did mention being restricted only by her lack of English proficiency. This confirms how Brazilian evangélicos navigated their undocumented status in different ways, and how the level of impact that being undocumented had on a person's expression of faith was at times mitigated by how comfortable that person was with taking certain risks. Nevertheless, it is needless to say that all were impacted at some level. Pastor Lucas mentioned that the way he has advised his parishioners to overcome both the legal concerns and the lack of English proficiency when evangelizing was for them to focus their evangelistic efforts toward other Brazilians whom they may come in contact within their daily lives. Thus, demonstrating how the political and linguistic realities of migration to the US are tending to define the missiological boundaries for these evangélico churches.

In terms of opportunities for leadership in churches, the issue of undocumented evangélicos becomes a more complex one, especially when it comes to pastors. José believes that pastors should always be documented. "If you are going to use the pulpit (podium), you need to have adequate standing in the country," he stated.[113] Pastor Vitor sees additional challenges for an undocumented pastor in spiritual terms. "There is also a parallel between the spiritual and physical

[113] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

worlds, and if you have no legality on earth, consequently you will have no legality in heaven… (when it comes to a pastor), there are certain obstacles that he will have because he has to fix things," he argued.[114] Being undocumented offers many challenges for evangélico pastors, but chief among them is the fear of deportation. Pastor Samuel shared the story of a Brazilian church of nearly 600 members in the neighboring city of Port Saint Lucie, Florida that fell apart because the church's lead pastor left for Brazil after receiving a deportation notice. When it comes to lower leadership positions, perhaps there is less of a concern about one's documentation status. Gustavo mentioned that he is not aware of any restrictions at IPF up to the level of presbyter, even though they are affiliated with PCA, an American church organization.[115] This is certainly not the case at RCP, where given their participation in an American church, there are a lot more restrictions for undocumented immigrants in terms of involvement in church leadership. RCP follows the guidelines of Renovation Church, which has a 3-tiered registry system in place for those who wish to get involved in church ministry. Level one, intended for those involved in hospitality, only requires the registration of names. Level two, intended for lower-level leaders, requires two references from one's previously attended church, as well as the personal and Christian history of the applicant. Level three, which is reserved for higher-level leadership, such as youth, children, worship, and teaching departments, has the additional requirement of a full background check. Pastor Samuel mentioned that RCP only has two other people with level three

[114] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

[115] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

clearance besides himself, who are the worship leader and an associate pastor. He mentioned how this has limited his ability to expand RCP because he wanted to open another congregation in the city of Boca Raton, closer to the Brazilian hub, but he does not have the documented personnel to be able to do so, since the majority of the members of RCP only have level one clearance. In some ways, the ability to participate in church ministry, albeit in a limited capacity, without having to disclose additional information other than their names mitigates some of the concerns of undocumented evangélicos about worshipping in a Brazilian church that is part of an American church. When asked about how Renovation Church viewed the presence of undocumented parishioners in RCP, Pastor Samuel argued:

> They know there is a number (of undocumented parishioners) but they do not have any direct connection to it because I am the pastor, I am the one that is caring (for them). So, if the person is undocumented, they are not doing anything that is in (direct) connection with the church. The church is an entity that has its doors open to all.[116]

In other words, there are no issues regarding one's documentation status for Brazilian evangélicos who wish to worship at RCP, but the case is not the same when it comes to involvement in leadership roles. As Pastor Samuel himself observed about undocumented evangélicos at RCP, "if you want to grow in the ministry, you will have this challenge."[117]

Although Brazilian Protestant pastors in South Florida lacked a robust and explicit public theology of God's response to undocumented evangélicos in their

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[116] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

[117] Ibid.

churches they did possess an implicit public theology, as they showed in many ways, both through words and actions, that they were sympathetic to the struggles of undocumented migrants with a response that was very committed and engaged, standing with undocumented migrants whenever they needed practical help. Pastors also often looked for ways to incorporate stories and lessons that were applicable to the life of undocumented immigrants in their sermons. Some of the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants, such as harder working conditions and the lack of documentation, were the topics of prayers and sermon anecdotes. When preaching about the need to stop comparing one's life with someone else's, Pastor Samuel used documentation as a means of comparison: "It's not because someone received documents with three years and another with five that one is better than the other. When someone is here for two years, has documents, and has traveled to Brazil, it does not mean everyone will do the same."[118] Pastor Lucas often related examples about his own experiences as an immigrant, especially his time spent in an immigration detention center, not only as a way to express that he understood the challenges that most of his congregants were facing, but also as a way to provide credibility to the teachings he was offering on the subject.

Evangélico pastors also often prayed for undocumented immigrants that God would work a miracle and open a pathway to documentation for them. There were also occasional testimonies given by people who had been detained by immigration but later released on bail as an answer to prayers from the church. The reality of the

[118] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday evening service, September 22nd, 2019.

lack of documentation and the strong desire of becoming documented was an ever current one inside these Brazilian Protestant congregations. Nevertheless, many of the pastors interviewed made sure to emphasize that they had never invited evangélicos to immigrate to the US with the promise of applying for their documentation status through the church. Pastor Vicente mentioned being troubled by a situation that ensued in a nearby city in Florida where a Brazilian pastor invited people to migrate from Brazil, falsely applied to provide them documentation through the church, and ended up being arrested, placed in jail for a year, then deported to Brazil.[119] The US immigration system does offer religious visas, but Pastor Vicente stated that these have only been used by the church on a small number of occasions to relocate clergy professionals from their church in Brazil to the US while following the strict USCIS guidelines.[120] Other missionaries have been invited on short trips to participate in church activities provided they had the proper documentation to do so. Pastor Miguel also echoed Vicente's words, stating that IPF is not an institution for immigration documentation, and that if parishioners are in need of documentation, they should seek whatsoever avenues are available to them.[121] Nevertheless, Pastor Miguel, along with all Brazilian pastors interviewed, mentioned that their role as pastors is to keep parishioners informed about any changes in US immigration laws that might benefit them, and to encourage them to seek aid from immigration attorneys whenever possible.

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[119] Personal interview by author, August 16th, 2018.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Personal interview by author, June 16th, 2018.

Therefore, these Brazilian pastors approached the subject of undocumented parishioners primarily from a practical position of support, embracing them and accepting their undocumented status while guiding them in their journeys as undocumented immigrants in the US.

Conclusion

As it was explored in this chapter, the Brazilian-American identity of 1st generation migrants is a complex one, as those who have moved to the US later in life strive to forge the balance between both cultures. We have looked at several different factors that shape this identity, such as ethnicity, discrimination, issues within the 1st generation Brazilian migrant community, and undocumented status. These challenges, in many ways, have shaped the lives of these Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida, but these churches have also played an important role in recognizing these challenges, and in helping 1st generation Brazilian migrants in navigating them. Therefore, it can be argued that these churches themselves also play an important role in the framing, reflection, and development of the Brazilian-American identity of 1st generation Brazilian migrants to the extent that they are able to recognize those traits, and to form their ministry and mission around them, as we have seen in this chapter. Nevertheless, this chapter also raised some key issues of pastoral theology and missiology that will be taken up in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 5. Brazilian Protestant Churches in Relation to the Quest for Brazilian-American Identity of 1.5 and 2nd Generation Brazilian Migrants in South Florida

Introduction

In chapter 4, we examined the different identity-shaping factors that affected 1st generation Brazilian migrants and the role of evangélico churches in the reflection and development of the Brazilian-American identity of members of this generation of migrants. In some ways, many of these challenges also shape the quest for identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants, such as issues of ethnicity, discrimination, and living as an undocumented migrant—an issue only applicable to the 1.5 generation, since 2nd generation Brazilian migrants are US-born citizens. Nevertheless, these challenges are experienced differently by members of these later generations of Brazilian migrants in comparison to their 1st generation counterparts, with the addition of some challenges distinctive to the 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrant experience. For instance, unlike 1st generation migrants, whose Brazilianess is almost never questioned, Brazilian migrant youths often have to prove that they are "Brazilian enough" to other members of the Brazilian community. The reverse is also true, because given their ethnic heritage, Brazilian youths can also be viewed as not "American enough" amongst their American peers. It is against this backdrop of ethnic homelessness that Brazilian migrant youth embark on their journeys of self-discovery of their identities as 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian-Americans.

This journey is not taken alone, however. In the same manner that 1st generation migrants can find support from their peers in their communities, members of these later generations of Brazilian migrants have the opportunity to help each other navigate their specific challenges. Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida, then, become key players in the quest for identity of evangélico youngsters because they are an ideal place to foster such community of support, which in turn forms close friendships amongst these youths that enable them to both cope with, and thrive despite the challenges they face. Nevertheless, in order to better comprehend the role of Brazilian Protestant churches in relation to the quest for identity of Brazilian migrant youth, we must first analyze the identity-shaping factors that face members of these later generations of migrants. Therefore, the first half of this chapter is dedicated chiefly to the sociological analysis of the issues of identity faced by these young migrants or children of migrants, with the role of the church appearing briefly when discussing the crises of belonging experienced by these youths and the challenges of undocumented migration. It is important to note that although all interviewees were Brazilian evangélico youngsters, most of their issues apply equally to other Brazilian migrant youths who might not be members of church-going families. The challenges to the quest for identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants that will be explored in this chapter are the crises of belonging experienced by these youths, such as: the different ways that the Brazilian-American identity of the youth is understood, and how that leads to the experience of ethnic homelessness; the different ways that they relate to other Brazilians, both in Brazil and in the US; and, how they relate to Brazilians and

Americans at school. The chapter will then explore language issues, an area where the church begins to take a larger role because language affects ecclesial practices and mission, and the use of language in church services impacts the Brazilian-American identity of Brazilian evangélico youngsters, as it will be explored. The churches, then, will take a more prominent role as we conclude the chapter by exploring the ways that in response to these challenges, community is built, and the role of Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida in building a friendship community.

As it was shown in the introduction of this thesis, the study of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants is a subject that has been under-researched, and none of the existing literature on the subject investigated the relationship between 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants and 1st generation ethnic evangélico churches, thus the research in this chapter serves to fill this lacuna in academic research. Nevertheless, although the relationship between Brazilian evangélico youngsters and Brazilian Protestant churches has not been researched in-depth, other studies have analyzed the relationship between Hispanic, Asian, and African migrant youth and their respective ethnic churches in the diaspora. Thus, whenever possible, this chapter will seek to provide comparisons to these other studies of migrant youth while still seeking to unearth the specific experiences of Brazilian evangélico youngsters in diaspora in South Florida.

5.1. Crises of Belonging

In her research on 1.5 and 2nd generation West Indian migrants in New York and London, Janice McLean-Farrell argued that for these later generations of

migrants, "the issue of identity is not always well-defined,"[1] and that the identity-shaping process of these migrants is both fluid and based on "what is required in any given circumstance."[2] This is true of Brazilian migrant youth who find themselves living between multiple worlds, where "issues of identity, home, belonging, and faith span borders."[3] This constant need to navigate the intersections of different worlds presents Brazilian migrant youth with distinctive challenges in relation to 1st generation migrants in their quest to discover their Brazilian-American identity in the US. Some of the challenges that will be explored in this section are: the ways in which 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants understand and accept the US-given Hispanic and Latino labels; the ethnic homelessness experienced by these youth while trying to "fit in" to either side of their Brazilian-American identity; how these challenges can be more acute in the lives of children of interracial parents (one Brazilian and one American parent); and the challenges of living as an undocumented migrant experienced by members of the 1.5 generation.

5.1.1. The New Second Generation, Assimilation, and the Shaping of Dual Identity

As we have discussed, in the early 1990s researchers began taking note of changes in migration patterns to the US post-1965 and the creation of what was

[1] Janice A. McLean-Farrell, *West Indian Pentecostals: Living Their Faith in New York and London* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 115.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Mark R. Gornik, *Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2011), 244.

termed "the new second generation." This new second generation comprised the children of Latino and Asian migrants, and it differed from their European predecessors in how it brought questions to the once accepted linear theory of assimilation in exchange for a more segmented understanding of the process.[4] One of the leading sociologists of this movement, Alejandro Portes, proposed that it would be incumbent upon these new second-generation migrants either to follow their European predecessors in an ascent into the American middle class, or to find such an ascent restricted, leading these migrants to join a multiethnic underclass.[5] Portes' work on segmented assimilation theory also appears in his co-authored article with Min Zhou, titled "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants," and in the two volumes he edited with Ruben G. Rumbaut, titled *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*[6] and *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*.[7] The former systematically presents the results of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) around the concept of segmented assimilation, while the latter shares analyses of the concept through case studies of different second generation ethnic groups.

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[4] Alejandro Portes, *The New Second Generation* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 3.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

[7] Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

Jehu Hanciles, one of the leading historians of migrant churches, argues that segmented assimilation theory focuses on several complex factors, four of which he finds the most important: "(1) how the first generation of immigrants are received; (2) the relative pace of acculturation among parents and children; (3) the particular challenges confronted by the second generation in their bid for adaptation; and (4) the economic resources and social capital."[8] In this process of assimilation, Hanciles places church participation as "the most powerful means available to immigrants in their search for self-identity, communal acceptance, and social integration."[9] Thus, Brazilian Protestant churches have the potential to aid in the assimilation process of Brazilian migrant youth by addressing some of the complex factors mentioned by Hanciles, especially numbers three and four, through the building of community and educational efforts geared toward these issues.

In terms of assimilation, Fenggang Yang offers a different paradigm based on his research on the relationship between Chinese ethnic churches in the US and the identity-shaping process of Chinese migrants that is very fitting for Brazilian evangélico youngsters in their quest for Brazilian-American identity. Yang presents the concept of adhesive identities that are formed as a result of selective assimilation, which is "the process of selective preservation of ethnic identity and traditional culture. Instead of choosing either American or ethnic identities, immigrants may construct adhesive identities that integrate both together."[10] Yang

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[8] Jehu Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), 247.

[9] Ibid., 277.

also argues that ethnic churches play a key role in the creation and development of adhesive identities.[11] "Empirical studies of various immigrant groups show that the immigrant church may serve both as an assimilation agency and a bastion for preserving traditional culture. These two functions seem contradictory, but they are not necessarily exclusive to each other,"[12] he argued. This is in line with the dual role of Brazilian Protestant churches to reflect and develop the hybrid Brazilian-American identity that was discussed in chapter 4. When it comes to the youth, Brazilian evangélico churches in South Florida have the ability both to connect youngsters to their ethnic identity, and to help them to assimilate better into US society, albeit through the process of selective assimilation. Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, who are also proponents of selective assimilation as a pathway for migrant youth success, remind us that such selections are not available to all migrants, however:

> As the experiences of Punjabi Sikh and Cuban American students suggest, a strategy of paced, selective assimilation may prove the best course for immigrant minorities. But the extent to which this strategy is possible also depends on the history of each group and its specific profile of vulnerabilities and resources.[13]

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[10] Fenggang Yang, *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 17.

[11] Ibid., 18.

[12] Ibid., 31.

[13] Alejandro Portes, and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530, no. 1 (1993): 96.

This is certainly true of darker skinned Brazilian migrant youth whose options are limited due to their skin tone, and of the newcomers who have not yet learned English, as we will continue to explore in this chapter.

Yang's concept of adhesive identities offers Brazilian migrant youth a pathway to hold both sides of their Brazilian-American identity in a healthy tension with each other. He claims, "instead of either assimilating by abandoning ethnicity or simply preserving ethnicity in sacrifice of assimilation, this new concept opens the possibility of holding both American and ethnic identities simultaneously."[14] Thus, we shall now turn our focus to the different ways that Brazilian migrant youth understand Brazilian-American identity, and some of the challenges facing these 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants in their quest for Brazilian-American identity.

5.1.2. The Brazilian-American Identity of 1.5 and 2nd Generation Brazilian Migrants

> It is inevitable, our children are hybrid as well, but they are more inclined toward one culture than another. For instance, they are more American than Brazilian.[15]
>
> — Miguel, IPF's lead pastor

> (The youth in our church), they are Americans, Americans that speak Portuguese and eat rice and beans, if you understand me.[16]
>
> — Davi, RCP's youth pastor

> Well, most people they say I look White and I'm more American, but I think (once) most people get to know me, I am kind of like both. I don't feel like I'm

[14] Ibid., 27.

[15] Personal Interview by author, June 19th, 2019.

[16] Personal Interview by author, January 22nd, 2020.

> extremely either or, just because my life has always been so balanced personally between the Brazilian culture, but I prefer Brazilian though.[17]
>
> — Ethan, 2nd generation Brazilian migrant and a member of INW

These quotations depict the different ways that the Brazilian-American identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants is understood. Oftentimes, these later generations of Brazilian migrants are perceived as being primarily "more American," but in reality, many members of these generations are regularly looking for ways to feel "more Brazilian," especially those who attend ethnic churches. "Sadly, I am American. I do not like being American. I would prefer to be Brazilian, to be honest. I try a lot (to be Brazilian)," said Enzo, a 2nd generation Brazilian migrant, and a member of INW.[18] McLean-Farrell argued that children of migrants seek to establish dual identity by integrating parts of their parents' ethnic upbringing with their own upbringing in the diaspora,[19] and that an ethnic church "functions as a dynamic space that facilitates the creative process that accompanies identity construction."[20] Thus, the desire to connect with one's Brazilian roots experienced by these migrant youths provides Brazilian Protestant churches with the opportunity to help reflect and develop the dual identity of members of their youth

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[17] Personal Interview by author, October 4th, 2019.

[18] Personal Interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[19] Janice A. McLean-Farrell, "Uncovering an Alternative Story: Examining the Religious and Social Life of Afro-Caribbean Youth in London and New York City," in *The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora: Imagining the Religious 'Other,'* ed. Afe Adogame (London: Routledge, 2014), 130.

[20] Ibid., 141.

through their use of language and by providing a friendship community for 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants, a subject that will be further explored later in this chapter. Nevertheless, it is at the intersection of different worlds that the Brazilian-American identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants is crafted. Whether at school, home, work, or church, the ethnic identity of Brazilian migrant youth is at the forefront of their daily lives in South Florida, as they strive to understand and express who they are as the children of foreign-born migrants.

This journey of self-discovery is filled with many challenges for 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants. Having lived most, if not all of their lives in the US, and possessing strong language skills, one can be quick to classify them as Americans, but as it has been argued, such conclusions fail to comprehend the complexity of their identity. Ethnic identity is often self-ascribed, as seen in the ways that respondents described "feeling" more American or more Brazilian. Yet, ethnic identity is also the product of spoken and unspoken societal classifications, some of which are dictated by skin color, English proficiency, and economic standing. In the case of Brazilian migrant youth, what has been ascribed to them does not always align with how they see themselves, both in Brazilian and American milieus. This leads, as briefly discussed in chapter 2, to the concept of ethnic homelessness that is faced by these migrant youth, which is the inability to feel at home in either culture. "It is strange because if you go to Brazil you are American, but if you come here (to the US) then you are Brazilian," said Manuela, an eleven-year-old who was born in the US and attends IPF.[21] Isabella, a sixteen-year-old who also attends IPF, and

[21] Personal Interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

whose family migrated to the US when she was six months old, explained her own struggle to find her place between both cultures:

> I personally do not associate with Americans, but I feel like obviously I am more American than Brazilian. I have not been to Brazil, but I still associate myself as a Brazilian because even when people are making jokes (about immigrants) I know how to laugh it off, I do not care, I am not the type to really listen to people. People call me an immigrant and I say, okay sir, you are an American.[22]

Ethnic homelessness, therefore, can be seen as the other side of the coin of hybrid identity. Having to navigate two cultures has an intrinsic propensity toward instability, an issue that has the potential to become more acute for later generations. Thus, one can view dual identity either positively or negatively. Isabella's inconsistency in how she described herself first as "more American than Brazilian" before saying that she still identified herself as a Brazilian serves to shed light on the complexity and messiness of ethnic identity for later generations of migrants. It also points back to the fluidity of self-identification based on the given circumstances, to which McLean-Farrell alluded. Most respondents justified claiming they were Brazilian based on their associations with other Brazilians either at school or at church, while others understood the balancing act involved in their dual identity, such as Davi, RCP's youth pastor who is married to an American, and who moved to the US at age 17: "(I feel) half and half. The culture from my blood is still Brazilian, but my work ethic, my rhythm, my life, the way we cook at home, the way we shop, I would say it is all Americanized."[23] Davi also mentioned that he

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Personal Interview by author, January 22nd, 2020.

enjoyed the way that certain things, such as home visits by friends, are usually planned in advance in the US, claiming that he would find it strange if someone were to show up at his house unannounced, as is customary in Brazil.[24] "I want to have the comfort and privacy of my home," said Davi.[25] He is right to differentiate the way that Brazilians often tend to see themselves as more flexible, open, and familial in friendships than Americans, while perceiving the latter to be more reserved and private in general, but such "Americanization" of later generation migrants is usually frowned upon by 1st generation Brazilians. It is often the case that 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants are called "Americans" in a pejorative manner to symbolize the ways in which they have allowed themselves to lose part of their Brazilian culture by becoming more reserved and less flexible like many Americans. This type of criticism only serves to further extend the feeling of ethnic homelessness experienced by migrant youth, as their Brazilianess is questioned by other Brazilians.

Brazilian migrant youth also face certain challenges when interacting with relatives, whether in Brazil or in the US. Many of the respondents described some challenges they encountered when visiting Brazil, such as the language barrier and the culture shock they experienced. Pastor Miguel claimed that he had to explain how daily life works in Brazil to his twenty-year-old son who was due to visit Brazil on his own in 2019, twelve years after his last visit to the country.[26] "Although he is

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Personal interview by author, June 19th, 2019.

going to the house of family members, it is a new reality for him," said Pastor Miguel.[27] Davi, who moved to the US at age seventeen, described his own experience when visiting Brazil for the first time after eight years:

> In the beginning it was funny because they had new expressions that I had either forgotten or had never learned, and I had to re-learn these expressions, things of day-to-day life. So, it was a bit funny, and when I had to say something that was a word that I did not use much in the US, and I had to remember the word, they would laugh at me. So, I felt a bit out of place, but you learn in a week or two, and you can regain the rhythm again.[28]

Davi also recalled wanting to go to overnight fast-food restaurants or late-night screenings at the movie theater, things he was used to in the US, but were not possible in Brazil. Davi was not the only respondent who mentioned being laughed at in Brazil for messing up words in Portuguese or for speaking with an accent, a loss of language proficiency that happens primarily in the case of later generation migrants. Vitor, INW's youth pastor, claimed that some Brazilian migrant youth believe that they speak Portuguese well until they go to Brazil and they are made fun of because they do not know street colloquialisms. Having left Brazil at age twenty-three, Vitor also felt the impact of returning there after many years: "I felt like a fish out of water," he claimed.[29] These linguistic hurdles can make it challenging for 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants to adapt to life in Brazil. Pastor Vitor had an opportunity to move to Brazil in 2013 to become a youth pastor at a large evangelical church but he said that although he may have been able to

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Personal interview by author, January 22nd, 2020.

[29] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

adapt to life in Brazil, his wife, a 1.5 migrant who moved to the US at age 11, would not have been able to do so.[30] "She came here (to the US) very young, so this is her nation, and there (in Brazil) was her missionary field," he argued.[31] Lack of Portuguese proficiency can also subject migrant youth to be called a *gringo(a)* by family members.[32] "My brother is a *gringo*. He struggles going to visit Brazil because he does not speak Portuguese well, he is a *gringo*." said José of his brother who arrived in the US at age 5.[33] Being called a *gringo(a)*, though oftentimes in jest, can be another pejorative way to challenge the Brazilianess of 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants, and it continues to exclude them from the Brazilian side of their dual identity. Many respondents mentioned that they preferred remaining quiet when Brazilian relatives came to visit due to the fear of speaking incorrectly or with an accent. "I almost feel embarrassed to speak because I am going to make a mistake," said Manuela. On the other hand, Bernardo, a fourteen-year-old 2nd generation migrant that attends IPF, mentioned that he always asked relatives to correct him whenever he misspoke in Portuguese so that he could learn it better.

As argued, the ethnic homelessness experienced by Brazilian youth happens in both the Brazilian and American cultures. They are not "Brazilian enough" in

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] The word *gringo(a)* is a term used by Brazilians and other Latinos to represent a foreigner, especially an American, at best humorously, but at worst in a derogatory manner.

[33] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

Brazil, or in the Brazilian culture in the US (i.e., in comparison with their parents' friends and generation), and they are not "American enough" in the US because they are either immigrants themselves, or they are the children of immigrants. Many respondents mentioned being discriminated against in school, where Brazilians were generalized as being rowdy.[34] Their immigration statuses were also questioned on occasion: "I was called an immigrant and they said they would deport me," said Isabella.[35] Gornik described a similar, yet harsher discrimination faced by Ghanaian-American youth in New York City schools: "at school they are often taunted with 'you look like a gorilla' and 'you don't have no clothes.'"[36] He rightly argued that "school is not only a place for achievement, it is also where identity comes into question."[37] For Brazilian migrant youths, these actions can serve to challenge the American side of their identities, as if they are not "American enough" because of their Brazilian heritage. The feedback received from respondents was not all negative, however, as some of them claimed that their Brazilianess was appreciated by classmates, especially their ability to speak a foreign language.[38] Some members of the Brazilian youth at INW and IPF also experienced the partial insulation from discrimination mentioned in chapter 4 due to their proximity to the

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[34] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Gornik, *Word Made Global*, 247.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

Brazilian hub, and consequently, the large presence of Brazilians in their schools, as seen in the words of Luis, a seventeen-year-old 1.5 Brazilian migrant that attended INW:

> Today in high school I even tease my American friends. They joke that we are a minority, and I respond, you are American, you are the minority in this school. So, because there are so many Brazilians today in high school, it is very normal, there is not a great segregation (between groups). There is a bit of segregation, but not a pressure against minorities.[39]

This is not the case for Levi, a fifteen-year-old Brazilian migrant who had moved to the US six months prior to his interview in 2019. Levi attended RCP, which was located far away from the Brazilian hub in the city of Palm Beach Gardens, and he mentioned not having encountered any other Brazilians in his school. Levi's lack of contact with Brazilians and his lack of English proficiency led him to cultivate relationships with Hispanics in school, and he claims that he quickly learned Spanish so that he could communicate with his new friends.[40] Levi's story speaks to the relatability found between members of the 1.5 and 2nd generations of migrants across different cultural backgrounds because of their shared experiences of exclusion while living at the intersection of multiple worlds, and it also reinforces Portes and Zhou's theory of segmented assimilation that sees some migrant youth assimilating with other minority subcultures rather than with the mainstream White culture, a phenomenon that does not occur with most 1st generation Brazilian migrants, as argued in chapter 4. It is important to note that Levi is light-skinned,

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[39] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[40] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

and that it was his lack of English proficiency that limited his ability to assimilate into White American culture in school rather than his skin tone as it is the case for darker skinned migrant youth.

As argued in chapter 2, migrant youth are more likely than their parents to embrace the ethnic label system in the US, even at times identifying themselves as Hispanic in documents and school forms, but still preferring the Latino identifier. Some respondents pondered the possible advantages of self-identifying as Hispanic in scholarship forms and job applications. Catarina, a sixteen-year-old who had lived in the US for a little over a year at the time of her interview in 2019, argued, "although there are some prejudices involved, I think we have some advantages with future opportunities."[41] Luis, on the other hand, confessed feeling guilty over the thought of receiving any benefits for self-identifying as Hispanic:

> I had a heavy conscience because I was thinking about this. When they ask me (if I am Hispanic) I deny that I am, so then why am I going to do it now? So, there was this heavy conscience. I could even say that I am, but then, am I or am I not? I do not know; is it (Brazil) considered (Hispanic) or not? Because Hispanics are in reality those who come from a country that was colonized by Spain. So then, Brazil is not a Hispanic country, but I do not know.[42]

Luis' confusion about the use of Hispanic as an ethnic identifier was also expressed by Ethan, who claimed that he is usually unsure of what to put down for his race and ethnicity in forms, and that he tends to only self-identify as White most of the time. However, after discussing the differences between the terms during his interview,

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[41] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[42] Ibid.

Ethan did acknowledge that he would maybe put down Hispanic for a scholarship application, but he would not do so if the application were for a job: "If it is for a job, I kind of go for White. It's just, you know, I faced a lot of persons (that were) like a little bit racist."[43] This type of code switching is only possible because Ethan, along with Catarina and Luis, is light-skinned and "looks" more American than Brazilian, so he has the option to choose whether to self-identify as Hispanic/Latino or not. This was also the case for many of the 1.5 and 2nd generation informants who were mostly light-skinned, several of them having American names, and who mentioned that oftentimes classmates did not know they were Brazilian until they heard them speaking Portuguese.[44] This, coupled with the ability to speak English without a foreign accent, can insulate some of these youths from the xenophobia and discrimination experienced by many later generations of Latinx migrants in the US. Nevertheless, some of these 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants still faced discrimination, especially those of darker skin tone, who are in essence a double minority being dark-skinned Latinxs. Gabriele, an eighteen-year-old informant from INW who was born in the US but raised in Brazil, shared her own experiences with discrimination in South Florida based on her skin tone:

> I feel that people pre-judge, and they create a lot of prejudice mainly based on my skin tone, because I am not White, I am very dark-skinned. So, for instance, there were many situations that happened at my job…It is very difficult at my job, especially because I deal a lot with men, and they are very racist. They look a lot at the color of my skin, they see that I am Brazilian. They sensualize me more than other girls, they look at me more than other

[43] Personal interview by author, October 4th, 2019.

[44] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

> girls. This is very complicated, and I feel that this is a bit because of my nationality.[45]

Gabriele also argued that her co-workers, who also happened to be 2nd generation Brazilian migrants, did not deal with the same discrimination as her because they spoke better English than her and they looked White. The discrepancies between the way that one looks and the way that they feel, namely in terms of ethnicity, is an ever-present struggle in the lives of many Brazilian migrant youth, especially those of darker skin tones, in their quest to discover and establish their Brazilian-American identity. In her study of 2nd generation Congolese Pentecostals in Montreal, Géraldine Mossière argued that the Christian identity one develops in ethnic churches can enable migrant youth "to overcome the experiences of racism and discrimination that are related to their double minority status."[46] Thus, Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida have an opportunity to support migrant youth, especially those who classify as double-minorities, to overcome the racism, xenophobia, and discrimination they face in the diaspora.

Another group that has an acute struggle to craft their Brazilian-American identity are the children of interracial parents. Being the offspring of one Brazilian parent and one American or Hispanic parent, these youths can often find it more challenging to navigate both sides of their ethnic identity, with their Brazilian side

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[45] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[46] Géraldine Mossière, "Juggling Multiple Identities to Overcome Minority Status: Young Congolese Pentecostals in Montreal (Quebec)," in *The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora: Imagining the Religious 'Other,'* ed. Afe Adogame (London: Routledge, 2014), 148.

being weakened by the presence of only one Brazilian parent. This becomes more problematic if the Brazilian parent is the father because the children may not be as exposed to Portuguese if the mother happens to be the one spending more time with the children during their developmental years, thus decreasing the exposure to Brazilian culture for the children. These children may also have weaker Portuguese proficiency if the Brazilian parent decides to only speak in English in the household, since the other parent does not speak Portuguese. Ethan, whose father is Italian-American and mother is Brazilian, mentioned that he lost a lot of his Portuguese proficiency when he lived with his dad for two years while growing up because he only spoke English with him.[47] These children of interracial parents certainly have additional challenges when trying to navigate their multifaceted and complex ethnic identities.

5.1.3. Being Undocumented

The lack of residency status is an issue that primarily affects members of the 1.5 generation of Brazilian migrants, since 2nd generation migrants are US citizens by virtue of being born in US. Nevertheless, in some cases, the parents of 2nd generation migrants may be undocumented themselves, and because 2nd generation children are only able to apply for a Green Card for their parents once they turn twenty-one years old,[48] the fear of deportation can be long-lasting for

[47] Personal interview by author, October 4th, 2019.

[48] "Bringing Parents to Live in the United States as Permanent Residents," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed November 20th, 2020, https://www.uscis.gov/family/family-of-us-citizens/bringing-parents-to-live-in-the-united-states-as-permanent-residents.

undocumented parents of 2nd generation migrants, and for their children as well. Although the daily life of many 2nd generation migrants is not affected by the lack of residency status, respondents reported being aware of the impact experienced by some of their undocumented 1.5 generation friends. Ethan mentioned realizing these challenges when he encountered undocumented youth at his school in South Florida:

> I noticed that (being undocumented) as being a problem when I got to Florida because up north (in Connecticut), maybe it was because I was not around that, but like this whole thing of 'I don't got papers' [sic], and these are the struggles we go through, I never really saw that. When I moved here for high school, I saw a lot of kids like struggle, you know, to get their license. They were worried about getting a job. College obviously was something they really worried about. I had friends that got arrested, you know, or been in jail because of ICE.[49]

Other respondents also mentioned understanding the fear of returning to Brazil that some 1.5 migrants face: "You know that they (our parents) came here to give us a better life. They were running away from something, and we would not want to go back to that, obviously," said Isabella.[50] Clara, a fourteen-year-old 1.5 generation migrant who attends IPF, added, "you have built a whole life here. You do not imagine having to go back to that place."[51] Clara also mentioned that although her family had a four-year visa to stay in the US at the time of her interview, she was afraid that her status could change at any moment, forcing her to go back to Brazil.

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[49] Personal interview by author, October 4th, 2019. ICE is the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency.

[50] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

[51] Ibid.

"God is in control, but we never know what will happen," said Clara when asked if she feared returning to Brazil.[52] She ultimately mentioned that the Green Card, which would grant her family permanent residency, has always been her dream. The fear of deportation also causes 1.5 Brazilian migrant youth to look for ways to maintain a low profile: "Those of us who do not have documentation, we avoid a lot of things so that we can go unnoticed, so that we may not draw a lot of attention, because the least you show the better," said Rafaela, a seventeen-year-old 1.5 generation migrant that attends IPF.[53] Ethan recalled a game of soccer he once participated in where he was required to jump a fence in order to reach the field, but one of his friends refused to do so, arguing: "No, I am not doing it. I am not going to be deported for this. My family is not going to be deported for this."[54]

The fear of what life could be like in Brazil shared by the 1.5 Brazilian migrant generation in South Florida is in line with Cebulko's research mentioned in chapter 2, which argued that 1.5 generation Brazilian migrants would find it difficult to return to a country of which they may have little or no recollection, and where they would most likely lack the language skills to be successful at upon their return.[55] Some 1.5 generation migrants may also struggle with the harsh reality of

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Personal interview by author, October 4th, 2019.

[55] Kara Cebulko, "Documented, Undocumented, and Liminally Legal: Legal Status During Transition to Adulthood for 1.5-Generation Brazilian Immigrants." *The Sociological Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2014): 148.

living as an undocumented migrant. While it is true that 1st generation Brazilian parents may feel a greater responsibility than their children for the choices that led to migrating to the US without proper residency status,[56] Arthur, IPF's youth pastor, also believes that migrant youth may question God at times as to why they may be facing such challenges:[57] "This question of when there is a crisis, or when something happens, they (members of the youth) may say, 'I never asked to come here.' This is something inside their hearts that needs to be dealt with," affirmed Arthur.[58] The need to offer emotional support to undocumented 1.5 Brazilian migrants is a subject that will be further explored in the concluding chapter of the thesis, when we explore possible future avenues of ministry for Brazilian Protestant churches in diaspora in South Florida.

Finding a job is another challenge for undocumented migrant youth. Davi recalled the difficulties he faced prior to receiving his Green Card:

> When I did not have the proper documentation to work, I always had to find temporary jobs painting, cleaning carpets, installing wood flooring, these types of things. I also worked a lot in restaurants, but at soon as the work permit arrived in 2017, I looked for an office job in that same week…When I did not have the work permit, I felt underprivileged because I did not have access to all the opportunities.[59]

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[56] Leisy J. Abrego, "Latino Immigrants' Diverse Experiences of 'Illegality,'" in *Constructing Immigrant 'Illegality': Critiques, Experiences, and Responses,* ed. Cecilia Menjivar and Daniel Kanstroom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 145.

[57] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Personal interview by author, January 22nd, 2020.

Many undocumented 1.5 generation migrants face some of the same harsh working conditions of 1st generation migrants that were explored in chapter 4. They often work with false social security cards, or receive payments "under the table," which is the reason why they hold so many different temporary jobs, as Davi mentioned. There are also some instances where 1.5 generation migrants have a visa to live in the US but not to work. Catarina mentioned that her parents have work permits but she does not, and she said that although she could look for work without proper documentation, she prefers not to, a choice that has come with certain consequences for her: "I do not have a job, and the things that I want to own, my parents have to buy them for me. So, I must deal with this dependency, and it is something I would not have to deal with if I had the documents to work."[60] This is similar to what Teresa Sales found in her research of undocumented 1.5 migrants in Boston, in which she argued, "work in America also signified a gateway to consuming, never enjoyed with so much freedom in Brazil. Many respondents took pain to stress that they did not need to work but wanted the pocket money so they could buy things instead of asking their parents."[61] Sales also pointed out that the other half of her respondents claimed that they worked so they could help support their families in the US, which is also true of some migrant youth in South Florida.[62]

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[60] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[61] Sales, "Second-Generation Brazilian immigrants in the United States," 198.

[62] Ibid.

Undocumented Brazilian youths also have to contend with the inability to travel outside the US because they would not be able to return to the country. There is an added level of frustration when their documented friends share stories of international travels, or speak of dream vacations, as was the case with one of Gabriele's friends: "I have a friend that is here illegally, and she is the same age as me. So, I told her, I really want to save up some money to spend Christmas in Venice or somewhere in Italy, and she said to me, it is my dream to see these places."[63] The lack of proper documentation to travel internationally also causes undocumented migrant youth to miss out on overseas missionary trips, an issue that brings sadness to many undocumented 1.5 generation evangélicos, according to respondents.[64] Pastor Vitor's prayer at one of INW's youth services about an upcoming overseas mission trip captures this desire for documentation well: "I want to declare this prophetically. Those who cannot leave (the US) because of documents, God will give you documents because of your missionary heart." I do not know whether the prayer was answered,[65] but I also had a personal experience related to this issue while I was undocumented, which happened while I attended an Anglo church. The youth group I was a part of was going on a mission trip to Africa, and although I did not have the proper documentation to travel yet, I signed up to go with the hope and faith that I could achieve proper documentation during the one-year fundraising period. When that did not happen, I donated the money I had raised to a friend of

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Fieldwork notes by author, Friday evening youth service, July 19th, 2019.

mine who was going on the trip as well, and I had to concoct an excuse as to why I could not go. On the one hand, my fear of being forthcoming about my undocumented status with church youth leaders at an Anglo church speaks to some of the challenges faced by undocumented Brazilian evangélicos who choose to worship in Anglo churches, while on the other, it also speaks to the importance of ethnic churches in creating safe spaces where one's struggles, such as the lack of documentation and its impact on the life of an immigrant, can be expressed, heard, and spoken to more freely.

Attending university is another challenge for undocumented 1.5 generation Brazilian migrants. Many universities in South Florida do not allow students to attend without proof of residency status, and the ones that make certain exceptions usually classify undocumented migrants as out-of-state students for tuition purposes, which often comes with a rate four- to five-times higher than an in-state student. When asked about the biggest challenge facing undocumented migrant youth, Ethan argued, "the (driver) license might come in second, but I think the biggest one is mostly when it comes to work or college, because at my age it is all about college. They want to study, but it is ridiculously expensive, especially if you do not have a visa."[66] Undocumented migrant youth do not qualify for merit-based state scholarships because of the lack of residency status, which in some cases could have covered the full tuition of the student's degree. Undocumented students also do not have access to federal student loans, which can further diminish their ability

[66] Personal Interview by author, October 4th, 2019.

to attend university altogether. I, for instance, finished high school at the top 5 percent of my class, had the grades and test scores to qualify for a 75 percent scholarship for university, but I could not use it since I was undocumented. I attempted to take a few college classes, but I just could not afford the expensive rates even at a community college. This caused me to have a significant hiatus between high school and university, and significantly delayed my own educational journey. Research shows the negative impact that these challenges have on the ability of undocumented Brazilian 1.5 migrants to pursue further education altogether. A study conducted in 2009 found that out of an estimated 65,000 undocumented students that graduated high schools in the US that year, only 5 percent attended college.[67]

5.2. Language Issues

The use of language is one of the most important choices made by 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants because language can serve to strengthen a migrant's identity.[68] Learning a language often means learning a culture, and in the case of these later generations of Brazilian migrants, to speak Portuguese means to strengthen their ties to the Brazilian side of their dual identity, and to connect with

[67] Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil*, 227. For an in-depth analysis of the different ways that the legal status of 1.5 generation Brazilian migrants affects their lives and their ability to function in American society, see Kara B. Cebulko, *Documented, Undocumented, and Something Else: The Incorporation of Children of Brazilian Immigrants*.

[68] Min Zhou and Carl L Bankston III, *The Rise of the New Second Generation*, Immigration & Society (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016), 119.

their ethnic community. Min Zhou and Carl L Bankston III argue that "language as a social connector can also be valuable because an immigrant community provides useful information, as well as social support and control."[69] There are several areas in which language plays a key role in the lives of these Brazilian migrant youths, beginning with how it affects family dynamics between parents and their children.[70] The use of language also affects how these Brazilian evangélico youngsters practice their mission to those inside and outside their ethnic group, and the use of language employed by these Brazilian Protestant churches has a direct impact on the Brazilian-American identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, as it will be explored in this section.

5.2.1. Language and Family Dynamics

As discussed in chapter 4, many 1st generation Brazilian migrants have difficulties learning English at a later stage in life. 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants, on the other hand, are able to become English proficient with ease, even when only Portuguese is spoken at the home, because of school and television exposure in English. Oftentimes, if the parents do not speak English well, the child(ren) become

[69] Ibid.

[70] For an extensive sociological analysis on the role of language in the lives of later generation Brazilian migrants and their families, see Katia Maria Santos Mota, "Two Languages at Play: Language Boundaries in the Speech of Second-Generation Brazilian Immigrants," in *Becoming Brazuca: Brazilian Immigration to the United States*, ed. Clémence Jouët-Pastré and Leticia J. Braga, 313-337 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies: 2008).

responsible for supporting the parents to handle household matters in English, which creates an imbalance of control in the home, according to Pastor Lucas:

> I have a very serious problems here (at the church) with families that have closed themselves in the middle (of the Brazilian hub) through (the parents choosing to) only speak Portuguese. Their kids have grown, and today I have families that have children who are ten and twelve years old, and everything that the parents need to take care of, they ask the children to make the phone calls for them. Then, (if) they need to go to the bank, the child (has to) go with them. The children (then) realize that their father and mother need them, and they begin to blackmail their parents. There are many families here that are being controlled by a child who is ten or twelve years old.[71]

This imbalance of control can put a strain in the parent-child relationship at home, leading to resentment from both parties, where parents become frustrated at having to depend on their children, and the children become aggrieved for having to become involved in adult matters.

There are also families where the children do not speak Portuguese and the parents do not speak English, which leads to significant communication issues between parents and children. Vitor, INW's youth pastor, argued that such communication barriers in the home can lead to misunderstandings between parents and children, where children can be seen as rebellious when they simply did not understand what was asked. Vitor said that oftentimes he found himself as a translator between parents and children, having to explain to both parties what is being asked, especially when the misunderstanding is the result of cultural differences.[72] "The (ethnic) youth leader today has to have this role (of mediating).

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[71] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[72] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

He or she has to have these cultural sensibilities, or else they will not be able to help solve these problems," said Vitor.[73] This is certainly an area where the youth leaders of Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida can support their parishioners, both the parents and their children.

5.2.2. Language and Practices of Mission

Language had a direct impact on the practices of mission expressed by the 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants interviewed. Respondents distinguished between talking about Jesus with others and inviting people to church services, with most claiming they had no problems talking about Jesus with Anglophones, whether at school or at work, but also mentioning that they would not feel comfortable inviting them to church services, citing that most Americans would feel out of place in an ethnic service. Levi, however, said that because his English was not fluent enough, and since he had learned Spanish so he could connect with Hispanics at his school, he would feel more comfortable talking about Jesus with Hispanophones at school, especially because he did not know any Brazilians there.[74] The lack of contact with other Brazilians was also expressed by Davi, RCP's youth pastor, who claimed that if he wanted to share about Jesus with another Brazilian he would have to drive closer to the Brazilian hub, to the city of Boca Raton, and that his only contact with Brazilians was at RCP.[75] This is very different from the experiences of members of

[73] Ibid.

[74] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

[75] Personal interview by author, January 22nd, 2020.

INW and IPF, whose schools had a large presence of other Brazilians, making it easier for them to invite their peers to church, as was the case with Luis and Enzo. Luis said that he was the one who brought Enzo to INW, inviting him to a small group meeting before bringing him to a youth service.

5.2.3. Language and Church Services

> The youth, most of them were either raised here or they were born here. They have this challenge that they understand Portuguese but they do not comprehend the significance of (certain) things. So then, there is communication in Portuguese but there is not an absorption of what is being taught. So, the English-Portuguese communication is fundamental today.[76]
>
> — Vitor, INW's youth pastor

All three case study sites provided some services in English to the youth, with IPF and INW having a mixture of both languages, and RCP holding their youth services primarily in English. When members of the youth were asked which language they preferred to have church services in, the responses were varied. Those who had arrived in the US more recently, such as Levi and Clara, preferred to listen to church services in Portuguese because their level of comprehension was higher than in English, whereas those who were born in the US said they could comprehend services better in English, but they still valued hearing Portuguese since it helped them to improve their Portuguese proficiency. In relation to this point, INW's simultaneous translation was an ideal system to help these later generations of migrants to learn and practice Portuguese, as Enzo explained: "I prefer to hear services in both languages because there are some words that I would

[76] Personal interview by author, July 19th, 2019.

like to be said in Portuguese, but there are some things that I really do not understand. If there is a translator, I can understand what is being said, and it connects."[77] Luis mentioned that Enzo's Portuguese was really poor when the two first met in school, but he had vastly improved it ever since he began attending INW.[78] Ethan shared a similar story, saying, "when I came here (to INW) my Portuguese was all broken. I got it back quickly, and that is how I speak it (well)."[79]

The other benefit of simultaneous translation is that it allowed Brazilian migrant youth to remain engaged with the preaching since they were able to better grasp what was being said. Pastor Vicente, the lead pastor of a large church in Broward County, mentioned noticing that many youths would spend a large part of Sunday school on their phones searching the meaning of words, or asking one of the youth leaders for the meaning of what was said.[80] "This caused them to lose the quality of what was said. When you are hearing a language and you do not understand everything, the tendency is for your brain to become tired and go somewhere else. You are not understanding things, so your attention becomes easily distracted by other things," said Pastor Vicente.[81] Such awareness prompted him to change all the church's Sunday school youth classes to English. Alice, a thirteen-

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[77] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Personal interview by author, October 4th, 2019.

[80] Personal interview by author, August 16, 2018.

[81] Ibid.

year-old 2nd generation migrant who attended IPF, also admitted feeling more distracted while listening to services in Portuguese and mentioned that she would prefer to go to a church in English if she wanted to truly pay attention.[82] IPF did offer youth services in English, but their regular services were primarily in Portuguese, which was also the case at RCP. Youth at INW, on the other hand, were able to benefit from a simultaneous translation, which allowed them to better comprehend the preaching. INW's strategy had proven successful for them because they had the largest youth group of the three case study sites, something that Pastor Lucas attributed to the simultaneous translation: "Why is the translation important," he asked? "Because the translation brings (to the youth) what they do not understand fully, the certainty of what I am preaching, so then they stay in the church," he answered.[83] The need to help 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants to better understand the preaching during the regular services is a subject that will be further explored in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

5.3. The Church as a Friendship Community

The aforementioned crises of belonging and language issues create a need for community for members of the 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian youth. These youths can benefit from the support of others who may be facing the same struggles as them, as they strive to craft their Brazilian-American identity in the diaspora in South Florida. Many 1.5 generation migrants who arrived in the US during their pre-

[82] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

[83] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

teen or early teenage years also mentioned the loss of friendships they experienced upon migrating to the US. Luis, for instance, went back to Brazil several times during the first two years of living in the US, and he noticed that each time he returned he had lost touch with more and more friends. His interests changed, such as the fact that he began watching European soccer rather than the Brazilian league, and soon enough he was only able to maintain contact with his relatives.[84] Levi also struggled with the loss of friends when his family first moved to the US:

> In the beginning I had a great desire to go back to Brazil because it was very difficult. I would be alone in school, there was no one to talk to. In Brazil I was always very involved, always talking with my classmates, so this was a very big change for me. After a while, I was able to make some friendships with the Hispanics, and that was the first language that I learned here, Spanish, and then I was able to have more friends.[85]

Levi's desire to return to Brazil soon after arriving in the US is a common one among many 1.5 migrants. The loss of friends and the challenges of a new place can become overwhelming at first, and the lack of a proper supporting community can exacerbate the feelings of loneliness experienced by these youths. Levi also had to deal with the lack of Brazilian classmates in his school, an issue that is caused because of his distance from the Brazilian hub in South Florida. This led him to learn Spanish quicker so that he could find a new community at school.

The 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants interviewed at IPF and INW also mentioned a different struggle at school, which was the feeling of rejection by other Brazilian youths who wished to disassociate themselves from the Brazilian

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[84] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[85] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

community at school. “There are people who I see that were born here but I did not even know they were Brazilian because they only talk with Americans,” said Clara.[86] Similar to the way that some 1st generation Brazilian migrants choose to disassociate themselves from other Brazilians due to issues within the Brazilian community and for assimilation purposes, as discussed in chapter 3, a few respondents mentioned feeling that some Brazilians youths in school wanted to distance themselves from the “rowdy” stigma that most Brazilians had at school:

> It felt like half of the school it was all Brazilians, except the Brazilians were also divided. It was like (some of) the Brazilians (were all Americanized). The ones that were more Americanized…I got a shameful vibe (from them). They would not really speak Portuguese, and they are trying to hide the fact that they are Brazilians, because when you saw the new Brazilians, you know Brazilians, we are all loud and we come in rowdy and throwing a party.[87]

In Ethan’s case, as with other youths who attend schools with a large number of Brazilian students, the feeling of exclusion may not be as impactful because it is counteracted by the ability to still associate with many other Brazilians, which was described by respondents at IPF and INW. Luis, on the other hand, did not have access to a Brazilian community at school, which made the need for a friendship community at church all the more important for him.

Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida have the ability to provide members of the 1.5 and 2nd generation with a place to cultivate meaningful friendships with people of shared experience. “All of us here, we are dealing with the same things as Brazilian-Americans. Although it is a Brazilian church, most of us

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[86] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

[87] Personal interview by author, October 4th, 2019.

speak English and Portuguese. We are on the same boat, and we understand what each other is going through," said Manuela.[88] "When it comes to friendships, we already have so many around us (at church). This helps you at school and in your daily life. If you are feeling down or something, you can hang out together," added Isabella.[89] Members of the youth expressed this desire to help each other navigate life, and they looked for ways to stay connected outside the church, either by going out to eat or by hanging out at school. Enzo mentioned that he only associated with his Brazilian friends from INW at school, and that the church had become his primary source of friendship connections. Given Enzo's aforementioned desire to "feel" more Brazilian, the church's friendship community took on a more important role in the life of this 2nd generation Brazilian migrant. The church not only provided him with a community where he could learn and experience what it means to be a Brazilian-American in the US, it also helped to reinforce the Brazilian side of his dual identity. To the latter point, Brazilian Protestant churches can achieve this through the strengthening of language skills and the propagation of Brazilian culture, which can happen through food, national events, and the re-telling of stories about life in Brazil, whether past or current. Reflecting on whether INW had influenced him culturally, Enzo responded: "In some ways I would say yes. The church brought me closer to Brazilians. There were not many Brazilians at the school I attended in New York, so I was always around Jews because they had a large community there. So,

[88] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

[89] Ibid.

when I came here, I felt more comfortable with who I was, I believe."[90] Gabriele also mentioned enjoying a sense of belonging in a Brazilian church: "The church makes us feel more loved as immigrants, more accepted," she said.

Overall, Brazilian Protestant churches can have a key role in supporting the emotional wellbeing of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants, and to help them feel "more Brazilian," as Ethan stated.[91] However, that is not to say that Brazilian Protestant churches are the only forum in which these aforementioned ambiguities of identity are worked out. Brazilian migrant youth also have access to Catholic parishes, soccer clubs, martial arts dojos, and schools with a large presence of other Brazilian migrants. The sheer size of the Brazilian enclave in South Florida allowed for those who lived near it to find different avenues for community. Nevertheless, due to their reputation of social support in the Brazilian community as a whole and their large presence in South Florida, which were shown in chapter 3, Brazilian Protestant churches stand out as very attractive sources of social capital amongst the religious and community marketplace in the South Florida Brazilian enclave. Respondents also mentioned an added benefit of participating in Brazilian evangélico communities, which was the idea that relationships formed in these Brazilian Protestant churches went deeper than regular friendships; they became a substitute family. Many of the Brazilian evangélico youngsters interviewed spoke with joy about this strong bond they had formed with other parishioners and church

[90] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[91] Personal interview by author, October 4th, 2019.

leaders, and they mentioned how these relationships helped them to overcome some of their toughest challenges in the diaspora.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the identity-shaping factors that form the Brazilian-American identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation evangélicos in South Florida. These factors were viewed against the backdrop of ethnic homeless, a challenge distinctive to these younger generations of Brazilian migrants. These crises of belonging that evangélico youngster face in the diaspora in South Florida create a need for community that can be filled by evangélico churches. In these churches, evangélico youngsters may find a friendship community, a place where they can build meaningful relationships with other 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants who may be dealing with some of the same identity struggles they are facing, and who can help them to navigate these issues together. Evangélico churches can also serve to strengthen the Brazilian side of the dual identity of evangélico youngsters by helping them to learn or to maintain Portuguese proficiency, and by connecting them with Brazilian culture

Overall, 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants struggle to forge their ethnic identities in diaspora in South Florida, and evangélico churches have the ability to participate in this self-identity journey both through the services they provide and through the communities they foster. In terms of community, the ways in which evangélico church communities can function as extended families will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 6. Church as an Extended Family: Meaning and Implications for Brazilian Protestant Churches in South Florida

Introduction

> This is what I say about the church…Our family stayed in Brazil, and we have to build a family here, and the people that will substitute sometimes an uncle or a cousin are the people (from the church) that you will invite sometimes to have dinner with you. Thus, the church is making up for the lack of a family.[1]
>
> — Murilo, a member of RCP

In most interviews and church interactions with members of evangélico churches, a keyword kept being repeated by many church members over and over, which was the word "family." From members of the youth to older first-generation migrants, evangélicos sought to describe their relationship to each other in familial terms, and they expressed the different ways that the church family had become like an extended family for them, as evidenced in Murilo's above-mentioned words. As has been argued in earlier chapters, Brazilian Protestant churches serve to provide evangélicos with a piece of home away from home, as they recreate worship spaces. Based on her research of West Indian Pentecostal churches in New York and London, Janice McLean-Farrell argued that "this re-creation of home however was indelibly connected with the formation of a spiritual family. This family was based on their common status as believers in Christ and thus children of God. This was a

[1] Murilo, personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

family that was there to encourage, support, love, and care for the immigrant as they navigated life within the metropolitan contexts."[2]

This chapter will examine the various ways that the concept of church as an extended family shapes the character, activities and missional outlook of Brazilian Protestant churches in diaspora in South Florida. We will begin by surveying the nature of family structures in Brazil, and by looking at patterns of familial migration to the US, which will set the backdrop to identifying the ways that evangélico churches take on the role of an extended family for parishioners in the diaspora. We will then look at how members of the family care for each other in many aspects of life. This care is especially expressed by the leaders of the family, the evangélico pastors who become like "elder brothers" through their extensive support of all family members. We will then look at how these pastors assumed different roles in order to care for their extended families. The chapter will also assess the strengths and weaknesses of using the concept of the church as a family when it comes to the churches' mission and evangelism. The chapter will conclude by looking at how evangelism and mission, as a way to expand the family, fits into the concept of church as an extended family.

This conceptualization of the church in familial terms is obviously not exclusive to the Brazilian-American evangélico experience, but one that recurs throughout Christian history. Tobias Brandner[3] has researched the ways that the

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[2] Janice A. McLean-Farrell, *West Indian Pentecostals: Living Their Faith in New York and London* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 105.

[3] Tobias Brandner, "The Church as Family," *Theology Today*, 76, no. 3 (2019): 217-223.

church has been understood as a family in a Confucian context in China, while Fenggang Yang[4] and Nanlai Cao[5] have focused on a Chinese-American context, and Benjamin Kiriswa[6] and Aidan Msafiri[7] have critiqued the African model of church as a family that was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church in the African Synod of 1994.

6.1. The Nature of Family Structures in Brazil and the Familial Pattern of Migration to the US

The nature of family structures in Brazil has gone through a few changes over the past decades. While Brazilian families are historically patriarchal and remain predominantly nuclear in structure, with families comprised of couples with children constituting more than half of Brazil's population in 2011,[8] newer expressions of the family have been steadily increasing in number and recognition

[4] Fenggang Yang, *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

[5] Nanlai Cao, "The Church as a Surrogate Family for Working Class Immigrant Chinese Youth: An Ethnography of Segmented Assimilation," *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 2 (2005): 183-200.

[6] Benjamin Kiriswa, "African Model of Church as Family: Implications on Ministry & Leadership," *AFER* 43, no. 3 (June 2001): 99–108.

[7] Msafiri, Aidan G., "The Church as Family Model: Its Strengths and Weaknesses." *AFER* 40, no. 5–6 (October 1998): 302–19.

[8] Alexandre Gori Maia and Camila Strobl Sakamoto, "The Impacts of Rapid Demographic Transition on Family Structure and Income Inequality in Brazil, 1981-2011," *Population Studies* 70, no. 3 (2016): 300.

in Brazilian society.[9] This change started with the Brazilian constitution of 1988, which broadened the concept of the family, allowing for the recognition of single-parent households and stable unions.[10] These newer expressions of family are not fully accepted in Brazilian society, however, especially those headed by women, which are often seen as "incomplete, irregular, or unorganized."[11] Brazil's 2010 census also reported an increase in the percentage of couples without children between 2000 and 2010, which went from 14,9 percent to 20,2 percent of the entire population, a change attributed to "changes in the family structure, a greater participation of women in the workforce, low fertility rates, and the ageing of the population."[12]

Although the predominant structure of Brazilian families is that of a nuclear family constituted by a mother, a father, and children, extended families are still very much a part of Brazilian society, especially in the north and northeast regions of the country.[13] Research also shows a great degree of urbanization in the last decades, with Brazil's urban population increasing by 84.3 million people between 1981 and 2011, while its rural population decreased by 8.2 million people in the

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[9] Nayara Hakime Dutra Oliveira, *Recomeçar: Família, Filhos E Desafios* (São Paulo, Brasil: Editora UNESP, 2009), 26.

[10] Ibid., 72.

[11] Edilane Bertelli and Liliane Moser, "Que Família é Esta? Mosaico De Diferenças, Contradições, Discriminações," *Em Pauta* 16, no. 42 (2019): 29.

[12] Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estadística—IBGE, *Censo Demográfico: Familias e Domicilios* (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2010), 70.

[13] Ibid., 74.

same period.[14] One could expect such urbanization to break down extended family networks. However, while comparing the changes in structure between urban and rural families between 1981 and 2011, researchers found that after these three decades, "there was also a higher proportion of extended families in urban areas (27 percent in 2011), despite the pronounced growth of families in this category in rural areas (from 20.7 percent in 1981 to 24 percent in 2011)."[15] The research of E. Wilbur Bock, Sugiyama Lutaka, and Felix M. Berardo on the effects of urbanization on the extended family in Brazil, though dated, offers interesting findings on the relationship between the two.[16] They confirmed the notion that urbanization does not necessarily lead to the loss of extended families, and they offered a theory that it is indeed "possible to maintain significant kinship relations within the urban, industrial setting."[17] They argued that:

> Proponents of this position suggest that while conditions of modern societies may encourage separate, nuclear households, these conditions do not prevent kinship interaction. Rapid means of communication and transportation facilitate the maintenance of interaction among related, but separate conjugal households; a structural arrangement referred to as the modified extended family.[18]

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[14] Maia and Sakamoto, "The Impacts of Rapid Demographic Transition on Family Structure and Income Inequality in Brazil," 299.

[15] Ibid., 300.

[16] E. Wilbur Bock, Sugiyama Lutaka, and Felix M. Berardo, "Urbanization and the Extended Family in Brazil," *International Journal of Sociology of the* Family 5, no. 1 (1975): 14-30.

[17] Ibid., 14.

[18] Ibid.

This modified extended family, which comprises multiple nuclear families within its boundaries, is exactly the type of familial relationship structure expressed by Brazilian evangélico churches, where many nuclear families can come together to support each other through the church network. Bock, Lutaka, and Berardo ultimately argued that the concept of extended family was an ideal held in Latin American countries, even if it was not always practiced. This resonated with the evangélicos interviewed because many of them evoked memories of interactions with members of their extended families that they had left behind in Brazil with a sense of sadness and *saudade*, the Brazilian word used to express missing something or someone.

When it comes to familial patterns of migration to the US, a lot has changed in the past decades as well. As argued in chapter 2, the Brazilian migration to South Florida has taken place in three waves. The first wave in the 1990s, comprised primarily members of Brazil's middle class, while the second wave in the 2000s comprised members of the working class who were seeking work opportunities. Most early migrants were males,[19] and many of them left their spouses and children behind with the hopes of reuniting with them in the US, or to return to Brazil after having saved enough money to buy property or businesses. Ana Cristina Braga Martes noted in her research on Brazilian migrants in Massachusetts carried out in 1996 that a shift began to happen in the late 1990s, which led her to predict that "it is probable that the number of Brazilians arriving in Massachusetts with their

[19] Álvaro Eduardo de Castro e Lima and Alanni de Lacerda Barbosa de Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos: meio século (re)fazendo a América (1960-2010)* (Brasília: FUNAG, 2017), 101.

nuclear family is increasing."[20] This shift become more prominent in the third wave of Brazilian migration (2010-onwards), which has brought in many members of Brazil's elite who arrive in the US with more financial means to start a life in the country, despite tougher immigration restrictions. Chapter 4 noted the appearance of a new kind of immigrant, one who has come to the US looking for permanence in the country, and because of that, most of these migrants are traveling with their nuclear families. Margolis pointed out that "a study of Brazilians in South Florida found that, in many cases, entire nuclear families had emigrated together, about half accompanied by their children."[21]

In a survey conducted by Global Media Commerce Group in 2014 under the auspices of the Brazilian Citizen Council, which is a part of the Brazilian General Consulate in Miami, their findings corroborated the assertion that the Brazilian community in South Florida is primarily composed of nuclear families. For instance, out of 1,276 interviewees (561 men and 715 women) 18% had one child, 34% had two children, 18% had three children, 5% had 4 children, while 23% did not have any children.[22] This means that 75% of Brazilians interviewed had children. When it came to marital status, the survey results showed 17% single, 68% married, 11% divorced, 2% widowed, and 2% in a stable union. These numbers combined show

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[20] Ana Cristina Braga Martes, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos: Um Estudo sobre Imigrantes em Massachusetts*, (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1999), 51.

[21] Maxine Margolis, *Goodbye Brazil: Émigrés from the Land of Soccer and Samba* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 54.

[22] Global Media Commerce Group, "Survey II Results for the Brazilian Citizen Council- Florida" (December 2014), 7.

that most Brazilians interviewed were married and had children. Although this does not specify if the children were in Brazil or in the US, given the latest patterns of migration, it can be argued that most Brazilian migrants in South Florida are part of a nuclear family. Another contributing factor to this assumption is that Brazilian migrants in Florida have the highest rate of home ownership out of all Brazilian communities in the US at 55%, followed by California at 39%, New York and New Jersey at 32%, and Massachusetts at 19%.[23] This is not to say that all evangélicos were part of a nuclear family, or that all had access to some physical kin, but it is to say that this was not a scenario where the majority were deracinated individuals finding themselves completely bereft of physical kin when they arrived in Florida. Yet, despite that, there was still this sense that the church was seen as a family amongst evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida.

Celia Falicov has argued that "migration always involves separation. It often separates nuclear families from extended families.[24] Thus, in the case of Brazilian evangélicos who have migrated to the US as a nuclear family and left behind their extended families, the church can become a new extended family, and for those who left behind their nuclear families, the church can become a surrogate nuclear family. However, the degree to which the church can become more or less like an extended family will depend on the individual's level of interest as well. A research project on internal migration in Brazil showed that:

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[23] Lima and Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos,* 84.

[24] Celia J. Falicov, "Working with Transnational Immigrants: Expanding Meanings of Family, Community, and Culture," *Family Process* 46, no. 2 (2007): 160.

> Participants compared friends and family several times. Regarding the possibility of friends replacing family members, some felt that friends do not replace family, although they provide support and help a lot: 'No, they do not replace family. No way! To me, family is still in the foreground. Despite having friends as if they were brothers and they help us in many moments, nothing replaces [family]. Even living far [away] I call them every day, then I speak [for] one hour.' On the other hand, some respondents reported that friends can become like family members due to the close bond formed, even if they do not replace them.[25]

Thus, the idea that the church family can become like an extended family for evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida is a realistic one, and it is one that will continue to be explored for the remainder of this chapter.

6.2. Family Care

> When we arrived here at the church…it was just us in our family, so the church in a literal sense became part of our family. When my wife lost her father and mother in Brazil, the support of our brothers in this aspect was very important for us…The way in which we relate to each other in the church is more of a fraternal relationship…it is more intense than in Brazil, where you have your relatives and you also have friends from different groups, unlike here where we only have friendships inside the church.[26]
>
> — Gustavo, a member of IPF

In the life of the extended family, all aspects of the lives of its members are of concern to other family members, and particularly to the pastors, as it will be explored further in the upcoming subsection 6.3. This special care for family

[25] Agnaldo Garcia, Lorena Schettino Lucas, and Tayssa Grassi Rodrigues, "The Meaning of Friendship for Brazilian Internal Migrants," in *Love, Family and Friendship: A Latin American Perspective*, ed. Agnaldo Garcia (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2014), 150.

[26] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

members was described by several respondents as encompassing many areas of their lives, from emotional support, as seen in the case of Gustavo's wife, to financial aid and spiritual care. Afe Adogame argues in relation to the African Christian diaspora that these church family networks of support "assume social and cultural capital through the immense, vital knowledge, information, experience that are shared and constantly transmitted between network members in order to ease their multiple everyday activities."[27] Kiriswa describes the church in the family model in Africa as "a place of belonging where sharing and solidarity characterize daily life and each one feels truly at home," a place where values such as "love, concern for others, warm relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust are emphasized."[28] The features described by Kiriswa were also present in the Brazilian evangélico context in South Florida, providing benefits for Brazilian migrants feeling out of place in the diaspora. The missional implications of this theme will be explored in subsection 6.5. For those who are already part of the evangélico family prior to moving to the US, as was the case with Gustavo, the network of support found in diaspora churches served to strengthen their faith, a general feature of migrant religious communities observed by Charles Hirschman: "the bonds of faith are reinforced when a religious community can provide nonspiritual fellowship and practical

[27] Afe U. Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 117.

[28] Kiriswa, "African Model of Church as Family," 100.

assistance for the many problems that immigrants face."[29] This holistic approach to ecclesial support that is intensely practical, not simply spiritual, was evident in these Brazilian evangélico church communities in South Florida.

In her research on evangélicos in the greater Washington, DC. area, Johanna Richlin noted that Brazilian migrants often shared experiences of severe emotional distress due to their move to the US.[30] Richlin conducted a survey of forty-seven Brazilian immigrants, which revealed the different emotional stressors experienced by these migrants in the diaspora:

> Of the 47 migrants who responded to the self-authored survey I distributed, 23 (49%) noted a dramatic increase in their feelings of loneliness (solidão). Twenty-two (47%) answered that they felt anxious (ansioso) more frequently since arriving to the United States, and 17 (36%) described themselves as more frequently depressed (deprimido). Furthermore, 11 (23%) explicitly ranked depression, loneliness, and isolation among the most difficult aspects of living in the United States.[31]

Richlin found that Brazilian evangélico communities in the greater Washington, DC. area addressed these emotional issues as "treatable spiritual maladies, and fostered an effective community of care in which migrants experienced relief."[32] Pastor Lucas described being aware of the emotional problems affecting Brazilian migrants in South Florida. He argued that many of the Brazilians that arrive in the US are fleeing

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[29] Charles Hirschman, "The Role of Religion in the Origins and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States," *The International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 1229.

[30] Johanna Bard Richlin, "The Affective Therapeutics of Migrant Faith: Evangelical Christianity among Brazilians in Greater Washington, DC," *Current Anthropology* 60, no. 3 (2019): 372.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

from some type of failure experienced in Brazil, which leaves them emotionally wounded and in need of healing. Brazilian migrants "need to go through a process of interior healing…they need healing and deliverance, to be healed from their emotional (distress). They need to learn the value of forgiveness, and to be transformed both spiritually and emotionally," he added.[33] Pastor Lucas ultimately believed that such a healing enabled evangélicos to help others, thus contributing to the wellbeing of other members of the family.

As aforementioned, emotional needs were not the only needs taken care of by members of the family. Many respondents recounted stories of when they were helped with physical needs as well. José spoke of when his family arrived in the US in 2001 and how much help they received from church members: "I remember as if it were today, having recently arrived, we were with almost nothing inside our home, and an aunt from Igreja Connect came to our house at nine o'clock in the morning on a Sunday, and this lady came with a food basket, and I kid you not, it had a giant cookie in it, and as a kid I loved sugar."[34] It is interesting to note the familial language employed by José calling the church lady an "aunt" when she was not his biological relative, thus using the word as a term of endearment, which reinforces the concept of the church as an extended family present in these Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida. Gustavo also shared that many members of the church helped him navigate even the most trivial things of everyday life, such as fueling a car or buying groceries, things that he struggled with because of his lack of

[33] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[34] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

English proficiency when he first arrived in the US.[35] Murilo mentioned the importance of returning the kindness and helping other members of the family, thus creating a cycle of support. He shared a story of a time when he was gifted a new sofa, and he immediately donated his old sofa to another family in the church. He mentioned that if this had happened in Brazil, he would have sold his old sofa instead of giving it away.[36] This higher level of solidarity in the diaspora can perhaps be attributed to the migrant status shared by evangélicos, a feature that could indeed be experienced to some extent by Brazilian migrants in Catholic or secular contexts when it comes to emotional and physical support. Nevertheless, the added value that evangélico faith superimposes on common ethnic identity is that Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida provide a sort of structured community, a framework that is local and that is ongoing. It is not just the occasional support that might be offered to somebody who has just arrived if they happen to meet a fellow Brazilian. It is a structured local community that provides an ongoing practical support, which functions as an extended family. Given the evangelicalization of Christianity in South Florida that was explored in chapter 3, evangélico churches can provide such local communities of support to more Brazilian migrants than their Catholic counterparts due to their more extensive presence and more developed infrastructure in South Florida.

[35] Personal interview by author, September 10th, 2019.

[36] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

Fenggang Yang suggested that prayers can also contribute to the understanding of church as a family because of the familial language used of "brother," "sister," "aunt," or "uncle," which paints a picture "of a big family caring for each other."[37] Such familial language, especially that of brother and sister, has been a recurring feature of Christianity ever since NT times. In fact, all Christian traditions use the language of brothers and sisters because it appears in the New Testament. Nevertheless, within an ecclesiology that emphasizes the church as a gathered community tradition, such as that of these evangélico churches, familial language becomes more prominent, and there are certain implications that follow. For instance, the communion is seen as very much a family meal, meant to be partaken with only those who are in fellowship with the family. Such emphasis helps to explain the fact that these churches' ecclesiology and missiology are very strongly related to this inner circle, and about how one brings others into this inner circle, rather than a wider public engagement, bringing the Gospel to bear on structures of society. This familial language also serves to structure Christian communities within a gathered church tradition as they reinforce the bonds between congregants, which was evident in many instances in these evangélico churches in diaspora in South Florida. At RCP, Pastor Samuel prayed giving thanks to God for the life of a church "brother" who was now cancer free, and at INW Pastor Lucas also had several prayers of thanksgiving, two for "brothers" that had been released from immigration detention, and another for a "sister" that had miraculously gotten pregnant after many years of infertility, just to name a few. Pastor Miguel had a

[37] Yang, *Chinese Christians in America, 3.*

tradition of always praying for many "brothers and sisters," inviting them to come to the front so that the church could pray for them corporately. He prayed for a "brother Judson" who had lost his biological father and brother within weeks of each other, and who was battling with depression. In another service, Pastor Miguel prayed for a young "sister" who was moving away for college in New York City, commissioning her to keep her faith away from home. I had my own experience of receiving corporate prayer at IPF during one of my first church visits when Pastor Miguel introduced me to the church family as "brother Matheus" who was doing an important research work on Brazilian churches in South Florida. After I expressed my gratitude to the church for allowing me to participate in their services, Pastor Miguel prayed for me that God would not allow academia to dry up my heart, exhibiting both a sincere desire that God would help me to maintain my faith and a stern warning of what he perceived to be the danger of academic theological study.

Members of the youth also expressed feeling cared for by their peers in ways that made up for the familial relationships they left behind in Brazil. Levi, for instance, stated that if it were not for RCP, he would spend his weekends alone without having much to do. When I asked him if he thought that the church was able to fill some of the emptiness he felt being away from his extended family in Brazil, he answered: "Yes, a lot. On the weekends we used to go to my grandma's house (in Brazil) but here we go to church, which is good because I can talk with a lot of people."[38] RCP plays a larger role in Levi's life because he lives away from the

[38] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

Brazilian hub and he attends a school that does not have many Brazilian youths, if any; therefore, the church becomes his sole support system, as he mentioned. At INW, Gabriele described feeling a strong sense of belonging inside an evangélico church community. "You are in another country, but you are still loved," she said.[39] Catarina, who did not have any extended family in the US, described the way that INW was like a family for her:

> For me, my (extended) family here (in the US) is the church. I think that people come here (to the US), as in my case, and you do not have any (extended) family here, and you end up very alone when it comes to family because a friend is not like family. I believe in this a lot. For me, there are acquaintances, there are friends, there are great friends, and there is family. So, for me, you can find an acquaintance, a friend, or even a great friend, but family it is very difficult. I spent a year here (in the US) without finding family, and when I came here (to INW), I found family. So, I think that this is the meaning of church for me here. It became a family for me.[40]

Catarina's depiction of how the church became an extended family for her is the central motif this chapter is exploring.

Members of the youth at IPF also talked about being part of a church family. "For those of us who have our families in Brazil, we have to say that our family is the church," said Clara.[41] "We consider each other a family," added Michael.[42] Isabella said that in church she experienced a special communion, or "*koinonia*" as she called

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[39] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Catarina migrated to the US with her nuclear family (mother and father), thus she is speaking of the church as her family not as a substitute for her nuclear family but as a surrogate extended family. Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

[42] Ibid.

it, with other Brazilian youths, and that her friendships from church helped her in school and in her daily life, even providing her with emotional support.[43] Isabella also mentioned that the evangélico youngsters at IPF tried their best to acclimate new members into the family:

> I feel that in the beginning with new people, since we are a family, a community, this helps them in general. If you have just arrived from Brazil here as Rafaela just did, we helped her as much as possible. We invited her, she is part of our church now, we are all friends. I feel that coming to a Brazilian church after making this move (to the US) is an important step to start your life. This gives you everything. You already have people that you can depend on.[44]

Rafaela agreed, stating that coming to IPF was one of the best things that had happened to her because "besides getting to know people, you receive a lot of help. You have a ground to stand on, and you know where to start life from."[45] These evangélico youngsters at IPF also appreciated attending services in a smaller church setting, where these familial relationships can grow easier. In comparison, they complained that they felt more disconnected from their peers when visiting American churches, and even felt judged at times without explaining on what grounds. Michael shared his thoughts on what he perceived the differences between Brazilian and American churches to be: "I feel that in Brazilian churches unlike in American ones, we are all friends with each other. We are more open, we are friendlier with each other, you know. I think that in American churches everyone is

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

in their space, just sitting there."[46] Although Michael's assessment is not nuanced, and it may even perhaps be considered overly optimistic of Brazilian Protestant communities, his assertion of American evangelical individualism echoes Hellerman's indictment of American evangelical Christianity: "the influence that our radically individualistic worldview exerts on American evangelical Christians goes a long way to explain the struggles we face to keep relationships together."[47]

The care that each person interviewed expressed toward other members of the church family demonstrated a real network of support inside these Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida, something that was present from 1.5 and 2nd generation members of the youth to 1st generation older migrants. This network of support is extremely important for those migrants who find themselves away from family and without much, if any, external support. McLean-Farrell has argued that West Indian Pentecostal migrant churches in New York and London became "sites where members, who were often without biological family, could acquire a surrogate family and gain access to housing, social welfare, and employment opportunities."[48] A similar level of support was found in this family community of Brazilian evangélicos, which served to fulfill the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of their members, as it has been shown. Nevertheless, it is not possible to speak of the church as an extended family in the Brazilian Protestant context in

[46] Ibid.

[47] Hellerman, *When the Church was a Family*, 4.

[48] Mclean-Farrell, *West Indian Pentecostals*, 8.

South Florida without speaking about the leaders of the churches, the pastors. Therefore, we shall turn our attention to the lead pastors and their roles in the lives of these evangélico church families.

6.3. The Role of Pastors in the Family

> The (Brazilian) pastor has multiple tasks. (S)He is a legal adviser, a psychologist, and a social worker, (just to name a few). [49]
>
> — Pastor Antonio

Brazilian pastors in diaspora in South Florida have an expanded role that goes beyond tending to the spiritual needs of their parishioners, which is similar to that of pastors of the African diaspora. As Mark Gornik pointed out with reference to African churches in New York City, these pastors' jobs include the building of "communities of spiritual and social belonging where human flourishing can occur."[50] This requires an understanding of the gospel's implications for human life, here and now, as Gornik argued:

> The starting point of ministry for African pastors in New York is an understanding that salvation is not just for the future, but very real for the present. Each pastor approaches ministry with theological nuance and emphasis, but the task they share is the same: to care for the members of their congregation in a manner that speaks to their spiritual and social realities, help navigate the uncertainties, opportunities, and losses of a globalized world, and most prominently, experience the liberation, power, and healing of salvation.[51]

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[49] Personal interview by author, August 20th, 2018.

[50] Mark R. Gornik, *Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2011), 52.

[51] Ibid., 65.

Brazilian evangélico pastors need to fit into multiple roles in order to fulfill all the different needs of their parishioners, as Pastor Vicente, the lead pastor of a large church in Broward County, pointed out. In this process of becoming problem-solvers, these pastors take on an important role in the family, a role that for the sake of the church as an extended family analogy could be compared to that of an "elder brother." One might expect the pastors to take the role of "fathers;" however, this application of the analogy does not work in the Brazilian evangélico context for two reasons. First, as examined earlier, the majority of evangélicos have migrated as part of a nuclear family, or they may have other physical kin around, which means that more than likely they are not bereft of their biological fathers. Second, with an average age of the Brazilian population in Florida at forty-four years old,[52] these evangélico pastors are not much older than most members of their congregations, which would make it uncomfortable for a parishioner to refer to someone who is close to them in age, or perhaps even younger as "father." Thus, the analogy that may be more appropriate to describe how parishioners viewed their pastors is that of a younger sibling viewing an elder brother, even though I never found such language being used by evangélicos. It is a fraternal relationship of care and support, but it is a relationship that still carries some authority. It is worth noting, however, that there are certain contexts in which the pastor's role approximates more to that of a "father," especially in the case of the relationship between youngsters and their youth pastors. One could also think that the sense of a Protestant identity that is

[52] Lima and Castro, *Brasileiros nos Estados Unidos,* 60.

differentiated from a Catholic one, which was discussed in chapters 1 and 3, could make evangélicos generally hesitant to regard their pastors as "fathers" because of its Catholic connotation. This is not necessarily the case, however, because a Catholic priest in Portuguese is called a "Padre," which is the Spanish and Italian word for "father" deriving from the Latin *pater*, rather than "*pai*," being the Portuguese one. When it comes to the pastors' wives, they did not have a specific name in the extended family, but they were never referred to by respondents as "mothers," as is customary in other church contexts, specifically in some African Christian contexts, for the same above-mentioned reasons of being close in age to parishioners, and the possible presence of biological mothers. Nevertheless, for the sake of maintaining the analogy of the church as an extended family, the researcher has chosen to call them "elder sisters" to suggest that they also possessed a caretaking role in the life of the family, even though such language was never used in my hearing.

As Pastor Antonio mentioned, evangélico pastors take on the role of legal advisers in order to help their parishioners navigate life as immigrants. He stated that he had appeared so often in a courtroom in the city of Fort Lauderdale helping Brazilian migrants who had court hearings for different reasons that the judge already knew him by his first name.[53] This type of legal advising is especially important when supporting undocumented evangélico migrants who are in constant fear of getting in trouble with the law. In chapter 4, we discussed how Pastor Samuel tried to offer his parishioners advice to maintain a low profile when driving in order

[53] Personal interview by author, August 20th, 2018.

to avoid being stopped by the police, but the support offered by these pastors is not simply in the form of advice, it also often required different actions on the part of the pastors. Pastor Samuel shared a story of how he was able to come to the aid of one of his congregants who did not have a driver's license when he was stopped by the police nearby the church:

> 80% of my congregation does not have a driver's license, so this guy was stopped by the police, and he called me. I asked to speak with the officer, and the officer asked me, do you have a driver's license? To which I responded, I do, I am American. So, the officer said, I see that you have a family person here, and I do not want to call immigration. It was just a brake light that was not working. Can you come here and take his car because I cannot let him drive it away? So, the guy had a pastor that he could call at that very moment who could go support him. We try to be a family. If I could not have gone, I would have called Felipe who lives on the same street that the guy was stopped by the police, or I would have called Carlos who lives on the next street over, or Tiago who does not live too far either. It (the church) is (a) family.[54]

Pastor Samuel's story not only depicted the way that he was able to step in and help his parishioner, but he also wanted to share how he could have connected the person in need with other members of the family who could have helped as well in case if he were not available. The ability to coordinate support and delegate responsibilities in the family is an important role that these pastors take on because although they can perform different tasks themselves, there are many occasions when it is better to connect the parishioner with someone who is better trained in the field of need, such as in immigration law advice for instance. Evangélico pastors are ultimately able to foster an environment of support when they encourage members of the family to help each other. Pastor Miguel mentioned approaching

[54] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

wealthier members of the church family to ask them for donations for newer members who were in need of household items, and he often tried to raise support for church members in need through his personal relationship with other members of the church family.[55] He also noted that the support he offered was different than what some evangélico churches in the Brazilian hub were able to offer through their larger infrastructure: "We do not do (communitarian work) as a church, but we do it on a personal level. It is different than what they have in Pompano Beach, the Brazilian communitarian center for new arrivals."[56] It is possible that Pastor Samuel was referring to Igreja Batista Videira (IBV), a Brazilian Baptist church in Pompano Beach that is known for its social outreach services. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, IBV was one of the largest food distribution sites in its area, with food donations reaching many other ethnic groups outside of the Brazilian community. Nevertheless, Samuel's description of social support through relational means speaks to what has been explored in this chapter, namely that the primary avenue of support used by these Brazilian evangélico churches is relational, and it functions through the concept of the church as an extended family.

Much like in Brazil's patriarchal society, the pastoral leadership in the Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida was still very male-centric, though there were few instances of churches that were either led by a female pastor, or where the pastor's wife shared some of the preaching duties with her husband. This

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

was not the case in any of the three primary churches of this study, but that is not to say that the pastors' wives were not involved in the life of the church family. Brandner proposes that when the pastor is a male in the church as a family model, their wives frequently take on the role of mothers of the family.[57] Although as argued, these evangélico pastors' wives were never called "mothers," they did also possess an expanded role due to being important pillars of support in the extended family. This expanded role of pastors' wives was seen in the Brazilian churches in South Florida that were part of this study. Pastor Lucas mentioned that his wife studied psychology in an American university, and she was able to help him with church counseling. "We work a lot together," he added. Beth, Pastor Samuel's wife, was also very involved in the life of the church family. She led a women's evangelistic meal gathering on occasion, and she also helped to collect different donations to distribute to members in need. Ana, a new member of RCP in 2019, shared a story of how Beth had become her main source of support when she first arrived in the US:

> For me, the church was everything. Today I had a school meeting because of my daughter. She came from Brazil with a diagnosis of dyslexia, so I came with all of the documents in Portuguese. Beth went with me, she read all the documents and she translated them. I even feel bad sometimes, and I tell her that because I call her whenever anything happens…even to talk, to get things off my chest. I believe this is a very positive thing. The church is helping us a lot.[58]

When it comes to the roles played in the family by evangélico pastors and their wives, it is important to note that the fact that most Brazilian pastors are

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[57] Brandner, "The Church as Family," 219.

[58] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

married means that in reality, the family analogy actually works better in Protestant contexts rather than in Catholic ones. Furthermore, within this overall family of the church, the family of the pastor in the nuclear sense is really rather important. It is a sort of hub around which the wider sense of the church as family revolves. Understandably, that cannot happen in a Catholic context, which is one of the significant differences between the way in which the church as family operates in a Protestant context and the way in which it may still operate in a Catholic context. The Padre does not have a nuclear family around him that can serve as the focus of a wider parish family. As mentioned in chapter 3, the fact that the size of Brazilian Catholic parishes in South Florida is so vast means that a Padre may not have the same intimacy of familial relationships as evangélico pastors are able to develop within their contexts. This is clearly a distinctive appeal and purchase of the church as extended family motif in the Brazilian Protestant context in South Florida.

Another significant role that these Brazilian evangélico pastors have in the diaspora is their service to the Brazilian migrant community as a whole, as leaders of important institutions that reflect and maintain Brazilian-American identity in South Florida. Jehu Hanciles noted a similar trend of the important public role of migrant pastors among African pastors in the diaspora:

> It is important to acknowledge that by presiding over the well-being of significant sections of the new immigrant communities, African pastors perform an important public service; and it ought not to be overlooked that their churches provide the main sites of acculturation and spiritual orientation for new/future American citizens. These are important beginnings.[59]

[59] Jehu Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), 373.

Pastor Lucas believed that this social role of Brazilian pastors in diaspora is so important that he dubbed evangélico pastors in South Florida "Brazilian ambassadors," saying: "each Brazilian pastor here represents his or her nation."[60] Lucas also added that this public service should be recognized by the Brazilian consulate in Miami because he argued that INW had served more Brazilian migrants than the consulate itself.[61] Pastor Vicente also believed in the importance that Brazilian evangélico pastors had in the Brazilian migrant community as a whole. He argued that Brazilian migrants who moved to the US without any support group tended to go through what he called an identity crisis because the person could now do illicit things without the fear of being shamed by a known community. Vicente said that Brazilian pastors are tasked with the work of "restoring the person, not just their soul, but also in social and moral terms, so they can regain a moral standard of being able to choose what is right morally, not just circumstantially."[62] This idea of evangélico pastors helping Brazilians navigate life as migrants in the US relates to much of what was discussed in chapter 4, which examined how Brazilian pastors helped to reflect and develop the Brazilian-American identity of newly-arrived 1st generation Brazilian migrants.

Brazilian evangélico pastors also became counselors for both marriage and to help Brazilian migrants cope with the emotional distresses of living life as an

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[60] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Personal interview by author, August 16th, 2018.

immigrant in the US, especially an undocumented one. Pastor Samuel noted that he was often asked by couples whether they should host another family member from Brazil, and his response would always be that they could do so as long as they stipulated the amount of time the relative would stay in their home before finding their own living space. Pastor Lucas and Pastor Miguel also mentioned the need to counsel members of the church family often. The counseling did not just take place in a church office, however. Pastor Samuel shared a story in one of the church services about an outing he had with a church member that yielded positive results:

> This lady in our church called me and told me her husband was feeling depressed. He was a mechanic in Brazil, but he had not been able to find a job in the US yet because he did not speak English well, and this made him feel that he was not being the "man of the house." The lady asked me to invite him to hang out. I did not want to do it initially because I was tired, but I ended up taking him to the local drag racing strip where we met a mechanic that spoke Portuguese. He was the chief mechanic, and he asked the guy if he could change a tire in three minutes, which he did, and the mechanic offered him a job on the spot. I thought to myself: I did not even want to go out that night. This is not to my credit, however. It is for the glory of God.[63]

Pastor Samuel's story reveals how the role of these evangélico pastors can extend beyond the church walls and into different aspects of everyday life. Although this type of support given by pastors can be seen in other migrant contexts, such as the aforementioned African churches in the US, this seems to be very evident in these Brazilian contexts in South Florida, where evangélico pastors, to a greater extent than seems to be the case with some of these other migrant churches, are not afraid to multitask as social workers, furniture providers, jobseekers, or whatever the

[63] Fieldwork notes by author, Sunday evening service, September 6th, 2019.

need may be. The support that they offer is intensely practical, not simply spiritual or emotional.

Evangélico youngsters also depicted their relationship with their youth pastors in familial terms. Luis, a 1.5 generation member of INW said that once his parents started to travel often for work, he began looking at Pastor Vitor, INW's youth pastor, as a father figure.[64] He mentioned a time when he forgot to fuel his vehicle, so he became stranded. His father was not at home, so he immediately decided to call Vitor, but if he were not available, Luis said he would have called another member of "the family that I have here."[65] Catarina, another 1.5 generation member of INW attributed this familial relationship with Vitor to the way he pastors the youth. "He treats us like he would his own children," she said.[66] McLean-Farrell noted that pastors are not the only familial figures in the church, however, because other adults can take the place of an uncle, aunt, mother, or father.[67] She also argued that these relationships are vital to the establishment of the identity of these migrant youths, a definite area of need for 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants.[68]

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[64] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Mclean-Farrell, *West Indian Pentecostals*, 130.

[68] Ibid.

6.4. Strengths and Weaknesses of Seeing the Church as an Extended Family

6.4.1. Strengths

> Interfamily solidarity, exemplified by the Latina/o family practice of extended communal family, emphasizes the integral dynamic between family solidarity and the common good. Intrafamily solidarity simultaneously critiques abusive dynamics in Latina/o families while asserting the necessary dialectic between individual and familial flourishing.[69]
>
> — Nichole Flores

One of the biggest strengths of the concept of the church as an extended family is the virtue of solidarity. As seen in this chapter, members of the family have the opportunity to share their possessions with others in order to ensure that no member of the family is lacking anything. This solidarity is especially important for undocumented parishioners who may find themselves marginalized due to their documentation status, and other minority groups in the family, such as women, those who are single and the ones who are divorced. Nichole Flores argues that such concept of solidarity is deeply entrenched in the Latino/a understanding of extended family, which is something that is beneficial to Latino/a communities as a whole:

> Beyond the familial bonds among parents and children, siblings, and spouses, Latinas/os practice an expansive vision of extended family that incorporates members beyond the bounds of biological or legal conceptions of the family. Latina/o personal and family identity is transformed by building family-like relationships with other families in the community. (58) Latinas/os often come to relate to community members who are not biological relatives as

[69] Nichole M. Flores, "Latina/o Families: Solidarity and the Common Good," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 33, no. 2 (2013): 57.

> extended family members to whom they are deeply committed. These relationships make it possible for Latina/o communities to channel significant social resources beyond the boundaries of particular households and form the basis of a community of response and resistance to socioeconomic inequality facing Latina/o communities today. The Latina/o practice of extended communal family promotes solidarity, which strengthens the larger community.[70]

Flores rightly argues that such practice of solidarity strengthens the community at large, which is something that evangélico pastors mentioned during interviews, stating that their work benefited the Brazilian community in South Florida as a whole.

Another strength of the church as an extended family is the emotional support that either compensates for the missing extended family that stayed in Brazil or it supplements the support received by the nuclear family, especially when it comes to the youth. Gabriele, a Brazilian Protestant youngster at INW mentioned that in many ways she felt closer to her church family than she had felt toward her own biological extended family in Brazil.[71] This extended church family network not only provided emotional support for parishioners who are far away from their families in Brazil, but it also offered Brazilian migrants refuge and support in an environment that can at times be hostile to them. Adogame adds, "owing to the vulnerability of many immigrants, particularly the undocumented ones, family and church networks help immigrants who are confronted with difficult situations."[72]

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[70] Ibid., 59.

[71] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

[72] Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora*, 117.

A research project conducted among Black American church members on the support received in Black churches found "that church members may function as alternate sources of assistance for individuals who, for perhaps a variety of reasons (e.g., emotional estrangement, geographic distance), do not have access to family support resources or do not have significant levels of contact and emotional intimacy with family. "[73] In the case of evangélicos, the most obvious of the reasons mentioned is the geographic distance, but for members of the youth, it could also be work responsibilities of one or both parents that may keep them away from home for longer periods of time, since as argued in chapter 4, most Brazilian migrants face hard working conditions. Nanlai Cao found that in a Chinese-American context in New York City, the youth pastor operated as a "foster father," and "referred to his role as 'a positive father figure' to those youth whose demand for self-esteem and self-identity cannot be met by their immediate families."[74] This resonates with Luis' aforementioned story when he relied on Pastor Vitor to help him since his parents were busy at work, and it shows how the Brazilian evangélico context in South Florida reinforced Cao's findings in a Chinese-American context in New York City .

As Tobias Brandner observed of Christian churches in a Chinese context, the church as an extended family model also offers evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida a way to participate in church that fosters a strong bond between members

[73] Linda M. Chatters et al., "Patterns of Informal Support from Family and Church Members among African Americans," *Journal of Black Studies* 33, no. 1 (2002): 78.

[74] Cao, "The Church as a Surrogate Family for Working Class Immigrant Chinese Youth," 191.

of the family.[75] The church becomes a place where friends turn into family, and they care about each other's needs, as explored in subsection 6.2. This relates to the complaints made by evangélico youngsters at IPF who felt disconnected from peers when visiting some larger American churches. This is not to say that a mega-church could not employ the model of church as a family, but the idea of a close-knit community is more easily accomplished the smaller the church is because one can easily go by unnoticed inside a mega-church. Pastor Samuel did just that when he decided to attend an American mega-church so he could have a short season to reset his priorities and not be so involved in church activities. "Brazilians always say that in (Brazilian) churches, everyone knows all about your life, and here in this American church, there are three thousand people seated and no one knows anything about your life," he argued.[76] Pastor Samuel's words identify weaknesses that are inherent not only in a mega-church but also in the church as family model, the latter being the idea that members of the family can get too involved in the lives of other family members, as the next subsection will explore.

6.4.2. Weaknesses

The understanding of church as an extended family also possesses some potential drawbacks. One of these drawbacks is the issue of gossip. As argued in this chapter, the church as family model fosters close-knit communities where people

[75] Brandner, "The Church as Family," 218.

[76] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

get to know one another more comprehensively. The downside of this, however, is when personal or intimate information gets shared around the church family through gossip. In chapter 2, it was argued that some members of Brazilian churches had left the church family to flee gossip. Another reason that some members left the church family was because of negative comments about their appearance that were made by other church members who may have felt so comfortable in the degree of their relationship that they ended up hurting others. Leaving the family is another issue, however. Brander mentioned that to some members of the church family, another member's departure can be seen as someone abandoning the family. "Christians changing congregations often experience the transition as a traumatic experience comparable to familial separation," he added.[77]

Another potential danger in seeing the church as an extended family lies in the possibility that pastors may become figures of ultimate authority, whose opinions should never be questioned. This level of unchallenged power can lead to an abuse of power, and it could be very damaging to the more vulnerable members of the family. Flores rightly argues that "Latina/o families often struggle with patriarchal dynamics that limit the agency and flourishing of women, children, and other marginalized family members."[78] She suggests that "Latina/o theology and Christian family ethics are called to respond to the abuse of vulnerable and marginalized family members by articulating a vision of just family relationships."[79]

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[77] Brandner, "The Church as Family," 219.

[78] Flores, "Latina/o Families: Solidarity and the Common Good," 59.

[79] Ibid., 62.

This just family relationship can be achieved by taking care of the needs of the community and of individuals through the display of both interfamily and intrafamily solidarity, she argues.[80]

In the church as family model, the church can also become an introverted, exclusive community. Sharma reported that some of the women she interviewed in the UK and in Canada felt so out of place in certain church spaces that they sought other church families that were more "egalitarian, inclusive, and diverse in membership."[81] An introverted and exclusive church family can also be detrimental to the assimilation process of Brazilian migrants into American society. Chapter 4 argued that living near the Brazilian hub can cause some Brazilians to forgo learning English, and in turn have very limited interaction with American society as a whole. It also argued that Brazilian churches can inadvertently enable this lack of assimilation if they are not intentional enough in reflecting and developing Brazilian-American identity. Another danger of having an introverted and exclusive approach to the church as family is regarding mission. Brandner argues that such an inward approach to mission inhibits cross-cultural evangelization. In the Chinese context, he argues that missionaries focus primarily on Chinese communities abroad, and that "communities established by Chinese missionaries show little interest in interacting with local communities in Europe, America, or elsewhere."[82] The same can be said of Brazilian evangélico communities, as argued in chapter 3,

[80] Ibid., 57.

[81] Sharma, "The Church Is…My Family," 827.

[82] Brandner, "The Church as Family," 219.

since their missional focus is geared primarily toward those within their ethnicity, especially the ones who are found within their inner circle. This goes to show that the field work conducted amongst evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida is reinforcing the same sort of criticism Brandner has made of the Hong Kong churches he studied, namely that perhaps an overemphasis on the church as family leads to introversion, which in turn leads to a church being preoccupied with its own life and not being sufficiently outward looking, as it is the case with these evangélico churches. The more a church limits its focus to those inside the family, the less it engages with those outside of it.

6.5. Expanding the Family: Evangelism and Mission in the Church as an Extended Family Model.

In chapter 3, we looked at the different reasons why the missional focus of Brazilian evangélicos is geared primarily toward other Brazilians, which was mainly attributed to linguistic and cultural differences. This means that evangélicos faced difficulties not only proselytizing Americans due to the language barrier, but those who could speak English fluently still struggled to invite Americans to church services because of cultural differences, and because Portuguese was spoken either during or after service, or both. The political implications came from a lack of documented status, which inhibited people from engaging in any behaviors that would draw attention to themselves, such as proselytizing publicly. We also looked at how pastors adapted their evangelistic strategies for the diaspora, primarily in how they moved away from the usual methods of open-air evangelism that were so successful in Brazil toward a more relational approach. This relational focus was key

to how Brazilian Protestants evangelized in South Florida. Pastor Samuel pointed out that evangelism in the diaspora in South Florida happened mainly through "word of mouth,"[83] as evangélicos invited other Brazilian migrants to church through personal relationships. Once a part of these evangélico church communities, Brazilian migrants had the opportunity of being connected to their networks of practical support. In other words, evangelism in Brazilian Protestant churches was seen primarily in terms of inviting Brazilian migrants to evangélico churches so they could become a part of the extended family community and benefit from their social mission.

Hanciles has argued that the migration journey itself elicits different responses to faith on the part of migrants, and that pastors "quickly discover that, in the crises-ridden encounter with American society, many immigrants who once embraced the faith are in danger of backsliding, and many who once rejected the gospel were now open to its claim."[84] Brazilian migrants often find themselves in need in the diaspora, and evangélico churches in South Florida can offer spiritual, emotional and material support through their already established model of church as a family, where a network of support for family members exists. Richlin argued that the evangélico churches she studied in the greater Washington, DC. area "regardless of denomination…made migrant interiority and the healing of migrant distress central to their theology and practice," a focus that in her opinion "helps to

[83] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

[84] Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 346.

explain the widespread popularity of Evangelical religiosity among Latin American migrants in the United States, especially among those without documents."[85] This is also true of evangélico churches in South Florida, as Padre Manoel mentioned: their appeal as compared with Catholic parishes is also largely a result of their ability to offer support for Brazilian migrants.

This manifestation of Christian love and witness through social, financial, and emotional support is very attractive to newcomers, especially undocumented ones, and it might also have evangelistic consequences in the long run, as Guilherme argued:

> When someone comes here (to the US), especially the illegal immigrant, the immigrant in general, they come more sensitive, more open, because they are on the weaker side of things by being an immigrant. They find help especially in the (evangélico) churches, then they become more open and more sensitive to the gospel, and many times they convert.[86]

José rightly pointed out that given the language barrier that many newcomer 1st generation Brazilian migrants have, they usually turn to Brazilian churches for help, rather than American ones.[87] There is also the aspect that an undocumented Brazilian migrant would certainly find more acceptance and support inside an evangélico church. Throughout interviews, several stories were shared of people who started attending a specific church because of the support they received. Ana, a member of RCP, mentioned that they moved to the city of West Palm Beach so they

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[85] Richlin, "The Affective Therapeutics of Migrant Faith," 369.

[86] Personal interview by author, February 13th, 2019.

[87] Personal interview by author, October 7th, 2019.

could be close to RCP, and because of the help she received from Beth, Pastor's Samuel's wife, in the apartment hunting process.[88] Murilo, Ana's husband, said that Pastor Samuel helped them move into their apartment, and he also helped them to furnish their home through donations from other church members.[89]

The social mission of evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida was evident in most interviews, especially those with the pastors. One of the most common ways of support mentioned was that of furniture donations. All the pastors interviewed argued that they always tried to find ways to help newcomers furnish their homes. Another avenue of support was through helping migrants find jobs and housing. Evangélico pastors made sure to connect those in need with businesspeople in the church who could either offer them a job or refer them to someone who could. One noteworthy way of migrant support was IBV's car loaning system. Pastor Eduardo mentioned that church leaders would ask wealthier evangélicos to donate older cars to the church so they could lend them to newcomers. These loans would be temporary, only until the migrant was able to find work and purchase their own car, which would then cycle the car back to the church so that it could be used by another migrant in need.[90] Pastor Eduardo said that IBV's main avenue of social support was through a church program called *abraço* (hug), but he emphasized that this support was disseminated primarily through small groups, the informal church

[88] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Personal interview by author, September 7th, 2018.

meetings of ten to fifteen people that usually happened during the week.[91] These small group meetings were vital in terms of relationship building for new members, and it connected them to the different avenues of support in the family.

In chapter 3, it was mentioned that evangélico pastors complained about the lack of religiosity displayed by many immigrants, especially those who were able to obtain financial security in the diaspora. While it is true that the network of social support that is present in these evangélico communities can be attractive to Brazilian migrants who may eventually join the church family, a possible downside of a missional focus of social support is that when people no longer need such support, there is a chance that they will leave the church. Murilo argued that some Brazilian migrants attend church because of "personal interests," and although he recognized that God could use those circumstances to bring people to the faith, he complained that when some of these migrants become financially stable, they either go to an American church or they leave the faith altogether.[92] "They got what they wanted, so they do not need the church's help anymore. They used the church to get established in the United States and then they disappear,"[93] said Murilo, adding that such actions could also be disheartening to evangélico pastors.

The social mission of evangélico in diaspora in South Florida reached more Christians than newcomers to the faith. That is to say that most Brazilian migrants

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Personal interview by author, October 2nd, 2019.

[93] Ibid.

who were added to evangélico communities through invitations to Brazilian Protestant churches were largely Protestant or Catholic migrants. The researcher does not have extensive numbers on this issue, but out of the twelve 1st generation migrants interviewed in the three churches, all without exception had moved to the US as evangélicos. Therefore, it appears that although these churches are effective in bringing in new parishioners to their congregations, many of them were already part of the family of faith. This is especially true when one considers the Catholic migration to Protestant churches in the diaspora in South Florida discussed in chapter 3. Thus, the church as an extended family model of these evangélico churches might not be as much evangelistic as it is missional in this context since it is primarily leading to the faith development of people who already have faith, and who have joined because the distance they have to their physical families has led them to explore their faith more in the diaspora. Nonetheless, the appeal that the church as an extended family model has for Brazilian migrants who find themselves away from their biological extended families is there, albeit not overtly in the preaching. It is visible in the subtle offerings of support through personal connections. It may not be apparent in the form of an explicit invitation, as if to say, "come join a real Brazilian family, an extended family, one that will fulfill all the functions and more that an extended family gives you in Brazil," but the appeal is certainly there through the actions of evangélico pastors, their wives, and of other members of the family who welcomed newcomers with open arms, and who provided them with the level of support that could be experienced in an extended family in Brazil.

The thesis, then, has shown that evangélico pastors, and their congregants as well, have a theology of mission that is holistic within certain limits, primarily within the limits of the congregation, but outside of those limits it effectively equates mission and evangelism. Although there is a certain degree of responsibility to recent Brazilian arrivals, this is seen primarily as an evangelistic tool. Thus, there is a mismatch between, on the one hand, a highly developed and highly involved pastoral mission toward the congregants, coupled with an evangelistic mission toward the wider Brazilian community, and then on the other hand, a lack of missional thinking to anybody beyond that. A good way to interpret the evangélicos' understanding of mission is through the picture of concentric circles. The innermost circle is the immediate congregation, or the church family. The next circle would be the wider Brazilian community, particularly new arrivals. Then the circle beyond that would be almost non-existent because most evangélicos in South Florida do not see much responsibility to a non-Brazilian population. The mission of evangélicos is impressively holistic within the inner circle, but only partially holistic in the second circle, while the third circle is beyond the scope of mission entirely. The evangélico approach to mission is very pragmatic and pastoral-driven: there is a strong care for church members but a lack of engagement with society as a whole. Pentecostal and baptistic traditions tend to be quite pragmatic in theology, where the theology may not be fully worked out or particularly developed. Pastors present a pragmatic response to particular needs of people, often looking to identify ways that those needs can be met within the resources of the Christian faith. This need – and experience-driven theology was evidenced in these Brazilian evangélico churches,

where pastors came to terms with the undocumented status of parishioners in practical ways that helped to alleviate some of the stressors of daily life, but in a way that did not address wider issues of justice and immigration reform.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the various ways that the concept of church as an extended family shaped the character, activities and missional outlook of Brazilian Protestant churches in diaspora in South Florida. It has suggested that in the life of the extended family, all aspects of the lives of its members were of concern to other family members, and particularly to the pastors. Although the theme of the church as an extended family is not distinctive to Brazilian evangélicos, this chapter has reinforced findings about the strengths and weaknesses of the familial model drawn from a number of different contexts, especially from one of the more profound analyses of the theme, which comes from a Chinese context. It has also shown how evangélico pastors, to a greater extent than seems to be the case with some of these other migrant churches, are not afraid to multitask as social workers, furniture providers, jobseekers, therapists, lifelines, legal advisers, or whatever the need may be. The support offered was intensely practical. Spiritual, physical, and emotional needs were looked after by family members through the encouragement and organization of the pastors, who often functioned as “elder brothers” or “surrogate fathers” depending on the context. In other words, the mission of these Brazilian Protestant churches toward members of the extended family was people driven and pastoral-centered.

The chapter has also assessed the strengths and weaknesses of seeing the church as an extended family. The strengths were the concept of solidarity toward those within the church family and the community at large, the emotional support, and the stronger bond formed with other members of the church family. These benefits of the church as extended family model provided great avenues of support for evangélicos in the diaspora, especially undocumented ones. The weaknesses explored were the issue of gossip, the danger of pastors becoming ultimate figures of unchallenged authority, which could be detrimental to the most vulnerable members of the church family, and the issues that stem from the church possibly becoming introverted and exclusive. These issues ranged from alienating marginalized members to deterring assimilation, and to having an exclusive missional reach.

The last part of the chapter explored how evangelism and mission fit into the model of church as an extended family as a way to expand the family. It was noted that the church as an extended family model of these evangélico churches was not as much evangelistic as it was missional. This was in part due to the different challenges expressed by pastors that made overt evangelistic outreaches difficult in the diaspora, such as lack of documentation, language barriers, and the difficulty to locate Brazilian migrants outside of Brazilian businesses. This caused evangelism to become more relational-focused, and personal invitations its main avenue. It was also argued that these invitations tended to reach more Christians than non-Christians, as many inside evangélico churches expressed having belonged to the Christian faith in Brazil prior to emigrating. Nevertheless, the networks of practical

support that the church as an extended family model provided participants of evangélico communities did hold an appeal to migrants who had left behind most, if not all their extended families in Brazil, especially undocumented ones. Ultimately, the mission of these Brazilian evangélico churches was holistic in relation to those who were within their communities because they provided different material and practical support, and they helped migrants negotiate the problems of living undocumented. Their church leaders were not just concerned with the souls of their congregants; they were also concerned with the whole life of those within the community. However, this holism was not extended to those outside the community in the same manner, since the social mission of evangélicos was geared primarily toward those who were a part of the church family. Other than IBV's food donations, the social services provided were geared primarily toward those within the evangélico community. Thus, it is appropriate to conclude that although these churches exhibited traces of a holistic ministry, the holistic dimension of mission was underdeveloped. The possible future development of a more robust understanding of the holistic dimension of mission will be explored in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate the significance that Christianity has for Brazilian evangélicos living in diaspora in South Florida and the ways in which evangélico churches shape their mission and practices around this reality. It aimed to answer the primary research question "what is the relationship between identity, ecclesial practices, and mission among Brazilian evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida?" The answers provided by this thesis have shown that the relationship between identity, ecclesial theory and practices, and mission amongst Brazilian evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida is both complex and diverse given the different ways that evangélico churches aid their congregants in navigating life as immigrants in the US by supporting them in negotiating processes of reception, survival, and integration within the Florida context. The way in which the mission of these evangélico churches is both understood and practiced is the result of how a particular gathered church tradition, conservative in both theology and politics, is reinforced in both its strengths and its weaknesses by the collective experience of being a migrant minority in a kind of Promised Land that never quite fulfils its promise. One of the strengthens of this ecclesial tradition is the way in which the pastor has become a key figure not just as a Christian nurturer of these congregants, but in supporting them through the strains and stresses of immigration. The thesis has shown that the pastor is a much-valued "elder brother" sort of figure in helping to support the community in the migrant context. The thesis has also indicated that the flip side of that is the weakness of missional thinking about those outside the

circle of the evangélico community, which reflects the lack of an explicit public theology. Brazilian evangélicos are not just another migrant group to the US, but a distinct and mis-represented minority within the larger Latinx migrant community. They are also a minority from a Brazilian perspective, both religiously as Protestants, and in terms of race and class, as the thesis has indicated. The sense of being a chosen minority people can impart a strong sense of mission, but also a tendency to ignore or marginalize wider justice issues. The history of early Puritan migration to N. America, and also of Dutch Calvinist migration to South Africa, exhibits quite similar features.

The thesis explored this in more depth in relation to three sub-questions that shaped the direction and content of the research project. The first sub-question asked was how the identity of Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida has been shaped by their socioeconomic status as immigrant minorities. Chapter 2 introduced many of the struggles faced by Brazilian migrants in diaspora in South Florida, such as busy work schedules, hard working conditions, a lack of a settled ethnic identity, discrimination, and the lack of residency documentation, an issue that exacerbates all others. Chapter 4 explored how these issues affected members of the 1st generation, while chapter 5 looked at its impact on 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian evangélicos. In comparison, 1st generation evangélicos struggle particularly with a lack of English proficiency, which in turn makes it more challenging for them to relate to the American side of their dual identity, while evangélico youngsters struggle with the reverse, as a lack of Portuguese proficiency makes it more difficult for them to feel "Brazilian" enough. The issue of undocumented migration is more

pertinent amongst 1st generation evangélicos, but members of the 1.5 generation have distinctive struggles when it comes to living undocumented, such as the inability to attend university, or to travel outside the country with friends or on a church mission trip. The struggles faced by Brazilian evangélicos, especially undocumented ones, shape their daily lives, as the ethnic and racial divisions that permeate American society constantly remind evangélicos of who they are, an immigrant minority in the United States.

The second sub- question asked was how Brazilian evangélicos perceived their identity in relation to other groups in the US, such as other Latinos, Brazilian Catholics, and Americans. Chapter 2 argued that Brazilian migrants in the US often try to disassociate themselves from Hispanics in part because of the longstanding prejudice associated with the term in the US. Brazilians also strive to forge their own ethnic identity, one that often perpetuates the discrimination against Hispanics in the US, as also suggested in subsection 4.2.2.1. Chapter 5 showed how some members of the 1.5 and 2nd generation may be more accepting of the labels "Hispanic" or "Latino," especially if it such association may lead to better scholarships for university. However, chapter 5 also revealed that some evangélico youngsters feared discrimination in job applications if they were to identify themselves as Hispanics or Latinos.

When it comes to Brazilian Catholics, chapter 3 described how the Christian history of Brazil is one marked by animosity and distrust between Brazilian Protestants and Brazilian Catholics, as these two expressions of Christianity have since the mid-nineteenth century wrestled for religious spaces in Brazil's society. An

interesting thing happens in the diaspora in South Florida, however, where evangélicos go from being the minority in Brazil to now becoming the majority, which creates a new sense of self-worth for evangélicos. This can be seen in the manner that evangélicos become more tolerant toward Brazilian Catholics in South Florida, which in turn facilitates the migration of Catholics to evangélico churches, a phenomenon that occurs in the diaspora. In Brazil, evangélico pastors often preach against Catholic doctrines, but in South Florida, evangélico pastors seem to be accepting of the idea that some of their congregants still receive communion on occasion in Catholic masses. Chapter 3 showed that the animosity and distrust that was and remains a mark of the relationship between Protestants and Catholics in Brazil is not present in the diaspora, for the most part.

Chapter 3 argued that Brazilian evangélicos in South Florida, for the most part, held an idealized vision of the US as a model Protestant country where conservative values and a civic religion are a part of politics. This admiration for the US, which is partially a result of the appreciation for the early Protestant missionary efforts from American missionaries that brought Protestantism to Brazil, has been exported from Brazil to the US, as evangélicos, even those who have lived in the country for many years, continue to express this conception of the US. Nevertheless, subsection 3.3.1. showed that the majority of evangélicos in South Florida do not have a missional focus toward Americans because of the perceived irreconcilable cultural differences between Brazilian immigrants and Americans, especially as it pertained to church culture. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 argued that the use of language is the chief determining factor in terms of how evangélicos conceive and practice their

mission from Brazil to the US. The choice to have church services and activities in Portuguese limits their missional reach to mainly Brazilians, while the use of English is seen primarily as a tool to connect with 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian migrants. The use of English in these churches does not seem to attract Americans because these churches are still significantly ethnic in their flavor and leadership, and even at INW, the church that offered simultaneous translation from the podium, evangélicos still spoke Portuguese before, during, and after services, which could make it more difficult for non-Portuguese speakers to feel at home or to adapt to these evangélico communities. This issue was also raised by evangélico youngsters who claimed that even though they could evangelize Americans at school and at work, they would not be able to invite them to church since they would feel out of place not being able to speak Portuguese; thus, they focused on inviting only other Brazilian youngsters.

The third sub-question asked was what the distinctive features of the worship and congregational life of evangélicos revealed about their sense of identity, and their understanding and practice of church and mission within their diasporic contexts. Chapters 4 and 5 suggested that evangélico churches play an important role in the reflection and development of the Brazilian-American identity of their congregants to the degree that they can recognize the identity-shaping factors that affect evangélicos of different generations, and to form their mission around these needs. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 have shown that the ethnic identity of Brazilian evangélicos also impacts their Christian identity, as many evangélicos mentioned being restricted in their practices of church and mission due to many

obstacles, such as language barriers, lack of autonomy over church services because of a lack of building ownership, cultural differences, and lack of documentation status. These obstacles may be the main reason why the missional focus of evangélicos who worship in ethnic churches is geared primarily toward those within their ethnic group regardless of whether they ascribe "home" to be Brazil or the US. Evangélicos who worship in Anglo churches have their ethnic and Christian identities inevitably shaped by their decision to worship in English at an American church.

In the case of undocumented migrants, they faced distinctive challenges that affected not only their ability to practice church and mission, but also their ability to live and survive in the US. It was also noted, however, that some individuals were less impacted than others due to their willingness to take more risks, such as participating in activities that could cause them to face trouble with the law, or worse yet, to be deported. In this issue of the lack of documented status of many evangélicos, pastors played an important role in how they responded to this in theological and pragmatic ways. Subsection 4.4.2. showed how Evangélico pastors accepted, guided, and offered practical support for undocumented parishioners while still hoping that they could find a way to achieve documented status. Theologically, their answers varied, as they struggled to come to terms with the sin aspect of breaking immigration laws. Pastor Lucas offered an intriguing alternative to this conundrum by arguing that the breaking of immigration laws was a human transgression and not a spiritual sin, thus it did not have spiritual consequences.

Chapter 6 analyzed the variety of means employed within evangélico communities to aid Brazilian migrants from different generations in negotiating processes of reception, survival, and integration within the South Florida context. This practical support was best seen through the concept of the church as a family, the network of support established in these evangélico communities that provided evangélicos with the necessary tools for survival and integration in the diaspora in South Florida. In these extended families, evangélicos can find a home, a place to belong in a foreign land that is at times unwelcoming to them.

7.1. Belonging to an Evangélico Community in Diaspora in South Florida

In chapter 3, when looking at the different issues that are present within the 1st generation Brazilian migrant community in South Florida, it was argued that the lack of community amongst Brazilians in South Florida provided evangélico churches with a unique opportunity to fill that void by offering Brazilian evangélicos a new community, one where they can have a true sense of belonging. This sense of belonging was not just attractive to 1st generation migrants, however, as evangélico youngsters also mentioned feeling at home in evangélico churches. In chapter 5 we saw the story of Enzo, a 2nd generation Brazilian migrant who attended INW, and who claimed that belonging to a Brazilian evangélico community made him feel "more comfortable with who I was," and Gabrielle who added that church participation made her feel "more loved as an immigrant, more accepted."[1] There is an added purchase that belonging to an evangélico church in the diaspora has for

[1] Personal interview by author, September 27th, 2019.

Brazilian evangélicos that cannot be had elsewhere. It is the possibility to belong to a church family, of being accepted, seen, and heard. This has an added appeal for undocumented migrants who often feel the opposite of those things in the US society as a whole: not seen, not accepted, and not heard. I think back to my own personal experience as an undocumented migrant inside an Anglo church. At the time, I wished to be able to speak to someone in the church about my undocumented status, to share with them the pain and frustration I felt knowing that I would not be able to join the youth group in their mission trip to Africa. Instead, I stayed quiet and made up an excuse as to why I could not participate in the mission trip. I was too afraid that I would be judged, too ashamed to admit that I was living undocumented, and I was also scared that such admission would cause me to lose my leadership position in the church. I had heard too many Christians speak against undocumented immigration without any consideration for the context of such situations, without knowing the stories behind the numbers. So, I stayed silent, but when I look back at this experience, I believe that if I were part of an evangélico church at that time, I would have found a safe place to talk about those issues. This is one of the most important aspects of ethnic churches: the ability to find shared experiences, to talk openly about these experiences, and to find help along the way.

There are also some pitfalls to belonging to an evangélico church community, however. One of these possible drawbacks is the already mentioned concern that participation in an ethnic church can become a hindrance to assimilation in the US. Evangélico pastors mentioned that Brazilian migrants need to learn how to navigate

life in the US if they are to be successful in the diaspora, and they need to realize that being a Brazilian in the US is different than being a Brazilian in Brazil. Nevertheless, belonging to an evangélico church family can provide Brazilian migrants with too much of an enclosed community, with the result that evangélicos may get a false sense of comfort to the point that they believe that they can thrive in the US without changing their mindsets to adapt to the conditions of migrant life. Thus, church participation can actually obstruct the formation and development of a dual identity by focusing only on the Brazilian side of the ethnic identity of evangélicos. Evangélico churches could benefit from being mindful of this pitfall so they can ensure to be intentional in forging an ethnic and religious identity that encompasses the duality of the Brazilian-American ethnic identity.

The other pitfall that became apparent in the course of the research is the reinforcement of conservatism and populism that is found in evangélicos in Brazil. In chapter 3, it was shown how evangélicos in Brazil supported Bolsonaro, who declared himself the defender of conservatism and the protector of the Brazilian family, and how those ideals resonated with evangélicos who dreamed of returning Brazil to an idealized past. When evangélicos migrate to the US, an interesting phenomenon happens. In many cases in Europe, populism is in part a response to a perceived threat that the migration of non-Christians poses to a supposedly Christian "Promised Land." Ulrich Schmiedel argues that for populists in Germany, their homeland is the "Promised Land," and it is recent arrivals from the non-Christian outside who seem to threaten it: "(populists) identify themselves as

patriots struggling against what they see as the 'Islamization' of Europe."[2] This thesis examined the obverse phenomenon—Christian migrants into what appears to be the Promised Land of the US—and discussed their perspectives and experiences of the receiving country, rather than the receiving country's perspectives on them. Yet, evangélicos still adhered to a form of populist politics. In the case of evangélicos in South Florida, the populism was a characteristic of the migrants themselves, and was reinforced rather than created by the process of migration. In chapter 3, we looked at how evangélicos in the US have generally identified with the Republican Right. This is primarily the continuation of the evangélico trend of supporting the Right in Brazil, thus they gravitate toward politicians in the US who stand for similar values. Schmiedel argues that "populists belong and believe in a Europe in which the values of dignity and decency, seen as started and sustained by Christian culture, contrast with the values of indignity and indecency, seen as started and sustained by non-Christian culture."[3] This idealized view of Europe is similar to how evangélicos see the US as a model Protestant country, sustained by Christian values. Perhaps chief among those values is the importance given to the family, as seen in chapter 3, which Schmiedel also notes of populist policies in Germany,[4] but there may be other answers, which point to the fact that migrant communities can be surprisingly supportive of the status quo in their receiving country: they do not want it to change

[2] Ulrich Schmiedel, "Hijacked or hooked? Religion in populist politics in Germany," in *Is God a Populist? Christianity, Populism and the Future of Europe,* ed. Susan Kerr (Oslo: Frekk Forlag, 2019), 2.

[3] Ibid., 5.

[4] Ibid., 7.

too much from the ideal which attracted them to migrate in the first place. Nonetheless, evangélicos need to be aware of these pitfalls so that belonging to an evangélico church does not hinder one's assimilation nor does it strip Christianity of its capacity to speak against the status quo, as the gospel places the responsibility on Christians to care for the most vulnerable in their societies.

7.2. In Word and in Deed: Doing Church as Holistic Ministry

As seen in the church as a family model employed by these evangélico churches, mission was practiced in holistic terms, although only in relation to those who were already a part of the inner circle in evangélico communities. Pastors were not just concerned with the souls of their congregants, they were also concerned with many aspects of their lives as immigrants in diaspora in South Florida. Evangélico pastors organized their congregations to provide new arrivals with material and practical support that helped them to navigate their lives in the diaspora. For evangélicos, church had become the central feature of community in a strange new land, and ecclesiology a matter of how the church creates or reinforces community through practical support and networking, rather than being focused on church order or other denominational distinctives, for instance. This focus on "doing church" is in line with the recent turn to "the power of practice" in writing on ecclesiology.[5] Church is defined by what it means in practice for participants in the ecclesial community, rather than by theoretical or preached doctrine. As Schmiedel

[5] Ulrich Schmiedel, *Elasticized Ecclesiology: The Concept of Community after Ernst Troeltschel* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 197.

argues, "in the practices of church, Christianity is 'done' rather than 'described'".[6] Such a focus on the practices of the church also resonates with Swinton and Mowat's definition of practical theology, which this thesis followed, that sees practical theology as "critical, theological, reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world."[7] This focus on practice reflects the apostle James' admonition for Christians to be "doers" of the word, not simply "hearers." This impetus is almost inevitable for migrant Christians because much of their Christianity is intertwined with their ethnic identity and hybrid inter-cultural experience, as this thesis has shown. Therefore, the ways that the gospel speaks to their everyday lives is more evident because their struggles lead them to seek solace in a church community, which in turn is tasked with finding ways to address these struggles of cultural and ethnic belonging.

In the case of Brazilian evangélicos, most of their struggles are addressed by other church members through ecclesial support. In the church, Brazilian migrants find jobs, legal advice, life advice, food, help to find housing, and friendships that make up for the absence of an extended family that was left behind in Brazil. For evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida, ecclesiology is lived, it is practiced, and it is holistic. It is also communal, and it invites others to participate in this church family that cares for the lives of their members. Thus, this study has served to shine a light

[6] Ibid., 11.

[7] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, Second Edition (London: SCM Press, 2016), 7.

on a model of ecclesiology and mission that has much to offer scholars of both subjects.

Pastors also play an important role in the holistic support of evangélicos. As seen in subsection 6.3, evangélico pastors assume new and expanded roles as legal advisers, therapists, job seekers, and lifelines, just to name a few. They also help to organize the ecclesial support that Brazilian migrants receive in evangélico churches because the mission of these churches is very pastoral-centered. Another area in which evangélico pastors support migrants is through experientially-focused preaching. Chapter 4 introduced the theme that the sermons preached in these evangélico churches related to the migrant context, not so much through biblical exposition of the topic of migrants and strangers, but usually through reflection on personal experience by the pastors. This sourcing of theology from experience is reminiscent of theologies of liberation, but the emphasis on individual testimony is distinctive of evangelicalism. This was seen especially in Pastor Lucas, whose experience in an immigration detention center was a part of many sermons he preached, but it was also present in Pastor Miguel and Pastor Samuel's preaching, who often looked for ways to share their personal testimonies of some of their struggles as migrants, which helped evangélicos to better relate to their sermons.

Throughout chapters 4 to 6, several questions of pastoral theology and missiology arose from the researcher's fieldwork, and these could be addressed as presenting challenges and opportunities for additional support inside these evangélico communities. Swinton and Mowat argue that such reflection and constructive criticism is part of the task of practical theology, which seeks "to enable

the Church to perform faithfully as it participates in God's ongoing mission in, to and for the world. As such it seeks to reflect critically and theologically on situations and to provide insights and strategies that will enable the movement towards faithful change."[8] Therefore, the researcher will now move from the descriptive mode of practical theology to a more reflective and in some ways constructive mode based on the practices observed in these evangélico churches. Swinton and Mowat rightly suggest that:

> The task of Practical theology is to mediate the relation between the Christian tradition and the specific problems and challenges of the contemporary social context. It therefore moves from practice, to reflection on practice, and back to practice, a dynamic movement that is carried out in light of the Christian tradition and other sources of knowledge and is aimed at feeding back into the tradition and the practice of the church.[9]

This dynamic movement from practice, to reflection on practice, and back to practice is precisely the work this researcher has engaged in as he observed the practice of Christianity by evangélicos in South Florida, reflected on this practice, and he is now going to offer suggestions for new practices based on those reflections.

Chapter 4 examined how the Brazilian church experience was in some ways changing what it means to be Brazilian-American by its existence, but in other ways it was reinforcing some of the prejudices and colorblind racism that were present in Brazil's society. This happened especially when jokes were made about *Valadarenses*, which perpetuated some of the longstanding internal prejudice in

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[8] Ibid., 24.

[9] Ibid., 24-25.

Brazil toward those who were born in certain areas of Brazil. Evangélico churches have the opportunity to become more mindful of these prejudices, and to work toward breaking down any racial or other discriminatory walls inside their church communities. The first step toward change is self-awareness. Thus, evangélico churches could benefit from open conversations about colorblind racism and place-of-birth discrimination within Brazil. Once the discriminated and racialized are able to vocalize their pain and struggles, evangélico communities will have the opportunity to recognize their part in this issue, and to look for ways to rectify the situation.

Chapter 4 narrated Mariana's story of how she struggled to cope with the demands of work while trying to raise two children. Although Mariana was able to find support in other mothers who were members of the evangélico community, she did not find any intentional support in the church itself. Thus, evangélico churches have the opportunity to support Brazilian mothers more intentionally. This support could be done in the way of parenting or pre-natal classes, which could help mothers to navigate their busy lives as migrants along with the demands of motherhood. These classes can in turn create a community of support especially geared toward early mothers. Evangélico churches could also help to coordinate babysitting services for mothers who may need to work to support their homes, and they could also offer to watch their children on occasion so that mothers could spend more quality time with their husbands.

Another issue raised in chapter 4 was about the need for evangélico pastors to look for explicit ways to incorporate their theological reflections about

undocumented migration in their preaching so they could assist undocumented Brazilian migrants to come to terms theologically with their undocumented status as evangélicos. Although evangélico pastors often preached from their personal experiences as migrants, none of their sermons approached the issue of undocumented migration openly. Evangélico pastors could be encouraged to look for ways to speak more openly about the issue of undocumented migration from a theological standpoint, especially in light of the reality that the majority of their parishioners are undocumented. These evangélico pastors come from church traditions that take the Bible seriously, and that have a high reverence for biblical authority. Therefore, evangélico pastors have the resources within their traditions to look more seriously at passages of scripture that talk about issues of justice, the situation of migrants, and the motif of the church as a pilgrim migrant community. Their traditions also have a high regard for biblical preaching, and these pastors also have the resources to notice what is in the biblical tradition in terms of care for the stranger and the prophetic message about justice in society. Such a careful attention to resources from within evangélico theological traditions to tackle the issue of undocumented migration more publicly would be an appropriate priority for this is an issue which conservative figures see simply as a fundamental contravention of legality, whereas those from a justice perspective would see the harassment of the undocumented as a contravention of justice. This is the sort of issue that a culturally appropriate public theology that holds all aspects of the human condition in its scope could help address amongst these evangélico communities. All theological traditions are incomplete in one way or another, and

such a focus on issues of justice could help to fill in the gap where these churches lack in a public engagement with these wider justice issues. These resources could help evangélico pastors to explore different avenues to engage more seriously with issues of justice publicly, which in turn will help Brazilian migrants to come to terms with their own realities as undocumented evangélicos.

Chapter 5 discussed different areas of support pertaining to 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian evangélicos. One of these areas was the need for emotional support for evangélico youngsters, especially undocumented ones, who may question God as to why they are experiencing different struggles in the diaspora. Some of these youngsters may feel as if they never chose to come to the US in the first place, which can add to their frustration. Evangélico churches, especially evangélico youth pastors, have the opportunity to support these youths in these difficult emotional times through counseling and by connecting these youngsters with other later generation evangélicos who may have experienced the same struggles before, and who can help them to navigate these issues. Having open avenues of communication is key to helping those who are struggling emotionally, thus evangélico youth pastors need to look for ways to foster such conversations amongst evangélico youths. Another issue raised in chapter 5 was the need to help 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants to better understand the preaching during regular church services. Many of these young evangélicos do not speak Portuguese well, which makes it difficult for them to participate in the regular church services. For this issue, the simultaneous translation employed at INW serves as a possible answer. Evangélico youngsters are not likely to use the earphones connected to RF

receivers that many churches use for translation because of the attention it draws, but when the translation is done from the podium, they are able to comprehend what is being said fully. This also offers a way to deal with the fears of migrant youth leaving the church because of language barriers. It provides a way of having an ethnic church that speaks to the duality of the Brazilian-American ethnic identity of evangélicos.

Chapter 6 investigated how the church functioned as an extended family through the holistic ministry it provided to those within it. However, it was argued that this holism was not extended to those outside the community in the same manner. Therefore, evangélico churches could be helped to develop a more robust understanding of the holistic dimension of mission. That is to say that evangélico churches in diaspora in South Florida need to look for intentional ways to extend their practical support outside the church walls, to those who find themselves outside of evangélico communities. A more developed holistic dimension of mission encompasses aid to the most vulnerable, the oppressed, and the downtrodden, simply out of God's love for them. Given the large community of Brazilian migrants that exist in South Florida, evangélico churches are bound to have many opportunities to extend their support to those outside evangélico communities on a consistent basis. This is not to say that some churches are not expressing this holistic dimension, which was certainly the case with IBV, but their example could be replicated by many more evangélico churches in diaspora in South Florida.

7.3. Christianity, Ethnicity, and Migrant Identity

The study of evangélico churches in diaspora in South Florida has much to offer the field of migrant church studies in world Christianity. This thesis has explored different contributions to the field that this research topic has offered, such as the way that ethnic churches can reflect and develop the ethnic identity of parishioners from different generations, the opportunity for the church to foster a friendship community for migrant youth, and the potential for the church to function as an extended family in support of migrants, especially undocumented ones. There are two additional areas, however, where this thesis illuminates the themes already explored that have a direct relationship to other migrant church studies. These two areas are: Christianity and ethnicity; and migrant identity and Christian identity.

As we have explored in this thesis, the idea of ethnicity is complex and multifaceted. People have different ways of defining their ethnicity, and one's ethnic identity is found somewhere along a spectrum. These identities are held in tension with each other, as migrants choose how much of each component of their ethnic identity they wish to hold on to at different stages of their lives. Chapters 4 and 5 argued that the ethnic identity of evangélicos in diaspora in South Florida is a dual identity that is found in the balance between competing American and Brazilian identities. They also showed that evangélico churches play an important role in the reflection and development of these hybrid identities across members of different generations, thus showing the value of ethnic churches in the lives of migrants. Brazilian migrants, then, benefit from participation in an ethnic church because it

enables them to strengthen their hybrid ethnic identities. It is interesting to note that the idea of an ethnic church is only meaningful in a migrant context even though in essence, most churches are ethnic churches, such as Scottish or German congregations in their respective countries, even if they may not see themselves as such. As Mark Noll has suggested,

> It is increasingly clear that all true expressions of Christianity, like politics in the famous American saying, are local. When the Christian faith takes real root, it takes real root in particular places and works in and through the cultural values of those places to restore fellowship with God, undergird functioning churches, and do the work of Christ in the world. Agents from outside that culture may play important roles in assisting, or hindering, Christian maturation, but Christianity has to be local or it can barely be called Christianity.[10]

What becomes an issue is when assimilation is used negatively by host countries in a racist way to strip migrants of their ethnic identities and to force them to conform to the normative culture. René Padilla, when arguing against church growth gurus who proposed the use of the homogenous unit principle for church growth, wrote that "clearly the apostles would have agreed with the claim that 'any teaching to the effect that Christianity requires a person to adapt to the culture of another homogeneous unit in order to become an authentic Christian is unethical because it is dehumanizing.'"[11] Thus, some may wrongly claim that to be a part of the family of Christ one needs to let go of his or her ethnic identity, as if Col. 3:11 were to be taken as saying that there is no longer a Greek identity or a Jewish

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[10] Mark Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grover: IVP Academic, 2009), 197.

[11] C. René Padilla, "The Unity of the Church and the Homogeneous Unit Principle," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 6, no. 1 (1982): 26.

identity because God has stripped us of our cultural backgrounds so that Christ could be all, and in all. To this, Andrew Walls argues, "but, if He accepts us 'as we are' that implies He does not take us as isolated, self-governing units, because we are not. We are conditioned by a particular time and place, by our family and group and society, by 'culture' in fact."[12] He adds,

> The fact, then, that 'if any man is in Christ he is a new creation' does not mean that he starts or continues his life in a vacuum, or that his mind is a blank table. It has been formed by his own culture and history, and since God has accepted him as he is, his Christian mind will continue to be influenced by what was in it before. And this is as true for groups as for persons. All churches are culture churches—including our own.[13]

Thus, we cannot escape our cultures, neither should we, as they are a part of who we are, which in turn becomes a part of the church communities we create. Col. 3:11 is speaking primarily about the power of the gospel to break down negative racial divisions, as Padilla argues: "Paul states that for those who have been incorporated into the new humanity created in Jesus Christ, the divisions that affect the old humanity have become irrelevant…Race loses its importance because all the believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, belong to the 'Israel of God' (Gal. 6:16)."[14] A more fitting translation of Col. 3:11, then, could be the New Living Translation that reads: "In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile…Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us." That is to say that our ethnic identifiers,

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[12] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 7.

[13] Ibid., 8.

[14] Padilla, "The Unity of the Church and the Homogeneous Unit Principle," 24.

though not eliminated, are not things we cling to so that we can exert superiority over others, as was the case of Jews over Greeks in the early church. There is a significant difference between a segregated church that exists out of racism and an ethnic church that exists out of necessity.

Ethnic churches also validate both the multicultural and the localized aspect of Christianity, which is a foretaste of the church triumphant to come, as Noll has argued:

> On the day of Pentecost the gift of tongues, which has inspired Bible translators right to the present day, was on full display as a sign of the essentially multicultural character of the faith. The missionary journeys in Acts that saw so many from such various tribes and peoples respond to the gospel carried this message further. And it received renewed expression in John's Apocalypse that draws the New Testament to a close. One of the most forceful of such statements… is the vision right at the conclusion of the book of Revelation that exalts 'the Lord God, the Almighty and the Lamb' as providing all the illumination that is necessary in the New Jerusalem: 'the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.' Immediately after describing this Light at the center, the passage moves on to the efforts of God's saving works for the world as a whole: 'The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.' (Rev 21:22-24) This vision of divine fulfillment picks up Isaiah's theme about the kings of the earth even as it speaks graphically about the universal outreach of the gospel. The passage also hints at the sanctification of the world's diverse cultures. The kings—or, we might expand, the cultures of the world—with their glory will enter the heavenly city.[15]

Chapter 2 introduced two principles identified by Andrew Walls in Christian history, namely the indigenizing principle and the pilgrim principle. It argued that diasporic communities of faith, such as the Brazilian evangélico community in South Florida, could offer an illuminating example of what it means to live within the tension presented by these principles, since the fact of being literally and

[15] Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity*, 200.

geographically a pilgrim people has made a distinct difference to the dimensions and shape of their ecclesiology and mission. Walls' indigenizing principle argues that since we cannot remove ourselves from our social relationships, we encounter the desire to "indigenize," or "to make the church a place to feel at home."[16] This concept validates the need for ethnic churches, such as the evangélico church in South Florida, in the same manner that it validates the endeavor of world Christianity, or as some would prefer to say, world Christianities, to denote the multiplicity of contextualized expressions of the Christian faith. Ethnic churches are necessary for migrant Christians because they provide migrants with a place to feel at home, a community of believers that theologizes around real-life issues pertinent to their everyday lives. On the other hand, Walls' pilgrim principle reminds Christians that they have no abiding city because aligning with Christ will inevitably mean a misalignment with society, "for that society never existed, in East or West, ancient time or modern, which could absorb the word of Christ painlessly into its system."[17] This goes back to the earlier point that Christians should not cling so tenaciously to their ethnic identifiers that they claim that their society is the paragon of Christianity that others should emulate, because no such ideal Christian society exists. Instead, Walls believes that a Christian has "an entirely new set of relationships, with other members of the family of faith into which he has come, and whom he must accept, with all their group relations (and "disrelations") on them,

[16] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 7.

[17] Ibid., 8.

just as God has accepted him with his."[18] Thus, he adds, "every Christian has dual nationality, and has a loyalty to the faith family which links him to those in interest groups opposed to that to which he belongs by nature."[19] That is to say that the indigenizing principle forces us not only to recognize that we will never fully feel at home in our societies, but also to realize that other Christians will have different, and sometimes opposing interests than us, and we must accept those differences as we hope they will accept ours. Therefore, ethnic churches have the potential to bring this need for unity within diversity in the body of Christ, and of the acceptance of different views to churches in their host countries. However, in order for this to happen, churches in the host countries need to be willing to commune with ethnic churches, and to accept them as equally necessary parts of the body of Christ, as Noll reminds his intended American readership:

> The image of Christ's body makes it possible to think again about the American place in world Christianity. Regardless of which part of the body one would like to assign the American Christian community, that part of the body cannot be viewed as more important than any other part; neither can it be thought to function without necessary dependence on the rest. The beauty of the body image for world Christianity is its mutuality. As all share in Christ, all share in each other. Every body part, no matter how prominent, needs every other one, no matter how obscure. Some will carry out more visible functions, but none can get along without others.[20]

Only when the church comes together as the full body of Christ will it be able to reap the full benefits of ethnic expressions of the faith, one of which is the ability to read

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[18] Ibid., 9.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity*, 197.

the Scriptures together, and to learn from one another's experiences. Walls puts it well:

> But since none of us can read the Scriptures without cultural blinkers of some sort, the great advantage, the crowning excitement which our own era of Church history has over all others, is the possibility that we may be able to read them together. Never before has the Church looked so much like the great multitude whom no man can number out of every nation and tribe and people and tongue. Never before, therefore, has there been so much potentiality for mutual enrichment and self-criticism, as God causes yet more light and truth to break forth from his word.[21]

The opportunity for a communal reading of the Scriptures is there. It is up to churches in the host country to come together with ethnic churches so that they may benefit from each other in Christ.

The three case study churches offered different models for navigating Christianity and ethnicity mainly based on the choice of language and in the structure of the church. IPF, on the one side, held services mainly in Portuguese. Although such model can provide a stronger sense of Brazilian identity, as it was the closest of the three models to the way church is done in Brazil, it can also further modes of exclusion due to its distance from American culture. INW's use of English connects their congregants with the native language of the host country, and their choice of American worship songs that are sung in English further links their parishioners with a part of American Christianity. RCP displayed some English videos with Portuguese captions from their mother church, and the participation of the Brazilian congregation in multicultural events with the mother church and with other congregations gave parishioners additional opportunities to connect with

[21] Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 15.

Christians from other cultures. In terms of church structure, INW had the most autonomy of the three churches, which enabled it to offer the most weekly services to their congregation. Building ownership is a determining factor for the way that evangélicos can practice church and mission in the diaspora, which is seen in the limitation of the choice of church service times experienced by both RCP and IPF. RCP, with its connection to an American church, offered an interesting model of navigating ethnicity for Brazilian evangélicos. At RCP, evangélicos are able to maintain ethnic distinctiveness in their church services while still participating in events and gatherings with other cultural expressions of the faith. This is a closer model to the multicultural vision of the church triumphant to come.

Overall, these three case study churches offered distinctive models for Brazilian evangélicos to follow. This gives individual Brazilian migrants different avenues as to how they wish to develop both their Brazilian-American and Christian identities.

7.4. Suggestions for Further Research

During this study the researcher encountered a few areas that warranted further exploration than the scope of this thesis allowed. Therefore, the researcher would like to offer these areas as suggestions for possible future research for those interested in the study of evangélicos in diaspora in the US. The main area that warrants further research is the relationship between Brazilian Protestants and Brazilian Catholics in South Florida. The researcher was only able to conduct ethnographic work inside evangélico churches. However, an in-depth study

dedicated to comparing these two groups that would involve ethnographic studies of both could potentially yield illuminating research results. In addition, one could also compare these relationships both in Brazil and in the US more contemporarily and ethnographically so that they could analyze how these relationships get translated to the diaspora currently. Another area that warrants further research is the differences and similarities between evangélicos in South Florida and in the Boston area. These are two very different Brazilian diasporic communities; the latter being longer-standing and more involved with other ethnic communities in their area. Thus, a comparison between these two evangélico communities could provide rich data to analyze the different ways that evangélicos understand their identities, and practice church and mission within their specific diasporic communities in the US. Lastly, because the research of this thesis was unavoidably skewed toward male respondents, there is both a need and an opportunity for similar work to be conducted by a female researcher who could focus on Brazilian Protestant women in South Florida.

7.5. Some Ways Forward: Possible Future Trajectories for Evangélicos in South Florida

Historically, many of the ethnic churches that have limited their missiological focus primarily toward their own ethnic groups have had to evolve with the passing of time in order to survive in the diaspora. The changes faced by these ethnic churches usually revolved around the use of language. For example, one of the first Pentecostal churches in Brazil, the Italian Christian Congregation, had to change their services from Italian to Portuguese in 1935 in order to remain relevant in

Brazil. In the United States, Dutch Reformed and German Lutherans, along many other groups that originally maintained their linguistic distinctiveness, by and large have lost such linguistic distinctiveness. Mark Noll points out that "the ELCA, as the largest Lutheran body, came into existence only after ties with Europe faded and English replaced the German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Finnish languages."[22] When it comes to the Dutch Reformed, Roger Nemeth and Donald Luidens argue that their assimilation has also come at the cost of their ethnic distinctiveness:

> For European immigrant groups such as the Dutch, the processes of assimilation and acculturation have virtually eliminated their cultural and institutional distinctiveness. Dutch language, foods, schools, clubs, and newspapers either have been submerged or have declined to the point that they no longer serve as sources of Dutch identity in America. Ethnic identity for Americans of Dutch descent is now a matter of choice for each individual, what Gans has called 'symbolic ethnicity' (1979). This represents a 'privatization' of ethnicity rather than a significant ethnic revival.[23]

Although these ethnic settler churches are no longer speaking German, Dutch, Italian, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, or Finnish, they have established their own churches, which still have a certain imprint of the country from which they came. Nemeth and Luidens point out that that the Reformed Church of America and the Christian Reformed Church are the only churches that maintain a significant Dutch presence in the face of cultural assimilation, and they hold that "to the extent that

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[22] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 462.

[23] Roger Nemeth and Donald Luidens, "The Persistence of Ethnic Descent: Dutch Clergy in the Reformed Church in America," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 34, no. 2 (1995): 212.

Americans of Dutch extraction wish to identify with their ethnicity, they may find that association with these denominations is the only route left."[24] In light of these discussions on the loss of ethnic and linguistic distinctiveness due to cultural assimilation, a few questions arise for Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida: Will they be able to keep their linguistic distinctiveness as many years go by, or will they no longer be Lusophone in the future? Will they become gradually more open to those who are not from Brazilian stock? And above all, at what point will the conceptual gulf between "Brazilian churches" and "American churches" dissipate? Which trajectory will they take?

Although many Brazilian evangélicos have transitioned to American churches for different reasons, Pastor Miguel, Pastor Lucas, and Pastor Samuel did not appear to be worried that this impermanence could lead their respective churches on a trajectory toward full absorption into American society because they believed that there will always be a constant migration of Brazilians into South Florida. In other words, even if evangélico youths transition fully into other existing American churches, these Brazilian ethnic churches will still cater to older-generation Brazilian evangélicos, whether they are recent or older immigrants. Nevertheless, these churches are still concerned with the trajectory of the youth. Pastor Lucas believes that the key to maintaining the youth in the church lies in bilingual services. "Why is translation important?", asked Pastor Lucas. "Because translation gives to the youth what they do not understand 100 percent, the clarity

[24] Ibid.

of what I am preaching. Then, the youth will remain in the church,"[25] he answered. If one was to judge merely by the numbers, Pastor Lucas' strategy appeared to be working well because INW's youth group was larger than the size of many Brazilian Protestant churches in South Florida and it had a good mix of teenagers and young adults. Pastor Samuel, on the other hand, believed that the youth at RCP will eventually transition to one of Renovation Church's Anglo campuses because their first language is English, making them more comfortable in an Anglo service. He also predicted that although he will continue to pastor later generations of Brazilian evangélicos, the Brazilian ethnic church will weaken as more people learn English and assimilate into US culture.

When looking back at the experiences of German, Dutch, and Swedish ethnic churches in the USA, it is hard to say whether a transplanted church that is part of a migrant community that has recently come from South America will prove to be different in some ways from a transplanted migrant community that came from Europe in the nineteenth century. There are specific factors, however, that will determine the trajectory of the Brazilian Protestant church in South Florida, namely the migration flow of Brazilians and the retention of the youth. Only time will tell whether the Brazilian immigration into South Florida will retain its current flow, and when it comes to the youth, Brazilian churches also have time on their side, since many of these youths do not move away for college due to their lack of documentation.

[25] Ibid.

The biggest contributing factor in determining the future trajectories of the identity of Brazilian migrant youths perhaps lies in the choices that these young people will make about friendships, relationships, and ultimately marriage. In a study of the impact of Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam on 2nd generation Ghanaian migrants, researchers found that the fear of marrying a "potentially secularized" Dutch spouse led migrant youths to prefer marriage within their ethnic church groups rather than outside their ethnicity, with exceptions made for intermarriages with other Christians from different ethnicities.[26] Thus, the "religious social field" found in churches plays a large role in providing young migrants with "the marriage market for potential spouses or partners to interact and form social network that eventually lead to marriage or partnership."[27] Evangélico youngsters were asked direct questions about where they could see themselves attending church in the future, and the majority of them answered that they would like to attend a Brazilian church, though some acknowledged that relationships with Americans or Hispanics may alter the course of their decisions, as seen in Alice's words:

> If I am still in Florida in the future I will probably go to a Brazilian church, but it also depends on whom I am around. If I were to be around Brazilian people in the future or Hispanics, I will go to a Brazilian or a Hispanic church, but if I were to be around Americans, then I will go to an American church.[28]

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[26] Owusu Kyei Justice Richard Kwabena and Rafal Smocynski, "Building Bridges or Bonds: The Case of Ghanaian Second Generation Migrants in Ghanaian Churches in Amsterdam," *Anthropological Researches and Studies* 6, no. 1 (2016): 18.

[27] Ibid., 17.

[28] Alice, a thirteen-year-old 2nd generation Brazilian migrant. Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

Nevertheless, some still hoped to be able to bring an American spouse to a Brazilian church, even if it meant taking turns between attending both churches: "I would go to an American church but then I would still try to teach Portuguese to my children, and a little bit to my wife so that we could go to a Brazilian church to see if she could understand it, and to keep attending a Brazilian church," said Bernardo.[29] The need to expose their future children to Brazilian culture was one of the most frequently mentioned motives to continue attending a Brazilian church in the future: "I would go to a Brazilian church because I would want to pass on the Brazilian culture to my children, because if they are in America, I would like for them to still know about Brazil and to speak Portuguese, and not just to be American," said Manuela.[30] "I have already seen children that do not know how to speak any Portuguese but they are Brazilian. I would like my children to grow up in America but as Brazilians," she added.[31] The strong correlation between speaking Portuguese and Brazilianess, and between attending a Brazilian church and either learning or maintaining Portuguese proficiency was evident in the way that respondents spoke of their possible future trajectories.

Marrying an American spouse could certainly mean that one would become more Americanized, which would also likely lead them to attend an American church. However, it does not necessarily have to be the case. Davi, for instance, is

[29] Personal interview by author, September 15th, 2019.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

married to an American and they both serve as youth leaders at RCP, since their youth services are in English. When asked about his future possibilities in terms of church attendance, Davi admitted that he may eventually transition to an American church, but in the meanwhile, he is able to attend services in the Anglo campuses of Renovation Church with his wife, which he finds to be a great alternative for the time being.[32]

As has been explored in chapter 3, Brazilian evangélicos in general tend to be conservative in their theology, and they hold to somewhat romanticized ideals of the US being a model Protestant country. However, they do believe that secularization is a concern for future generations, and that there is a danger that the youth may be led astray by secular ideologies. Pastor Miguel argued that "there is a demonic force regarding materialism, putting in people's heart a greater desire for the things of this world than for heavenly things, placing greater importance on happiness here and now."[33] He then added that we will only be able to improve our society "if we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, which rebuilds people, not ideologies, philosophies, richness, or human strategies."[34] Pastor Vicente, an Assemblies of God pastor in Broward County, stated that he finds it his mission to prepare the youth at his church to face the challenges of secularization in the US:

> The transition (of our youth into adulthood) is something very important to us. We do not want to lose our children. We want them to continue feeling good in a church that speaks English, within the standards of the Assemblies

[32] Personal interview by author, January 22nd, 2020.

[33] Personal interview by author, June 19th, 2019.

[34] Ibid.

> of God that they were raised in. So, we translated the whole curriculum of our Sunday school into English, and today we use the lessons from the Sunday school in Brazil. We are an Assembly of God (church) in the US, and our children are studying their Sunday school in English, from kindergarten all the way to high school, because tomorrow at school they will have to defend the gospel in English, not Portuguese…We cannot lose our focus to teach the word of God to our children, to prepare them to confront the gender ideology, to confront abortion, to confront a series of things that are happening today, drugs, alcoholism, everything in their public schools…My concern is to prepare them to do this in the language that they feel comfortable in.[35]

Pastor Vicente's concerns depict the fear that many Brazilian pastors have that their youths may gradually drift away from the church the longer they are in the US. This fear of secularization also brings to light the ambiguity with which the US is seen by some evangélicos. On the one hand, the US is sometimes seen as a great Protestant nation, as mentioned, while on the other hand, the reality of life and culture may actually be creating quite a different impression, especially given how some of these pastors described secularizing trends within US culture at large.[36]

Daniel Rodriguez has argued that Hispanic youths, especially members of the 2nd generation, are leaving evangélico churches in large numbers.[37] Rodriguez mentioned that some church leaders attribute this exodus to a "lack of commitment to Christ, the Gospel, and the church," while others argue that it is a matter of

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[35] Personal interview by author, August 16th, 2018.

[36] For more on the debate of the secularization of America, see David Hempton and Hugh McLeod, eds., *Secularization and Religious Innovation in the North Atlantic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[37] Daniel A. Rodriguez, "Between Two Worlds: Hispanic Youth Ministry in the United States," in *Pentecostals and Charismatics in Latin America and Latino Communities*, ed. Nestor Medina (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 136.

"different priorities and philosophies of ministry."[38] Timothy Matovina, in his research on Latino Catholics in the US, added that for many 1.5 and 2nd generation Latinxs, their parents' faith may appear "as one more antiquated tradition from their land."[39] These issues of possible disconnect and departure from their parents' faith will have to be addressed by Brazilian evangélico churches if they are to ensure the successful continued participation from members of these later generations of migrants. In other words, the future trajectories of 1.5 and 2nd generation Brazilian evangélicos are also dependent upon the ways in which these churches plan to accommodate their needs. INW's current configuration stood as a possible successful model to be emulated. They had a sizeable community of about 240 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants during my fieldwork in 2019, of which 120 were children and 120 were members of the youth. As opposed to RCP and IPF, whose youth groups consisted primarily of teenagers, INW had a good mixture of teenagers and young adults (18-30), the latter being a group that is usually not present in any sizeable capacity in many churches because it tends to be the age group in which people leave the church for different reasons. During one of his church visits to a young adults' service at INW in 2019, this researcher was able to observe four small children, aged between three and six years old, at the front of the church during worship, which could suggest that some members of the 1.5 and 2nd generations were already bringing their own children to Brazilian services. Pastor Lucas

[38] Ibid.

[39] Timothy M. Matovina, *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012), 189.

believed that the secret to their success with these later generations was the bilingual nature of their services, which allowed 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants not to lose their Brazilian roots, and to be able to accompany their parents to services.[40] Pastor Samuel had slightly different plans to accommodate the future needs of 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants at RCP:

> My dream is to raise youths in my church with the calling to be future youth pastors. They will be the pastors of a church in English that will have my daughters and the children of these generations. Why would we do this? So that they may not be lost. What is happening a lot in our generation of Brazilians is that our children are getting lost.[41]

Pastor Samuel's vision to have a separate English service geared specifically toward 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants serves the needs of those who wish to attend a service in English, but it may not necessarily accommodate those who wish to attend services in Portuguese for the sake of their children, and who could also benefit from being able to hear the services in both languages.[42] It also suggests that for some evangélicos, spiritual identity is ultimately more important than ethnic

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[40] Personal interview by author, September 18th, 2019.

[41] Personal interview by author, July 22nd, 2019.

[42] For a Korean case study on the impact of having second-generation ethnic church services exclusively in English, see Karen J. Chai, "Competing for the Second Generation: English-Language Ministry at a Korean Protestant Church," in *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, ed. R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner, 295-331 (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1998). For case studies of Hispanic churches that transitioned to separate English and Spanish services, see Daniel A. Rodriguez, "Multigenerational Hispanic Churches," in *A Future for the Latino Church: Models for Multilingual, Multigenerational Hispanic Congregations*, 63-81 (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2011).

identity, as the priority is placed on retaining one's Christianity over concerns of partially losing one's ethnic identity, which was also evidenced in Pastor Vicente's words on his focus to equip the youth to defend their faith in English.

The pathways for Brazilian migrant youth are open-ended because choices are made on an individual basis. Some will become more American, some will become more obviously Brazilian if they marry within the Brazilian community, while some may marry a Hispanic, which can add another layer to their identity and that of their children. The decisions they make may not only impact their own identity, but also the flavor of these Brazilian Protestant churches in the future, depending on which of these different pathways become most common, but only time will tell.

Appendix A: List of Interviews

Name	Location	Date
Pastor Eduardo	IBV – Church office in Deerfield Beach	September 7th 2018
Pastor Antonio	Coffee shop in Deerfield Beach	August 20th 2018
Pastor Vicente	Assembly of God – Church office in Deerfield Beach	August 16th 2018
Padre Manoel	Phone interview	May 1st 2020
Pastor Miguel	Coffee shop in Boca Raton	August 22nd 2018 January 16th 2019 June 19th 2019
Pastor Arthur	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
Pastor Lucas	INW – Church office	September 18th 2019
Pastor Vitor	INW – Church office	July 19th 2019
Pastor Samuel	Coffee shop in Palm Beach Gardens	July 22nd 2019
Pastor Davi	Phone interview	January 22nd 2020
Guilherme	Interviewee's home in Boca Raton	February 13th 2019
Beatriz	Interviewee's home in Boca Raton	February 13th 2019
Gustavo	Video interview via Zoom	September 10th 2019
Mariana	Video interview via Zoom	September 10th 2019
Levi	Interviewee's home in Palm Beach Gardens	October 2nd 2019
Alice	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
Manuela	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
Bernardo	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
Isabella	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
Michael	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
Clara	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
Esther	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
Rafaela	IPF – Meeting room	September 15th 2019
José	INW – Meeting room	October 7th 2019

Elizabeth	INW – Meeting room	October 7th 2019
Luis	INW – Meeting room	September 27th 2019
Catarina	INW – Meeting room	September 27th 2019
Gabriele	INW – Meeting room	September 27th 2019
Enzo	INW – Meeting room	September 27th 2019
Ethan	INW – Meeting room	October 4th 2019
Brittney	INW – Meeting room	October 4th 2019
Murilo	Interviewee's home in Palm Beach Gardens	October 2nd 2019
Ana	Interviewee's home in Palm Beach Gardens	October 2nd 2019
Felipe	Interviewed via email	October 7th 2019
Helena	Interviewed via email	October 7th 2019

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