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Winning "Americans" for Jesus?: Second-Generation, Racial Ideology, and the Future of the Brazilian Evangelical Church in the U.S.

by

Rodrigo Otavio Serrao Santana de Jesus

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology
College of Arts and Sciences
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Keywords: racial ideology, racism, immigration, second-generation, congregations, Brazilians

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Dedication

To Adriana and Liz.

Acknowledgments

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To God, be the glory!

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Abstract

Beginning in the mid-1980s, a significant number of Brazilians began to leave their country due to economic stagnation, affecting the population and the middle class in particular. This event became known as the "Brazilian Diaspora" and was characterized by a type of labor diaspora that made scholars identify Brazilian immigrants as economic refugees. In the United States, churches have been one of the most important institutions to receive and socialize Brazilians. Considering that a new generation of U.S. born Brazilian Americans emerged, this dissertation provides one of the first studies to investigate the dynamics of a second-generation Brazilian church. In this dissertation, my focus is on how issues of race and ethnicity are entangled with religion in the context of multigenerational immigrant churches. I argue that the 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.

Drawing from diverse immigration (racial schema and transnational racial optic), race (colorblind racism and racialized colonial perspective), and religion (ethnic transcendence) conceptual frameworks, I approached my questions through three main research methods: in-depth interviews with fifty-one members of the Portuguese- and English-speaking congregations (Central and South Florida), participant observation during eight months from 2017 to 2018 in two churches in South Florida and from July 2018 to January 2019 in a church in Central Florida. Finally, content analysis of sermons posted on social media by the South Florida

churches. By focusing on issues of race and racism in a Latina/o congregation, this dissertation makes a significant scholarly contribution by combining two bodies of literature, one that centers on immigration, ethnicity, and religion and the other that emphasizes race and religion. Furthermore, this dissertation provides critical empirical and theoretical contribution to the field of race and ethnicity, due to its focus on the understudied white Latina/o/x population in the U.S.

Findings reveal that the second-generation Brazilian immigrant churches investigated pursue a Christian identity that supersedes all others without creating the proper spaces for affirming members' diverse ethnoracial identities. As such, congregational leaders and members do not challenge society-wide colorblind racism that is still prevalent among white members in their churches. Another finding reveals that members I interviewed from the second-generation church, Brazilian Americans and non-Brazilians, perceive the first-generation Brazilian church as non-modern, intolerant, and disorganized while simultaneously viewing their church as modern, accepting, and organized. Finally, my focus on white or light-skinned Brazilian immigrants' perception of racism found that many considered blacks in the United States as racist when interactions did not go as they expected when blacks did not conform to Brazilians expectations of showing respect.

Chapter 1

Introduction

I don't know what the statistics is but once someone told me, actually more than one person told me that statistically, an ethnic church won't last more than one generation or a generation and a half, something like that. So, it is my own experience, since I am the son of a Brazilian pastor who has always pastored Brazilian churches in the U.S., and we have always witnessed the coming and going of immigrants that are here. Many are here just to work and then they return to Brazil. Some others come and then find a job opportunity somewhere else and then they leave. So, I had that experience firsthand. The experience of seeing the transition of the church that my father pastored. Today we have a generation of sons and daughters of Brazilians who are 15, 16 years old… some others were born here in the US and don't speak Portuguese properly. Most of them can't speak Portuguese properly including my brother who is 23 years old and does not speak Portuguese well. He understands it but everything else is in English for him. This is the second generation of Brazilian Americans. I have seen this; I know people who have demonstrated this, and this has also been a spiritual direction from God. I did seminary in Brazil […] and during this time of seminary, it was that time that I listened from God regarding what was going to be the future of my and my wife's ministry. And we saw clearly God directing us to the English-speaking/American [populations] when we were still in Brazil finishing seminary. Investing in children since my wife works with them. Investing in teenagers, youth and young couples...all in English. (Pastor Elidio, 34, lead pastor of the American church).

In this quote, Pastor Elidio expresses the urgency to re-envision how the Brazilian immigrant church functions and who it targets to ensure its survival. This realization is significant because it represents a shift where a new generation of U.S. born and 1.5 generation of sons and daughters of Brazilian immigrants who have been socialized in church settings, mostly in the U.S., decides to continue the mission of the church that their parents have established. Three fundamental concerns about church membership, according to Pastor Elidio, drive the church's decision to extend the outreach to include native, English-speaking populations outside of the Brazilian immigrant enclave. The first concern is for the instability of the church which occurs because of the constant changes that affect immigrant communities (such as their return to the homeland or their moving to other places within the U.S. in search of better job opportunities). Secondly the church needs to address a new generation who grew up in the United States and are, in many ways, "foreign" to the Brazilian way of life (although not completely). Many among this new generation of U.S. citizens, DACA recipients, and undocumented Brazilian Americans speak English as their first language, and even though many are bilingual, there is a tendency among the Brazilian second generation for English to become the only language (Mota 2008). Finally, the movement to expand the membership is driven by the need to obey their religious mandate. As a Brazilian American seminary student seeking to establish his leadership and demonstrate that he is capable of solidifying the presence of the denomination in the U.S. (and defy the statistics about immigrant churches' survival), Pastor Elidio is among the first leaders of his denomination in the U.S. to attract non-Brazilian members.

Though Pastor Elidio's comments suggest that this transition to expand beyond the Brazilian enclave and to becoming an English speaking congregation will be fairly simple, there

are several dynamics involved in the organization of an English speaking church led by post-1965 children of immigrants (Bankston and Zhou 1995; Chong 1998; Chai 1998; Kurien 2005; 2013; Cha 2001; among others). In this dissertation, my focus is on how issues of race and ethnicity are entangled with religion in the context of immigrant churches. I argue that the 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.

Studies on Latina/o congregations usually ignore Latinas/os/xs[1] racial diversity and treat them almost entirely based on their different ethnic identities (Marti 2015; Mulder, Ramos, and Marti 2017). Even more recent studies that claim to be focusing on "race relations within Latino congregations" (Martinez and Tamburello 2018: 39; see also Chen and Jeung 2012) treat "Latinos" as a racialized category while inadequately identifying or completely ignoring the races[2] of those who are of a Latina/o/x ethnic background. For this reason, most studies on multiracial congregations focus almost exclusively on white/black congregations (Emerson and Smith 2001; Emerson and Woo 2006; Edwards 2008; Marti 2008; 2012; see Garces-Foley 2007 for an exception). This narrow focus gave rise to two bodies of literature: one focusing on "immigration, ethnic identity, and religion" and another focusing on "race and religion" (Emerson et al. 2015: 351). But, they barely dialogue with each other (an exception being Marti 2005 and Gans 1994).

This dissertation, therefore, makes a significant scholarly contribution as I merge these two bodies of literature. My goal is to understand the negotiations of race, ethnicity, immigration, and religion in a setting that juxtaposes a concern about ethnic preservation in the first-generation and the "de-ethnicization" and "Americanization" in the second-generation and

non-Brazilian members. Moreover, I examine these dynamics in a Latina/o congregation while emphasizing the religious and racial identity of the members (of all ethnic backgrounds), and examining the complex dynamics of racial ideology, racism and colonialism that still inform how people in the Global North perceive and interact with those from the Global South (Hall 1992; Said 1979; Hesse 2007; Nye 2019).

Another critical empirical and theoretical contribution I make is to the field of race and ethnicity, due mainly to my focus on the understudied white Latina/o/x population (Haslip-Viera 2018; Loveman and Muniz 2007; Delgado 2016). Here my focus is on how white Brazilians' "downgraded ethnoracial positionality," which is associated with their racial ideology, racism, and sense of entitlement, leads to a perception of racism mostly coming from African Americans. Finally, my dissertation provides further evidence to support Bonilla-Silva (2002; 2006) and colleagues' (Bonilla-Silva and Embrick 2006; Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2004) idea that U.S. race relations are now more than ever emulating aspects of Latin America's race relations, which they have called the *Latinamericanization* of U.S. race relations. As such, my research shows how those placed in the "honorary white" category "fight" amongst themselves in contestation of power or against those in the "collective black" category, serving as a buffer to protect the privileges of those at the top "white" group.

Before I present an overview of each chapter, it is important to first reflect on the research methods I used and issues of positionality in qualitative research, especially when the object under investigation is contentious and may generate resistance or even conflict. As Dawson (2010: 174) puts it, "the notion of positionality points up the often-unpredictable nature of the interface between researcher identity and the, always multifaceted, research environment."

Hence, in the next two sections, I will describe the research methods[3] and will detail how I dealt with issues of positionality during polarized times in an unpredictable research field.

Methods

For this study, I had the unique opportunity to investigate the sociological mechanisms at play in three distinct Pentecostal Protestant congregations of the same Brazilian denomination, two in South Florida (one Portuguese-speaking and one English-speaking) and one in Central Florida (Portuguese-speaking[4]), as they negotiated their identities in ways they understood would ensure their continual survival in the U.S. religious marketplace. One particularity of the two South Florida churches is how they share the same building and have their worship services during the same time on Sunday mornings. In one of my visits on Sunday morning, I heard a group of friends asking each other in Portuguese where they wanted to attend service that morning. This led me to think about the "a la carte" religious experience the churches could provide to some bilingual members of the church. However, the English-speaking church also meets on Saturday nights, and during this day and time, they only provide English services. The Central Florida church, on the other hand, only offers religious services in Portuguese, and meets once a week on Sundays.

I approached my questions through three main research methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of sermons posted on social media. This project relied upon fifty-four interviews with members of Central and South Florida churches. During the eight months (from 2017 to 2018), I drove down to South Florida, I interviewed thirty-two members from the English-speaking church and eight members of the Portuguese-speaking church. Moreover, I informally interviewed leaders of both churches in South Florida through

hallway conversations (before and after services) that lasted between three to ten minutes each. Several of the race questions followed Bonilla-Silva and Forman's (2000) questionnaire used to assess whites' racial ideology. Questions were on the following themes: affirmative action, social distance, and the significance of discrimination. Differently, however, I asked open-ended questions instead of fixed-response, survey questions. I selected most of the participants of this study through a "purposive sampling" approach. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that allowed me to handpick participants based on my judgment that their inclusion would meet the criteria of my investigation. My goal was to maximize variation in specific characteristics, such as gender, race, migratory status, social class, etc. As I interacted with church members during my visits to each congregation, I determined whether a person had the characteristics I was looking for, to diversify my sample. However, on some occasions, I asked participants to provide names and contact information of potential participants, thus engaging in snowball sampling.

During my time in South Florida, I also engaged in participant observation. I attended most of the church services (alternating my visits between the English-speaking and Portuguese-speaking churches) and participated in the lives of some of the members outside the church. To become more relationally integrated with the lives and experiences of respondents, I asked for and participated in some aspects of the leisure life of members of the English-speaking church. To achieve this purpose, I asked to "hang out" with members after service. Although they would split into different groups and go to various places, I was still invited on several occasions to restaurants, to movie nights at members' apartments, and bowling. These informal and leisurely activities were fundamental in my process of understanding the members' social life outside their church attendance. It also helped me to connect the interviews with their broader social

experiences. In summary, I conducted thirty-nine interviews in both the English- and Portuguese-speaking congregations and engaged in participant observation during religious services and members' leisure time before Pastor Elidio asked me to stop interviewing members and attending church for the purpose of collecting information for my research (more about this in the positionality section below).

I originally did not envision collecting data from a Brazilian congregation in Central Florida, only in South Florida. However, because I had only interviewed seven members of the Portuguese-speaking church in South Florida when I was asked to stop the interviews, I decided to add Central Florida to continue the interviews with first generation Brazilians. The Central Florida congregation is, as all other churches of this denomination in the U.S., a byproduct of the Brazilian church in South Florida. Moreover, even though the Central Florida church has a local pastor, this pastor is under the leadership of the South Florida Brazilian pastor. Hence, the religious culture of both Portuguese-speaking churches is similar despite the geographical distinctions of each place. In Central Florida, my approach was somewhat different because of the presence of both first-generation adults and second-generation children within the same congregation and at the same religious services. Nonetheless, from July 2018 to January 2019, I was still able to attend four services, a men's breakfast, and interview seven members, including the leading pastor. Finally, my research is also informed by seven interviews with members of the Brazilian church in Central Florida that I collected in 2016 as part of a project that involved a Brazilian Pentecostal church and other Brazilian religious congregations in the city. Using a different interview protocol, I gathered essential information about the denomination's strategy to establish churches in the United States.

A final method used was a systematic analysis of audio and video files posted on the South Florida churches' social media, more specifically YouTube, Facebook, and SoundCloud. For the English-speaking church, I listened to sermon from their youth, Saturday night services, Sunday morning services, and sermons preached at their annual conferences. For the Portuguese-speaking church, I watched YouTube videos from their Sunday morning services and their annual meetings. After changing the display that shows the older sermons first, I used a simple random sampling technique to choose the sermons. I selected this basic sampling technique because "each and every member of a population has the same chance of being included in the sample and where all possible samples of a given size have the same chance of selection." (West 2016: 1). I prioritized older sermons (beginning in 2015) because I wanted to have a better understanding of the initial struggles of each congregation as pastors usually talk about them in the context of their sermons.

Furthermore, I was not interested in the religious messages per se, but mostly on the moments prior and subsequent of each sermon. These are the moments when pastors make announcements related to the various programs and general work of the church. These announcements were even more accentuated during the conferences that were live streamed. Some of these videos from the conferences lasted for more than three hours and included not only the music, but the announcements from other churches of the same denomination that came from other states. Live streamed video of conferences also provided extended end-of-service announcements related to the next day's activities and their goals until the next conference. As I watched or listened to these videos and audios, I paid attention to the parts where the pastor made comments related to the church's self-identification, mission strategies, the beginnings of the church, the Brazilian immigrant experience, cultural nuances of Brazilians and Americans,

etc. When something said fit these criteria, I would transcribe the passage and save in a word document file divided by themes for future reference and analysis. In total I watched ninety-one YouTube videos and twenty-nine Facebook videos. Not all these videos were of sermons or conferences. Some videos had pastors advertising the U.S.-based seminary to attract Brazilians to come study in the U.S., other videos were about the Portuguese-speaking church's programs and events, particularly related to its children's ministry. I also listened to twenty SoundCloud sermon audios of the English-speaking church. These audios were mainly of sermons preached during the Saturday night and Sunday morning services.

Analysis of the interviews

Using a grant received from the Religious Research Association (Constant H. Jacquet Research Awards), I purchased a qualitative analysis software (NVivo) and paid for transcription services done by a bilingual transcriber who grew up in the United States but was living in Brazil by the time I requested his services. Every time the transcriber sent me a transcription, I would listen to the entire audio to check for the accuracy of the transcription and rearrange the punctuation if needed. This process helped me to remember the conversations I had with interviewees and to identify initial themes. As I listened to each interview, I also began coding by making side comments to describe the patterns that emerged as participants answered my questions. Finally, before uploading the file into NVivo, I gathered each participant's attributes[5] for demographic purposes. After this initial process, I uploaded all transcriptions and fieldnotes into NVivo.

In NVivo, I continued coding, but instead of going one interview at a time, I took advantage of a method called "searching for text" (Gibbs 2004: 307). Searching for text is basically a keyword or sentence searching that speeds up the coding process by allowing the

researcher to find "similar passages of texts" (Gibbs 2004: 308) across several interviews. Once I found relevant passages, I created "nodes[6]" to continue organizing these passages by themes. This simple method was complemented by "a careful reading of the documents" (Gibbs 2004: 309) so that "relevant passages that do not contain the terms" (Gibbs 2004: 308) could be accounted for and added to the nodes. In order not to "miss key examples of text that should be coded" (Ibid) at emerging nodes I paid attention to the meaning behind the text and not only to keywords or other similar sentences.

After coding and organizing the passages into nodes, I used a combination of inductive and deductive approaches (or abduction[7]) to find relevant theoretical frames for my analysis. For instance, some of my discoveries, mainly those narrated in chapter two (about white Brazilians' racism) and chapter four (about perceptions of the Portuguese-speaking church by members of the English-speaking church), were not anticipated in my research question, but were "discovered" as I allowed the data to guide the selection of theories I was going to use to make sense of the findings (Thornberg 2012; Charmaz 2014). This process is called *informed grounded-theory* and "refers to a product of a research process as well as to the research process itself, in which both the process and the product have been thoroughly grounded in data by GT methods while being informed by existing research literature and theoretical frameworks" (Thornberg 2012: 249). Chapter three, on the other hand, was mostly deductive in that I knew the theoretical perspective and wanted to "test" it by using the data I collected in the research field. The chapter not only confirms the theory but provides an explanation (also based on previous research) for why colorblind racism continues to be prevalent in the churches examined.

In chapter two, the framework that best fit was Joseph's (2015) *transnational racial optic* and Roth's (2012) *racial schema.* Applying both concepts to my data allowed me to examine

how racial ideology works transnationally and how structures of power adapt in different contexts. In chapter four, my data revealed that members of the English-speaking congregation had particular views of the Portuguese-speaking church that were akin to the racialized colonial narrative of Western superiority. Hence, I decided to use postcolonial theory to analyze church members' perceptions, particularly those related to the rhetoric of "reverse missions." These two chapters began through an inductive, data-driven approach "without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies" (Thomas, 2006: 238), which helped me to find the appropriate theoretical lens to continue the analysis deductively. Differently, chapter three began with my understanding of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of colorblind racism and ethnic transcendence, to then examine my data deductively to find the examples that confirmed my hypothesis[8].

Analysis of the videos

My analysis of the videos was done through the relevant excerpts I transcribed of sermons, announcements, ministry advertising, prayers, etc. relevant to my understanding of the church's activities, outreach strategies, civic engagement, etc. Once these excerpts were transcribed, I identified the context and the year when the pastor or some other leaders made the comment. Such identification was important to place the narrative in a historical continuum (from the time the church was formed in 2009 to the time I gathered data in 2017 and 2018). I then used these excerpts whenever necessary to complement the other data I collected through interviews and participant observation.

My analysis also considered how my positionality shaped how I approached my participants, how they perceived me, and ultimately how I was able to capture the data (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman 2016). Below I will turn to a detailed breakdown of my

positionality and the consequences of research on religion and race in times of deep political polarization.

Issues of Positionality During Polarized Times

This study developed in continuity with my master's thesis (Jesus 2014), where I investigated the Brazilian congregation of which I was a member while I attended seminary in Texas. During the time I collected data for my thesis, the second-generation consisted basically of children and adolescents who did not have enough autonomy to form their congregation. Hence, the leaders who served these groups were first-generation Brazilians and the language spoken was a blend of Portuguese and – broken – English. Even during that time, I found myself interested in understanding how this group of second-generation Brazilian Americans would fit in the vision of those Brazilian churches in the future. Leaders and other members I had a chance to interview had different opinions on this matter (from the disappearance of the Brazilian church within the next few years to the formation of an English-speaking church to serve the second-generation). However, what was clear to me at that time was that most Brazilian pastors were not worried about the second-generation because of the constant flow of newly arrived immigrants and their churches' focus on helping these new immigrants settle in the host society.

My time as a seminary student from 2005 to 2008 and my commitment to be actively involved in one of the churches investigated helped me to establish the necessary rapport that I needed to examine the two churches in 2013. Furthermore, my focus on relatively non-controversial themes (i.e., cultural adaptation and social networks) helped me to keep everyone interested and in active collaboration.

In 2014, my move to Florida for my doctoral studies provided me with the unique opportunity to study Brazilian churches in the state that today has the largest Brazilian community in the United States (Blizzard and Batalova 2019). A larger Brazilian community also meant an older, more numerous, and better-established second-generation community. Such a research opportunity, however, would not come without its challenges. Different from Texas, my focus on issues of race and racism in the church made members and pastors particularly uncomfortable. Moreover, the unanticipated political situation with the rise of far-right politicians in the United States and Brazil greatly impacted my research.

Combining these two reasons, I expected to find some resistance. I knew, via personal experience through interactions with religious Brazilians (immigrants and non-immigrants), that intentional conversations about race were not common in church settings. Part of the reason was that many Brazilians still believed in racial equality because of the popular racial democracy ideology[9]. Furthermore, I also knew that evangelicals heavily supported politicians like Bolsonaro in Brazil (Henrique 2018; Richmond 2018) and Trump (Marti 2019) in the U.S. However, because of my positionality as an "insider" (meaning, a Brazilian immigrant and religious), I believed that the church and my informants would, ultimately, cooperate with my research during its entirety.

Scholars who have faced difficulties in the research field, especially studying religious institutions and members, attest that matters of positionality and identity negotiation are not easy to establish (Rocha 2008; Dawson 2010; Burns 2015). As identities shift in the field, or at least how participants perceive the researcher's identity shifting, so does the relationships between the researcher and gatekeepers to the site (Burns 2015; Reeves 2010). My first approach to negotiating my positionality among this Brazilian religious community was that of "credibility

and approachability," presented by Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman (2016). I introduced myself as credible by combining what the leaders knew about me as a former pastor and current Ph.D. student. Hence, I was worth their "investment of time" (p. 5). My credibility, however, shifted as Pastor Elidio consistently emphasized my academic achievements, especially calling me a university professor, every time he introduced me to the members. This shift impacted my approachability which is defined as presenting yourself as "nonthreatening and safe" (p. 5). Taking advantage of how members (with ages varying from 18 to 30) began to perceive me more as an academic than as a pastor, I began to accentuate to members and leaders that the congregations' numerical growth among Brazilians and non-Brazilians was attracting the attention of academia, which I was its embodiment. That helped me to reestablish my approachability.

In addition to how respondents perceived me, significant events in the global political sphere also shaped my interactions in the research field. Recognizing that these global factors are significant, Rocha (2008: 159) states, "[i]n order to understand the field, researchers need to map the circulation of global flows, their impact on the field, and the community's responses to them…" The unanticipated rise of far-right politics in both Brazil and the United States made participants and leaders of the church question my credibility and approachability. The types of issues I was raising during my interviews, first with race, ethnicity, racism, and racial ideology, and later with the incorporation of gender, made some participants feel uncomfortable. Moreover, both lay and paid leaders seemed worried and suspicious of my presence among them. I suddenly was no longer someone perceived as credible, since leaders and members began to question my methods and motives. I found myself embedded in the culture wars (for instance, anti-black racism, whiteness, gender ideology, etc.) that have polarized Brazilian and U.S.

societies, and some members of these congregations began to believe that I was not on their side. Over time, Pastor Elidio and other leaders began to perceive me as a threat, and eventually they asked me to discontinue conducting interviews with the members of the congregations. Although they did not prohibit my access to the church for attending services, they requested that I not attend services if my intent was to conduct research.

The abrupt and non-negotiable way that I was banned from conducting this research illustrates the reservations within the church about discussions of racism and sexism. Pastor Elidio used the mobile app WhatsApp to send a message to me requesting that I should end interviewing members of his and the Portuguese-speaking church. I even called Pastor Elidio's supervisor, Pastor Manuel, but he told me that he did not want to go against the decision of one of the church's pastors. At that point, I realized that there was nothing I could do to display an insider identity because the pastors now regarded me as an outsider, as a threat to their idealized vision of their congregations. As I asked questions about race and racism and probed participants to explain their views on these issues, I ended up being framed as "biased." In a text-message, Pastor Elidio wrote,

> In the beginning I allowed you to start the research with us, because it was through the University of South Florida, and I was under the impression that there would be no agenda or political presuppositions in the research. I believed that being a public university, the research would be neutral and that no-one would attempt to manipulate the information in order to justify a certain ideology. But unfortunately the feedback I received from the people being interviewed has been different.

Part of the problem is that any discussion I brought up about oppression was considered "steering the conversation in a wrong direction" by members and leaders. They felt

uncomfortable because some of my questions made them face some of their own prejudices and yet this was allegedly my "attempt to manipulate" them into admitting their biased views.

It is essential to make clear that during my entire research period and even during the time I experienced field "rejection" (Burns 2015), I acted in accordance to all ethical procedures as guided by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is the university's research office for academic integrity, and the several ethical guidelines that researchers who are involved with "human subjects" must follow. Moreover, I followed all procedures to protect the participants', the churches', and the denomination's anonymity at all times. At no moment, before or during my interviews and participant observations, did I attempt to mislead those whom I contacted, members or leaders. Although I did not tell them my hypotheses about race and gender, I was transparent about the content of the research. Perhaps they felt betrayed because, as a native Brazilian and practicing Christian, they thought I would follow the discursive script instituted at the church and would not discuss issues of race and gender in ways that deviate from that script.

And yet, despite all the research ethics I employed, my critical approach and the questions I was asking were making people uncomfortable to the point that I went from a Christian academic to a leftist sociologist with a political agenda. Other Brazilian researchers investigating Brazilian immigrants have also experienced this animosity toward social scientists, particularly, sociologists[10]. For instance, Martins Jr. (2016: 88), studying Brazilian immigrants in London in places of leisure, was faced with this comment about sociologists by one of his interviewees:

> I'm sure you're a nice guy, don't get me wrong, but sociologists are complicated. Like, in Brazil, you guys are the ones who defend thieves; you victimize them and you talk about human rights and all that shit. Thieves don't think about human rights when they're

> robbing or killing people. We have to kill them, create a concentration camp like they did in Germany and kill them all. But you sociologists protect them; you always say that they commit crime because of their poverty. No, they commit crime because they want to. I was poor in Brazil but I always worked, it has nothing to do with poverty. So if I start talking to you, telling you about all these Brazilians here in London exploiting each other, you'll say it's because of poverty, when you don't know the reality, because you're here to study, not to live with us.

Hence, this perspective, which is highly critical of the work of sociologists, is not unique to my own research site, but it is common in a variety of more conservative settings, including many churches. My experience with these Brazilian churches in the U.S. gave me a personal understanding of their power structures. My questions and the interrogation of members in that space were threatening the entire colorblind racial structure that works for many meso-level institutions, which includes many religious congregations (Ray 2019). As I continued to ask questions that made participants reflect on their churches' disregard for issues of race and their racialized experiences in the U.S., it shook the entire foundation where whiteness[11] resides. Holding ideas about racism and sexism that contradicted the dominant narrative in Brazil was enough to exclude me from being seen as "one of them" despite my Brazilianness, religious commitment, language, and other cultural similarities.

Below, I reflect on some of the challenges of conducting research from a critical perspective in times of political polarization.

Researching Race Issues During Polarized Times in Brazil and the United States

The weight of diverse ideologies influencing the Portuguese-speaking and English-speaking churches became clear to me after I was asked, by Pastor Elidio, to stop interviewing the members of the Portuguese-speaking and English-speaking churches. He said that some members began to complain to him about my questions related to race and gender[12]. As I mentioned before, these interviewees reportedly told the pastor that I was making them feel uncomfortable. To understand the church's decision, however, in addition to racial ideology, it is possible that the influence of the political process that polarized the nation and resulted in the election of a far-right president may have affected the leadership decision.

Because of Brazilian racial ideology, to talk about race in Brazil or in my case, with Brazilian immigrants and their children is not an easy task. Issues related to race and racism are contested and sometimes controversial[13]. Racial democracy ideology has made the simple act of asking people about race to be perceived as offensive or even racist. Several scholars have documented the difficulties of researching race among Brazilians, primarily white identifying ones. Hordge-Freeman (2015: 249) narrates an episode where a white-identifying Brazilian accused her of being racist for politely explaining to him that he should not refer to a Black person using a racial slur. Joseph (2015: 174) describes the misperception that some Brazilians had by associating the word "race" with "racism" and "racial inequality" during her research in Brazil. As mentioned before, researchers have also documented the use of racial jokes (*brincadeiras*) as a standard way among Brazilians to deal with racial issues (Lima and Vala 2004; Guimarães 2004; Dahia 2008). Hence, my attempt to talk about race seriously and thoughtfully challenged notions of cordial race relations that is one of the fundamental expressions of racial democracy (Sales Jr. 2007).

According to Pastor Elidio, participants also reported being uncomfortable with questions related to women's role in the church (i.e. gender-related questions). I decided to incorporate issues of gender in my interview protocol after a couple of U.S. born, white women brought the issue of limited leadership opportunities for women in the church. They mentioned that as women, they could only lead children or other women, and reported problems of male chauvinism and indifference to their opinions.

Hence, as I began to ask about gender roles in the church, some may have assumed that I was talking about "gender ideology[14]." To understand this confusion, it suffices to say that issues related to sexuality have generated misinterpretation and prejudice in Brazil, particularly in religious circles. As a result, politicians have co-opted the more conservative sectors of the Evangelical and Catholic churches, taking advantage of the deep political divisions between left- and right-wing politics worldwide (Miskolci and Campana 2017). The now President Jair Bolsonaro was propelled to the national spotlight after his racist, sexist, xenophobic, and homophobic comments. However, it was his clash, during his tenure as a congressman, with feminists and supporters of the so-called "gender ideology," (Henrique 2018) that gave him access to and the sympathy of the religiously conservative sectors in Brazil. Evangelicals became an influential force, including those who had migrated to other countries. According to reports from a Brazilian news agency (Moreno 2018), in the 2018 presidential election, Bolsonaro won in all eight U.S. cities that offered ballots for Brazilian immigrants to vote.

I suspect that this political context of Brazil likely influenced my respondents' perception of me and the topics of my research. I also did not expect that one of the founders of the denomination, Pastor Manuel, was politically engaged in social media activism against "gender ideology." Using the Facebook page of the denomination mission's ministry, with more than

twenty thousand followers, he wrote about the visit of the American scholar, Judith Butler, to Brazil in 2017. In his note, he said that progressive Brazilians were intellectually colonized. He also wrote:

> "Leftists, after the overthrow and general failure of the 'Socialist Utopia,' are today a bunch of weirdos, orphans without a cause. They no longer have a viable existential project, so they adopt any intellectual nonsense. This is the central question that involves this modern and glamorous GENDER IDEOLOGY. That simple!" (emphasis in the original).

He further claimed that most Brazilians reject such ideology, which, according to him, is imposed by an intellectual elite.

Although this Facebook post by Pastor Manuel does not mention issues of race, it shows how politicized gender and race continue to be in conservative religious circles. Furthermore, this post reveals the approach through which lower rank pastors in congregations like the English-speaking one deal with such issues. For instance, when Pastor Elidio, the leader of the English-speaking church, text-messaged me to stop the interviews, he used the same language used by his leader, Pastor Manuel, on the Facebook post quoted above.

According to Pastor Elidio, the interview process "seemed biased and was steering the conversation in the wrong direction." He also connected my research questions to what is currently happening in the political process in Brazil. He questioned my methods and claimed bias in the process. He said, "It seemed like you were trying to get filtered responses from them to draw certain conclusions." Then, he continued:

> "I was under the impression that there would be no agenda or political presuppositions in the research. I believed that being a public university, the research would be neutral and

that no one would attempt to manipulate the information in order to justify a certain ideology. But unfortunately, the feedback I received from the people being interviewed has been different."

Although Pastor Elidio did not mention how many people felt uncomfortable and what questions made them uneasy, he swiftly concluded that I was pushing a specific ideology. To explain his plans for the future of the English-speaking church, he used a blend of ethnic transcendence with ethnic inclusion language (Marti 2005; Garces-Foley 2007):

"I'm not trying to become 'white,' and I do not have the intention to lead my congregation to become 'culturally white.' My intention is to pastor a church that has the culture of Heaven, a Christ-like culture. And this church is going to 'look like' the residents of South Florida, whether Black, White, Latino or Asian. The 'look' of our church is not restricted to a certain race or gender."

Pastor Elidio's decision to shut down my interviews, however, revealed more about the church's culture than his ethnic inclusivity language. More than just having people who "look" a certain way as members of the church, Pastor Elidio's action in response to members' reactions to my interview protocol exposed the colorblind institutional culture and the *white habitus* of the congregation. Considering the Brazilian roots of the English-speaking congregation and its adoption of white, middle-class evangelicalism culture, I suggest that the discomfort felt by members of the English-speaking congregation was rooted in what Robin DiAngelo (2018) termed, white fragility. White fragility is defined as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (quoted in Jayakumar and Adamian 2017: 916). Moreover, their decision that I discontinue my research allowed them to avoid having the existing racial structures challenged. My research, as perceived by the

English-speaking congregation's leadership, violated the invisible cordial racial agreement that exists in their white/colorblind space.

So, while my field rejection was not caused by the political polarization and the rise of alt-right politics, it was likely an important factor. Moreover, as explained above, the types of questions I was asking to congregants were enough to make them uncomfortable and to have them complain to the pastor.

Organization of the Dissertation

As already mentioned, this dissertation explores the sociological mechanisms involved in how first- and second-generation Brazilian immigrants and non-Brazilians negotiate their perceptions of racial ideologies amid their long-term goals for their congregations. These goals refer to how these congregations promote their religious identities for immigrants and non-immigrants in the United States, and how issues race, racism, and racial ideology although present and latent are not discussed and, most importantly, are perceived as taboo. Below I provide an expanded overview of each chapter. This first chapter I provided an overview of the study including a discussion of the methods and my positionality.

In chapter two, "Blacks Here are Racist Against Whites": White Brazilian Immigrants' Perceptions of Racism," I explore how white Brazilian immigrants from Central and South Florida understand racism in the U.S. context and how the racial ideologies that they adopt shape their perception of racial discrimination. I draw primarily on data collected from in-depth, open-ended interviews to I argue that white Brazilian immigrants' investment in colorblind rhetoric often leads them to categorize racism as a problem that is primarily perpetuated by African Americans. They also experience racial anxiety that they feel from their downgraded status as

immigrants in the U.S. and by black Americans' failure to meet their expectations for showing "respect" which fundamentally shapes such perceptions of racism.

In chapter three, "Transmitting Racism Through Religion? Racial Ideology, Ethnic Transcendence, and Racism Among Members and Leaders of Latina/o Led Ethnic and Multiethnic Congregations," I examine whether members and leaders of the Portuguese-speaking and English-speaking congregations investigated here embrace colorblind racial ideologies. Drawing on the concepts of colorblind racism and ethnic transcendence, I argue that members I interviewed from the churches investigated here adopt similar colorblind racist ideologies for different reasons. The Portuguese-speaking churches ignore racism in exchange for their emphasis on aspects of Brazilian immigrant identity, such as their work ethic and nationality. In contrast, the English-speaking church reproduces colorblind racism through its focus on cultivating a master religious identity and failure to provide a space for affirming members' racial diversity. In this process, they end up making discussions of issues of race a taboo.

In chapter four, "Escaping Post-Colonial Confinement: Perceptions of Reverse Missions Among Brazilian Americans and Non-Brazilians in South Florida," I examine how members perceive their English-speaking church in comparison to the Portuguese-speaking congregation from which they originated. Applying the concepts of racialized modernity and post-colonial confinement, I argue that the perceptions espoused by members of the English-speaking church reflect the racial ideologies and classist stereotypes designed to distance themselves from the perceived backwardness of the Brazilian immigrant community. Rather than challenging the dominant hierarchy that undervalues Brazilian culture, members of the English-speaking church reinforce these hierarchies through their negative evaluations of the Portuguese-speaking Brazilian church.

In chapter five, "Conclusion," I highlight the main findings of each chapter bringing them all together with a focus on their application to how researchers might better understand and study the changing congregations of Latina/o congregations, especially those congregations involving Brazil. I end the chapter by discussing the limitations of my analyses and suggesting future directions for research among Latina/o/x groups and the congregations.

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Endnotes

[1] Throughout this dissertation I use the elongated version of Latinx, where I include the specific gender vowels ("a" for female and "o" for male) along with the gender-neutral letter x. The reason I chose to refer to Latina/o/x this way is that it is not only gender inclusive but also language inclusive. People who speak Portuguese and/or Spanish languages cannot pronounce or understand what the word Latinx means.

[2] I do not treat race as a fixed category that is immutable and based on one's ancestry. In this study race is contextual and used interchangeably with ethnicity to convey one's understanding of their racial self regardless of how they may be perceived by the larger society.

[3] Each stand-alone chapter has its own more specific methods section.

[4] In the chapters that follow, I call these churches AmSF, BrSF, and BrCF churches in chapter three, and American and 1stGen churches in chapter four.

[5] "Attributes are the salient personal characteristics of the interviewees […] such as age, gender, race, occupation […], or specific contextual data…" (Deterding and Waters 2018: 17)

[6] According to NVivo's glossary webpage, "Nodes are central to understanding and working with NVivo—they let you gather related material in one place so that you can look for emerging patterns and ideas. You can create and organize nodes for themes or 'cases' such as people or organizations." http://help-nv10.qsrinternational.com/desktop/concepts/about_nodes.htm. Accessed Feb 8, 2020.

[7] "The American pragmatist philosopher Charles S. Pierce (1958) first introduced the concept of abduction as something between deduction and induction, referring to a selective and creative process in which the researcher carefully investigates how far empirical "facts" (or data) agree with theory or hypothesis and how far they call for modifications of it" (Thornberg 2012: 247).

[8] For this chapter, my hypothesis was that the churches investigated did not challenge a society-wide form of racism (colorblind racism) for not offering adequate spaces for discussing racial matters.

[9] The basic idea behind racial democracy is that "there is no prejudice or discrimination against non-whites in Brazil" (Hasenbalg and Huntington 1982: 129), because of widespread racial mixture. Such ideology (also known as *mestizaje* in other Latin American countries) led most people (especially those who identify as white) to believe that racism did not exist in Brazil while helped to hide racial inequality (see Joseph 2013).

[10] Although not all sociologists approach their research topics through a critical perspective, the general perception among Brazilians (especially after the rise of far-right politicians, see Serrao [2019]) is that social scientists in general and sociologists in particular are ideologically leftist or even considered communists.

[11] When I say "whiteness," I am using Edwards (2008) framework (not necessarily definition) applied to her study in multiracial congregations. For her, whiteness "…includes the normativity of white culture, white privilege, and white structural dominance." (1). Furthermore, whiteness means that members in these churches draw upon "religious-cultural tools of white evangelicals" (52) (i.e. individualism, relationalism, and antistructuralism) and leadership functions under "white cultural capital" (i.e "dominant white attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, networks, credentials, etc.").

[12] In this paper I do not talk about issues of gender as related to the leadership role of female church members for lack of space. Here, however, I will discuss the controversy around what was labeled in Brazil as "gender ideology" and its consequences for my research.

[13] Those who enjoy soccer may remember the infamous "It's not like I'm black, you know?" statement by famous soccer player Neymar Jr. in 2010, when asked if he had ever experienced racism. Commenting about Neymar's words, journalist Cleuci de Oliveira said in an opinion piece of the New York Times in June 30, 2018, "Neymar's words revealed the tricky, often contradictory ways that many Brazilians talk, and fail to talk, about race in a country with the largest population of black descendants outside of Africa."

[14] While this is not an expression recognized in academia, it is widely popular in religious circles in Brazil. Gender ideology as commonly understood is a reaction to gender studies theories originated in the United States and Europe that argue that there is a difference between gender and biological sex and that the culture of a society plays a role in determining gender-specific social behavior. (Matarazzo and Gonçalves 2019).

Chapter 2

"Blacks Here are Racist Against Whites": White Brazilian Immigrants' Perceptions of Racism

Abstract

This paper examines how white identifying Brazilian immigrants from Central and South Florida understand racism in the U.S. context and the extent to which the racial ideologies that they adopt shape their perception of racial discrimination. This analysis draws primarily on data collected from in-depth, open-ended interviews with twenty-five Brazilian respondents. Drawing on critical and cultural theories of race and racism I argue that white identifying Brazilian immigrants' (mis)-understanding of race and racism as well as their investment in 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 black Americans showing "respect" not being met. Brazilian immigrants' tendency to define racism as interpersonal politeness contributes to their perpetuation of anti-blackness, and renders them unable to articulate how they, themselves, are also disadvantaged by white supremacy.

Introduction

In an interview with Carolina, 19, a U.S.-born Brazilian, she recalls observing a recent Brazilian student make racist comments to his black friend. In her recollection, the Brazilian immigrant "jokingly said the 'n' word a lot …He was just throwing it out. And I was like, 'Dude have some respect. You don't say that." Her attempts to correct him were rebuffed because she notes, "the person didn't believe that what he said was so offensive." Despite Carolina's efforts to educate her fellow Brazilian about the (mis-) usage of the term, she notes that he ultimately "walked away with an attitude" because he felt entitled to use what he perceived as an innocent term[15]. Carolina, herself, was taught not to use the 'n' word in the U.S, and she provides context for her Brazilian colleagues' response:

> [I]t's kind of very common for you to say the 'n' word [in Brazil]. It doesn't mean anything. It is very common for whites and blacks to say it. Whoever comes from Brazil, don't understand that here is like, a little bit different […] if he said [the 'n' word] in Brazil it would have been just brushed off. Here, people actually hate you if you say that.

Studies examining the roots and perceptions of racial prejudice among diverse ethnoracial populations in the United States traditionally focus on the racial attitudes between whites and African Americans (Schuman 1997; Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000; Feagin and Sikes 1995). More recently, researchers point out to the continuation of racism, racialization, and stereotypes enacted by whites toward minority groups, including Asians (Chou and Feagin 2015; Park et al. 2015) and Latinas/os/xs (Ortiz and Telles 2012; Lacayo 2017; Telles and Ortiz 2008). They also investigate tensions between black and brown communities, especially as it relates to black and Korean and black and Latina/o/x communities (Min 2007; Johnson Jr. and Oliver 1989; Cheng and Espiritu 1989; Cummings and Lambert 1997; Vaca 2004). Such studies have

examined issues ranging from exploitation and interethnic conflict to potential alliances among minority groups. This paper falls under the latter body of research by studying Brazilian immigrants who fall along the color continuum and have a distinct expectation of how race functions in the United States. Specifically, my goal is to examine how Brazilian immigrants from Central and South Florida understand racism in the U.S. context and the extent to which the racial ideologies that they adopt shape their perception of racial attitudes.

Prejudice and Racial Ideology Among Latinas/os/xs in the U.S. and Latin America

Prejudice and tension among minority populations have been less investigated in comparison to anti-black racism propagated by whites (Sanchez and Espinosa 2016; Vargas et al. 2016). Among Latinas/os/xs, for instance, studies have highlighted in-group discrimination over issues such as immigration status, country of origin, and linguistic skills (Gutiérrez 1995; Ochoa 2000; García Bedolla 2005; Aranda et al. 2014). When it comes to prejudice across racial and ethnic groups, researchers have found that increased immigration from Latin America and Asia has led to increased prejudice and discrimination among African Americans, Asians, and Latinas/os/xs (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Johnson et al. 1997). Explanations vary from competition in the job market (Bobo and Hutchings 1996) to political orientation (Faught and Hunter 2012), to increased interaction among minority groups, including those who are living in the rural South (Marrow 2011; Kochhar et al. 2005).

Other scholars, however, acknowledge the role of race for prejudice among minority groups. More specifically, these studies focus on Latinas/os/xs' racial diversity to examine how light-skinned Latinas/os/xs internalize racial ideologies to the extent that they attempt to pass as non-Hispanic white to find acceptance as Americans. Light-skinned Latinas/os/xs also tend to

discriminate against blacks and indigenous Latinas/os/xs because of skin color and social class privilege. Two recent studies – one in South Florida and one in Texas – among Latinas/os/xs reveal these dynamics (Aranda et al. 2014; Dowling 2014).

Aranda and her colleagues' research in the Miami-Dade area found that *mestizaje*, immigrants' diverse racial understandings, and social class are used as whitening factors that create racial boundaries and benefit light-skinned Latina/o/x groups while disadvantaging indigenous Latinas/os/xs and blacks (Aranda et al. 2014). In Texas, Dowling (2014) found that Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans fall on a *racial ideology continuum* when it comes to choosing their racial identification. Those who wish to self-identify as white, abide by a color-blind ideology just as many non-Hispanic whites do, however for different reasons. Usually, these reasons range from a belonging strategy (being white equals being American) to defensive strategies (being color-blind avoids racial division). On the other side of the continuum, Dowling identified those who have experienced racism and racialization. These Latinas/os/xs decided to self-identify racially as "other," thus abiding by an anti-racist view on race.

Dowling (2014: 52-53) then concludes:

> … what distinguishes "other race" Mexican American respondents from those who identify as "white" on the census is not greater attachment to their Mexican heritage, lower socioeconomic status, darker skin color, or more experiences with exclusion and differential treatment, as some have hypothesized. Rather, it is how they see racism and the strategies they employ to deal with discrimination that separate the two groups.

For Dowling, being subjected to racism plays a central role on how Mexican Americans determine their racial identity. Central to these studies is the differential distribution of power and privilege among racial groups. Usually, non-Hispanic whites reap most of the benefits of a

racist society (Feagin 2012; Bonilla-Silva 2006; Roediger 2007; Massey and Denton 2003; Mills 1997). However, as the United States racial stratification becomes more complex, possibly resembling that of Latin American nations, light-skinned Latinas/os/xs – or as Bonilla Silva (2002) contends, honorary whites – may be empowered to defend their social status and to discriminate against blacks and dark-skinned Latinas/os/xs (Aranda et al. 2014, see also Bonilla-Silva 2004; Bonilla-Silva and Embrick 2006). These dynamics, nonetheless, have historical precedents in Latin America itself, as the black and Indigenous populations have been "otherized" as well as perceived and treated distinctively from the white and light-skinned mixed people due to various understandings of *mestizaje* (Wade 2010; Hooker 2005; Silva and Saldivar 2018; Weinstein 2015).

Racial Democracy and the Transnational Racial Optic

The way Brazilians who have immigrated to the U.S. understand race is rooted in how race is constructed in Brazil. Historically, Brazilian social and cultural institutions have promoted a racial ideology of racial democracy which was an attempt to celebrate cordial race relations (Freyre 1933; Guimarães 2001; Joseph 2013b). 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 (Silva and Paixao 2014; Telles 2004). Second, it vilifies and erases black identity in favor of white or *morena/o* identity (Pravaz 2009; Bailey and Fialho 2018; see also Harris et al. 1993). Finally, it neutralizes antidiscrimination strategies (Bailey 2002) by ignoring structural and racial inequality among the black and brown populations (Hasenbalg and Huntington 1982; López 2012; Werneck 2016).

Hence, Brazilian racial democracy is a racist ideology disguised by celebratory racial myths. The racist aspect of racial democracy becomes more transparent when white identifying Brazilians migrate to the United States. In the United States, Brazilians 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. Even though few scholars have argued that the U.S. race relations are becoming similar to Latin America's colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva 2002) and Brazil's race relations are converging into U.S.'s multiculturalism (Daniel 2006), historical comparative studies have found that Brazil and U.S. race relations "are often regarded as reverse mirror images of one another" (Lamont et al. 2016: 12). One way this is true is by the construction of who is categorized as black. To illustrate this, Marrow (2003: 428) contends 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 'onedrop' rule, so that anyone with any European ancestry at all is defined as 'potentially white', or at least 'not black.'

Marrow's quote above is aligned with Martes (2007:233) findings among Brazilian immigrants in Boston that "identify themselves, in racial terms, as white, despite the fact that they are very often regarded as black or non-white" by the U.S. population. The structurally different classifications and organization of race in the U.S., unavoidably make Brazilian immigrants compare the two countries' racial system. Again, the work of Marrow (2003: 448) on second-generation Brazilians in Boston provides the lens through which one can better understand this dynamic. She has found that Brazilians believe that blacks in the United States

are "more powerful than Hispanic/Latinos because of their birthright claims to U.S. citizenship […], and because of [B]lacks' greater political power in the USA than Hispanics/Latinos…"

Moreover, Brazilian immigrants understand the advances made in society among African Americans through the Civil Rights Movement and the legal consequences for disrespecting blacks in the U.S. (Marrow 2003). More recent studies confirm Marrow's findings while adding further discoveries. For instance, Joseph (2015) devotes an entire chapter to discuss the effects that migration and the perception that race and racism have on return migrants and non-migrants in the Brazilian city of Governador Valadares. Joseph's findings, although similar to Marrow's (2003) regarding how Brazilian immigrants attempt to distance themselves from Spanish-speaking Latinas/os/xs and their perception of U.S. blacks vis-à-vis Brazilian blacks, added a vital transnational component for understanding the fluidity of these dynamics in multiple contexts.

To explain such dynamics, scholars have identified cognitive processes rooted in local culture that allow for immigrants from Latin America to negotiate racial categories transnationally. This mental process has been called *racial schema* and is defined as "the bundle of racial categories and the set of rules for what they mean, how they are ordered, and how to apply them to oneself and others" (Roth 2012: 12). A number of institutions shape individuals' racial schemas throughout their lives in a reciprocal process influenced by as well as influencing a shared culture of race (Roth 2012). Drawing on Roth and applying specifically to the Brazilian case, Joseph (2015: 7) develops the concept of a *transnational racial optic* which she defines as the "lens through which migrants observe, negotiate, and interpret race by drawing simultaneously on transnationally formed racial concepts from the host and home societies." In short, these concepts help to explain how immigrants understand race before they migrate, how it

is negotiated and shaped during migration, and how new forms of racial understandings are carried out with them when or if migrants return to their home countries.

However, neither of these studies account for Latinas/os/xs perceptions of racism coming from African Americans. Marrow (2003) and Joseph (2015) studies are significant for showing the value Brazilians give to American citizenship and for highlighting the empowerment and inclusion of the African American community in the U.S., especially when compared to a society that boasts about their cordial race relations. Moreover, Joseph (2015, 2013b) studies are particularly relevant to demonstrate how different understandings of racial democracy may challenge previously held beliefs about race relations in Brazil. According to her, Brazilians hold three different perspectives about racial democracy. The first is the achieved perspective that there is no racism in Brazil. The second is the oppressive perspective, where Brazilians believe there are racism and tense race relations in their country. Finally, there is the aspirational perspective where Brazilians think racism is real in Brazil, but in general, the country aspires to be non-racist. Black and brown Brazilian respondents in the U.S. usually held an oppressive view of Brazilian race relations, especially after comparing with "socially mobile [B]lack Americans" (Joseph 2015: 114). White and light-skinned Brazilians' experience in the U.S., argues Joseph, "made Brazil seem more cordial and aspirational…" (Ibid). These findings are relevant because as light-skinned Brazilians experience racialization and discrimination in the U.S., they see Brazil (where they experience "minimal social exclusion") as less racist and the U.S. as more racist.

What is not clear, however, are the mechanisms through which Brazilian immigrants' interactions with minority groups shape their perceptions of racism. Even Joseph's (2015) account on Brazilian's perception of African American racism is limited to the dynamics of

residential segregation and social isolation. Her research does not account for the actual interactions among Brazilians and African Americans that create such perceptions. Hence, as the U.S. moves away from the biracial system of race relations and stratification to one that accounts for the experience of its growing non-black and non-white populations, it is imperative to understand the experiences of Latinas/os/xs of different races, colors, cultures, languages, social classes, and immigration statuses.

I draw on critical and cultural theories of race and racism to analyze Brazilian immigrants' narrative of interaction with U.S. blacks in general and African Americans in particular. I triangulate my findings with the large scholarship produced on Brazilian immigration to the U.S. and Brazilian race relations. For instance, researchers have studied Brazilian immigrant communities' "invisibility" in the U.S. (Margolis 1994); their national, racial, and ethnic identities (Martes 2007; Beserra 2005; Fritz 2010); their second-generation (Cebulko 2014); and their transnational understandings of race (Joseph 2013a; 2013b; 2015). In terms of race relations in Brazil, researchers have investigated the history of race relations (Skidmore 2005); theorized abut about racial democracy and racism (Guimarães 2001; 2004); applied racial formation theory to the Brazilian context (Winant 1992); examined the effects of skin color for accentuating racial inequality (Telles 2004); explored the ways Afro-Brazilian families negotiate racial hierarchies (Hordge-Freeman 2015); and compiled studies on the intersection of race and knowledge production (Mitchell-Walthour and Hordge-Freeman 2016).

Data and Methods

For this paper, I focus primarily on data from in-depth, open-ended interviews with 25 respondents. These are Brazilian immigrants, defined as those who came to the United States at

the age of 15 or older (14 women and 11 men). All respondents were drawn from a purposive sample of Brazilian immigrant and Brazilian American members of Brazilian congregations in South and Central Florida. Participants' ages range between 18 and 50 years old. From the 25 Brazilian immigrant participants, only three self-identify racially as *Pardo* (brown) in Brazil, and Latina/o/x in the U.S. Another 16 respondents self-identify as white in Brazil and shift their racial identification between Latina/o/x and white in the United States. Finally, six respondents did not declare their racial identity. All names were changed to protect their anonymity.

I conducted interviews in three different ways: in-person, through video-phone apps (FaceTime and WhatsApp), and one via email. Except for one written interview, all the other interviews were audio recorded. Interviewees answered a series of questions under four major themes: race, racism, gender, and immigration. Several of the race questions followed Bonilla-Silva and Forman's (2000) questionnaire used to assess non-Hispanic whites' racial ideology. Questions were on the following themes: affirmative action, social distance, and the significance of discrimination. Differently from Bonilla-Silva and Forman, however, I asked open-ended questions instead of survey, multiple choice questions. I later transcribed the interviews and imported them into NVivo software for coding and analysis.

Findings

Throughout my analysis of the findings, I noted how Brazilian immigrants characterized their interactions with U.S. blacks (African Americans and other ethnic blacks). These narratives revealed a typical pattern where Brazilian immigrants believed that U.S. blacks were racist toward whites, a group to which many Brazilians felt that they also belonged. My findings highlight the specific lived experiences and explanations used by these immigrants to rationalize

the allegedly black racist behavior. Important to note is that while Brazilians widely recognize that there is racism in Brazil when asked if they know someone who is racist, they are unable to provide a name. Lilia Schwarcz (1996) concludes that Brazilians believe they live on an island of racial democracy surrounded by an ocean of racism. This perception of wide racism in Brazil is essential because my conversations with white-identifying Brazilians around issues of race invoked the constant "I am not racist" mantra. Throughout my interviews, I heard different stories about interactions between Brazilians and African Americans that invariably ended with Brazilians believing that U.S. blacks acted racist. Schwarcz's findings resonate with my interviewees, as they were oblivious to the possibility of them reproducing racism while they perceived blacks as racist. For this section, I will concentrate primarily on the narratives of first-generation Brazilians who self-identify as white with shifts between white and Latina/o/x (N=16). Their stories are necessary to understand the extent to which a transnational racial optic (Joseph 2015) and downgraded social position shape their perceptions of racism.

Downgraded positionality

As Brazilian immigrants struggle to understand their position within the U.S. racial and ethnic hierarchy, one of the factors that they face as a group is a significantly downgraded status when compared to their lives in Brazil. This downgraded status is as much a question of legality, as it is economic, social and even racial. For instance, Roberta, 41, abandoned her career as a psychologist, where she "coordinated the department of psychology" at an institute created by her church in Brazil. She recalls that "the church's institute had lawyers, physicians, and psychologists who served the poorest…" in her city. Roberta and her family (husband and three children) came to the U.S. to pursue Roberta's academic goals. "I have a goal; I want to speak English. I already have plans here. I want to continue in my area, I want to do a master's degree,

and a doctorate." However, by the time of the interview, Roberta was frustrated at herself because she was not learning the language fast enough. "Sometimes it is disheartening because I've been in this country for almost two and a half years and I'm still in basic English. Then I start to think, 'Am I ever going to learn?'" Roberta recognizes that the slow process to learn English is affecting her wellbeing to the point of sometimes enter "in a state of crisis."

Similarly, Alexandro, 27, another white identifying respondent says, "I never did heavy work in Brazil." Despite coming from a working-class background, Alexandro was able to move upward economically in Brazil. "Since I was a little kid, I started to develop an interest to learn languages," he said. "I took an English course, Japanese and Spanish courses. I always liked learning other languages. So, when I turned eighteen, I began to work at the airport's reception desk." From the airport, Alexandro was able to find a better job at a Hotel in Rio de Janeiro. He remembers that time with a bit of nostalgia, "so [in the Hotel] I always worked this way, [wearing] a suit, unconcerned, air-conditioning." However, violence and political turmoil motivated him to migrate to the United States, "I could not take it anymore, as much as I did well financially and I had a comfortable life, I was unhappy with the situation of Brazil […], Rio de Janeiro is very complicated with violence." In the U.S. Alexandro began to work in construction. "I decided to erase everything I've done [in Brazil], and I got here with zero experience." He continued, "I've never been scared of work. It was hard to adapt, it is hard work, but I did my best…"

Perhaps Maria's experience as a house cleaner summarizes the downgrade effect many white identifying Brazilian immigrants go through in the U.S. Speaking about whether she had already experienced discrimination, Maria, 51, states:

> "I believe I am not discriminated for being an immigrant, but I imagine it's because of the work I do. We have always seen this in Brazil. You know? This type of discrimination I have already seen in Brazil. I always had people who worked for me in Brazil, but they were people I never considered as domestic workers [*empregadas*]. Now I see this type of discrimination here."

Maria's new positionality allows her to compare the time she used to have domestic workers in Brazil to now have to clean houses herself. Maria recognizes that domestic workers in Brazil are discriminated against by homeowners who hire their services. Hence, when she perceives similar treatment, she attributes to the kind of work she does and not to her immigrant status. According to a study organized by the Migration Policy Institute[16], although "Brazilian immigrants have high levels of educational attainment compared to the overall foreign- and native-born populations" they also have "relatively high share of unauthorized individuals." (Zong and Batalova 2016). Margolis (2013) contends that approximately 63% of all Brazilians in the U.S. are undocumented. This situation, consequently, reduces work opportunities for many of these migrants, thus contributing to their downgraded positionality.

Nevertheless, limited professional opportunities and undocumented statuses are not the only dynamics impacting Brazilians downgraded status. A third factor happens through racialization. As the interchangeable labels Latina/o/x and Hispanic continue to be stigmatized and associated with inferiority in the U.S. (Lacayo 2017), many Brazilian immigrants continually attempt to distance themselves from these categories (Martes 2007; Marrow 2003; Joseph 2015). For instance, persistent racialization may increase Roberta's plan to learn English faster to pursue her goals, thus adding to her state of crisis, "… usually [when] I get somewhere, and someone comes, and I say, 'hi, how are you?' The person begins to speak with me in Spanish,

you know? [The person] does not even continue the dialogue with me in English, [the person] already starts talking to me in Spanish. I say [to myself] 'what did I do wrong?' 'How are you?' is in English, (laughs), but [the person] continues [the conversation] with me in Spanish." These interactions make Roberta question her "whiteness" and forces her to reevaluate her new "middle ground" position in the U.S. "It must be because of my physiognomy," she says. "Because the American, he [or she] is either white, really white, light eye and blonde, or he [or she] is black. So, this middle ground [talking about herself] is not characterized to be American." Joseph (2013: 557-558) maintains that "...many Americans still think of Brazil as a nonwhite Latin American country. [...] Brazilian immigrants are seen as nonwhite Hispanics in U.S. society and are not in a privileged social position to collectively contest such an identification." This reality for white identifying Brazilian immigrants forces them to reinterpret their new positionality because of persistent racialization.

Notably, many of my respondents who reported to be white recognized some incongruence between how they see themselves and how others see them (Vargas 2015). Part of the process of socialization into U.S. racial categories for Brazilian newcomers come from filling out the demographic's information of official forms. Typically, these forms serve to get immigrants familiarized with the new categories imposed on them. Carmen, 41, who migrated three years ago, was puzzled when she realized that the U.S. had an additional category for white people from Latin America. She said, "Surprisingly, when I arrived here, on the forms, in any form, I saw a difference between white and Hispanic." She continued, "Regardless of whether the Hispanic is white or not, he [or she needs to] mark [Hispanic] as a race." "This was my surprise, to classify Hispanic different from white..." she concluded. Even though Carmen conflated race and ethnicity into one single category, the fact that she understood Hispanic as a

more salient category to the point of surpassing her "whiteness," shows how racialization happens even when people are not interacting with others. Carmen's remarks illustrate how Latinas/os/xs may perceive the Hispanic category as a racial category (see Roth 2012). In the next section, I will discuss the interactions of white identifying Brazilian immigrants with African Americans considering Brazilian immigrants' double perception of U.S. blacks' upward mobility and their downgraded positionality.

Perceptions of African American prejudice

When speaking about the dynamics of racism, white identifying interviewees were hasty to point out that racism was not only committed by whites in the U.S. For instance, Renato, 42 said, "We also see discrimination coming from blacks toward whites, you know? If you live [in a neighborhood] where the majority are black, they will exclude you." For Alexandro, 27, racism is a two-way street, "the word racism has to do with race, right? So, it is not only white against blacks but blacks against whites, right?" He further suggested that African Americans are responsible for segregation, which is passed from one generation to the next.

> Nowadays you do not see restrooms [only] for black, [only] for whites and such. But the residue from that time remains and is passed from grandfather to father to grandchild, and so on. Therefore, when a child is born in a black neighborhood, the black child will hear right from the parents that they should not blend in with the whites because the parents heard from grandparents, grandparents heard from great-grandparents, and so [segregation] stay that way. Here [in the U.S.], when you go to a black neighborhood, there are only blacks [living there]. It seems like they just want to stick together among themselves. You do not see... it is very difficult to see a black [man] with a white [woman], for example, holding hands on the street. In Brazil, you see [that] a lot.

As one of the fundamental mechanisms for racial inequality reproduction in the U.S. (Anderson 2010; Massey and Denton 2003), residential segregation affects all ethnoracial groups (including Brazilians). However, many Brazilian immigrants perceive residential segregation simply as a matter of personal choice that is reproduced by family socialization. Hence, many Brazilian immigrants believe that self-segregation creates hostility when non-black groups enter black spaces – or neighborhoods. For instance, Joana, 33 understood as racist African Americans' reaction to her entering a black area. She was driving her car – a convertible eclipse – "I do not remember where I was going, but a lot of black people started to stare at me," she said. Joana recalled that because she was driving in a "dead-end street" she "had to turn back and get out of there." She remembers people making hand gestures and even "some of them screaming loudly," to the point that she "got terrified." Then, she concludes, "So, every time I talk about racism, I remember that day, you know?" Even though Joana interprets this interaction as strictly racial, there is a class component where white Brazilians conflate blackness with poverty and criminality (Souza 2017), which may increase her fear of black people.

The failure to understand structural racism and the tendency to attribute racial inequality to the choices of black people is part of colorblind racism's abstract liberalism (Bonilla-Silva 2006). White identifying Brazilians also make use of abstract liberalism to blame Afro-Brazilians for their unequal position in society. For instance, Dalva, 35, believes that Afro-Brazilians tend towards self-indulgence and victimization. When asked about the differences she sees between Afro-Brazilians and African Americans, she said, "I see a lot of victimization [in Brazil]." She then gave an example to illustrate what she meant by victimization.

> "I have a friend who went to do a psychological evaluation for a job. After she passed that test, she made a comment like 'now it's the interview. If there is only one position,

and one white and two blacks like me there, I'm certain the white will get the job, right?' I told my friend, 'what you are saying does not make sense. Are they going to judge the candidates by their color or by their performance?' This is the type of victimization I'm talking about. [Afro-Brazilians] always put themselves in a lesser position than others."

Dalva's perception of Afro-Brazilians' victimization and Joana and Alexandro's perception of African Americans' racist self-segregation are two sides of the same colorblind/racial democracy coin. These stories reveal the (mis-) understanding of structural racism of many white identifying Brazilians. Additionally, perceiving racism only as interpersonal politeness shows how white Brazilians are unconscious of and privileged by systemic racism in Brazil. Since there is minimal neighborhood and institutional segregation in Brazil (Lamont et al. 2016), Brazilians tend to frame Afro-Brazilians' inequality and disadvantages in meritocratic terms and consider the role of socioeconomic class to be unrelated to race.

Although white identifying Brazilian immigrants agree that there is racism in both countries, they usually perceive the U.S. as more racist than Brazil (Joseph 2015). Part of the reason for regarding Brazil as less racist is the persistent ideology of racial democracy brought by middle-class, white identifying Brazilian immigrants. Through a racial frame of conduct, which is part of this ideology, white identifying Brazilian immigrants expect to "be respected" by blacks in public interactions. Usually, these unspoken hierarchical rules set the parameters of the perceived cordial race relations in Brazil (Sales Jr. 2006; Guimarães 2012). These notions of "the right" racial conduct may explain the low numbers of discrimination reported by black Brazilians when compared to U.S. Blacks. In Brazil, Datafolha survey found that only 22 percent of black Brazilians stated, "ever having been discriminated against," whereas in the U.S., "76

percent of African Americans reported personal experiences of discrimination" (Lamont et al. 2016: 154). Below, I will move from general perceptions of racism to the actual narratives of interactions between white identifying Brazilian immigrants and African Americans that reinforce such attitudes.

Interactions with African Americans

Brazilian immigrants I interviewed interact with African Americans and other black individuals in the U.S. in a variety of places and situations. Specifically, to white identifying Brazilians, previous racial socialization serves as the lens through which they interpret their interactions with Africans Americans (Joseph 2015; Roth 2012), as well as their new social position as immigrants. For instance, when asked to provide a personal experience of racism, Ricardo, 35, a former entrepreneur who migrated to the U.S. because of violence in Brazil provided the following narrative:

> One time, when I had a pain on my sciatic nerve, I was moving like this [he puts his hand on his waist]. And a young black man who was coming out of the convenience store at the gas station, when he saw me like that [showing his hand on his waist], I don't know what he thought. Maybe that I was armed or I that was going to shoot him or something. And he looked at me and did not turn his back on me at all. He went to his car walking backward looking at me. He opened the door of his car and got into his car looking at me. He just turned his back after he left. So, here in the US, there's a little…, no, there's a lot [of racism].

In this excerpt, Ricardo's perception of racism reverses the logic of the way white Brazilians react to interracial exchanges in public spaces in Brazil. Usually, white Brazilians feel threatened by poor, dark-skinned or black Brazilians due to internalized societal messages that

present black Brazilians as criminals. An ethnographic study conducted by anthropologist Robin Sheriff (2001) in Rio de Janeiro's urban areas showed this internalized predisposition to see whiteness as good and blackness as bad and evil. One of Sheriff's respondents said, "If you see a white man, who is well dressed, oh, then it's fine, right? But if you see a *negro*, you think he is a bandit, a mugger, and you become afraid" (Sheriff 2001: 129).

Hence, to interpret this interaction, Ricardo made use of available racial schemas (Roth 2012) rooted in Brazilian racial relations, where ethnoracial and class discrimination go hand and hand (Souza 2017). Even though he places himself as the victim of racism, his rationale bears a resemblance to how white Brazilians feel about and react to black Brazilians. It also fits the general perception among white identifying Brazilians that blacks are racist. Though, in a new society where blacks are socially mobile and empowered by a positive representation in media and culture, Ricardo, who is an undocumented immigrant, feels discriminated against because of his perception of being a potential threat to U.S. blacks.

This next interaction, told by Roberta, 41, happened when she was at a Walmart store. Similar to Ricardo's story above, Roberta's account is also filtered by her previous socialization into racial democracy ideology and her downgraded social status as an immigrant. During the interview, Roberta was explaining how Americans were so "correct with things." She even mentioned that she considered them as "standards of excellence." Based on these remarks, I introduced the subject of race by asking Roberta if she could apply the term "American," that she was speaking so positively about, to Americans of all races, she said:

> No […] in Florida there is a significant difference of behaviors and cultures when it comes to different races, between whites and blacks […]. I have even had two interesting experiences at Walmart. I saw a woman with two children. She was one of these typical

Americans, with blond, almost red hair. I played with her children, and she looked at me and smiled and said something I did not understand because I had just arrived here, but she said it smiling. And then, I did the same thing with a little child who was being held by a black [woman], at the checkout line at Walmart. I played with the little girl and the person who was carrying, supposedly the mother looked at me and made a face like 'if you continue, you will be in trouble.' So, what I said [about Americans] was about a specific group. I cannot generalize to all races. And even by what we learn [by living here], that it really is about people who are in a way, well not all, I could ever say that, but these people [African Americans] do not behave appropriately.

Rodrigo - Ok, you talk about behavior in what form, what kind?

Roberta - I would say they are people who behave somewhat offensive […], and this comes with the culture of slavery and civil war….

Roberta continued explaining that Florida had a different a black culture from the rest of the country because it was, according to her, the last state to abolish slavery. She then continued to narrate another interaction with African Americans, but now in a different state.

… Because of this [supposedly late emancipation], they have this behavior that is passed from father to son and is forming this culture very different from what we imagine. But this is the Florida context because they [her Brazilian friends] have already told me that in other states it is not like that. I was in South Carolina on Thanksgiving, and I went to Walmart again, and I was impressed by the politeness [*educação*] of the groups of blacks who were there. I was impressed. I was in a tight aisle, and my cart was blocking the passage a bit, and they said 'excuse me,' and then after they passed, they thanked me, greeted me, and finally smiled at me. And this is a behavior you do not expect. But I've

seen that in South Carolina. There's a difference among the blacks from [South] Carolina to the groups here in Florida.

Roberta's remarks started by her perception of being prejudiced against by an African American woman who did not admit a stranger interacting with her child. Roberta even compares a similar experience she had with the child of a "typical American" woman [read, white], to frame the African American woman's behavior as offensive. Consequently, Roberta's interpretation of the event was that she did nothing wrong; she was polite, behaved, and displayed a middle-class habitus (Bourdieu 2008 [1990]). She then compared her interactions with African Americans in different U.S. states to show the uniqueness of blacks in Florida. In the context of these interactions, there are multiple and intersecting dynamics. Here, however, I will concentrate on just two, social class and race[17].

Brazilian sociologist Jessé Souza contends that in Brazil "class prejudice is racial prejudice" (Souza 2017: 82). He considers that Brazilian lowest class – what he calls *ralé* – is not only treated poorly, especially by the middle-class but also represents a continuation of slavery or what slavery represented in the country. Those who are part of the *ralé*, "mostly black and brown people" are "stigmatized as dangerous and inferior and pursued […] by police vehicles with a license to kill…" (Ibid: 83).

Furthermore, this violence is justified by the societal perception of black Brazilians as the "enemy of order," meaning "decorum, respect for property, and security" (Ibid: 78). Brazilian middle-class, argues Souza, is complacent and numb to this reality because "it was made invisible, and therefore, never made conscious" (Souza 2017: 106). Such dynamics show how racial democracy plays a role in the perpetuation of inequality and racism in Brazil. Roberta's interaction with African Americans in the U.S. reveal much of the racial and class dynamics

presented above, but one that is rooted in Roberta's new positionality vis-à-vis U.S. blacks. Immigration has "downgraded" Roberta's status which forced her to rethink race relations.

On the one hand, Roberta's new understanding is that blacks in the U.S. will not validate the superior position that she believes she should be afforded. On the other hand, she continues to perpetuate old forms of racism by framing black Americans as offensive and racist. Roberta's use of slavery and civil war locates the roots of African Americans' aggressive behavior which is contrasted with the cordial and passive behavior she associates with Afro Brazilians. Even the patronizing language used by Roberta to talk about her surprise for being treated with respect in South Carolina demonstrates how she continues to reproduce Brazilian social hierarchies in the context of immigration, despite her struggles to establish herself in this new context. Roberta's disbelief that African Americans were polite not only illustrates her racial and class biases but also bear a resemblance to how middle-class Brazilian immigrants treat other immigrants from Brazil who have a poor or working-class background. Immigrants who come from a middle-class background (despite the downgrade effects of immigration) use the idea of being educated or polite as a mechanism of differentiation to distance themselves from other immigrants with less cultural capital (Martins Jr. 2016). Martins Jr. (2016), in his study on the production and negotiation of difference among Brazilian immigrants in London, argues that middle-class Brazilians feel "out of place" within the immigrant community because "they have to interact, in a symmetrical or subordinated way, with bodies that used to serve them" (Martins Jr. 2016: 190; see Aranda et al. 2014 for a discussion of the concept of "disidentification"). Similar dynamics may explain Roberta's surprise to U.S. black politeness.

The interactions provided by white identifying Brazilian immigrants analyzed here were so far in places and situations where no professional relationship existed. The next example

comes from Marcia, 42, an undocumented, white identifying Brazilian who has been in the U.S. for almost ten years. She said:

> When I first got here, I went to work with a Brazilian woman who had a cleaning business. I worked [cleaning] an office in the morning and then I was back at night. It was a big office, you know? And I suffered a lot of racism with blacks because many blacks worked there. I was vacuuming on the other side of the room, and they would unplug the power cord, you know? It was a huge place; I had to use four extensions to clean everything. Then I had to walk to plug the power cord back again and then walk to the vacuum, and [when I got to the vacuum] they would unplug again. There was even a time when they put a lot of Styrofoam in the microwave, they had about 15 microwaves in the kitchen, and they turned on all the microwaves so that the Styrofoam would catch fire, you know? And I had to clean all the microwaves. In that same office, they covered the bathroom sink drain and 'pooped' in the sink. I just freaked out, but because I did not want to lose my job as I had just arrived in the US, right? I desperately, said, I'm going to clean, and I went on and cleaned [the bathroom sinks], you know?

Even though she worked for another Brazilian immigrant and not for the company that operated the office, she was under a subordinate position vis-à-vis the office workers who constantly bullied her. A system of double exploitation – from her co-national and the office workers – then exacerbates the power discrepancy experienced by Marcia.

Studies on organizations have shown that supervisors rather than co-workers commit workplace racial/ethnic bullying happens across racial groups (Fox and Stallworth 2005; see Namie and Namie 2000). Moreover, these studies have documented how abuse supervision, also called supervisory bullying or petty tyranny, influences employees' sense of life and job

fulfillment and work alienation (Duffy and Ferrier 2003; Fox and Stallworth 2005). Before examining Marcia's increased perception of African American racism due to her downgraded positionality, it is important to understand what Alves (2009) has called "the immigrant regime of production." Examining Brazilian immigrant networks developed in religious organizations, Alves (2009:143) concluded that many enter the job market "in a position of vulnerability." He further explains that "the fact that the […] immigrant does not speak English and does not know how to get around or how to negotiate the rules and regulations of the host society becomes the justification for low salaries and unsafe work conditions." (Alves 209: 143). Demonstration of the immigrant regime of production in Marcia's case is perceived as she never reported the kind of treatment she received to her superiors in the office. She said:

> [A]t the time I did not speak English, right? I had just arrived in the U.S. from Brazil, and it was my first job. So at that time, I did not speak any English. That's how I worked there; I vacuumed the floor always looking down so that no one would talk to me or ask me anything. My intention really was not to let anyone speak to me because I would not know how to respond.

The language barrier and other issues, like an undocumented status, became a recipe for Marcia's exploitation. Hence, the second group exploiting Marcia were African Americans, which added to her perception of black racism. Some studies have documented African American's sentiment toward Latina/o/x and black immigrants from the Caribbean for taking away jobs and other resources (Johnson Jr. and Oliver 1989, Min 2007; Waters 1999). However, despite the motivations behind Marcia's bullying, she perceived it as racially motivated. Reflecting upon this episode, Marcia concluded that black people are racists because she had "suffered enough here with them." She knew she was in a subordinated economic and social

position that was aggravated by her immigrant condition. “I talked to my husband. We both would get home crying,” she remembers. “In one occasion I called him [referring to her husband], and he said, ‘let it all go and leave.’ I said ‘no, I can’t lose my job’” Marcia said. This experience made Marcia conclude that race relations in the United States were the opposite of that in Brazil. She said, “blacks here [in the U.S.] are racist against whites; they do not like whites.” Marcia, then continued, “And in Brazil, it's the opposite, whites are racist toward blacks.”

Discussion and Conclusion

Like Carolina’s recent-arrived Brazilian friend in her school described at the beginning of this paper, white identifying Brazilians continue to perpetuate Brazilian racial norms or as some will say “racism Brazilian style[18]” in the United States. However, as Brazilian immigrants understand that African Americans do not abide by the “cordial racial model,” by not accepting jokes and other offensive behavior, they repeatedly describe being victims of prejudice by African Americans, instead of by whites. Brazilian racial democracy ideology, although assumed to be based on racial egalitarianism, has always been rooted in anti-blackness (Hordge-Freeman 2015, see also Telles 2004) and the overvaluation of whiteness. Consequently, socialization into racial democracy ideology may obscure Brazilian immigrants’ perception of potential negative effects of whiteness. Despite being racialized and discriminated against by whites, many Brazilians continue to see white as a more common racial identity for themselves – even if they recognize some hybridity (Martes 2007). Although according to a recent national survey (PNAD[19]) in Brazil, the population is increasingly identifying as brown and black and less as

white in recent years, light-skinned Brazilians continue to "aspire to whiten themselves biologically, socially and culturally" (Warren and Sue 2011).

The main finding from this study is that 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. Brazilian immigrants' tendency to define racism as interpersonal politeness contributes to their perpetuation of anti-blackness, and renders them unable to articulate how they, themselves, are disadvantaged by white supremacy.

Diffused among different racial ideologies, white supremacy in Latin America fosters national narratives of ethnoracial relations, racial mixing, whitening, and colorism – i.e., *mestizaj*e ideologies of various forms and contexts. Additionally, as white identifying Brazilian immigrants interact with African Americans in a "space of power relations" (Grosfoguel 2008: 608), they interpret these experiences through the lens of their loss of social status and racialization; thus, perceiving African Americans as having higher status and as being oppressors and racists.

In many ways, Brazil's colonial history in Latin America, along with its race-based system of slavery, bears a resemblance to the United States in which both countries have developed their societies on the enslavement of Africans for several centuries. Embedded in the dynamics presented here is a global phenomenon where race, power, and immigration are intertwined. Still, geography plays a role as whiteness from non-core nation-states – within the

capitalist world-system – (Wallerstein 2011), may be perceived as inferior by whites and non-whites in core-nations. In a context where "individuals and groups cross the globe, and their racial positions shift; marginalized here, privileged there; white there, 'othered' here" (Christian 2018: 4; see Purkayastha 2010), racism "Brazilian style" could not be sustained "as is" and needed to be transformed. This move, I argue is part of the "transforming" (Goldberg 2009) characteristics of racism[20].

This study is important because it investigates how racial systems collide, are reconstructed, and finally reinterpreted in ways that attempt to maintain the racial hierarchies intact. In doing so, my focus on Brazilian immigrants makes a unique contribution, particularly as I considered the role of Latin American racial ideologies and its influence on the dynamics of race relations in the United States. Future studies should investigate the long-term effects of these dynamics in light of white identifying Brazilian immigrant's socialization in the U.S. racial system and exposure to white racism. Moreover, comparative analysis with other Latina/o/x light-skinned populations may help understand how different *mestizaje* ideologies impacts diverse Latin American groups differently. Finally, future studies should consider the impact of multiple racial ideologies on second-generation immigrants, especially as they navigate different U.S. institutions.

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Endnotes

[15] Despite what many Brazilians think, the 'n' word is not the same as "negro/negão, neguinho, neguinha" many Brazilians use in their everyday language. The 'n' word is perhaps the most offensive insult in the English language (Rahman 2012), while the word "neguinho," according to Brazilian Portuguese online dictionary *Michaelis*, can be used as a nickname of affection. (https://michaelis.uol.com.br/moderno-portugues/busca/portugues-brasileiro/neguinho/). Accessed November 6, 2018.

[16] https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/brazilian-immigrants-united-states (Accessed on November 21, 2018).

[17] Although gender is an important variable to understand Roberta's interaction, my focus is to analyze this interaction through class and race dynamics.

[18] The idea that racism is non-existent because of miscegenation without regarding for structural racism.

[19] https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-noticias/2012-agencia-de-noticias/noticias/18282-pnad-c-moradores (Accessed December 6, 2018).

[20] Even though there is a transforming aspect of racism (based on different world geographies and histories), it is "*still* being entrenched in a continuum of white dominance and racial subordination" (Christian 2018: 3 emphasis on the original). Hence, when white Brazilians feel oppressed or discriminated against, they are expressing racism due to their feelings that their new social position in the United States inverts the "natural" logic of race relations.

Chapter 3

Transmitting Racism Through Religion? Racial Ideology, Ethnic Transcendence, and Racism Among Members and Leaders of Latina/o Led Ethnic and Multiethnic Congregations

Abstract:

In this paper, I address the dynamics of racial ideology and racism in three Pentecostal congregations – two monoethnic and one multiethnic – of the same Brazilian denomination in Central and South Florida. More specifically, I investigate whether the members I interviewed embraced colorblind raial ideologies. Data come from eight months of participant observation in Central and South Florida, 50 in-depth interviews with first and second-generation Brazilians as well as non-Brazilians of different ethnoracial backgrounds, and content analysis of the churches' social media. Drawing on the concepts of colorblind racism and ethnic transcendence, I argue that the churches investigated here perpetuate similar colorblind racist ideologies for not providing a space for affirming diversity in the church. The English-speaking church reproduces colorblind racism because of their emphasis on a master religious identity and lack of space for affirming members' diversity. In this process they end up making discussions of issues of race a taboo.

Introduction

Religious congregations organized by immigrants and their offspring constitute an essential aspect of immigrant life in the United States. For example, research on religion and immigration has demonstrated the role of religion for the incorporation of first- and second-generation immigrants without necessarily detaching them from their culture of origin (Waters 1999; Bankston and Zhou 1995; Warner 2007; see Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Hirschman (2004) argues that ethnic congregations' functions can be summarized in three R's: refuge, respect, and resources. These three features become even more critical in a society where some immigrants (mainly from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and some parts of Asia) are marginalized from the larger society and in some cases, experience downward mobility (Foner and Alba 2008).

For Brazilian immigrants to the United States, religious congregations have also played a pivotal role in their lives. Researchers have found that Brazilian churches function as spaces for the socialization of immigrants (Margolis 1994; Martes 1999). Churches have given Brazilians in the United States a space where they can become visible to one another, thus increasing cooperation, while at the same time becoming temporarily invisible to the "panoptic power of the state" (Ribeiro and Vasquez 2012: 3). Such invisibility is due to how congregations are sometimes perceived as "sanctuary places" that should not be violated by anyone, not even the State. However, Ribeiro and Vasquez (2012: 3) also agree that even congregations these days have become targets of immigration agents who take advantage on immigrants' faith to arrest them on their way to church. Congregations have also served as "alternative places of belonging…" (Levitt 2003: 868), where collective identity affirmation and mutual help are primary functions (Vasquez and Ribeiro 2007). This specific function is particularly important

due to a large number of undocumented Brazilians, their lack of English skills, and their limited interactions in public spaces (Alves and Ribeiro 2002).

Moreover, religious networks organized within these congregations have become a source of social capital for many Brazilians (Alves 2009:136; see Williams et al. 2009). These networks have helped incoming and long-term immigrants. Religious congregations and the networks established within and around congregations have promoted widespread transnational connections of religious actors and religious goods (Levitt 2007). Finally, Brazilian congregations have also provided social spaces for leisure and emotional support as well as to reorient immigrants' lives as they try to adjust to a new society (Vasquez and Ribeiro 2007).

Although scholars have called attention to potential "dysfunctions[21]" within Brazilian congregations' roles (Serrao and Cavendish 2018), the findings above remain significant and useful for the larger first generation and the newly arrived Brazilian immigrants. Nonetheless, there is still relatively little research, if any at all, focusing on collaboration and religious transmission among first and second generations among Brazilians in the U.S. Additionally, when it comes to the larger literature on Latina/o Protestant congregations, issues that have been notably absent are those dealing with the racial diversity within the Latina/o/x population (Marti 2015). While scholars have started to move in this direction (Calvillo and Bailey 2015; Mulder et al. 2017; Martinez and Tamburello 2018), the experience of Brazilian immigrants is still mostly unexplored.

In this paper I address these gaps by offering some insights into the dynamics of race relations within two first-generation Brazilian churches of the same Brazilian denomination in Central and South Florida and a multiethnic church established by the second generation of Brazilians in South Florida. More specifically, I want to examine whether members and leaders

whom I interviewed of the Portuguese-speaking and English-speaking congregations embrace colorblind racial ideologies. Drawing on the concepts of colorblind racism and ethnic transcendence, I argue that the churches investigated here perpetuate similar colorblind racist ideologies for not providing a space for affirming diversity in the church. The English-speaking church, particularly, perpetuates colorblind racism because of its emphasis on creating an ethos where religious identity ought to transcend and overtake ethnic identity without providing the proper space for affirming its members' diversity, but instead making discussions of issues of race a taboo.

Multiethnic/Multiracial Congregations, Ethnic Transcendence, and Diversity Haven

Scholars of race and religion have argued for two broad, yet opposing perspectives on the integration of diverse racial groups within multiracial congregations: ethnic reinforcement, and ethnic transcendence (Marti 2010a). Drawing from critical race theory, proponents of ethnic reinforcement dynamics argue that churches are not immune from the power of race in the U.S. (Edwards 2008a). Additionally, they "affirm the weakness of religion in the face of racial obstacles such that achieving true religious integration between blacks and whites seems nearly impossible" (Marti 2010a: 201).

For instance, Emerson and Woo (2006) argue that the opposition between white and black cultures has developed racial tensions in multiracial congregations. These tensions are most visible in what they call Mixed American Culture congregations, or simply MAC congregations. MAC congregations, different from other multiracial churches, those involving a larger non-white and non-black membership, face more tension and conflict because of "the heightened difficulty and social energy expended […] to bridge the two indigenous American

cultures" (Emerson and Woo 2006: 139). Edwards' (2008a; 2008b) research provides an example of how MAC congregations may struggle for unity. Drawing from the National Congregations Study, Edwards (2008b: 8) argues that white structural and cultural privileges create an atmosphere in multiracial congregations that benefit white attendees by affirming "the particular religiocultural tools and predilections of whites," such as, individualism, relationalism, and antistructuralism (Edwards 2008b: 52). Going beyond the scope of MAC congregations, however, she contends that regardless of what is the racial or ethnic group sharing the congregation with whites, "whiteness, white hegemony will persist…" and problems of control, structure, and culture will emerge (Edwards 2008b: 8; see also Christerson et al. 2005; Cobb et al. 2015).

On the opposite camp, scholars have argued that racial unity within multiracial congregations is achievable if members uphold their ethnoracial identities in favor of one that transcends ethnicity (see Stanczak 2006 for the idea of "strategic ethnicity"; Ecklund 2005). Marti's (2005; 2008a; 2008b; 2009; 2012) studies are particularly helpful for understanding these processes. According to him, multiracial congregations "leverage their theological resources to realign the personal interests of a diverse congregation toward a shared identity that 'trumps' their racial and ethnic designations" (Marti 2008b: 13). Such an intentional process is done at the structural level (i.e. racial awareness, church discussions, diversity hires, etc.) with the goal of "shaping people toward a new identity framed around new interests" (Marti 2009: 63), with the goal of having people subduing "their [ethnoracial] distinctions in favor of one common religious identity within a diverse congregation" (Marti 2008b: 14). To achieve this goal, multiracial congregations create spaces (or havens) for relationships based on members'

“interest, beliefs, values, and life circumstances that ally people together regardless of ancestral heritages” (Marti 2005; 2010: 202; 203).

Earlier developments of this concept, based on a case study with less than two percent of African Americans, assumed that such havens had to be racially neutral (i.e. not affirming any particular group’s racial identity) to reach ethnic transcendence (Marti 2005; 2008a; 2009). However, new ethnographic research in a different multiethnic congregation, with a large percentage of African Americans, led Marti to review and expand on some of his earlier ideas “to allow for racially affirming havens” (Marti 2010a: 213; 2008b). He considered such havens as places of “unique inclusion for people who value diversity, for both blacks and whites” (p. 212). He further argued that for black-white churches pluralism (having multiple cultures coexisting) rather than integration (having a new culture based on multiple existing cultures) was a more likely outcome (p. 214).

These perspectives account for the complexity of multiracial congregations, mostly from a black/white binary perspective. However, Latina/o congregations, of which the Brazilian church is a part, have mainly been portrayed along ethnic and cultural lines, without much reference to their racial diversity, even less to their efforts to attract a racially diverse membership. Sociological research investigating the dynamics in Latina/o congregations often frames these congregations as “ethnic” or just “Latino” even when their membership is composed primarily by the U.S. born, English-speaking, multiracial Latinas/os and their organizational structure resembles white evangelical churches (Calvillo and Bailey 2015; Martinez and Tamburello 2018; Marti 2010b). As Mulder, Ramos and Marti (2017) have already shown, Latina/o congregations are much more diverse, in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, immigration status, religiosity, than earlier studies on this group want to portray (Marti 2015).

Persistent ethnicization of Latina/o congregations despite their ethnoracial diversity prevents a more in-depth analysis of the effects of whiteness, racial ideology, and discrimination within multiracial churches composed predominantly by Latinas/os/xs. Furthermore, as the U.S. moves away from the biracial system of race relations and stratification to one that accounts for the experience of its growing non-black and non-white populations (which some have called Latinamericanization of U.S. race relations – Bonilla-Silva [2002], see more below), it is imperative to understand the experiences of Latinas/os/xs of different races, colors, cultures, languages, social class, and immigration status. While existing research suggests that the second-generation is more open to developing multiethnic congregations (Kurien 2004; Marti 2012; Dhingra 2004), few studies among Latina/o congregations investigate the processes through which racial ideology and racism, may be transmitted and/or negotiated among first and second-generations and its influence on a multiethnic congregation.

Colorblind Racism and its Connections to Latin America

To understand the dynamics presented in this paper, it is important to understand what colorblind racism is and its connections with race relations in Latin America. Basically, colorblind racism "is the set of ideologies and discourses that uphold contemporary racial inequality by denying either its presence or its significance" (Burke 2017: 857). Bonilla-Silva (2002: 6), whose body of work has been pivotal to uncover these dynamics, argues that colorblind racism is a form of racism that emerged in the U.S. to maintain "systemic White privilege" through "institutional, covert, and apparently non-racial practices." Additionally, Bonilla-Silva (2006) claims that colorblind racist practices are put forward through "rhetorical maneuvers" (p. 38) that shield whites from being perceived as racists. These are "intellectual

road maps" (p. 26), also called "the frames of colorblind racism," which are used by whites to explain contemporary racial inequality. The frames are, abstract liberalism, naturalization of racism, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. I will define these frames in my findings section.

Another important aspect of colorblind racism, especially considering the major demographic changes in the U.S., is its similarities to Latin America's race relations. Bonilla-Silva and his co-authors (Bonilla-Silva 2002; 2006; Bonilla-Silva and Embrick 2006; Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2004) have argued that due to these demographic changes and the consequent adoption of colorblind rhetoric, the United States "is developing a more complex and apparently 'plural' racial order that will mimic Latin American elements of racial stratification" (Bonilla-Silva 2006: xvii). Basically, there are six essential elements present in most, if not all, Latin American countries that facilitate a discourse of unity and colorblindness while racist structures remain intact. These features can be summarized as, *mestizaje* or racial mixing, plural racial stratification systems, colorism, whitening, a national ideology praising racial mixing, and race as nationality (Bonilla-Silva 2006: 181-183; see also Telles 2014; Roth 2012). As these scholars have pointed out, even though Latin American countries have developed different understandings of race, like in the U.S., the prevalence of whiteness[22] as normative and ideal has remained the same.

In the contemporary United States, where Latina/o/x population has now surpassed blacks as the largest minority group, "a new, triracial order" can potentially emerge "with a pigmentocratic component to it" (Bonilla-Silva 2006: 173). In Latin America Telles (2004: 32) has called this triracial arrangement, "pigmentocratic social pyramid," where the population is divided among whites or light-skinned at the top, a mixed-race population in the middle, and

blacks/indigenous or dark-skinned groups at the bottom. In Brazil, racial democracy ideology, the idea that racial mixture is perceived positively, prevents people from seeing such disparities. According to racial democracy enthusiasts all Brazilians are a mixture of all three races, and for this reason the country is free from racism (for a discussion of racial democracy see chapter 2 of this dissertation).

In the context of the U.S., such triracial order would include Latina/o/x population in all three major groups. The system would be composed of whites (including among others, U.S. born white Latinas/os/xs), honorary whites (including light-skinned Latinas/os/xs), and collective blacks (including dark-skinned Latinas/os/xs) (Bonilla-Silva 2004; 2006). Such system, as theorized by Bonilla-Silva and colleagues (2004; 2006b) and already empirically demonstrated by Aranda, Hughes, and Sabogal (2014) in their study in Miami, has the honorary white group serving as a buffer, protecting the top white group from race conflict and allowing "white supremacy to reign supreme, hidden from public debate." (Bonilla-Silva 2006: 173). The importance of this concept for this study is that such dynamics are invisible to the untrained eyes and perpetuated, via colorblind ideologies, in society, and as I will demonstrate in the multiracial congregations I studied.

In the next section I present the methods I used to collect data. Then, I show the organizational strategies used by the Portuguese-speaking and English-speaking churches for reaching out to immigrants and U.S. born of all ethnoracial backgrounds. Next, I discuss how ethnic transcendence without a space for diversity in the church results in members perpetuating colorblind racism. I conclude by addressing the consequences of racial ideologies for non-white members of both congregations investigated.

Data and Methods

Data for this paper come from a larger project focused on race and religion in Brazilian immigrant congregations that started in the spring of 2016 in Central Florida and continued in 2018 in South Florida. In 2016, I collected data from two different religious communities that were serving Brazilian immigrants in Central Florida (an Evangelical church and a Spiritist center). I attended each of these religious congregations' meetings and events for six months. I interviewed members and leaders and studied their history, social media presence, literature, and sermons. Through my interview with one of the church pastors (Pastor Elidio), I learned about the size and scope of the denomination investigated here. Even though the church in Central Florida was relatively small, their South Florida congregation was much larger and acted as a hub for the expansion of the denomination among Brazilians and non-Brazilians in the United States. At the end of 2016, Pastor Elidio was transferred to South Florida to be the pastor of the English-speaking church.

In South Florida, I had full access to the Portuguese-speaking and the English-speaking congregations established by Brazilian-Americans via pastor Elidio. After I received IRB approval, I started my bi-weekly trips to South Florida for eight months. Combining Central and South Florida congregations, I conducted 50 in-depth, open-ended interviews with 23 women and 27 men, aged between 18 and 50 years old. From those, 17 were part of the Portuguese-speaking congregations in Central and South Florida, and 33 belonged to the South Florida English-speaking congregation. I selected most of the participants of this study through a "purposive sampling" approach. This non-probability sampling technique allowed me to handpick participants based on my judgment that their inclusion would meet the criteria of my investigation. My goal was to maximize variation in specific characteristics, such as gender,

race, migratory status, social class, etc. As I interacted with church members during my visits to each congregation, I determined whether a person had the characteristics I was looking for, to diversify my sample. However, on some occasions, I asked participants to provide names and contact information of potential participants, thus also engaging in snowball sampling. The racial composition of my sample was as follows, for the Portuguese-speaking congregations: 29% self-identified as white-only; 29% as white with variances[23]; 13% as Pardo (Brown); 29% undeclared. For the English-speaking congregation 27% identified as white-only, 40% as white with variances, 15% as Hispanic/Latina/o/x/Other only; 9% as black/African American; 3% as mixed race; and 6% undeclared[24].

Interviews were conducted in English and Portuguese and lasted between one to three hours. Interviews were carried out in three ways: in-person, through video-phone apps (FaceTime and WhatsApp), and one via email. Except for the written interview, all the other interviews were audio recorded. Interviewees answered a series of questions under three major themes: race, gender, and immigration. Several of the race questions followed Bonilla-Silva and Forman's (2000) questionnaire used to assess whites' racial ideology. Questions were on the following themes: affirmative action, social distance, and the significance of discrimination. Differently, however, I asked open-ended questions instead of multiple choice, survey questions. I later transcribed the interviews and imported them into NVivo software for coding and analysis.

Additionally, I conducted participant observation in many of the church activities, including Saturday evening and Sunday morning services, members' social events like going to restaurants, bowling allies, and movie 'nights' at their homes. Through ethnographic fieldwork, I observed normalized practices of the congregations and their cultural ethos by carefully taking

ethnographic fieldnotes about their worship styles, liturgy, outreach, and civic engagement. I interviewed pastors, seminary students, and church members. Interviewees were from diverse ethnoracial backgrounds, including Hispanics (with whites, Afro-Latinas/os/xs and bi-racial), non-Hispanic whites (among others a Russian woman), blacks (including African Americans), and first- and second-generation Brazilians.

Through the in-depth interviews, I examined how respondents understood the U.S. racial system and developed their own ethnoracial identities. I have also conducted a systematic investigation of the church's social media presence (YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook) and other forms of literature produced to inform their public. Through content analysis of the church's sermons, church bulletins, websites, and videos posted on the internet, I captured the discursive tropes and images used to convey information about racial relations and ideology. For identity protection, I use pseudonyms for the participants and omit the denomination's name.

Findings

Reaching out to Brazilian immigrants in the U.S.

The churches investigated here, which I will call Brazilian South Florida church (BrSF), American South Florida church (AmSF), and Brazilian Central Florida church (BrCF), belong to an influential Brazilian Pentecostal denomination, well-known in Brazil for its small-group growth strategy and rigid leadership structure. Two dissident pastors of another Pentecostal church in Brazil became the founders of the denomination studied. Their newly established church rapidly grew and expanded to other regions of Brazil as well as to other countries. Strategically, one of the founding pastors became responsible for the church's expansion within Brazil, whereas the other oversaw international development. Internationally, the church first

targeted Lusophone Africa and Latin America because of linguistic and regional proximity. However, as former church members began to migrate to Europe and the United States, those more involved in church activities began to organize small groups and prayer meetings. These informal meetings among migrants would later become established churches as the denomination in Brazil sent trained pastors abroad.

In the United States, the denomination has grown to more than thirty congregations (mostly Portuguese-speaking, but also a few English-only, and one Spanish-only group). Part of this expansion is a result of the denomination's evangelistic program that recruits young Brazilians from different cities and churches in Brazil and sends them to the United States to attend classes in the seminary the church organized in order to help their congregations. The recruitment process happens through social media and local churches in Brazil. The program aims to have students trained in basic biblical theology in the United States for one or two years – depending on the type of Visa they obtained – to then send these students to other nations or back to Brazil.

In the next section I will introduce the AmSF church's strategy to reach out to the second-generation Brazilians and to a diverse group of non-Brazilians. Different from the first generation, however, the AmSF church, for the most part, is not dealing with immigrants, but with a diverse group of 1.5 and U.S. born population who grew up in a different racial context and with a different history of race relations.

Reaching out to second generation and non-Brazilians: mixing the strategies

As the BrSF church acted as a hub, providing motivated seminary students brought from Brazil to different newly formed Brazilian churches throughout the U.S., the second-generation began to organize their English-speaking churches. The first English-speaking congregation was

established in South Florida as a result of the BrSF youth group. Pastor Elidio, who is currently the pastor of the AmSF church, gave two reasons for the establishment of the English-speaking church. The first reason was linguistic, "today we have a generation of sons and daughters of Brazilians who are 15, 16 years old… some others were born here in the U.S. and didn't speak Portuguese properly. Most of them can't speak Portuguese properly…," Pastor Elidio explained. Corroborating with this information, Léo, 23, a white identifying Brazilian-American, one of the earliest members of the AmSF church recalled that he could not "understand [the sermon] because my Portuguese was not good. […]." He felt that the service was meaningless, as he was "just going to the [church]…, but barely understood what the preaching was about." A second reason given by Pastor Elidio for the formation of the AmSF church was spiritual. He said that God was directing him personally to preach to "English-speaking America," and that he had a burden for "this young generation." Members and other leaders of the denomination were also motivated to see the United States as their mission field. In a sermon preached to an audience composed of Brazilians and Americans, posted on YouTube, Pastor Manuel, one of the founding pastors of the denomination, said:

> God will give us spiritual sons and daughters among the Americans. Like the apostle Peter coming from a third world country, Israel is a third world country, he came from an impoverished village in the interior of Galilee, and where did the apostle Peter end up? In Rome. And the same thing goes for someone from Governador Valadares [city in Brazil with the largest number of immigrants in the U.S.], who ends up going to New York City. You came directly from the Republic of cheese bread [*pão de queijo*], but within you lives a giant. It does not matter that you came from a third world country; you came in the name of the one who is all powerful.

He continued:

> … the small-groups will multiply in the Bronx, Queens, Manhattan Island, and when I die, there will be American men and women full of the Holy Spirit, and they will say, 'In the last century, or 20, 30 years ago, God brought some Brazilians to New York City, and they preached the word to us. We are in debt to Minas Gerais state; we are in debt to Governador Valadares city, we are in debt to Brazil, they were our spiritual fathers.

Léo, remembers the BrSF church's leadership telling the youth about this divine mandate to reach out to Americans:

> One of the main things that we were told [by the leadership was] 'we want a church that impacts America, not just the Brazilians that live in America, but America.' So we're like, we need an English service because we're not going to get Americans, African-Americans, we are not going to get a diverse group of people by just speaking Portuguese...

Following the organizational recipe of the BrSF church, the English-speaking church of the denomination grew and expanded to other U.S. cities. Currently, there are English-speaking churches in South Florida (East and West coasts), Central Florida, in the Northwest, Mid-Atlantic, and the Northeast regions. Their emphasis on small groups, which allows for stronger social control of the members, and their emphasis on recruiting members for an in-church seminary training, have given them a devoted group of people ready to lead their multiple activities.

However, for the AmSF and the other English-speaking newly planted churches, to rely on extra motivated workforce without concomitantly creating an ethos that accommodates the growing and diverse second-generation and non-Brazilian membership, would be

counterproductive. Hence, the English-speaking congregations have attempted to mix the first generation model of recruiting and educating members to be group and network leaders, similar to the Brazilian denomination's model, with a white megachurch model imported directly from the largest churches in the U.S., as its overall church culture. This became clear when I asked Pastor Elidio why Americans would be interested in attending a church that came from a Brazilian denomination, to which he responded:

> There are obviously things we can learn [in the U.S.], and I visited many churches. You've heard of Elevation Church in Charlotte, North Carolina? Very big church, you know. Growing. The preacher is very charismatic. So, what we did was, we did our homework, you know? We visited these churches. I visited that church. I visited the NewSpring Church in South Carolina. It is one of the fastest growing churches in the United States. When they offer conferences, we go. We have other pastors and leaders who visited Bill Hybels church in Illinois. Antioch Church from Waco. Pastor Manuel has been there several times. He has even preached in their leadership conference. So, as Brazilian churches we think that we can learn so much from these American churches that are growing that are preaching the gospel, they are making disciples, and we can learn from them…

Even when Pastor Elidio claimed some originality in the Brazilian church model which gave him the confidence to "have something to offer that they [megachurches] don't," he continued to make reference to the influence of U.S. megachurch model.

> We would be different because we strongly believe in mentorship. We have a strong focus on not only winning people to Christ, which is very evangelical, very basic. […] but also, we believe strongly in leadership development. […] That's something I believe

> we can offer that the American churches are still discovering right now. […] What we will be focusing on is emphasizing this aspect that everyone who visits our church needs to have a personal experience with God at the service. How are we going to do that? Well, we are a church of [small] groups. What we are going to encourage is not having people randomly sitting anywhere. *But we learned this from Bill Hybel's church to have [small] group leaders and network leaders make sure that everybody who is a part of their network sits together in the same place…* (Emphasis mine).

This emphasis on white megachurch evangelicalism is not unjustified. Other ethnic groups in the United States have also been persuaded by and adopted this congregational model (Kurien 2017). Part of this culture, especially for those led by white pastors and striving to become multiracial (Barron and Williams 2017), is to create an environment that fosters what Marti (2009) calls a religious racial integration. For Marti (2009: 54), "[r]eligious racial integration is the process by which a person considers the congregation to be *his or her* congregation, considers himself or herself as *belonging* to the congregation, has *committed himself or herself* to the congregation, and see himself or herself as an *extension* of the congregation" (emphasis in the original). This integration happens through a three-part process: congregational affinity, identity reorientation, and ethnic transcendence. To reach this goal, the church constructs an environment where they "stimulate members to transcend ethnic specificity in favor of a new congregationally based religious identity" (Marti 2008b: 13; see also Ammerman 1997). Furthermore, Marti (2008b), highlights that church efforts to create or accentuate a religious identity on members is not the same as being colorblind. As noted earlier, subsequent studies by Marti (2008b; 2010) led him to recognize the need for a "diversity haven"

within multiracial congregations to accommodate members' ethnoracial specificities and create spaces for discussion and counseling around issues of racism, oppression, and inequality.

For the remainder of this paper, I will show how the churches pursue an ethnic transcendent ethos without offering an institutional space for affirming members' diversity. Then, I will demonstrate how members who identify as whites in both the AmSF and BrSF churches engage in similar colorblind racist rhetoric. I will end the paper discussing the potential consequences of such a rhetoric for members of both churches.

Ethnic Transcendence and a Lack of Diversity Haven

The churches investigated in this study negotiate the diversity found in their midst using an ethnic transcendence strategy. Although this is not a term my respondents would recognize, they demonstrated the use of ethnic transcendence by using the religious language they understand. For instance, in a text-message sent to me by pastor Elidio, he wrote, "[m]y intention is to pastor a Church that has the culture of Heaven. A Christ-like culture." Making an announcement about a special event that would gather all churches of the denomination in the United States (Portuguese- and English-speaking), another pastor said:

> January 30th will be a special service with all churches in the United States. […] We are going to do a bilingual service, […] and it's going to be a time when we express the Kingdom of God. I don't know if you guys know but the Kingdom of God has no barriers. The Kingdom of God has no divisions. In the Kingdom of God there is no black, there is no white. There is no language barrier, we all have the same blood coursing through our veins and that is the blood of Jesus.

In the same text message I received from pastor Elidio, he wrote the Bible verses he believes encourage churches to seek diversity:

> As a Christian, I know very well what the 'ideal' Church should look like. It's written in Revelation 7:9, 10 'I saw a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.

Yet, despite this understanding, what I found really remarkable was the church's embrace of the "language, theology, music, and worship practices of white, upper-middle-class evangelicals," (Kurien 2017: 2). Such processes are attuned with processes of individualization and "de-ethnicization" that many second-generation Protestant congregations have experienced in the United States (Jeung et al. 2012; Kurien 2017). In fact, Garces-Foley (2007: 117) argues that multiethnic churches through ethnic transcendence promote assimilation "to Anglo American cultural norms that people of color experience in the larger social context."

Due to its normativity, members of the AmSF church do not see the influence of whiteness in their worship liturgy, music, and even leadership style. For instance, when I asked Celvis, 37, who is biracial but self-identifies as Hispanic, about his understanding of how the church deals with some of the diverse membership and their reliance on contemporary Christian music – groups like Hillsong and Elevation Worship – for their worship experience, he said:

> …like I said, it's like we […] are more Americanized, not necessarily [a church made] for a white, black or any specific race, you know? It's just a church, a congregation of people [who] will come in there […] I think in regard to the worship music, I don't think you could put a race on worship music really. I don't think there could be like, 'Oh, so this worship singer, I'm going to receive more from God during praise and worship because the singer is black or the singer is white […]' I mean, me personally, those thoughts

never [came to mind], you know, [to think] this singer is white or black or Hispanic or Puerto Rican like me.

For Henrique, 28, white identifying Brazilian American, the AmSF church should only focus on promoting one [transcendent] culture. This sole focus should prevent them from becoming mindful of other, perhaps competing, cultures. He states, "… at the end of the day, if the church becomes too mindful of this [black culture], they lose focus of what, you know, what the church was built for in the first place, which is, you know, to establish one culture, not different, cultures." Another respondent, Juliano, 25, who self-identifies as Latino and white, recognizes that the church does not address issues of race and diversity because "what we say is about love, you know, how to love each other." He also said that even though he believed the church "should do more" to recognize and create diverse spaces for members, this is not the main role of the church. For him, "[t]he main role of the church is to preach God's word and demonstrates what he is to society […]. The church is love, it's about loving one another, no matter who you are […] and the church should not deviate from [this]." Dalton, 26, bi-racial (white and Korean) who self-identifies as white, recognizes that the church does not address members' diversity because "the American side [are] trying to make American, you know, like they're trying to make American, you know, Hillsong and stuff like that is American, you know." He then said that even if the number of blacks in the church increased, "blacks would probably still have to adapt. I don't think it would change." I asked why he thinks this way, to which he answered, "[b]ecause the church has set in their ways of how they do it, I think they're just set in what they know and what they believe is effective."

However, some African American respondents do not think this way. They understand that at some point the AmSF church will need to include aspects of black religious culture in its

services. For instance, Aliya, 26, after saying a resounding "no" to my question of whether other ethnicities were being represented in the worship music, she added: "they definitely won't do any black songs...like gospel songs, whatever." This perception though also shared with Jamile, 28, "at first glance you will consider a church to be very white contemporary" she thinks that change is needed and possible when other black members take more position of leadership. For instance, she said that change "starts with people like me, people like Christopher, people like Aliya. I don't know if you spoke to Darius. Like it starts with [African American] people like us because there has to be a way that is paved." This new way for her is "a different sound, […] a different culture, […] a different sound of music, […] a different style speaking, like all of that…" Finally, André, 18, a phenotypically black respondent, who identifies as mixed-race, told me how his mother (who is white) uses the kids' ministry to create racial inclusion. He said:

> My mom is a kids' discipler and I see her doing a lot of like work at home with the kids and they talk about a lot of things, they talk about [race] in a subtle way where she won't offend kids because she is conscious of like, the kids' parents. So my mom would do, for example, she wants me to be Jesus, and dresses me like Jesus and some kids were like, Jesus isn't black. And she was like, well, what's wrong with Jesus being black? And so, like she kind of tried to show them that Jesus doesn't always had to be white, you know. This is [because] sometimes kids tend to, like, think that white people [are good and], like black people are the evil ones. And so, she tries to like to show them other ways…

By and large members recognize that the church does not create spaces for an African American affirming diversity, which can be frustrating for the growing non-white and non-Brazilian membership. For instance, the same Aliya mentioned above said that she felt frustrated when on MLK day she went to Instagram to…

> … see if our church would say anything about honoring Martin Luther King, anything. And I know my pastor on the American side he did post a picture. But you know there was just like...happy Martin Luther King Day. There was no... There was nothing else. That was just a picture and happy MLK day whatever. Even within my own life group I shared something, and no one responded. Not even my leader responded (laughter).

The examples described here show how ethnic transcendence without a space for affirming diversity and colorblindness can exist side by side. I agree with Bonilla-Silva (2002: 6), when he says that colorblind racism "denies the salience of race, scorns those who talk about race, and increasingly proclaims that 'We are all Americans.'" By choosing to use terms like, "Americanized" church or "one culture," or even "make American," members and leaders of the AmSF church can emphasize the need for racial diversity, when they in fact encourage a "race-less" religious unity, under the elements of whiteness. Moreover, cases like Aliya, Jamile, and André and his mother, show how African Americans and other blacks with their families within the church are taking these issues personally and acting upon them while the church – in general – remains colorblind. In the next section, I will show how colorblind racism is perpetuated through some of its frames among some members of the BrSF and AmSF churches.

Ethnic Transcendence Surrounded by Racial Democracy/Colorblind Racism Ideologies

Socialization in both countries' racial ideologies has given members of the AmSF and BrSF churches similar colorblind rhetoric that "places the onus of responsibility for diminishing racial inequity on individuals' commitment to Christ while the structural inequities associated with race were left well-formed and enduring" (Craig 2018: 11). First generation Brazilians and

their U.S. born children who self-identify as white, as well as white Americans in both churches are swift to dismiss racialized structures while at the same time engage in some of the frames of colorblind racism. Below I will show how white members of the AmSF and BrSF churches talk comparably in colorblind terms.

Minimization of racism

The first frame I will consider is minimization of racism. Bonilla-Silva (2006) argues that minimization of racism happens when someone believes that race is no longer a problem and minimizes "the salience of racism." (p. 44). For instance, one aspect of this frame is to claim black racism as part of reverse discrimination. Like many first-generation Brazilians, Martina 18, a member of the English-speaking congregation who identifies as white (based on her phenotype), considers blacks to be racists.

> Before, when racism was an actual thing when white people would own black people, black people were afraid of white people, you know? They were scared of them, so they never stood up for themselves. But now, black people have tended to come out of their shells. So now, people tend to be more afraid of black people. So not a lot of people pick on them anymore. Because they first pick on you, that's the thing. Black people are racist before anybody can be racist on them.

When I asked if she had ever felt discriminated, she replied: "Yes. Most by black people…" Martina's quote is an example of what Feagin and O'Brien (2003) call "sincere fictions." Martina truly believes that blacks are being racist towards her. What is fictional about her claim, however, is that it is "divorced from a historical and contemporary reality" (Cabrera 2014). By saying that she suffers racism, Martina is minimizing the power of racism and recreating white supremacy. In addition, Martina's comment that blacks are coming "out of their

shells" shows her understanding that blacks should be passive and always nice to her. Having agency and actively engaging whites' racism is perceived as black racism.

This frame is also observed among members of the BrSF church. In a conversation with Osvaldo, 35, white, undocumented immigrant in the U.S. since the age of 16, told me that he believes racism is real both in Brazil and in the U.S. However, in Brazil Osvaldo considers that racism "is weaker than here [in the U.S.]." He continued:

> … jokes (*piadinhas*) involving blacks and whites, are more like jokes (*brincadeiras*) than racism, right? Or when people talk about our own menial jobs, "Ah that's a job for blacks [*trabalho de preto*]." Like many friends I had back home in Brazil, we used to joke around with them, but they also made jokes with us. That's OK. We are all friends.

Writing about racism and humor in Peru and Mexico, Sue and Golash-Boza (2013: 1594) contend that "despite the façade that racial humour is benign, such humour is intricately linked to power-laden ideologies and unequal social structures." In Brazil, the idea that racist jokes are not authentic racism is also common (Guimarães 2004; Dahia 2008; Nunes 2006; Sales Jr. 2006). Sales Jr. categorize this type of discourse (racist jokes, proverbs, and puns) as "witty." For him, such discourse is involved in a "witty wrapping" that confuses and diminish our ability to act critically (Sales Jr. 2006: 239). Essential to my discussion is that humor as a discourse tool promotes a colorblind ideology, already prevalent in Latin American countries (Sue and Golash-Boza 2013). Unfortunately, this was not the only frame found among members of the congregations investigated.

Cultural racism

Another frame of colorblind racism found among the respondents I interviewed in the AmSF and BrSF churches was cultural racism. This frame "relies on culturally based arguments

[…] to explain the standing of minorities in society" (Bonilla-Silva 2006: 28). For instance, Pedro, 19, white-identifying U.S. born Brazilian, and one of the seminary students of the AmSF church, said that during high-school, most of his friends were African Americans. These interactions, however, did not prevent Pedro from considering blacks as culturally inferior. He said:

> I feel like most of the black people, you know, are raised in broken homes or raised in a bad environment or most of them, you know, are not as wealthy... You know, most of them are full poor. I would say white people are more... Mainly worried about getting their education done. They could mainly go after these things. I would say… I think it is one thing where black culture can lack a little bit at times... because most of them are laid back. A lot of them don't care. But I think that's because of how they grew up as well, the environment that they grew up...

Another white member of the AmSF church, Lindsey, 23, who is married to a first-generation Brazilian immigrant said:

> Maybe because, coming from back in the days of I guess slavery, maybe a lot of the people stayed and like some of the people stayed in poverty and it just kept in poverty and kept in poverty and never really wanted to try more to push forward and try to help their family grow and have their kids grow. So then they just continued to stay in that level of maybe not poverty but not even middle class or more. And I'm not saying there are not black people and [the] middle class and high class because there obviously are, but maybe the majority of the black people that were enslaved here because there were a lot, decided they didn't want to work that much or should get out of that zone they were in. So maybe like nowadays it's still the same thing."

I heard similar demeaning arguments about blacks' work ethics and culture in the BrSF church. For instance, Renato, 41, a white-identifying member of the BrSF church told me:

> … we see that many [blacks] have all the chances here in the U.S., but they don't want to [work]. They let themselves to be overcome by laziness or just don't want to pursue [a job], unfortunately…"

Another example of cultural racism was demonstrated by Maria, 51, a white member of the BrSF church. In this case, her biased understanding from black culture prevented her to let her daughter date a black person. She said:

> My daughter had several black friends here [in the U.S.]. She even fell in love with a black student at her school. But here is my concern, I always told her, "Sweetie, the problem is not that you have a black boyfriend. But what about the boy's family? As a white person, will they accept you? The way they are raised is totally different from the way we were raised [...] So, my concern is if you will be allowed into his family, a family with black American culture. It's very different...

In Maria's case, it is important to note that she had previously disclosed that she had never met with her daughter's black friends, which makes her perceptions of black American culture completely based on stereotypes learned from friends and the media. In all of these examples, the idea that black culture is responsible for their poverty (Pedro, Lindsey, and Renato) and for being biased (Maria) reveal a colorblind attitude rooted in the frame of cultural racism.

Abstract liberalism

A final colorblind racist frame that resembles the way many first-generation Brazilians think about race and that is found among members of the AmSF and BrSF churches I

interviewed is abstract liberalism. Abstract liberalism, "involves using ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., 'equal opportunity,' the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters" (Bonilla-Silva 2006: 28). Katie, 20, non-Hispanic white, used this frame to tell how she sees black disadvantage in society.

> I personally don't like when people say, 'Oh, I didn't get in because I'm black.' No, maybe you didn't get in because you're not academically ready to go to college […]. Why would you go somewhere where you're not going to like because you are not ready for it?

Katie then continues to use abstract liberalism to explain her understanding of affirmative-action policies.

> So, the way I see it, another person and I have the same thing like we are all... technically we have the same lifestyle stuff. Ok, then why they would go like 'Oh, accept her because she is black. It is our policy.' That's kind of messed up. I feel like that they should just accept both of us. But at the same time, I understand that that the world is not perfect. They can't accept everybody. […] I feel like, I have friends getting accepted just because of their skin color. I am like 'Oh, that's nice. I wish I could do that.' (laughter).

Another non-Hispanic white member of the church, Hunter, 26, believes that life opportunities are the same for blacks and whites in the U.S.

> Oh, today I believe that an American black person has just as much opportunity as any white person. I believe as a whole […] way back in time, the way how the Europeans came here and how basically how black people came here as slaves […]. So, they started at a different starting point as white people. […] But now, I believe they have just as

> much opportunity, but maybe a black person still has like a viewpoint of what has happened in the past through their history that they may not be able to... But like I said, I think today a person who grows up black has just as much opportunity.

Katie's feelings toward her non-white friends who are "getting accepted just because of their skin color" and Hunter's insistence that there are as many opportunities for whites as there are for blacks do not accurately portray the reality of racial inequality. These quotes show how disconnected the perceptions of some whites are from the continual prevalence of racial inequality in the United States (Matthew et al 2019). In Katie's case, although she sounds ambiguous at times, at the end, she feels that affirmative action may violate a principle of merit-based equal opportunity. Hunter, 26, begins by recognizing that the playing field was not leveled in the past between blacks and whites. However, he thinks that today society has changed to the point of creating equal opportunities for both groups. Not only that, he also simultaneously perceives some blacks as not taking advantage of these opportunities, thus blaming the blacks for not reaching parity with whites. Such combination is at the core of a meritocratic, colorblind way of seeing the world (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Perry and Whitehead 2019).

Likewise, when I engaged in conversations about affirmative action policies in Brazil with members of the BrSF church I received comparable answers. For instance, after saying that such a system is "racism against whites," Maria, 51, white, said:

> Look, both whites and blacks will be able to get into college the same way. It just depends on who they are, what their level of competitiveness is, their level of education, what they are looking for. So, it must be the same [process] for everyone, right?

In a more emphatic and racist way, Ricardo, 35, white Brazilian said:

> The question is this. Does the difference of whether or not I was a slave lessen my mental ability? No, it does not. What does he [black individuals] have different from me? Nothing. What do I have different from him? Nothing. So, this issue is already discriminatory. Do you understand?

Conversations around issues of affirmative action in Brazil have created competing perspectives, from, they "will do little to challenge social inequality," to they will initiate "momentous change" (Bailey and Peria 2010: 601). Despite these contending views, recent numbers from the Brazilian survey National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) show that "the number of Black and Brown Brazilians who graduated from universities grew from 2.2% in 2000 to 9.3% in 2017" (Serrao 2019), attesting to the success of the policy. Opposition, however, comes mainly from white Brazilians who have expressed antiblack sentiments, notably more recently during the rise of far-right politics that culminated in the election of Jair Bolsonaro (Silva and Larkins 2019). In Brazilian immigrant church settings the combination of divisive politics and conservative Christianity accentuated not only overt racism but also colorblind racial ideologies that make conversations around issues of race and racism discomforting and even a taboo.

Discussion and Conclusion

The churches investigated here are rooted in the experiences of Brazilian immigrants and their children. At the frontstage level, the AmSF congregation presents itself as ethnically transcendent. Its preaching and teaching display the message that Christian identity is more important than ethnoracial identity. They are attractive to "those who believe racism can best be overcome by treating people as people" (Garces-Foley 2007: 98). As still a church project, they

want to adopt the typical stereotype of Brazilian "warm" culture. As Pastor Elidio puts it, the "English speaking American church, […] still have the cultural characteristics of Brazil, which is great, [because] Americans love Brazilian food, the warmth of Brazilian culture…".

Despite their frontstage racial inclusivity and their successful "alternative shared religious identities" (Marti 2008b: 13), their backstage racial identity (Barron 2016; Barron and Williams 2017) is not challenged and thus continues to display societal racial democracy/colorblind racist ideologies. Different from what Marti (2009: 64) observed in the congregations he studied, that "the occurrence of ethnic transcendence allows significant racial and ethnic issues (e.g., structural racism and institutionalized discrimination) to be discussed or accentuated in the public ministries of the congregation," the Brazilian congregations in this study strongly oppose such discussions.

By promoting an ethnic transcendent ethos without concomitantly providing a space for discussing institutional discrimination and other forms of inequality, the churches in this study, intentionally or unintentionally, create a safe space for white Brazilians and Americans to navigate free of accountability and unchallenged of their "not racist" assumptions. Consequently, the English-speaking and Portuguese-speaking congregations perpetuate an ideological "ethos" that has consequences for their non-white membership. As it is the case in Latin American nations, colorblind racism creates an atmosphere where non-whites are framed as "overly sensitive" if they do not "go along" with whites "not intentional" and "unproblematic" racial jokes and perceptions about the world (Sue and Golash-Boza 2013: 1589; Sales Jr. 2006; 2007; Warren and Sue 2011). As such, the congregations in this study have fallen into the mistake of thinking that their decision of not seeing race will in fact serve everyone equally.

The church's unconscious perpetuation of racial democracy/colorblindness will differ in outcomes as each congregation targets different populations. As the English-speaking church continues to target a multiracial U.S. born population, they will inevitably continue to socialize members into ethnic transcendence without a diversity haven, which will allow for the continuation of colorblind racism. This can be challenging, especially for African Americans who have a strong racial and cultural identity. Marti (2010: 210) found that some African Americans in his study at Oasis, a church with a large percentage of blacks considered the church to be "not black enough." In my study, particularly in the AmSF church, although blacks are growing in numbers, they have not yet started to push for the church to create diversity havens in the congregation.

Another consequence of racial democracy/colorblind racism ideologies for the English-speaking church will be their lack of sensitivity to conversations about race and racism that are happening in society and in many multiracial churches (Wadsworth 2014; Barron 2016; Barron and Williams 2017). While making white congregants comfortable, second-generation Brazilians of color and other minorities may not benefit from this aspect of the church. Feeling uncomfortable to discuss issues of race and racism may display white members' strong emotions (white fragility) against these topics while at the same time may hinder essential conversations about the consequences of race and racism for non-white, second-generation Brazilians as well as other racial minorities in the church. For the children of Brazilian immigrants, church and family socialization may contribute to make issues of race a taboo. For the white identifying second-generation, racial democracy and colorblind discourse may invert their perceptions of racism accentuating their perceptions of discrimination by U.S. blacks, which can also create tensions among groups.

As the United States becomes increasingly more diverse, studies focusing on multiracial congregations outside the black/white binary become fundamental. My focus on Brazilian congregations makes a unique contribution because Bonilla-Silva's conceptualization of "colorblind racism" has been framed as evidence for the Latinamericanization of race in the U.S. Future studies should examine multiracial Spanish-speaking Latina/o congregations, led by second or third generation Latina/o pastors, to see how, if at all, ethnic transcendence and conversations around issues of race and racism are encouraged or suppressed. Moreover, more studies within the Brazilian immigrant community are needed. As of now, this is the first study examining a Brazilian second generation church. As this generation grows in other parts of the U.S., it is essential to understand the pathways they take, whether to create new churches or to join pan-Latina/o or multiracial megachurches or even avoid religion altogether.

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Endnotes

[21] Serrao and Cavendish (2018) show how the immigrant church investigated help strengthen social bonds within the immigrant community while also creating dependency and isolation from the larger society. This dependency and isolation are framed as a potential dysfunction of the congregation.

[22] When I say whiteness, I am using Edwards (2008) framework (not necessarily definition) applied to her study in multiracial congregations. For her, whiteness "…includes the normativity of white culture, white privilege, and white structural dominance." (1). Furthermore, whiteness means that members in these churches draw upon "religious-cultural tools of white evangelicals" (52) (i.e. individualism, relationalism, and antistructuralism) and leadership functions under "white cultural capital" (i.e "dominant white attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, networks, credentials, etc."). Whiteness is not challenged within Brazilian churches because it is considered "common sense." This white hegemonic way of thinking is "given as fact; any alternative is still in the domain of the unthinkable" (Trouillot 1995: 93).

[23] Some members were ambivalent about their racial classification and would identify as white, other, or white and Latina/o. Some others, especially in the Portuguese-speaking congregations and those members of the AmSF church who arrived in the U.S. at later age, would identify as "white in Brazil," but "Latina/o/x in the U.S."

[24] During my visits to the congregations I could identify a group of black attendees in the English-speaking congregation larger than those in my sample. Moreover, I noticed a small number of black Brazilians in the Portuguese-speaking congregation. Unfortunately, no black Brazilian accepted to be interviewed. However, social scientists in Brazil have found that the social outcomes for blacks and Pardo (brown) in Brazil are similar to each other and different from those who identify as whites (Hasenbalg and Silva 1999). Hence, black and brown Brazilians are usually analyzed as one category called non-white.

Chapter 4

Escaping Post-Colonial Confinement: Perceptions of Reverse Missions Among Brazilian Americans and non-Brazilians in South Florida

Abstract

In this paper, I examine how members of a majority second-generation Brazilian church in South Florida perceive their English-speaking, "American" church in comparison to the Portuguese-speaking, Brazilian congregation from which they originated. Data for this research are drawn from in-depth, open-ended interviews with 32 members from different ethnoracial backgrounds, participant observation, and content analysis of the churches' social media. Applying the concepts of "racialized modernity" and "post-colonial confinement," I argue that the perceptions espoused by members of the American church reflect and perpetuate racial ideologies and classist stereotypes designed to distance themselves from the perceived backwardness of the Brazilian immigrant community. Findings show that the discourse of church differences portray the two churches in racialized and classist ways.

Introduction

Scholars investigating Brazilian Pentecostal transnational endeavors have examined some of the tensions that arise when church leaders try to expand their operations beyond their own ethnic community. For instance, writing about the experiences of the Brazilian churches in the United Kingdom, Clark (2013) suggested four factors that may have hindered the churches'

successful "reverse mission[25]." First, Brazilians demonstrated negativity toward Britain. He explained that "[t]his negativity is unlikely to help promote a positive engagement with British culture so that the focus is more likely to be upon assisting Brazilian immigrants in coping with life in the United Kingdom than in outreach amongst its indigenous population" (p. 245). Second, Brazilians perceive the U.K. as a temporary place for material prosperity, rather than a place "where God has called migrants to bear witness to the Gospel." (Clark 2013: 245). Third, Brazilians lack the commitment to the churches for their short-lived church membership and extremely busy lives. Finally, Brazilian churches have become isolated from British churches. Clark noted that, in part, this isolation is a reflection of the growth of evangelicalism in Brazil and the "decline of church attendance in the United Kingdom" (p. 246). Brazilian pastors expressed "a sense of superiority" (p. 246) in relation to British churches. Alternatively, this isolation is also due to British pastors' suspicion and rejection of Brazilian pastors for lack of "recognised academic qualifications" and for not belonging "to established denominational networks" (Clark 2013: 246).

Others have found similar struggles among Brazilian churches in other parts of Europe. For instance, using data from interviews with Brazilian religious leaders and participant observations in three different Brazilian congregations in different Italian cities, Rome, Treviso, and Bologna, Oro's (2014a) investigation identified three reasons for the absence of greater participation of Italians in these churches. First, Oro found that Italians expect church services to begin and end at a precise pre-established time. Additionally, Italians expect the church to separate religious teachings from economic as well as political issues. Finally, Italians, according to those pastors interviewed, expect religious services to be emotionless. In this regard, Oro explains that Italians – like Europeans in general – associate emotions to poverty and reject the

emotional feature of "immigrant Pentecostal churches" based on an "ethnocentric prejudice" (Oro 2014a: 111).

The tensions described above by Clark (2013) and Oro (2014a) related to some aspects of the ethnic and missionary purposes of Brazilian Pentecostal churches abroad, are by no means exclusive to the Brazilian diaspora. For instance, after reviewing the literature on African Christianity in Britain, missiologist Babatunde Adedibu (2013) argues that Black Majority Churches (BMC's) in that country "are gradually assuming the identity of migrant sanctuaries" due to their "insufficient understanding of British culture, flawed church-planting strategies, and missiological inadequacies…" (p. 407). Similarly, Jemirade's (2017), through interviews with leaders and participant observation of the two largest congregations of Nigeria's Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Canada, found that most of their members are "Yoruba people from the southwest region of Nigeria," and that the church "has so far failed to integrate non-Africans into its congregation" (p. 281). Finally, Catto's (2008, 2012, 2017) research among missionaries from Melanesia (a former British colony) in the cities of Chester, Exeter, and London found that most of the impact these missionaries had were among members of the Church of England and not among the wider population.

Differently from these cases described above, where diasporic churches and missionaries have failed to convert the native, non-immigrant local populations, I will focus on a Brazilian Pentecostal church that has, after slightly over ten years of operations in the U.S., been effective in proselytizing and retaining members from outside of the first-generation Brazilian community[26]. Here, I seek to answer the following question, how do members of the American church in South Florida, composed mainly of U.S.-born multiracial and multiethnic members (from Brazilian and non-Brazilian backgrounds), perceive their English-speaking, "American"

church and culture in comparison to the Portuguese-speaking, Brazilian congregation from which they originated? Part of my goal is to examine how issues of coloniality, race, and class influence members' discourse and the extent to which these perceptions have helped and/or hindered the church's achievement of successful "reverse missions." Using de-colonial theory, I argue that the perceptions espoused by members of the American church are rooted in a racialized colonial mentality that perpetuates racial ideologies and classist stereotypes as an effort to distance themselves from *post-colonial confinement* (Burity 2018), prevalent in the Brazilian church in the United States. Such stereotypical perceptions of members contribute to creating cultural distinctions between the first- and second-generation churches necessary for them to "Americanize or westernize[27]" the English-speaking congregation versus "Brazilianize or un-westernize" the Portuguese-speaking.

These perceptions are not "caused" by the Portuguese- or English-speaking churches, as I did not find evidence[28] to support the churches' leadership attempt to accentuate members' differences or stigmatize Brazilian immigrants and their culture. Nonetheless, my findings show that members are attracted to the American church because they uniformly evaluate the church based on common tropes that reflect their colonial mentality. Though they, themselves, are not preoccupied by postcolonial confinement, the ease with which these members (including second-generation, U.S. born Brazilians) use colonial tropes gives them a perspective that advances the type of integration that is powerful enough to challenge post-colonial confinement.

Finally, I argue that it is precisely second-generation's unconscious reproduction of a racialized colonial mentality that has helped the American church in South Florida succeed in their reverse mission's efforts. In the next section, I will explain the theoretical framework that orients my

analysis to then situate this study within the larger literature of immigrant transnational religiosity.

Theoretical Framework

Sustaining racialized colonial mentality to escape post-colonial confinement

To understand the dynamics resulting in successful reverse missions within the Brazilian experience in South Florida, one needs to understand how members' discourse is embedded in a much larger colonial narrative between the West and the rest (Hall 1992; Said 1979). The second-generation church has been insistent on differentiating itself from the native church as a reflection of its desire to free itself from post-colonial confinement (defined below). To do so, they have relied on the reproduction of a racialized colonial mentality (which associates Brazilianness to backwardness, otherness) so that it can be distinguished as superior to the "mother" church.

In his analysis of Habermas and Hegel's discourse of modernity, Hesse (2007) deliberately states, "[m]odernity is racial" (p.643). His idea is that by considering modernity as a racialized project, one may interpret it "as a historical and discursive 'European' / 'non-European' colonial process" (p. 659). For Hesse (2007: 643-644), such processes started in the sixteenth century and throughout time marked "peoples (nations/tribes), identities (Christians/pagans), ecologies (landscapes/wildernesses), cultures (civilized/savage), histories (progressive/arrested), corporealities (superior/inferior)" through a discursive colonial understanding of the "white/European" and/or "non-white/non-European." This Eurocentric dichotomic way of thinking and knowing is based on the exclusion of the non-European, who is temporally, geographically, and religiously racialized as backward, primitive, and traditional,

(Nye 2019a: 15 footnote 13; see Mills [1997] for his discussion of the idea of enlightenment dichotomization).

Such hierarchical colonial understanding is at the center of Burity's (2018) notion of post-colonial confinement among Brazilian Pentecostal/immigrant communities in Britain. Post-colonial confinement, according to Burity (2018:21), are the processes of "(self) isolation, exoticization, and essentialization of Brazilian identity and culture" that create barriers for integration due to some aspects of the Brazilian immigrant community (particularly first generation), such as poor English-language skills, low-skill labor force, and the perception among Brazilians themselves of vast cultural differences with the host society. He argues that processes of glocalization[29] (Robertson 1995) and minoritization[30] (Connolly 2010) – as well as the racialized colonial forces mentioned above, have resulted in the subalternization of the Brazilian immigrant population. Burity (2018) claims that such subaltern positionality in the U.K. resulted in the "ethnicization of a religious identity intended to be transnational" (p. 21). Additionally, such practices have associated Brazilian Pentecostalism to "traces of Brazilian culture and identity, invoked stereotypically…" (Burity 2018: 22). Hence, participants' perception of the American church occurs in relation to and in opposition of the post-colonial confinement which is also common in Brazilian churches in the United States (Levitt 2003; Martes 1999; Margolis 1994; Alves and Ribeiro 2002). In the context of reverse missions, Burity (2018) concludes, where ethnicization prevails, "reverse missions will not prosper" (p. 17).

Diverse Ways of Understanding Religious Transnationalism

James Spickard and Afe Adogame (2010), introducing their edited book on the social dynamics of African diasporic religions, proposed seven patterns of transnational religiosity. The

patterns are, the Ellis Island model, religious bi-localism, religious cacophony, reverse missions, South-South religious trade, transnational organization theory, and deterritorialized religious identity. Three of these models, the Ellis Island model, religious bi-localism, and reverse missions are relevant to our analysis. Below, I will expand on these models to then briefly locate the Brazilian religious experience within these frames.

The first model Spickard and Adogame present is based on the European migration of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This model, they argue, has dominated academic discussions about cross-border connections and is aligned with permanent migration and straight-line assimilation (see Burgess 1925; Park 1950; Gordon 1964). They have called it "the Ellis Island model." One defining characteristic of this model is that "people move permanently" (Spickard and Adogame 2010: 9), which allows for their children to become "native[31]." In the United States, some religions played a great role in assimilating immigrants into the dominant white society. For instance, immigrants who were Protestants, Catholics, or Jews, even though they had to conform to the country's language and culture, they could keep their religion without hurting their adaptation into the American life (Herberg 1955; see Jeung, Chen, and Park 2012). Differently, post-1965 immigrants faced a rather "bumpy" process of incorporation (Gans 1992; Kivisto 2001). Religion, however, continued to play an important role as many immigrants became "more religious in their new country than they were in their old" (Spickard and Adogame 2010: 10; see also Warner and Wittner 1998; Cadge and Sangdhanoo 2005; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000). Some of the limitations of the Ellis Island model, however, are its unidirectional orientation and failure to "deal with race well" (Spickard and Adogame 2010: 11; Chen and Jeung 2012).

The second model for religious transnationalism, Spickard and Adogame (2010), discuss is religious bi-localism. The work of Levitt (2001, 2003, 2007) has been pivotal for understanding how religion facilitates transnational connections across national borders. The scholarship on transnational activity has been framed to incorporate multiple cross-border activities and locations (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007), where religion has been central. As it pertains to the second generation, Levitt (2009: 1239) argues that religion is "a powerful, under-explored motivator for second-generation transnational engagement," especially for middle- and upper-middle-class immigrants. Although some scholars have criticized earlier theoretical models (Kivisto 2001; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004; Waldinger 2008; Portes et al. 1999), the literature on transnationalism has gone through several theoretical and conceptual improvements, and this model still provides significant theoretical, methodological, and conceptual frameworks to understand migrants and non-migrants in diverse settings (see Aranda, Hughes, and Sabogal 2014; Joseph 2015 for recent empirical work).

Finally, the third pattern mentioned by Spickard and Adogame (2010) that is useful to our analysis[32] is called reverse missions. Since the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, historians (Jenkins 2002), Christian missions' scholars (Adogame 2000) – and later social scientists (Freston 2010) – noticed a phenomenon in global Christianity which later became known as "reverse missions." The idea is that countries that are part of the Global South (located in Latin America, Africa, and Asia), that were once colonies of European countries and Christianized by North American and European missionaries, inverted the proselytizing flow and started sending missionaries to European metropoles and the United States to convert their citizens (Ojo 2007; Freston 2010; Adogame 2000; Catto 2008; 2017). Also important in this narrative is that reverse mission is not just a geographical inversion, but also "an inversion of

centre-periphery relations in Christianity, whereby the formerly colonized are now evangelizing the former colonizers" (Burgess 2011: 432).

One common rhetoric that has motivated these forms of South-North, periphery-core missionary activities is that of "a form of secularization theory in their assessments" (Catto 2013: 40) of the West, particularly of Europe. Many missionaries have described Europe as a "prodigal" or "dark" continent, and "Britain as a former missionary-sending nation turned mission field" (Burgess 2011: 435). Such language has served to motivate churches located in the Global South that are experiencing growth to enter these once heralds of the Christian faith nations turned "secular." Yet, despite the "conquest" discourse, churches rarely make incursions among the native, majority-white populations (see the introduction of this paper for some of the tensions within the movement; one notable exception is Ukraine, where a church founded by a Nigerian-born pastor, has a majority non-African membership, Adogame 2010; Freston 2010).

In the United States, most scholars have not used the concept of reverse missions to describe the role of migrant churches among the native population, even though the United States has been experiencing secularization for decades (Voas and Chaves 2016). Instead, scholars have focused on how these churches have primarily served their ethnic and pan-ethnic communities (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Foley and Hoge 2007; Hirschman 2004; Levitt 2007; Jeung 2005; Warner and Wittner 1998; Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Ecklund 2006; Chen and Jeung 2012; Kim R. and Kim S. 2012).

In the next section, I will focus on Brazilian immigrants and briefly locate their experience within the three patterns of religious transnationalism proposed by Spickard and Adogame discussed above. Then, I will propose the contribution of this paper based on the gap found in this literature.

Brazilian Religions Expansion and a Lack of Research Among Second-Generation and non-Brazilian Converts

The literature on Brazilian religious activities outside of Brazil is diverse and, to some extent, has been explored through the same conceptual lens mentioned above. As such, scholars writing about Brazilians in the U.S. and other parts of the world, have focused on the immigrant community and the role of churches as a source of ethnic maintenance and identity, which resembles some of the changes religious institutions underwent in the Ellis Island model (i.e., Martes 1999; Beserra 2005; Margolis 2013; Ribeiro and Vasquez 2012). Others have focused on the transnational connections and activities among religious actors and intuitions, similar to the religious bi-localism model (see Levitt 2003; 2007; Fusco 2000; Rocha 2017; Oro, Steil, and Rickli 2012; Rodrigues and Oro 2014). Still others have focused on proselytizing activities of Brazilian churches – mostly within Pentecostalism, but also "charismatic" Catholicism (see Carranza and Mariz 2013) – among native populations, constituting their reverse missions efforts (Clark 2013; Oro 2014a; 2019; Oro and Alves 2015; Burity 2018).

Most of the literature that fits the Ellis Island model in the Brazilian migratory context has concentrated on the first generation, and in the case of reverse missions, scholars have focused on religious institutions and individual religious actors and their networks (Ribeiro 2007; Vasquez and Ribeiro 2007; Rodrigues 2012; Alves and Oro 2012; Freston 1999). In investigating religion using aspects of both models above (the Ellis Island and the reverse missions), scholars have also included dynamics that pertain to religious bi-localism. For instance, in the introduction of the edited book, "The Diaspora of Brazilian Religions," Vasquez and Rocha (2013: 1), contend that Brazil has become "a key center of religious creativity and innovation within an emerging, polycentric global religious cartography." Among the underlying forces that

have facilitated the global Brazilian religious expansion are immigrants, religious actors, cross-border religious mandate, religious institutions, globalization, and transnational processes.

Nonetheless, among this rich and distinct research agenda, covering several continents and different religious traditions, two major groups have been left out, the second-generation Brazilians and those converted to these religions who are not of Brazilian origins. Part of this absence can be explained by understanding the nature and evolution of Brazilian migration. Even though Brazilians have been migrating to the United States and other parts of the world in great numbers since the 1980s, they have engaged in distinct patterns of migration (Margolis 2013; Siqueira 2009). They first resisted even to be labeled immigrants, preferring to be known as sojourners (Margolis 1995; see Resende 2009). Similarly, due to several circumstances, immigrants engaged in what Margolis (1995, 2013) has labeled "yo-yo migration" (i.e., circular migration between countries to stay in Brazil, but eventually having to return to the host country). More recently, scholars have noticed a renewed wave of Brazilian migration, now among the rich, to settle especially in Orlando and Miami (Brum 2018). All in all, such nuances of the Brazilian migratory experience, particularly to the United States, have occupied scholars' attention while the second generation increased in numbers and began to act independently from their parents.

This paper, thus, centers on the experience, understanding, and perceptions of second-generation Brazilian and non-Brazilian members of a Brazilian Pentecostal church formed by the first-generation and led by the second-generation. Different from other "new" immigrant groups (post-1965) whose studies of their second-generation churches date back from mid to late 1990's (see Bankston and Zhou 1995 on Vietnamese-Americans; Chong 1998 and Chai 1998 on Korean-Americans; Kurien 1998 on Indian-Americans; Yang 1999 on Chinese-Americans; Hunt

1999 on 'Hispanics') and continued throughout the 2000's (Cha 2001; Kurien 2005; 2013; Min and Kim 2005; Peek 2005; Dhingra 2004; Marti 2012; Kim S. and Kim R. 2012; among others), the literature on Brazilian Americans, to date, does not offer a complete picture of this group, much less their religious life (Sales and Loureiro 2008; Marrow 2003; Sales 2008; Cebulko 2013; 2014).

Furthermore, since Brazilians are part of the Latina/o/x group in the U.S., this article provides a glimpse into how some Latina/o congregations may be similar to or different from other ethnic groups. For instance, while many East Asian Americans (Japanese, Chinese, and Korean) have chosen to join congregations that cater toward their (pan) ethnic group after having experienced racism and marginality in white churches (Kim 2004; 2006; Jeung 2005), South Asian Americans have mostly remained in multigenerational ethnic churches or chosen to attend white churches (Kurien 2017). Additionally, Brazilian Americans in South Florida find themselves at a historical juncture and geographical location that can take them to either embrace a pan-ethnic identity and join a church that caters toward Latinas/os/xs, embrace an ethnoracial identity and remain within their ethnic and national identities, or even join a perceived racially neutral white church. Second generation Brazilians' skin color and continued exposure to and experiences with white racism will most likely determine whether they will choose to embrace a Latina/o/x identity or an ethnoracial/national identity (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Fritz 2014). This study provides insights into the dynamics of a multiethnic, second-generation Brazilian congregation.

Throughout this paper, I will call the church I am investigating "*American* church," even though their denomination is from Brazil, and most of their leaders and members are U.S. born Brazilians. This designation is critical for a few reasons: First, this is how the denomination has

called all the churches they have organized that target English-speaking audiences. The church in South Florida is but one of several other churches the denomination has successfully established in a few cities across the United States. Second, members use the term "American" with a meaning that goes beyond mere nationality. As I will show throughout the paper, they want to present the church as culturally, unhyphenated American. And lastly, they do not want to be known as a Brazilian church with an English service, but an American church with a multicultural flavor, able to attract multicultural Americans. These are important features of the church's self-presentation, which I will explore throughout the remainder of the article. I also present the first-generation Brazilian church as 1stGen church. This terminology is important to distinguish the church under investigation from other Brazilian churches in the region and across the U.S.

Data and Methods

Data for this article were collected through in-depth interviews with 32 members of the American church of different ethnoracial backgrounds. From these, 12 members were not of Brazilian origins. The non-Brazilian participants self-identified racially as white only (41.6%), white with variances[33] (16.6%), Hispanic or Latina/o/x (16.6%), and black or African American (25%). Two of them were born outside of the United States (Russia and Argentina). Among those who were ethnically Brazilians, 13 were born in Brazil and came to the U.S. either before the age of 15 (53.3%) or after (46.7%). The remaining seven members were born in the U.S. from at least one Brazilian parent. See Table 1 below for an extended list of the key characteristics of my sample. Interviews were conducted in English and lasted between one to

three hours. Although some interviews were conducted in person, most were conducted via video-phone apps, such as FaceTime and WhatsApp. Participants' ages varied between 18 to 37.

I also interviewed pastor Elidio (the church's leader) before he joined the American church. My interviews and participant observations were part of a research project I conducted in 2016 among religious Brazilians in Central Florida. Other leaders of the Brazilian and American churches in South Florida were informally interviewed through hallway conversations (before and after services) that lasted between three to ten minutes each. In order to become more integrated in the lives and experiences of respondents, I asked for and participated in distinct aspects of the life of the American church outside of its walls. For instance, I asked if I could "hang out" with members after service. Although they would split into different groups and go to various places, I was still invited on several occasions to restaurants, to movie nights at members' apartments, and bowling. These activities were fundamental in my process of understanding members' social life outside their uniformed, religious lives. It also helped me to connect the interviews with their broader social experiences.

Although I will focus on members' perspectives, my analyses are also informed by the twenty hours that I watched and listened to sermons posted on the SoundCloud and YouTube platforms. Each platform hosts the Brazilian and American churches archived sermons. For the American church, I listened to sermon from their youth, Saturday night services, Sunday morning services, and sermons preached at their annual conferences. For the Brazilian church, I watched YouTube videos from their Sunday morning services and their annual conferences.

Findings

Second generation and the mission of "reversing the mission"

When I first met pastor Elidio in the spring of 2016, he was still the pastor of a 1stGen[34] Brazilian congregation in Central Florida[35]. His small church, which belonged to a large Brazilian Pentecostal denomination with churches throughout Brazil and in many countries, was one among more than thirty churches established in the United States that catered to members of the Brazilian diaspora. The largest congregation of this denomination in the United States, located in South Florida, was significantly different from the church in Central Florida. The southern branch was located among an older and well-established Brazilian community (Resende2009; Vasquez 2009; Alves 2009).

They also had an active and more mature second-generation that formed a new congregation when they became less dependent on their parents. In one of my visits to the Central Florida church, I learned from pastor Elidio that he had been invited to be the pastor of the South Florida congregation. He explained the details of the invitation, including the population in which he was going to serve. Part of his excitement for this position was that he was invited to be the lead pastor of the "American[36]" side of the church. Like himself, his new church was composed of members who had English as their primary language and were at ease with the most general aspects of U.S. culture.

Table 1: Key characteristics of respondents (N=32)

Name (Pseudonym)	Age at Time of interview	Age of Migration	Birth	Highest Educational Level	Occupation	Gender	Legal Status	Racial self-classification
1 – Ana	19	U.S. born	U.S.	-	T-Mobile	Female	Citizen	Other / Latina
2 – Léo	23	5	Brazil	AA	Security	Male	Green Card	Pass as white - Latino
3 – Carolina	19	U.S. born	U.S.	H. School	H. cleaner	Female	Citizen	White
4 – Lindsey	23	U.S. born	U.S.	H. School	-	Female	Citizen	Caucasian
5 – Cesar	28	24	Brazil	College	Salesperson	Male	In process	Other/Latino/white
6 – Marcos	32	15	Brazil	H. School	Salesperson	Male	Green Card	White or Latino
7 – Augusto	23	3	Brazil	College	Baker	Male	DACA	Hispanic/Latino/white.
8 – Dalton	26	U.S. born	U.S.	College	Salesperson	Male	Citizen	White or mixed-race
9 – Hunter	26	U.S born	U.S.	-	Chef	Male	Citizen	White
10 – Pedro	19	U.S. born	U.S.	H. School	-	Male	Citizen	White – Hispanic
11 – Beatriz	21	11	Brazil	H. School	Waitress	Female	Undocumented	White, other, Latino
12 – Sandro	19	US-born	U.S.	College	Factory	Male	Citizen	Hispanic
13 – Adriana	18	15	Brazil	College	Babysitter	Female	In process	White – Latina.
14 – Aline	19	15	Brazil	H. School	Babysitter	Female	In process	Hispanic/Latina
15 – Martina	18	4	Argentina	H. School	Babysitter	Female	Citizen	White – Hispanic
16 - Valentina	19	U.S born	U.S.	College	Receptionist	Female	Citizen	Hispanic
17 – Aliya	26	U.S born	U.S.	College	T.A.	Female	Citizen	African American
18 – Katarina	-	-	Russia	-	-	Female	Visa	Caucasian
19 – Peter	28	U.S. born	U.S.	A.A.	Business	Male	Citizen	African American
20 - Henrique	28	8	Brazil	H. School	Mechanic	Male	DACA	White
21 – Juliano	25	16	Brazil	College	Construction	Male	Citizen	Latino and white
22 – Marcelo	26	U.S. born	U.S.	College	Salesperson	Male	Citizen	White/Latino/Hispanic
23 – Katie	20	U.S. born	U.S.	College	Work/Study	Female	Citizen	White
24 – Andre	18	13	Brazil	H. School	-	Male	Undocumented	Mixed-race
25 – Andrew	26	U.S. born	U.S.	College	RehabCenter	Male	Citizen	White
26 - Fernanda	20	U.S. born	U.S.	College	Babysitter	Female	Citizen	White and Brazilian
27 – Juliana	20	17	Brazil	H. School	Clerk	Female	Undeclared	Latina, white, or other
28 - Fernando	21	1	Brazil	H. School	Construction	Male	DACA	White
29 – Sofia	19	U.S. born	U.S.	GED	-	Female	Citizen	White
30 – Emily	28	U.S. born	U.S.	-	Rehab center	Female	Citizen	Black
31 – Patricia	24	5	Brazil	-	-	Female	Documented	-
32 – Celvis	37	U.S. born	P.Rico	-	Manager	Male	Citizen	P. Rican / Hispanic

Moreover, pastor Elidio could practice what he believed was the main reason for Brazilians to migrate and establish churches in the United States:

> We [referring to his denomination's vision to the United States] strongly have this aspect that we feel that we are not here just to get a new start like a fresh start in life. Like these

> Brazilians who came here, who immigrated here to the United States, they are not here simply to make money. We believe strongly... it is our conviction that they came here to bless this country spiritually and the blessings that we have received and understand as the revelation and vision that God has given us, as a Brazilian church, we want to bring it here to the United States. But obviously, we want to do it in a way that is relevant to the culture here.

Pastor Elidio's understanding of the mission of his church among non-Brazilians is displayed on the South Florida, 1stGen church's website for every English-speaking person to read. In a 45-sized font banner, it is written, "God Bless the United States of America." Right below the banner, it continues in English:

> In this country, we would like to be a channel of blessings. We are Brazilians dedicating our lives to spread the Gospel. People that have become missionaries in a foreign land. We understand the Lord's calling. We have decided to answer the "Go" from the Lord and preach the Gospel. We have left our homes and our heritage, to give back to the United States, all the opportunities that have been given to many of us, and we would also like to thank the men and women that were sent to Brazil to preach the Gospel and dedicated their lives to bless ours. Today it is our turn to pray and see this nation being filled with the Glory of the Lord. I sincerely thank this country for welcoming us!

This vision speaks of the gratitude the church feels for the U.S. missionaries who went to Brazil, it also speaks of the obedience to the border-crossing, proselytizing mandate of the church, and lastly, it speaks of the commitment they feel they should have to the U.S. for allowing them to stay within its borders. Despite the symbolic impact such a statement may have on first-generation Brazilians – among other things, to accept some aspects of the immigrant

condition with less bitterness – the responsibility to reach out to non-Portuguese speakers, or more specifically, to the U.S. born English-speakers, falls on the second-generation. In other words, even though the 1stGen church presents its vision to proselytize the U.S. as every member's responsibility, it has purposefully been executed by those who either arrived at a young age – young enough to be socialized in the U.S. education system – or were born here.

The missionary vision of this Brazilian Pentecostal denomination intentionally placed their second-generation at the center of their strategy to avoid losing them to an English-speaking, most likely white church, or having them stray away from their faith entirely. In this sense, the leaders of the 1stGen, South Florida church reversed the mission by intentionally fostering their second generation's "native capital[37]," while designating the first-generation church with the responsibility of working among the immigrant generation.

Explaining the logic behind his denomination's vision, pastor Elidio said:

> Now, again, it is kind of two phases, two aspects of the same church. There is this aspect of the 1stGen church[38] that serves the Brazilian community and offers […] everything in Portuguese, and we have this other aspect which is really new, I mean less than a year old, where we are also now fully an American church; American team of leaders led by Americans. It is like two aspects of the same church.

Important in this vision is the way the new church is organized. The idea that it is "fully an American church" has great significance on how the church operates concerning the 1stGen church. Administratively, they are still part of the same Brazilian denomination under the leadership of the Brazilian immigrant pastor. However, organizationally and operationally, they follow the logic of large societal perceptions of "Americanness," and all the racial, classist, and colonial implications this term involves.

In the next section, I will analyze such perceptions as members of the American church reflect on the differences between their church and the 1stGen church. The American church has been able to reach out to and retain non-Brazilians and second-generation through the reproduction of a colonial mentality that distance themselves from the "post-colonial confinement" (Burity 2018), in which the first-generation Brazilian community is entrenched. I will conclude with a discussion on how whiteness, as a colonial project, plays a role in such a church organization.

Modern vs. Traditional

Contemporary versus traditional music style

One common characteristic that members of the American church perceived as a major difference between both churches is related to the dichotomy modern versus traditional. Participants usually referred to the 1stGen church as traditional and the American church as modern during interviews. For instance, Marcelo, 26, white identifying Brazilian American, after I asked him if he perceived the American church to be a white church, he said, "Uh, for the most part yeah, they're more contemporary." Jamile, 28, Afro-Latina, said, "yeah, I think it's very contemporary […] if you come in at first glance you will consider a church to be very white contemporary, our American church." Aliya, 26, one of the few African Americans in the church, spoke of the modern versus traditional dichotomy in terms of music, worship style, and race. She said, "I feel like the American side is more modern and contemporary. [The Brazilian side], I feel like they remind me of a Baptist church, like a black Baptist church." I then probed Aliya on the reasons why the 1stGen church reminded her of a black Baptist church. She replied:

> Just how they did their songs and the beats and the drums and all that just reminds me of the Baptist church I grew up when I was a kid. And then the American side is more modern and more like Hillsong, Elevation kind of thing.

In Aliya's case, the 1stGen church reminded her of the African American church she grew up in because of the songs and music style. In contrast, she perceived the American church as more modern because of the bands she associates with contemporary Christian music. Based on Aliya's answers, I wanted to know if she could distinguish the idea of modernity with whiteness the same way she associated the idea of tradition with blackness. So, I continued to probe her about the American church. "Would you consider them [the American church] more like a white evangelical church?" Which she answered, "I would say more modern and contemporary. I wouldn't say white evangelical. But just more modern... like what today is."

This innocuous perception of the two churches, one modern and one traditional, should be understood within the larger discourse of racialized modernity (Hesse 2007), as discussed above. For instance, being socialized in core nation-states, such as the United States, means that nonwhite people are also affected by "white socialization" (Christian 2018: 13) which influences them to see the world in binary terms. Moreover, it is remarkable how whiteness is hidden from Aliya's perception of the churches. Examining the power of race in multiracial congregations, Edwards (2008) argues that scholars should account for the role of whiteness, "to deconstruct the underpinnings of white hegemony" (p. 6), in interracial churches because "worship practices and congregational activities" (p. 7) in these churches emulate white churches rather than African-American churches. Commenting on Richard Dyer's (1997) seminal work "White: Essays on Race and Culture," Nye (2019b: 228) contends that "whiteness is usually invisible and unnamed and is assumed as the default form of humanity." Moreover, Nye (2019b) urges scholars of race

and religion, especially in the U.S., to understand the category whiteness as both racial and religious, since this is how Christianity is largely marked in the U.S. and how "contemporary white Americans are interpellated into white America-ness and (white) American nationalism" (p. 228).

Aliya's comments give us a powerful demonstration of the invisible power of whiteness, even within the context of a hybrid[39] congregation. This means that no matter how members make use of white worship practices, such as music style or liturgical practices, it will always be perceived as just "how things are done" in churches and never as racialized practices of worship. In addition to the comments about the two churches' contemporary and traditional worship styles, with racial overtones, Aliya's newly gained perception of Brazilians in the American church (and as a group), is also revealing. She said:

> Well, initially, I thought all Brazilians... I thought they were brown-skinned, for some reason. I don't know why...so I guess they made me realize that they are not all brown skin. They are lighter and uh […], I said, "Oh, they are really light. I thought they were darker. I thought they had a darker skin tone…

Aliya's expectation that there would be more dark-skinned Brazilians is reasonable given that 51% of Brazilians identify as brown and black. The fact that these groups are not represented reflects the way that racism shapes Brazilians' opportunities and life chances, in ways that advantage lighter or whiter Brazil. The original missionaries to Brazil were white and perhaps it is not a surprise that the Brazilians who are on reverse missions are also white/light.

Furthermore, Aliya's perceptions of her Brazilian American friends and the two churches complement each other in the larger scheme of constructing the American church for a U.S. audience and away from post-colonial confinement. It also speaks to the ongoing importance of

race and religion. Still, others perceive the dichotomy modernity versus tradition as accepting difference versus closemindedness. To this, I will turn my attention in the next section.

Accepting difference versus closemindedness

Respondents also framed the American church as accepting of human diversity and, therefore, successful in making inroads into U.S. society. This perception was counter-balanced by the closemindedness of the Brazilian church (in general and not just the 1stGen church studied). For instance, Martina, 18, a self-identifying white Latina of Argentine descent, related the modern aspect of the church with being accepting of difference. This was also considered an important attribute of the American church that was particularly relevant among the large U.S. born, non-Brazilian population. Martina perceived the Brazilian church as "old school" and not equipped to receive such a diverse population, especially those who do not abide by the moral life required in religious settings. She said:

> The Brazilian side of the church is, I guess, still kind of old school and a lot of the kids that we get on the American side of the church are people that wouldn't stay if we were old school. Like we have a lot of drug addicts, we have a lot of alcoholics, a lot of atheists, people that were like that back then. So, they always had this stigma already about Christians. And the only reason why they stayed with the American side of the church [was] because we're very modernized.

Martina's comment correlates modernity with acceptance of diversity and tradition with being close-minded. In part, this comment speaks about the generational gap between the two churches. Nevertheless, ending the analysis there would be incomplete. So much so that the idea of closemindedness versus being accepting appeared repeatedly among participants, even when they mentioned other Brazilian churches in the region. For instance, Sofia, 19, a white

identifying Brazilian American, told me that she decided to initially attend and later become a member of the American church because she felt that another Brazilian church (not the 1stGen church) she was a member of judged her for her past behavior when she was, "in the world." She continued:

> … but they were just less accepting, I guess, like because I was in the world and I did things like, I remember once I came back, uh… I heard that someone had just said like, oh, now you want to go to Jesus, now you want to follow Jesus. I just didn't feel that comfortable there. People would say 'hi,' but no one would try to connect. No one would try to speak to me. And then once I came here, like as soon as I walked in like there was already people saying hi, there was already people, uh, you know, trying to connect with me and trying to like, just make me feel welcome, make me feel that I was, you know, a part and that I was loved and that I wasn't going to be judged for the things that I've done in the past and I feel like that was really different. Like, I felt really judged there in the 'other Brazilian church,' than here in the American church.

Sofia and Martina's comments provide a few insights into how members' perceptions of these churches create a distance between the ethnically rooted, closeminded, 1stGen Brazilian church and the forward-thinking, modernized, American church, which allows for a successful reverse mission. One common observation among scholars invested in understanding the dynamics of reverse mission is how little transplanted ethnic churches understand their new society (Freston 2010; Burgess 2011; Catto 2012). Clark (2013) observed this among Brazilians in the United Kingdom, where an understanding of British culture was restricted in the churches studied because of the "transient nature of membership" (p. 246). Moreover, there is a strict sense of moral conduct that is also part of the Pentecostal ethos prominent among first-

generation Brazilian churches in the diaspora (Burity 2018). Such a "moral framework" is deemed necessary to help immigrants not to "lose themselves" in the context of migration (Sheringham 2013).

Nonetheless, this moral, religious zeal, is perceived as old school or even judgmental by non-Brazilians and Brazilian Americans. This focus on people's moral life is perceived as an ineffective proselytizing tool. Hence, what prevails among members of the American church, and which is part of their self-presentation strategy, is that they are a genuine, loving, and accepting religious community. For Hunter, 26, non-Hispanic white, this new "ethos" is what made him consider staying in the church:

> Even like if you took Jesus and the Holy Spirit out of the equation […] you know, it's not like they came up preaching to me and judging... They just like... They cared about me, you know, had an interest in me. And so, it's like influenced me in a way.

It is important to understand, however, that the American church is also theologically conservative, like its 1stGen church counterpart. The difference here is how members depict both churches' internal culture in terms of their ability to reach out to U.S. born natives. For instance, there is a clear understanding among members of the American church that they need to do whatever it is necessary to bring people of all backgrounds to the church, regardless if their lives do not fit the religious stereotype. Martina, whom I have mentioned earlier, told the story of a visitor to her small group[40] who was gay, she said, "we had a somebody [who] came in that was gay […] you know, the fact that they're coming [to the church] is all that we care about." And then, she continued, "… and I guess, I don't know, if like, if the '1stGen' side had someone come in that was gay, everything would go crazy, you know, they'd be like, oh no." Similarly, for

Jamile, 28, Afro-Latina, the ability of the church to attract people of all backgrounds is a mark of the church's Americanness.

> … we have people with new backgrounds coming in, people who don't come from traditional homes, people that come from broken homes, people who come from a single-parent home, they're coming from drug and alcohol abuse, they're coming from all of these things… I'm now seeing more of them in the church and I think because of that, I see a moving towards more of American.

Hence, the overall perception among members of the American church is that the 1stGen church is unable to accept divergent behavior, even amongst those who are visiting or who are non-Christians. And that the American church has become a beacon of love and acceptance toward all those whom they go after or who come to them. This discourse, however, is rooted in the American church's desire to be unique, especially concerning the 1stGen church and its Brazilian Pentecostal ethos. They do not see themselves as an English-speaking extension of the 1stGen church. They are fundamentally different, and their difference is appealing to a diverse, young, multiracial demographics of U.S. born population. The American church justifies its presence by focusing on what differentiates it from the backwards/old school 1stgen church.

However, as they represent themselves through a rhetoric of universal acceptance, love, modernity, and contemporaneity, they simultaneously antagonize and "otherize" the 1stGen church. Like the first marker of "otherness" in the context of racialized modernity (Hesse 2007), this is also "around religious identity" (Grosfoguel 2012: 11). Different, however, is that the 1stGen church is otherized not as "people with the wrong religion" (Ibid; see also Maldonado-Torres 2014), but as people who are judgmental and intolerant. Even though this is not done in a nativist way (as opposed to the othering of Muslims, for example), it is done in a way that is

reminiscent of a racialized colonial mentality in which the modern group perceives their ways as modern and progressive as opposed to the closeminded religious experience of the 1stGen church. Hence, this dichotomy becomes an important "selling point" for the American church to escape post-colonial confinement that might otherwise attach them to Brazilian immigrants in general, but more specifically, their Pentecostal churches.

Cold and on-time versus warm and always late

The final feature with the larger modernity versus traditional banner of colonial difference that distinguish these two churches is related to members' perception of time management and interpersonal relationships. Burity (2018: 27) argues that Brazilians believe Europeans are "cold and secularized." Oro (2014b, 2019) discusses how Brazilian churches in Europe must adapt to European rigorous time management and lack of emotions during service. Clark (2013) found a rhetoric of cold/hot features among Brazilian immigrants in the U.K. One interesting feature found by Clark (2013) was that his participants believed that the longer Brazilian immigrants remained in the U.K. the more they came to appreciate British "coldness" and reject Brazilian "hotness." The reason is that many associated being cold with "organisation, tranquility and relative fairness…," and "hot" with "informality, nepotism, and patronage" (Clark 2013: 141-142). In Japan, Ikeuchi (2017) noticed that Brazilians perceived Japanese nationals as cold, Brazilians as warm, and Pentecostals as emotional. In the United States Maxine Margolis (2008) and other scholars (Resende 2003; Martes 2007) noticed a perception of hierarchical "us versus them" mentality even within the immigrant group. Such rhetoric targets poor and dark-skinned Brazilians from the North and Northeast parts of the country as not intelligent, lazy, and traditional, while elevating Sothern and Southeastern Brazilians as hard workers, educated, and progressive (see Serrao, forthcoming; Martins Jr. 2016).

In the American church, such dynamics happen in the context of comparing the structural aspects involving each church's services and their attempt to distance themselves from the negative stereotypes associated with Brazilians, particularly related to time management and the display of emotions. For instance, Henrique, 28, white Brazilian, states:

> Americans are way more…, in terms of structure and organization, they're way more organized. We try to always keep our services at a certain time because we know that that is very valued in the United States. In Brazil, the culture is a little bit more lenient in that aspect; they can start a little bit late and finish late…

Similarly, Beatriz, 21, white Latina, says, "We're just very… we're different for sure, the structure itself. Even with time, I feel like we always start on time." Other members who grew up in a Brazilian household, locate these issues within the family. For example, commenting on the differences between her and her mother Ana, 19, who self-identifies as Brazilian and Latina, says:

> Well, for I know for a fact that Brazilians never get anywhere on time. If you tell someone to be there at like five, they'll get there at seven. So, it's like… that's how I feel, I'm very punctual with myself. I try to… I really want to be on time for things, but if I leave it to my mom, I have to tell her, okay, so we're going to be there, and it starts at six. I would say that because it really starts at seven, but I'm going to say six because I want her to actually leave on time.

Perhaps, the classist and racialized aspect of these comments appear more explicitly in my exchange with Pedro. Pedro is a 19 years-old, Brazilian American, who self-identifies as white. He explained that…

> … when it comes to organization and being on time and stuff, I prefer the American culture. Because Americans are always on time. They're organized. You know, when it comes to Brazilians, they are always late. They're not as organized and all.

Then, I probed him to know the scope of the word "American." I asked if, by American, he also included "African-Americans, Asian American, Hispanic Americans." To which he answered initially, "I'd say Americans, in general, to be honest. Americans in general!" But then he complemented stuttering:

> I think... I would say... I mainly see... I mean, I know for a fact that all the white Americans are like that... They are on time; they are really organized. I mean, I could say Americans in general, but most of them are white.

Oro (2019) documents the same perception about the strictness of time management among Brazilian pastors in Portugal and Italy and shows how pastors and their churches undergo a process of adaptation. Since these pastors and their congregations in Europe cannot rely on the second-generation and on a native-born leadership, they become agents of cultural adjustment and responsible for disciplining their congregants. In the case of the churches in this study, these dynamics have been transferred to those responsible for the American church, allowing the 1stGen church to continue displaying a Brazilian Pentecostal ethos without facing backlash from their members.

Relative to the emotions demonstrated versus suppressed as part of large church culture, my respondents consistently framed the American church as more contained and colder than the 1stGen church. For instance, Carolina, 19, white Brazilian American constantly referred to the service at American church as more calming, and not so loud. To make sure that Carolina was

not referring to preaching style, I asked whether she was confusing preaching style with church culture. She replied:

> I mentioned the preaching because pastor Elidio preaches in an American style….most Americans are calm like the way they talk, they are calm they don't raise their voices for anything easily, they don't express as much as Brazilians...[Brazilians] are very expressive; they are always out there hugging, talking loud, they are very outgoing.

Another respondent, Sofia, 19, considers that "Brazilians, they're more… they jump around and things like that," whereas, "our [American] church is calmer…" For Ana, 19, "the older Brazilian church" is more "spiritual," but "[o]n the American side sometimes, it takes a while for the younger generations to actually start praying." Carolina, 19, who, before joining the American church, followed her parents in Brazilian churches in Boston and Florida, said that she had to change herself to adapt to the style of her new church.

> Maybe that is how I became like introvert because like I started going to the American church and I became more...I basically changed myself a little bit more to be American-like, like to being crazy inside and keeping inside instead of just being outgoing and saying 'hi' to everyone and talking to everyone.

The comments provided by participants are even more revealing because they happen within the context of religious identity negotiations. In a study conducted among Salvadoran and Peruvian immigrants in the U.S., Vasquez (1999) demonstrated that religion alone (i.e. Pentecostalism) could not determine the identity path of Latina/o/x groups in terms of them choosing an ethnic/national identity versus a pan-Latina/o/x identity (Vasquez 1999; see Berhó et al. 2017). While Salvadorans chose to identify in ethnic/national terms, Peruvians chose an identity that privileged their pan-Latina/o/x ethnic identity. Pentecostalism in both cases played

an important role, but it was not the only moving variable. Factors such as members' social class and education levels, immigration status, church age, leadership style, theology of the church, etc., are all necessary elements that affect members' religious identity negotiations.

In the case of the American church investigated here, the "old" Catholic versus Protestant way of parsing out Latinas/os/xs identity is not applicable (Calvillo and Bailey 2015). Most members are either children of Protestants parents and grew up in the 1stGen church or came from other Protestant churches in South Florida (whether Brazilian or otherwise). Hence, members of the American church are constructing their religious identities in relation to two Protestant identities, one that is connected to the 1stGen church and its association to post-colonial confinement, and the other associated to the American church and its modernistic values. Because of members' perceptions of how each church operates in terms of organization and structure and based on members' need to demonstrate their church's distinctiveness relative to the 1stGen church, members, in this case, end up privileging an American Protestant identity instead of a Brazilian one.

Another important aspect is how class stereotypes play a role in these identity negotiations. Studies on social class stereotypes and inequality have shown that people usually associate being cold with competence and higher social class, whereas being warm is commonly related to poverty and lacking competence (Durante et al. 2017; Durante and Fiske 2017). Such stereotypes may help understand the perceptions that some members of the American church demonstrate toward the 1sGen church and why they portray themselves in opposite terms (Clark 2013). It is almost like if they were collectively saying, this is not a Brazilian church even though it shares the same building with one. We are as organized, well-structured, respectful of time,

and guided by reason as any other "American" (read white) church. In summary, we are not like them!

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, I examined the perceptions of Brazilian Americans and non-Brazilian members of a church that was created by second-generation Brazilians in South Florida. The church, which I called throughout this paper American church, belongs to a Brazilian Pentecostal denomination that has thousands of churches in thirty-one countries, according to the denomination's website, and engages in multidirectional Christian missions. However, my analysis privileges the idea of "reverse missions," as a South-North, periphery-core movement. The American church, through the efforts of its members, has been successful in proselytizing people from outside of the large Brazilian national/ethnic group located in South Florida. This is particularly new in the literature dealing with Brazilians immigrant churches in the diaspora (Oro 2014a; 2014b; 2019; Freston 2010; Clark 2013; Oro and Alves 2015; Alves and Oro 2012; Rodrigues 2012; Ribeiro 2007; Vasquez and Ribeiro 2007; Alves and Ribeiro 2002), however, it is not new among other ethnic groups (Olofinjana 2019; Heo 2019; Kim S. and Kim R. 2012). Such success, however, did not happen by chance. As I argue in this paper, the success of the American church is rooted in its intentional efforts to escape post-colonial confinement (Burity 2018) by engaging in practices that allow them to distinguish themselves from the first-generation on the basis of notions of being modern versus traditional[41]. This dichotomy has many variances, such as European versus non-European, white versus non-white, western versus non-western, core versus periphery, etc. In the end, however, the American church's success can

be attributed in large part to cultivating a church culture and perceptions among members in which a colonial mentality dictates the terms of their superiority over the 1stGen church.

The adaptation and transformation of the Brazilian church in South Florida into an "American" church, leaving the 1stGen church to continue its ethnic/national/Pentecostal practices is more than just a matter of reversing the mission to save the U.S. born, native populations or a matter of these two churches' survival. Using the experience of Europeans and recent African and Korean migrations, scholars have theorized models to predict the evolution of ethnic churches by focusing on the role of language and intergenerational conflict (Mullins 1987; Goette 2001). Others have argued that ethnic churches go through change and adaptation not only because of language and intergenerational conflict but also because of internal religious cultures, such as the group's religious beliefs and practices (Stevens 2004) or the decisions made unilaterally by the leadership (Dhingra 2004). Although some aspects of these dynamics may also prove valid in the Brazilian case here, I contend that the persistence of a *metropole-colony mindset*, meaning a mentality rooted in binary colonial narratives of civilized vs. uncivilized world, is constantly being imposed onto members of the second generation as it is unto the non-Brazilian population through agents of socialization in core nations such as the United States.

Such global forces, however, are a result of hundreds of years of colonialism and imperialism forced upon the Global South. These forces, however, do not begin when Brazilian immigrants arrive in the United States or Europe, but they are the result of American and European missionary activity in that region. Particularly in Brazil, protestant missionaries began to arrive in the early 19th century. First, Europeans established a Lutheran church in 1824 and subsequently, Americans a Methodist church in 1836 (Cavalcanti 2002). Baptist missionaries from the United States arrived later, but to serve a very specific population, those who were

defeated in the American Civil War, Confederates who had migrated to Brazil to keep their lifestyle (Esposito 2015; Silva 2015). Chaves (2017), writing on the history of the Southern Baptist Convention in Brazil and their legacy of white supremacy, observes: "It was among these immigrants from the southern United States, also known as Confederate exiles, that the first Baptist church in Brazil, the First Baptist Church of Santa Barbara, was founded in September 1871" (p.38). The arrival of Protestant missionaries coincided with the influx of great numbers of European migrants (Willems 1967) and the sudden process of "modernization" that divided the country into developed and undeveloped regions and populations. Such a large number of newly arrived whites in Brazil prompted a Southern Baptist missionary to write to a church in the United States challenging them to "emigrate and settle on these favored lands and establish a large Baptist community" (Cavalcanti 2002: 429). However, as Chaves (2017) reminds us, "white supremacist Christianity" in Brazil was ecumenical and not exclusively Baptist. Other denominations like Methodist and Presbyterian "also contain elements of racially-driven tensions between missionaries and natives" (p.43). This missionary movement "exported" white supremacy and a colonial mentality of the superiority of Europe and white America along with their missionizing efforts in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (Quijano 2005; Rieger 2004).

Hence, the American church's reproduction of such mentality happens in their constant desire to become an unhyphenated "American" church. Even though they are multicultural in the eyes of the members, they are "American" in the eyes of the 1stGen church. To remain American, they must reinforce practices and ideas that reflect a racialized colonial mentality, which may consequently reproduce inequalities associated with the larger society, for instance, colorblindness and structural racism. Freston (2010: 171) ends his article by referencing the way

Europeans perceive the "other," Global South Pentecostals trying to "save" them through their reverse mission. He says:

> That is the true scandal of the Pentecostals; they are the colonial other who has come to the former metropolis not to beg or steal or do the menial jobs or humbly learn Western wisdom, but to tell the West that it has lost its way! The scandal of Pentecostalism is that it is not humble, it represents the ″other" who still thinks he is right and (unlike the intransigent ″native" of colonial times) is now armed with a universalism which thinks its standards apply to all.

Brazilian Pentecostals who have been "socialized" in white supremacy even before engaging in reverse missions have learned their lesson. As they arrived in the United States, they encouraged the second-generation to reproduce a Western persona, while antagonizing the 1stGen church, at the risk of facing racism and discrimination in the "metropole." Nonetheless, I agree with Burity (2018) when he suggests that such tensions (i.e., the Brazilian community's post-colonial confinement) is what "help to reshape [Brazilian churches'] ecclesiastical structures and their ethos" (p. 29). In this case, they seem to be closely following the words of the Apostle Paul who said, "To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews […] To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."

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Endnotes

[25] According to Ojo (2007) "reverse mission refers to the sending of missionaries to Europe and North America by churches and Christians from the non-Western world, particularly Africa, Asia and Latin America which were at the receiving end of Catholic and Protestant missions as mission fields from the sixteenth century to the late twentieth century." (cited in Freston 2010 and Catto 2012). This concept, however, is considered by Morier-Genoud (2018) primarily a "discourse" used by "many African and Asian Christian migrants" (p. 181) to "bolster their claims to be allowed to do church work in the global North, in countries where, more often than not, they face disrespect, discrimination, and racism" (p. 181). Morier-Genoud (2018) also argues that such discourse has been legitimized by "social scientists and theologians" (p.182), thus transforming it in a *performative discourse*, meaning "a discourse with a direct impact on reality" (p. 284).

[26] Several leaders that I spoke with during my ethnography in South Florida claimed that the American church established by the second-generation of Brazilians has around 40% of its membership composed of non-Brazilians of diverse ethnoracial backgrounds.

[27] One can substitute the words westernize/un-westernize for whiten/un-whiten and the meaning will remain the same.

[28] Important here is to understand that while there is not an actual intention by members to act a certain way, the unconscious influence of widespread racialized structures in society over members of the English-speaking church, they end up consciously enacting and invoking colonial/racist behaviors.

[29] This idea refers to the "global-local interlacing" (Burity 2018: 17) of simultaneous constructions of the local (i.e. home, community, etc.) as an aspect of the global.

[30] "The concept of minoritization pays attention to this characteristic of collective action in contemporary societies that is found in the proliferation of voices claiming spaces for recognition of rights, reparation of past injustices and a voice in the public discourse of the wider society" (Burity 2018: 20).

[31] This model is not universal and works differently from country to country. Germany has never embraced Turkish descendants born in Germany as truly Germans (See Brubaker 1992).

[32] It is important to mention that the denomination investigated here has expanded globally and that the United States is but one of their mission fields, attesting for its multidirectional aspect of their mission strategy (see Chaves 2017).

[33] For instance, one bi-racial participant who passes as white said that when benefits him, he chooses Korean because of his mother's ethnicity.

[34] 1stGen church is a reference to the immigrant church as opposed to the American church formed by second generation.

[35] All information that can identify the denomination, its churches around the world, and members have been omitted.

[36] By American, Pastor Elidio was referring to the church formed by 1.5, second-generation Brazilians as well as those in the church who were not ethnically Brazilians.

[37] I define native capital as the capacity to understand and navigate the larger society as well as to speak the local language without accent. This capital, however, does not account for issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or class.

[38] Name of the church has been omitted.

[39] I do not use the term hybrid here as Kim and Kim (2012) do in their work among Korean Americans. I say hybrid in terms of how the church still operates administratively connected to the 1stGen church and under the direct leadership of the denomination in Brazil.

[40] The denomination puts a strong emphasis on small groups that meet on weekdays in one of the members' turned-into-small-group-leader house. This is a common practice among members of both, the 1stGen and American churches.

[41] Part of this mentality is present in Brazil and has its origins in the Portuguese colonial period. It has intensified after the nation became a Republic in 1889 and the subsidizing of mass European migration between the end of the 19th century and mid-20th century (Skidmore 2005; Serrao forthcoming).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Contribution to the Literature

Beginning in the mid-1980s, a significant number of Brazilians began to leave the country due to economic stagnation that affected the population and the middle class in particular. This event became known as the "Brazilian Diaspora" and was characterized by a type of labor diaspora that made scholars identify Brazilian immigrants as "economic refugees" (Margolis 2005: 602; see Rocha and Vasquez 2013). In this context, churches have been one of the most important institutions to receive and socialize Brazilians, particularly in protecting them from "outside" hostility[1] (Martes 2000; Margolis 1993; Ribeiro and Vasquez 2012; Vasquez 2009; Alves and Ribeiro 2002).

However, as with many other social institutions, Brazilian congregations are places where generational and racial tensions may emerge (Reina 2017; Burdick 1999; Emerson et al. 2015; Serrao and Cavendish 2018). Considering the diversity of the population attending Brazilian congregations, in terms of ethnic, racial, gender, social class, and generational backgrounds, and the way Brazilian and U.S. societies organize and understand race relations, it is not surprising that the migratory experience of members is not monolithic and varies from one to another. Hence, my goal in this research has been to emphasize the unexpected ways that churches can challenge and reproduce inequality. My interest in understanding the sociological

mechanisms that shape how churches and church members respond to racism and racial ideologies has been a central concern in my research in a relatively understudied area.

This research adds the literature that focuses on the different trajectories and decisions that second-generation immigrants make about their religious participation, with particular attention to the role of race and racism. My findings depart from earlier studies on second-generation (Kurien 1998; Yang 1999; Bankston and Zhou 1995) as I do not see the American church reinforcing a Brazilian or Latina/o/x ethnic identity. Part of the reason is that first-generation Brazilians have consistently attempted to separate themselves from Hispanics (Martes 2007; Margolis 2008). This became clear to me as many of my first-generation participants identified themselves in racial terms (as they do in Brazil). Moreover, because of how most members perceive the English-speaking church as "American," there is an attempt by the leadership to make the church as inclusive as possible to non-Brazilians. Hence, aspects of Brazilian culture, and especially the Portuguese language, are undermined or wholly removed.

Recent studies among the second generation and religion (Chen and Jeung 2012) have examined a type of hybrid congregations that appropriate and combine religious and cultural elements of both the home country and the U.S. Studying a hybrid Korean congregation, Kim S. and Kim R. (2012: 186) argue that these churches not only have aspects of Korean Protestantism mixed with "American Evangelicalism," but also that "the normative culture" (p.189) of the congregation is Korean American. My findings depart from such hybrid churches as well, because, despite the idea that the American church has the "Brazilian warmth," as Pastor Elidio once told me, there is no intentional recreation of Brazilian Protestantism, much less a Brazilian normative culture that members can point to as uniquely "Brazilian." This is mainly the reason

why members of the English-speaking church could make clear distinctions between their "American" church and the "Brazilian," first-generation church.

The findings relative to the American church in my study, however, are similar to some of the findings with respect to Korean American and Indian American congregations studied by Min and Kim (2005) and Kurien (2017), respectively. Such studies claim that the influence of white American evangelical culture amid the second-generation affects their decision to "de-ethnicize" their religion. Furthermore, the English-speaking church studied also resembles Marti's "third option[2]," meaning "a religiously based ethnic transcendent Latino identity" (Marti 2012: 31-32). In this case, I agree with Marti (2012: 32) that third option Latina/o churches "encourage members to put forward a broader religious identity as more important than any particularistic or pan-Latino identity." As discussed in chapter three, however, this ethnic transcendent understanding in the church can be potentially problematic to anyone who feels that unique issues related to their ethnoracial identities cannot be addressed because of colorblind racism, particularly black Latina/o/x and non-Hispanic black members. Such problems may occur when the congregation insists on ignoring the reality of race and fails to create the necessary spaces for celebrating ethnoracial diversity and educating white members about racial issues.

Having discussed points of similarities and differences between my research and that which was conducted on second-generation immigrant communities and churches in the U.S., there are several elements of my work that are distinctive. First, I take Latina/o/x racial identity seriously. By doing this, I can analyze my data through a theoretical framework that places issues of race and racism in colonial Latin America. Part of the problem of investigating Latina/o congregations through an ethnic-only lens is that one misses the potential for racism in

Latina/o/x religious communities happening within the frame of colorism and *mestizaje* (*mestiçagem* in Portuguese). As evident in chapter two, Brazilian racial ideology, racial democracy, is a racist ideology masquerading in colorblindness. White or light-skinned Latinas/os/xs in Latin America bring their prejudice toward blacks and dark-skinned Latinas/os/xs (Hordge-Freeman 2015; Telles 2004; Weinstein 2015; Wade 2010) with them to the United States and continue to perpetuate racism (Aranda et al. 2014; Dowling 2014; Haslip-Viera 2018) even though they suffer racism and racialization from non-Hispanic whites (Lacayo 2017; McDonnell and Lourenço 2009).

Second, within this racial analytical framework, I can investigate ethnic and multiracial churches and compare them with studies that have focused on black/white racial congregational dynamics to find similar or different patterns. As such, in my research, I show how the hidden power of whiteness plays a role in church dynamics, similar to what happens in U.S. black/white congregations (Emerson and Woo 2006; Edwards 2008a; 2008b). Moreover, since the members of the church have diverse ethnoracial backgrounds (including white Americans and Latina/o/x, black Americans and Latina/o/x, mixed race, etc.), I can investigate how different understandings about racism and the dissemination of colorblind racist practices contribute to maintaining racial hierarchy and inequality. As such, chapter three shows how more privileged members of the church are not critical about colorblindness and consider conversations about race a taboo even when they recognize diversity as a goal and a religious mandate.

Finally, by considering the perceptions of U.S. born second-generation Brazilians and non-Brazilians about the ethnic Brazilian church, I can examine how notions of modernity and stereotypes about people from the Global South are rooted in a racialized colonial discourse of "us versus them." In chapter four, I show that the members of the American church who I

interviewed perceive the Brazilian church and its culture in ways that resemble colonial rhetoric that otherizes Brazilians as non-modern, intolerant, and disorganized while simultaneously viewing the American church as modern, accepting of difference, and organized. This binary way of seeing the world is rooted in racialized colonial discourses and perpetuated in the church both as a way to differentiate themselves from first-generation Brazilians. Furthermore, this becomes a way to be attractive to a U.S. born population of different ethnoracial backgrounds.

Limitations and Study Considerations

This study has some limitations. Among the main ones are the consequences for the overall data collection after the pastor of the English-speaking church requested that I stopped collecting data. Because I had to interrupt my data collection abruptly, I could not participate in one of the essential church activities outside the church, small group meetings. Also, I could not conduct in-depth interviews with some of the leaders of the Portuguese- and English-speaking churches. Most of my conversations with these leaders happened in the hallways before or after each service. These brief conversations were superficial in that they did not touch in many of the themes related to race and racism that was a fundamental part of this research.

Regarding small groups, the fact that I did not attend these meetings prevented me from observing meaningful discussions and interactions relevant to this study. For instance, small group meetings happen in members' houses and not in the church. Participants invite new people or people that would not quickly go to a religious service to "multiply" the group, thus growing the church. Furthermore, these groups are designed for providing a space where the group leader trains new leaders that will lead the new group when the original one splits. Since the church has a seminary, they take advantage of these small settings for students to practice leadership skills.

Finally, and perhaps the most important feature of small groups for my research, these are also spaces for some challenging conversations, the types of which do not happen when the church meets in the building, including discussions about race.

Consequently, my absence in such spaces as an observer may have influenced my overall understanding of some of the racial dynamics, mainly related to the creation of "diversity" spaces for members to discuss and educate others in racial matters. My feeling, however, based on my understanding of how race conversations are absent in the larger church-wide meetings, is that leaders of small groups also avoid these conversations. Nonetheless, since I have not been to any of these meetings, I am confident that I have lost essential nuances that could have added to my understanding of the issues discussed in this research.

On the other hand, because Pastor Elidio asked me to stop interviewing members of the churches, I experienced first-hand what I was trying to convey through my analyses, that the convergence of different national racial ideologies in the context of a religious congregation is a powerful force for keeping racialized structures intact, thus perpetuating the racial status quo. Such experience for me was a clear manifestation, and evidence of my overall argument that is, talking about race becomes a taboo when it is brought to the attention of people who do not reflect upon their behavior and understandings of race. This is especially relevant in congregations that embrace white normativity and that do not offer spaces for conversations about issues of racism and how race affects each group differently. Moreover, because I was conducting these interviews during very contentious and polarized political times, I believe that part of the reaction in the church reflected how issues of culture wars were potentialized in church settings for political gains.

Issues during recruitment

Recruitment was not natural because the churches investigated did not have previous knowledge about myself -- as did the churches in Texas which I studied previously. My only point of contact was Pastor Elidio whom I had met in Central Florida before he was invited to be the lead pastor of the English-speaking church in South Florida. Because of the circumstances of our previous meetings, he knew me only as an academic. For this reason, he regularly introduced me as such which may have intimidated some of the members of the church (mostly composed of young individuals). Besides, because I was driving back and forth (paying gas and lodging with my graduate assistantship money), I could not stay longer than a couple of weekends per month at the research site. Hence, I was unable to establish a more in-depth relationship with many of the members of both churches. That limited presence prevented me from getting to know those members of the English-speaking church who would not "hang out" after Saturday night services. Among those were many newly arrived black members. That limited my recruitment among black members. When I was able to establish some snowball sampling to recruit some more black members, I had to stop interviewing all together. Similarly, because of the hurdles to immigrate to the United States, particularly the cost of the entire enterprise, many of the participants in the Portuguese-speaking church were considered middle-class and self-identified as either white or white with some variances. Such "immigration effect" and the lack of more time among first-generation Brazilian limited my recruitment of self-identified black Brazilians.

Recruitment in general in the Portuguese-speaking church (not only among black Brazilians), in South Florida, was challenging. Not only did I not know the lead pastor of that congregation (although pastor Elidio had previously mentioned about my research and that I

would be visiting the church for a few months), the church membership as a whole was suspicious of me and of what I was going to do with the information collected. I remember in one occasion pastor Manuel telling me after the service that the reason I was not getting enough people interested in participating was that they did not know me and were afraid of what I was going to do with the information I wanted to collect. A large number of undocumented Brazilians in the United States (Margolis 2013) combined with tense political times during the early years Donald Trump in the presidency (he had promised to deport millions of undocumented immigrants) led to an imperfect recruitment process among the first generation. Again, I could not invest more time in recruiting Brazilian participants because I was prohibited from collecting data.

Finally, my inability to recruit a diverse range of interviewees reflecting the generational and ethnoracial diversity of the congregations, stem from the fact that I was not living in the same city where these churches are located. Biweekly trips to the field restricted my access to members during the week. I could not attend small group meetings because they happened during the week, and I had teaching responsibilities that required I spent the week in Central Florida. By the time I organized my finances and planned to stay in the research field for a month during the summer of 2018, pastor Elidio asked me to stop the research. Having a permanent location in South Florida to attend different church events during the week as well as visit some members and leaders in their houses could have potentially reduced the skepticism of the members about me and my project and could have allowed me to add more voices, particularly those of the black members of both churches.

Future explorations of sociological mechanisms

Another limitation of this study relates to the lack of data to explain why the congregations investigated do not have the diversity-affirming havens that would help to stop the maintenance of colorblind and other forms of racism. In the introduction and throughout the chapters of this study, I made constant reference to how Pastor Elidio asked me to stop everything I was doing in terms of data collection. Such disruption prevented me from obtaining access to meetings and interviews with leaders of the congregations that would have given me insights into the institutional dynamics underlying the churches' omission in such an important area. Marti's (2010) study at Oasis reveals the steps taken by the congregation to create an African American affirming haven in the church. For instance, Oasis incorporated a music style that is persistently considered as "black sound" by members of the church (Marti 2010: 209). Moreover, the church has a straightforward "commitment to racial equity" (p. 209). Even the pulpit is used to educate members about racial inequality. Marti (Ibid) says that "the pulpit regularly addresses issues often left unspoken between blacks and nonblacks in congregations." The church also fosters "messages, ministries, and counseling sessions" that emphasize "prejudicial attitudes" (p. 210). Finally, the church is intentional about hiring black staff and about having questions about racial prejudice in "Application for Ministry" forms (p. 210). Other scholars have shown how church leaders "manage" diversity in ways that make the congregation look more appealing to potential members by balancing the congregation's image as neither "too white" nor as a "black church" (Barron and Williams 2017: 20). Such insights were possible as the authors "engaged in participant observation of evening worship services and other church-related activities such as dinners, leadership meetings, and community-building events" (Barron and Williams 2017: 16 emphasis mine).

Because of the abrupt interruption in my data collection, I was not afforded the opportunity to discover all the mechanisms by which these congregations and their leaders reproduced (or at least left unchallenged) the colorblind racial ideologies that I observed. Moreover, the colorblind nature of Brazilian and U.S. racial ideologies prevented me from getting relevant information to the issues of racial diversity in congregations via sermon analyses. Such topics are perceived as taboo and will rarely by spoken from the pulpit. In fact, many of my interviewees believed that bringing issues of race to the pulpit would be politically driven and divisive to the church. Hence, whether the lack of diversity havens is an intentional policy of the church or a result of the society-wide influence of racial ideologies, or even a combination of both, I cannot tell with the data I was able to collect. My experience among Brazilian immigrants in and outside of church settings, as well as my cultural competency as a native Brazilian, tell me that it is a combination of both.

For a holistic understanding of the mechanisms at play researchers need to conduct in-depth observation of informal and formal gatherings, and a systematic analysis of congregation materials, including, if possible, the minutes of leadership meetings. This would then allow for a more efficient connection of members' perspectives and beliefs to actual discourses, activities, and policies of the church. Finally, while my findings indicate that the members of the English- and Portuguese-speaking congregations demonstrated some of the frames of colorblind racism, future studies should examine how opposition emerges and how the congregations react. My impression is that as the number of black members in leadership positions grows, more changes regarding the establishment of diversity havens will be incorporated. I would need to observe the conversations around this topic in leadership meetings and the decision-making processes that come out of those meetings to know for sure. Until then, these are only speculation.

Contribution for the Church in the United States

Beyond the theoretical importance of my research, there are several practical ways that this work can be integrated into congregational planning by contemporary congregations in the United States. First, my research can help scholars and church leaders understand how demographic shifts can lead to the creation of new congregational forms and practices. The Brazilian denomination investigated seems to be taking advantage of their second generation to expand their reach beyond their ethnic community. They consider the entire U.S. population as their mission field and systematically pursue ways to reach out to them. Due to their racial and ethnic diversity, Brazilian immigrants and their offspring are well equipped for such a task – especially in South Florida. Nonetheless, as the church grows in number and racial diversity, it should deliberately pursue ways for diversifying the leadership, intentionally teaching issues of race relations, and create spaces for acknowledging racial differences and experiences among members, thus creating pluralist multiracial congregation rather than an assimilated multiracial congregation (DeYoung et al. 2003; Marti 2010).

Second, my research can help church leaders identify the practices that enhance members' feelings of inclusion, commitment, and participation in congregational life. As the church becomes more ethnically and racially diverse, it is increasingly essential for church leaders to understand the social processes that can create and sustain – or potentially undermine – feelings of belonging among congregants. An exploration of the affinities and relationships between congregants and the congregation could play a considerable role in maintaining sustainable membership.

Finally, given the South-to-North models of church mission, the congregation studied presents a successful case of the diasporic reverse mission. By examining how congregation

leaders make use of their second-generation members to reach out to "Americans" of different ethnic-racial backgrounds, my research sheds light on the strategies that are most successful in replenishing membership. However, as leaders attempt to recreate cultural norms that are appealing to a broader urban local membership, I believe they should proactively break any trace of colonial understanding that exists between the countries perceived as "western" and those located in the Global South.

What the coming decades will bring is uncertain – political changes, immigration uncertainty, DACA, among other things – but what will not change is the significance of churches and the focus of second-generation Brazilian churches which will continue searching for ways to win "Americans for Jesus."

Future studies should continue to follow Emerson et al.'s (2015: 355) suggestion that the triangulation between race, religion, and inequality is one of the most fruitful areas in researching issues of race and religion. In such a pursuit, researchers interested in continuing exploring issues of race in Latina/o/x communities, should uncover Spanish-speaking congregations' racial dynamics to see how different Latina/o/x groups (especially those from South America with large black and white populations) manage race and ethnicity in religious communities. Such a research agenda recognizes how religion is implicated at both reproducing and challenging racial inequality, and how understanding racial dynamics outside the black/white binary can help racial progress in the U.S. (Emerson et al. 2015).

Another essential venue for future inquiry is how these churches address and create spaces for conversations about issues of immigration. My research reveals that race is perceived as contentious and a politically motivated issue. However, considering a large number of people who are impacted by current immigration policies in both the English-speaking and Portuguese-

speaking churches, immigration may be perceived in different ways. And if so, what are the implications for non-Brazilian members whose families have been in the U.S. for many generations.

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Endnotes

[1] Outside hostility in this context has to do with society-wide anti-immigrant sentiments, especially those directed at Latina/o/x populations that affect Brazilian immigrant communities (Joseph 2013).

[2] The first and second options Marti (2012: 32) refers to is the "ethnic-specific and pan-ethnic Latino identity" and come from two case studies researched by Manuel Vasquez (1999) among Salvadoran and Peruvian immigrants in the United States.

Appendices A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

11/20/2017

Rodrigo Otavio Serrao Santana de Jesus
Sociology
4202 E Fowler Ave
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**
IRB#: Pro00031310
Title: Winning "Americans" for Jesus?: Racial Ideology and the Future of the Brazilian Evangelical Church in the U.S.

Study Approval Period: 11/20/2017 to 11/20/2018

Dear Mr. Serrao Santana de Jesus:

On 11/20/2017, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
Serrao_IRB_10-28-2017-v2.docx

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Assent Form_Serrao.docx
Assent Form_Serrao_Portuguese.docx
Paper Survey Assent Form_Serrao.docx
Paper Survey Assent Form_Serrao_Portuguese.docx
Informed Consent_Serrao.docx
Informed Consent_Serrao_Portuguese.docx
Paper Survey Consent Form_Serrao.docx
Paper Survey Consent Form_Serrao_Portuguese.docx
Parental Permission_Serrao.docx
Parental Permission_Serrao_Portuguese.docx
Survey Participation Parental Permission_Serrao.docx
Survey Participation Parental Permission_Serrao_Portuguese.docx

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent documents are valid until the consent document is amended and approved.***Consent forms with waiver are not stamped.

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.117(c) which states that an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either: (1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or (2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. [For verbal consent].

This study involving child participants falls under the minimal risk category 45 CFR 46.404: Research not involving greater than minimal risk.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Appendices B

Interview Protocol

These questions revolve around five major themes: (1) General experience as an immigrant (or child of immigrant) in the United States – issues of race, racism, racialization, gender, class, and migratory status; (2) Intergenerational tensions; (3) Racial ideologies; (4) Affirmative action questions; (5) Social distance questions; (6) Significance of discrimination questions; (7) Other important questions; (8) Religious ideologies (ethnic transcendence, salvation discourse, etc.); (9) Gender questions; (10) Inequality/immigration question; (11) Final questions.

Several of these questions follow Bonilla-Silva and Forman's (2000) questionnaire used to assess whites' racial ideology[1].

(1) General experience as an immigrant (or child of immigrant) in the United States – issues of race, racism, racialization, gender, class, and migratory status.

1.1 When and where were you born?

1.2 How long have you been in the U.S.?

1.3 What language did you grow up speaking at home?

1.4 Where do you work?

1.5 What is your immigration status?

1.6 How has this congregation had an influence on your life?

1.7 How have they influenced your view or impressions of Brazil?

1.8 How do you identify in terms of your nationality? Ethnicity? Race? Gender? Social Class?

1.9 Have you ever experienced other people making assumptions about your identity in any of these areas that are at odds with how you identify yourself?

1.10 Where have you encountered people who make assumptions about your identity or categorize you with groups that you don't think of yourself being a part of?

1.11 Have you ever experienced any form of discrimination because of your identity?

- Can you explain those experiences?
- Have any of those experiences been with members of your religious congregation?
- Have any of these experiences happened within this congregation?
- If not within this congregation, where have you encountered discrimination?
- Can you describe those experiences for me?

1.12 Have you ever experienced any form of discrimination because of your accent or level of proficiency with the English language? (OR do people think you have accent?)

1.13 In what ways, if any, does your nationality/ethnicity/race/gender/class/migratory status or English language fluency affect your interaction with others in your job? Your school? Your church? Your neighborhood?

(2) Intergenerational tensions

2.1 What is your role in the church? (ministry)
2.2 Why do you think it is important to have two congregations, one for first generation Brazilians and one for US-born Brazilians and other Americans?
2.3 Do you recall the circumstances through which the church leadership decided to create two distinct services?
2.4 Apart from language, what else do you think is different between the first-generation church and the second-generation church?
2.5 When it comes to culture, what cultural differences do you see between those who worship in the English service and those who worship in Portuguese?
2.6 In your opinion, what are the differences between Brazilian culture and American culture?
2.7 In your opinion, what are the main differences between Brazilian immigrants and Brazilian Americans?
2.8 Can you give me examples of how these differences manifest themselves in the context of this church?

(3) Racial ideology

3.1 Earlier you mentioned that you identify yourself racially as _____. How has your experience living here affected the way you see yourself?
3.2 How do these experiences affect the way you see other people of different races/colors?? What is your definition of racism?
3.3 Do you believe there is racism in Brazil? What about in the U.S.? Can you explain why do you think this way?

(4) Affirmative action questions:

4.1 (for Brazilians) In 2001 Brazilian government established affirmative action (quota system) for nonwhite students to attend universities (especially public federal universities). Do you agree with this system?
4.2 (For Brazilian-Americans and other Americans) Some people say that because of past discrimination it is sometimes necessary for colleges and universities to reserve openings for Black students. Others oppose quotas because they say quotas discriminate against Whites. What about your opinion – are you for or against quotas to admit Black students? Why?
4.3 (For Brazilian-Americans and other Americans) Affirmative action programs for Blacks have reduced Whites' chances for jobs, promotions, and admissions to schools and training programs. Do you agree, disagree, or neither agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

(5) Social distance questions:

5.1 What do you think of marriage between Whites and Blacks?

5.2 Think of five people with whom you interact the most on an almost daily basis. Of these five, how many of them are Black?

(6) Significance of discrimination questions:
6.1 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Discrimination against Blacks is no longer a problem in the United States? Why?
6.2 (for Brazilians) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is no discrimination against Blacks in Brazil? Why?
6.3 Do you think that blacks are in the position that they are as a group because of contemporary discrimination? Why?

(7) Other important questions:
7.1 Some Blacks claim that they face a great deal of racism in their daily lives. Many people claim that this is not the case. What do you think?
7.2 Many Blacks and other minorities claim that they do not get access to good jobs because of discrimination and that, when they get the jobs, they are not promoted at the same speed and to the same jobs as their White peers. What do you think?
7.3 On average, Blacks have worse jobs, income, and housing than Whites. Do you think that this is due to discrimination or something else?
7.4 Many Whites explain the status of Blacks in this country today as a result of Blacks lacking motivation, not having the proper work ethic, or being lazy. What do you think?
7.5 How do you explain the fact that very few minorities are at the top of the occupational structure in this country?
7.6 How different is your understanding of race from your parents?

(8) Religious ideologies (ethnic transcendence, salvation discourse, etc.).
8.1 What do you think this church is doing to address the racial tension that exist in the U.S.? Do you think this approach is working?
8.2 How does this church make room for other ethnic groups' cultural expressions?

(9) Gender questions:
9.1 If R is male – Do you personally feel women should have leadership roles (other than leading other women or children) in this church?
9.2 If R is male – Do you feel sometimes women are treated unfairly in the church?
9.3 If R is male – Have you ever heard of women being discriminated against in the church?
9.4 If R is male – What is the official position of this church when it comes to women exercising leadership roles among adults?
9.5 If R is female – Do you feel your opinions and suggestions are heard in this church?
9.6 If R is female – Do you feel sometimes you are treated unfairly just for being a woman?
9.7 If R is female – Have you ever felt discriminated against for being a woman in the church?

9.8 If R is female – If you feel God is calling you to be a pastor or a leader of a life group, can you pursue your calling in this church?
Outside the church
9.9 If R is female – How do people respond when they discover you are Brazilian?
9.10 If R is female – How do you feel about their reaction?
9.11 If R is female – Are there certain things you do/ don't do to make your Brazilian identity known to others?
9.12 If R is male – Do you feel people treat Brazilian women different when they discover she is from Brazil?
9.13 If R is male – Why do you think that?

(10) Inequality/immigration question:
10.1 How do you see the struggle of the undocumented Brazilian immigrant on the Brazilian church in comparison with Brazilian-Americans and other Americans in the American church?

(11) Final questions:
11.1 What do you think of Trump?
11.2 Do you know anyone who was part of this church and for whatever reason has left the church?
11.3 Is there anything I did not ask that you would like to let me know about (either about you, this congregation, or anything else)?

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[1] Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo and Tyrone A. Forman. 2000. "'I Am Not a Racist but ...': Mapping White College Students' Racial Ideology in the Usa." *Discourse & Society* 11(1):50–85.