


12-12-2016

# Fortaleza's Immigrant Song: Portrait-Narratives and an Identity Needs Analysis of Recent Immigrants' Lived Experiences

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FORTALEZA'S IMMIGRANT SONG: PORTRAIT-NARRATIVES AND AN IDENTITY  
NEEDS ANALYSIS OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES

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PIM 74

A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of  
Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management at SIT Graduate Institute in  
Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

December 12th, 2016

Advisor: Dr. John Ungerleider

Disclaimer: The thoughts, ideas, and information produced in this capstone report do not reflect those of the National Security Education Program, International Institute of Education, the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, or World Learning and the International Honors Program

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### Acknowledgements

I dedicate this capstone paper first and foremost to all of the incredibly brave and inspiring research participants and immigrants who made themselves vulnerable by opening their hearts and minds to share their stories, making this project possible. The success of this inquiry project is completely owed to their guidance, kindness, friendship, and their valuable and powerful knowledges they've continuously gifted me throughout my time in Fortaleza. Secondly, I dedicate this capstone paper to all of the warm and kindhearted Brazilian friends and family, Youth Ambassadors, Portuguese professors (Lilia, Natalia, Beatriz, Regis, and Gabriela), and the incredible bonds and friendships that continuously shape and tune the song that guides my understanding of the world. Thirdly, I dedicate this capstone paper to my advisor Dr. John Ungerleider, the staff and faculty at SIT Graduate Institute from 2014-2015, and the graduating classes of MAT46/PIM74. All of these remarkable folks laid the foundation to my rewarding and unforgettable journey on the hill in Brattleboro, Vermont, and subsequent journey in Brazil.

I'd like to acknowledge all of the powerful and caring women and men who contributed to the successful completion of this capstone paper: Adrienne, Alejandra Isabel, Amanda, Antonia, Jamie Lee, Laura Nathalie, Don Gerardo, Patrick, and Will. The guidance, technical, and academic support these incredible human beings provided me throughout this inquiry project was the invaluable push I needed to finish. I'd also like to acknowledge my *habibis*, *querrerxs*, friends, *hermanxs*, role-models, and beautiful family members who continue to provide me with the emotional, intellectual, and physical support and guidance throughout my rendition *desta vida humana*. I couldn't be who I am or achieve anything I have with out them. I would like to thank my "partner

person” who has provided me with all of the care, inspiration, hope, support, and encouragement I could ask for throughout my adventures in Fortaleza. I can't wait for our next adventure together.

And lastly, I would like to extend a special thank you to the funders that made this ethnographic inquiry project possible: the National Security Education Program, the Institute for International Education, the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, and World Learning and the International Honors Program.

*“What, then, is ethnography? The answer is not the same for everyone. But for me, and for this particular research, ethnography must be able to follow the question. It must be able to capture not only the site, but also the smell, feel, taste, and motion of a locale, of a people that share a common space and intertwined lives.”*

- Carolyn Nordstrom, *Shadows of War* (2004, p. 13).

## Table of Contents

Consent to Use of Capstone.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents .....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Resumo (Português) .....	vii
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>I</b>
Context.....	2
<b>Inquiry Questions.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Primary inquiry question: .....	2
Inquiry sub-questions:.....	2
<b>Background Information .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Basic Needs Approach .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Research Methodology.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Theoretical Framework .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Epistemologies of the south.....	5
Ethnographic principles .....	8
Grounded theory .....	10
<b>Data Collection Methods .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Data Analysis Methods.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Subjectivity and Limitations.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Project lead's personal subjectivity .....	13
Perceived limitations of study.....	14
<b>Portraits-Narratives and Findings .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Portrait-Narratives.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Guatemalan portrait-narrative .....	18
Argentine portrait-narrative.....	19
Salvadoran portrait-narrative .....	20
Pakistani portrait-narrative .....	21
Venezuelan portrait-narrative .....	22
<b>Survey Findings and Interpretation .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Inquiry Findings.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Language and communication .....	28
Professional opportunity .....	31
Personal growth .....	36
Saudade and belongingness.....	37
<b>Interpretation of Findings.....</b>	<b>41</b>
Language and communication .....	42
Professional opportunity .....	42
Personal growth.....	43
Saudade and belongingness.....	44
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>45</b>
Fortaleza's Immigrant Song	
Practicable Applicability .....	47
Considerations for Further Inquiry .....	47
<b>References .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>52</b>

### Abstract

This inquiry sheds light on the personal stories and lived experiences of a group of recent immigrants currently living in Fortaleza, the sprawling capital of the Northeastern state of Ceará, Brazil. Utilizing a theoretical framework guided by “Epistemologies of the South,” ethnographic principles, and constructivist grounded theory, this capstones presents five first person portrait-narratives highlighting intimate details of project participants’ lives prior to immigrating, and uncovers four persistent and recurrent themes expressed by project participants: (1) language and communication, (2) professional opportunity, (3) personal growth, and (4) “*saudade*” and belongingness.

Through the lens of Johan Galtung’s Basic Needs Approach, this inquiry also sought to analyze the relationship between conflict and identity, insofar as it existed, through determinable identity needs and satisfiers while recognizing overlapping themes for further inquiry. This analysis was organized under the four aforementioned themes offering explicit examples of when these identity needs weren’t satisfied, and of how personal or latent interpersonal conflict manifested. These manifestations of conflict often occurred when perceived social equilibrium failed to be respected or when research participants purportedly disrupted it. This inquiry could not determine identity based conflict in more traditional or academic senses, but at times revealed moments of polarization, isolation, and degrees of cultural resistance and friction as a result of a basic immigrant identity.

This inquiry’s findings can be best utilized by local organizations working to provide and improve support related to the aforementioned persistent and recurrent themes to promote better inclusion and integration into *Fortalecense* society.

**Keywords:** Immigration, Brazil, Fortaleza, Intra-American, Identity Needs

## Resumo (Português)

A presente pesquisa lança luz sobre as recentes histórias e experiências de vida de um grupo de imigrantes atualmente vivendo em Fortaleza, a crescente capital do Ceará, Nordeste do Brasil. Utilizando uma abordagem teórica guiada pelas “epistemologias do sul”, princípios etnográficos e teorias construtivistas, essa dissertação apresenta o retrato-narrativa de cinco participantes, destacando detalhes íntimos da vida de tais imigrantes antes da imigração, e revela quatro temas persistentes e recorrentes expressado pelos entrevistados: 1. Linguagem e comunicação; 2. Oportunidades profissionais; 3. Crescimento pessoal; e 4. Saudade e pertencimento.

Pelas lentes da abordagem das “necessidades básicas”, de Johan Galtung, essa pesquisa também buscou analisar a relação entre conflito e identidade, até onde exista, através das necessidades e satisfações de identidade determináveis, e ao mesmo tempo reconhecendo temas subjacentes para futuras investigações. Esta análise foi organizada sob os quatro temas supracitados, oferecendo exemplos explícitos quando tais necessidades não foram satisfeitas, além de como conflitos pessoais e interpessoais latentes se manifestaram. Tais conflitos se manifestaram quando o equilíbrio social foi desrespeitado ou quando os participantes da pesquisa o perturbaram deliberadamente. A presente pesquisa não foi capaz de determinar conflitos de identidade no sentido mais tradicional e acadêmico, mas revelou momentos de polarização, isolamento e graus de resistência cultural e embate como resultado de identidades básicas do imigrante.

Os achados dessa pesquisa podem ser mais bem utilizados por organizações locais que trabalham para fornecer suporte diante dos persistentes e recorrentes temas supracitados para promover e melhorar a inclusão e integração de imigrantes à sociedade Fortalecense.



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## Introduction

### Context

Immigration is not a new phenomenon in our shared world's history, much less the Federative Republic of Brazil. Recently, at the United Nations World Humanitarian Event on August 19<sup>th</sup>, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2016) reminded us that, "The movement of human beings on earth is not new. Human history is a story of movement and mingling." This is a historical fact that anthropologists, social scientists, and historians all share regardless of ontological or epistemological perspective. Like most of the Americas, Brazil is an industrialized modern nation-state with a rich and powerful history influenced and defined by immigration, colonialism, imperialism, indigenous resistance, slavery, oppression, and globalization. These influences have had compounding consequences that affect immigrants differently. Hence, not all immigrant experiences, both collective (structural) and individual (interpersonal) are created equally.

This particular ethnographic study worked to document experiences and knowledge related to immigrant experiences in Fortaleza, Brazil through a theoretical framework guided by Boaventura Sousa Santos' social theory *Epistemologies of the South*, realized with ethnographic research principles, and analyzed using constructivist Grounded Theory. This inquiry research project had three primary goals: (1) to tell the personal stories of research participants leading up to their move to Brazil; (2) to explore the relationship between conflict and identity among the participants through the lens of

their immigrant identity; and (3) and to uncover recurrent and persistent themes within their individual experiences.

### **Inquiry Questions**

#### **Primary inquiry question:**

What is the relationship between conflict and identity for recent immigrants and how has it shaped their experiences in Fortaleza, Brazil?"

#### **Inquiry sub-questions:**

- (1) What are the personal stories and experiences of recent immigrants residing in Fortaleza?
- (2) What are persistent themes that recur and overlap within immigrants' personal experiences?

### **Background Information**

Over the last two decades, Brazil, among other Global South and BRICS countries, has experienced a growing middle class that makes the country seemingly more suitable for immigration, or at the very least capable of accommodating a greater immigrant population to prevent "economic toll" or negative consequences (Economist, 2015). Many inquiries and published works have examined immigration to Brazil through varying research methodologies and conceptual frameworks. Most published works present various theories, data, and knowledge through historical reflections focusing on various components and broad experiences of individual immigrant groups.

Throughout my literature review, I've found that the largest and historical immigrant populations, mostly WWII Axis Countries (German, Italian, Portuguese, and Japanese), have been the most well-documented and researched immigrant groups

lending extensive information related to: public health; migration flows; slavery assimilation and acculturation and the influence of African cultures on Brazilian society; racial “whitening” policy stemming from deep-rooted anti-miscegenation; local economies and economic opportunity; xenophobia and fear; policy and legal status perception; and language and communication. A more detailed account of racial whitening policy and immigration can be found in Appendix A.

Despite rich scholarly literature and awareness related to immigration in Brazil, specifically historical immigrant populations, there is an evident gap of publications and documented research related to what Jeffrey Lesser (2013) refers to “new immigrants” in *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present*. These immigrant groups remain minimally researched, and their lived experiences in the country left unheard, and tend to be Arab, Muslim, and intra-Americans among others. Brazil is widely considered to be a pluralistic society in regards to racial, religious, and ethnic diversity, but the perspectives of immigrants of newer waves, of differently perceived ethnic backgrounds and religious identities are significantly less researched and available for public knowledge.

To further understand the experience of immigration to Brazil, particularly the experience of Intra-Americans, or groups from other territories in the Americas and/or immigrants coming from countries predominately of Islamic faith, this study will draw on historical context related to immigration in Brazil and Johan Galtung’s (1978) Basic Needs Approach (BNA).

### **Basic Needs Approach**

Johan Galtung’s (1978) Basic Needs Approach (BNA) is a social theory that was developed to help categorize and explain basic human needs offering an alternative to

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Galtung's social theory highlights, through a generalized typology, four classes of universal needs; these loose classifications are the overarching themes that describe the areas that contribute and lead human beings towards positive development: (1) identity; (2) welfare; (3) security; and (4) freedom. For the intended purpose of exploring the relationship between conflict and identity, this inquiry will limit its focus and analysis to universal needs related to the third class of universal human needs: identity.

In BNA, Galtung (1974) characterizes Identity Needs (IN), as non-material needs used to achieve "closeness," thus avoiding alienation in society. As seen in the figure provided in Appendix B, these IN are classified as: self expression; self-actuation; well-being; being active and subject; challenge and new experiences; affection; roots; understanding of social forces; relationship with nature; and a sense of purpose.

According to Galtung (1978), alienation, relative to identity needs, manifests as an unintended result of social context. The need to avoid alienation is of particular importance to immigrants who are consistently working to learn new languages, learn and adapt to cultural behaviors, find gainful employment and realize personal growth, establish roots and form meaningful relationships, reflect on their sense of belonging, nurture their levels of happiness and joy, all while establishing a sense of purpose. In the context of Fortaleza identifying IN that aren't, or conversely are, being fulfilled helps our ability to listen to the different tunes of the immigrant song. The propensity for any conflict to emerge rests entirely in the immigrants' ability to achieve many, if not all, of the aforementioned components through what Galtung loosely refers to as "satisfiers." These, in the context of IN, are typically—but not always—non-material, and manifest dependent of actors and structures.

In the Interpretations of Findings section, I will briefly analyze at least one example of identity needs satisfiers and examine where personal conflict or latent conflict could manifest in each of the persistent and recurrent themes detailed in the Findings section.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Theoretical Framework**

In order to best capture a glimpse into the lives and experiences of a diverse immigrant population in Fortaleza, Brazil, this inquiry project was grounded through an interpretive strand, ontological research approach focused on the subjective experiences of research participants. The theoretical framework I used to realize my research was guided by three particular foundational components: (1) Brazilian Sociologist Boaventura Sousa Santos' vanguard social theory: Epistemologies of the South; (2) ethnographic principles; and (3) Grounded Theory. This inquiry project sought to record, re-tell, and express the realities and knowledges of research participants while taking into account social theories, global social and political contexts, and working to make a positive contribution through a standard academic process.

As a researcher, I designed the inquiry's theoretical framework to allow research participants to participate in a form of ontology, or theory of reality, that could seek a deeper understanding of their lived experiences, the challenges they face as immigrants, and the relationship between conflict and identity insofar as it exists, in a co-participatory manner. I collaborated with research participants to shed light on their experiences and knowledge based entirely in constructivist interpretations of their experiences rather than actively intending to prove or disprove any theoretical conceptions.

**Epistemologies of the South.** Brazilian philosopher and educator, Boaventura Sousa Santos, coined Epistemologies of the South, as a social “theory that excels in knowing about, explaining, and guiding” the knowledge, experiences, and perspectives of the Global South (2014, xi). The social theory is almost entirely associated with his work, and has been continuously updated until one of his most publications, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*, in 2014. As a result of its emergence as a relatively new social theory, there have been minimal published works expounding upon it or repudiating its legitimacy. To best understand the Epistemologies of the South, and subsequently how it guided this inquiry, we must first understand context for Santos’ anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-colonialist vanguard theory.

Epistemologies of the South is “the retrieval of new processes of production and valorization of valid knowledges, whether scientific or nonscientific, and of new relations among different types of knowledge on the basis of the practices of the classes and social groups that have suffered, in a systematic way, the oppression and discrimination caused by capitalism and colonialism” (Santos, 2012, P. 51). The vanguard theory actively works to repudiate Eurocentric and Western social theories as being universally valid through the acknowledgement that multiple perspectives and different knowledges of suffering classes and social groups exist. In his social theory, Santos (2014) uses the terms “South,” or Global South, to represent a two-fold metaphorical concept that refers to (1) those negatively affected or those who suffer as a result of capitalism and colonialism at a global level and (2) serves a reminder of the resistance to “overcome” and “minimalize” suffering. According to Santos (2012), most who make up the Global South reside in the Southern Hemisphere; however, he explicitly notes that it isn’t merely a geographical reference.

The Global South also exists in the Global North “in the form of the excluded, silenced and marginalized populations, such as undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, ethnic or religious minorities, and victims of sexism, homophobia and racism” (Santos, 2012, p. 51). The existence of the Global South living within the Global North, or those who are positively affected or benefit as a result of capitalism and colonialism at a global level, also signals that the inverse, is confirmed, as well.

The Epistemologies of the South purportedly differs from other “Western-centric traditions” and other diverse methodological and epistemological positions of critical theory like postmodernism, poststructuralism, postglobal feminism, among other often used social theories, because of its ostensible “epistemological break.” The premise of Santos’ theory’s epistemological break is that political resistance to colonialism and capitalism must be grounded in the notion that “there is no global social justice without global cognitive justice. This means that the critical task ahead cannot be limited to generating alternatives” (2014, p. 133). He argues that these alternatives need to come from the Global South.

Epistemologies of the South are based are predicated on two premises: (1) that knowledge or understanding of the world is much broader than what the Global North conceptualizes. Therefore, solutions and “progressive change” can take place in ways unforeseen or predicted by the Global North; and (2) the diversity of the world is infinite. Santos (2012) characterizes this diversity of the world as “very distinct modes of being, thinking and feeling, ways of conceiving of time and the relation among human beings and between humans and non-humans, ways of facing the past and the future and of collectively organizing life, the production of goods and services, as well as leisure” (p. 51). Santos’ lends important theoretical frameworks to guide the analysis and processes

for this particular inquiry. The theory's previously mentioned two-fold premise significantly underpins the theoretical concepts guiding this project. Immigrant voices are often some of the most silenced or ignored voices in our globalized world today. This inquiry project was realized with the understanding that each unique research participant offers incredible insight into the aspects of the daily lives of immigrants residing in Fortaleza. Thus, this inquiry project was realized with the understanding that each unique research participant offers incredible insight into the aspects of the daily lives of immigrants residing in Fortaleza. I write not only to showcase the voluntarily-offered knowledge by some residents of the Global South, but also to underscore that diversity is infinite, and their knowledge is both valorized and a form of resistance. This resistance, these knowledges, multiple perspectives, and the diversity of experiences directly revealed recurrent and persistent themes relevant to immigrant experiences that when utilized and validated better position the world to withstand and counter the negative effects of colonialism and capitalism for the Global South.

**Ethnographic principles.** As Carolyn Nordstrom (2004) expresses in *Shadows of War*, ethnography doesn't signify the same process for every ethnographer, sociologist, anthropologist, or researcher. As a research process that is continuously evolving, it represents an organic and living method to work to express and valorize the knowledges, experiences, and epistemologies of research participants and cultures of the infinite diversity of the world. For this inquiry, my interpretation of ethnography was guided by basic concepts presented by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), Whitehead (2004), and Nordstrom (2004).

Ethnography has been continuously developed and characterized as an iterative, highly flexible, and creative learning process with epistemological and ontological



properties used by researchers to record both qualitative and quantitative data (Whitehead, 2004). Essentially, it is a research process that “aims to get a holistic understanding of how individuals in different cultures and subcultures make sense of their lived reality” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p. 193). Historically, the research process has been associated with the field of anthropology, but starting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century transformed into a common sociological practice in the used to study urban environments and provide support or assistance (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011).

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) describe ethnography’s functional purpose as “a useful tool for creating an in-depth picture of a cultural setting, particularly an exclusive environment that requires a researcher’s physical presence in order to get at lives hidden from the outside world” (p. 197) Throughout this inquiry, I interacted and formed personal relationships with research participants over the course of at least one, and in some cases, multiple academic semesters before formally requesting their participation in my inquiry; this physical presence helped gain legitimate trust and access to the lives of the recent under-researched immigrant population of Fortaleza. It also helped to guide my perspective, and strengthen my ability to analyze the experiences of the research population. Through months of relationship and trust building, an initial survey, multiple semi-structured in-depth interviews, and a focus group, I worked to achieve an emic perspective, or “understanding the meanings of studied phenomena from the host perspective” (Whitehead, 2004, p. 20).

Ethnography and other Global North research methods aren’t without critiques. Authors like Linda Tuhiwai Smith among others have questioned the premise of being

able to understand<sup>1</sup> or construct knowledge related to the social realities of members of the Global South as outsiders. The critique questions the legitimacy and plausibility of understanding the reality of others who don't have similar lived experiences. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) offers this critique as she explains that in Global North<sup>2</sup> research methods, "understanding is viewed as akin to measuring, the focus of understanding becomes more concerned with procedural problems. The challenge for understanding the social world becomes one developing operational definitions of phenomena which are reliable and valid" Often this focus renders knowledges and experiences as invalid or unreliable or non-factual, or as Santos' (2014) describes it as being considered "non-existent."

**Grounded Theory.** As previously mentioned, this inquiry project sought to tell the stories of recent immigrants to Fortaleza, Brazil, through a combination of guiding theoretical frameworks including a constructivist approach to grounded theory. Glaser and Straus originally developed Grounded Theory (GT) in 1967 as a standalone qualitative data analysis (QDA) methodology for studying medical patients (Glaser, 2016). Since the theory was originally introduced to qualitative researchers, it has been reproduced, implemented, and adapted for use in countless diverse international contexts.

According to Charmaz (2008), GT's fundamental tenets include: "(1) minimizing preconceived ideas about the research problem and the data, (2) using simultaneous data collection and analysis to inform each other, (3) remaining open to varied explanations and/or understandings of the data, and (4) focusing data analysis to construct middle-range theories" (p. 155-156). In the context of this inquiry project, the purpose of using the

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<sup>1</sup> Because of Smith's position on this issue, I will never explicitly suggest that I "understand" anything as outsider. I will almost preface any personal use of the concept of 'understanding' with the words "working or worked to."

<sup>2</sup> For the sake of continuity I use "Global North" as a synonym or to mean "Western."

approach would be to draw conclusions from persistent and recurrent themes presented in the experiences of the participating immigrant population. However, like ethnography, the efficacy of GT has been challenged and drawn a significant amount of critiques as being inherently Western, and engaged in a form of empiricism that may not be culturally appropriate for the context of the research population. Many indigenous researchers and scholars argue that Western, and subsequently Global North research methods like GT, compromise the legitimacy of knowledge in ways that “reproduce colonialist forms of knowledge and relationships with indigenous people” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 1074; Smith, 1999).

Deciding to use grounded theory was a complicated and difficult decision considering the possibility of producing faulty representation of the researched immigrant population’s experiences, and any other unintended consequences. However, considering the scope of the inquiry project, I ultimately agreed with Charmaz’s (2014) conclusion that “international researchers can adopt grounded theory strategies and adapt them to fit their cultural and research practices” (p. 1082). When acknowledging that “complex research relationships affect grounded theorists’ strategies of data collection particularly as immigration increasingly takes global forms and societies become multicultural” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 1077), it become apparent that GT is a process that remains “emergent” and continues to evolve.

While data collection and methods applied need to be adapted to fit the intercultural relationship between the researcher and research population, the continuously evolving nature of GT should not automatically precluded its use as a QDA method. For this particular inquiry related to the lived experiences of recent immigrants to Fortaleza, Brazil, I believe my background experience coupled with the application of

other theoretical frameworks legitimized my choice to use it effectively, and guide the inquiry process. Ultimately, I believe the theory aided my ability to uncover emerging, persistent, and recurrent themes throughout the entirety of my research process, and present, in good faith, legitimate findings.

### **Data Collection Methods**

When realizing this inquiry, I attempted to work towards shedding light on the knowledge and experiences of the research participants while answering the research questions through a triangulated mixed method designs combining three qualitative research means. In order to ensure triangulation, primarily using Grounded Theory, as explained in the previous section, qualitative data was collected and analyzed through three specific research methods: (1) an initial electronic survey designed and distributed via SurveyMonkey.com; (2) five semi-structured personal in-depth interviews; and (3) a focus group. It was my hope that this combination of data gathering methods would work to shape my understanding, and ultimately this capstone papers' representation of the participants' experience, ultimately allowing me to achieve a close-to emic (or emic-enough) perspective.

The three aforementioned data collection methods were selected and delivered as a way to ensure the safety of the inquiry project's participants and triangulation, and subsequently the verification and validity of findings. The data gathering process was designed to fully utilize gathered data from participants while minimizing bias and unintended consequences, and financed by the National Security Education Program (NSEP). Originally, the inquiry project sought to interview local professionals and an organization that works with immigrants, but time restraints forced me to cancel this

data collection method. For a more detailed explanation of the data collection methods, please see Appendix C.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

After the data collected methods phase concluded, I proceeded to analyze and sort through gathered data through the data reduction phase prescribed by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011). At this point in the inquiry project, I began to gain a more clear understanding of what the information produced in the interviews and focus group signified through reading, underlining, multiple phases of coding, categorizing, and memoing emergent themes as necessary. Throughout the analysis process, I used two computer programs: Microsoft Excel and NVivo II for Mac.

As the data analysis process continued, I continued to code and re-code, and create parent groupings for nodes that expressed any obvious overlapping. It wasn't until after the portrait-narratives were completed and multiple phases of coding and re-coding were completed before any truly salient themes emerged. Throughout this analysis process, I compiled a significant amount of information and knowledge some of which did was irrelevant to my research question, and subsequently were not included. The overlapping and emergent themes expressed by research participants were: (1) language and communication; (2) professional opportunity; (3) personal growth; and (4) saudade and sense of belonging. For more detailed insight into the data analysis process, please see Appendix D.

### **Subjectivity and Limitations**

As an interpretative strand inquiry project, all methodology and qualitative research methods were designed in a way that worked to seek understanding, valorize, and garner social meaning through participants' personal experiences. It is imperative to

acknowledge that no research project, objective or subjective, will be free of external influences or inquiry limitations (Ratner, 2012). Acknowledging my personal subjectivity and personal biases serve as the *sine qua non* to this inquiry.

**Project lead's personal subjectivity.** I was born to Puerto Rican and U.S. American parents, and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. I actively consider myself to be a social justice youth educator, aspiring polyglot, cultural anthropologist, and future peacebuilder. I have completed coursework at universities or graduate schools in Ohio, Vermont, Chile, and Brazil, and have lived four of the past six years in various regions of the Americas and the Caribbean. I have co-realized research projects in both Nicaragua and Peru prior to this inquiry project. Also, I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Costa Rica, and have worked directly with many immigrants, migrants, and undocumented seasonal workers while living in the United States. In addition, I completed a five month internship with a migrant justice anti-militarization not-for-profit organization in Washington DC. I have many close family members and friends who self-identify as immigrants, refugees, asylees, or as undocumented citizens both in U.S. American and throughout the rest of the world.

I consider myself an inquisitive, opinionated, compassionate, and radically progressive, but also proactive, pragmatic, and analytical. In completing this inquiry project, I recognize the complicated nature of my personal relationships and social and political identities that often present an opportunity for biases to manifest while conducting research irrespective of the differences in circumstantial contexts. I made my best effort to make the research participants aware of all of his personal biases prior to conducting interviews or focus groups with them.

**Perceived limitations of study.** In addition to the personal subjectivity, the following perceived limitations must be considered while processing and reviewing the inquiry project in its entirety.

***Language and intercultural translation.*** I recognize that despite identifying as being of Puerto Rican-American, English, as opposed to Spanish, is my first language. Despite having received certifications guaranteeing professional language competency in Spanish, and fluently speaking Brazilian Portuguese among other languages, some linguists and researchers might consider this a potential hindrance to my ability to carry out interviews in my L2<sup>3</sup>. However, it would be an incomplete or reductive assessment to suggest that L1s always remain a native speaker's dominant language. As a result First Language Attrition<sup>4</sup>, immigrating, or the influence of a *lingua franca* or an L2, can become someone's dominant language depending on various environment factors (Schmid & Köpke, 2007).

Notwithstanding, this perceived impact served to ensure that all translations, transcriptions, and data has been either examined, reviewed, or realized by native Spanish speakers and/or contracted professionals. As I mentioned previously, in most instances, transcriptions were translated into English for the dual purpose of achieving a multiple-language verification of understanding, and providing copies for primary research participants. It must be acknowledge that all translation runs the risk of intercultural communication errors, which theoretically could add a degree of separation between data collected, translation, and the analysis' interpretation. All

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<sup>3</sup> L1 and L2 generally refer to first and second languages respectively.

<sup>4</sup> First Language Attrition is generally described as the gradual decline of native language proficiency among people who immigrate. In many cases, the L1 can be influenced significantly by the subject's L2.

translators were professionals unaffiliated to the inquiry project thus working to minimize conflict of interests, and to protect participant confidentiality.

*Inquiry participant population.* Another perceived limitation for this study is the localized nature of the targeted population that was used for the original survey distributed. As previously mentioned, a requirement to participate in the inquiry project was an affiliation with the CCP at the UFC. There seem to have been at least two effects of this limitation that should be explicitly considered: (1) the survey yielded a disproportionate number of Intra-American respondents thus resulting overwhelmingly in a perceived homogeneous immigrant demographic despite the availability of the survey in multiple languages; and (2) the absence of qualified interpreters for Arabic available in Fortaleza for the inquiry project. This absence effectively eliminated the possibility for further participation for multiple survey respondents.

*Race and social identity.* A final limitation that should be considered is the absence of content related to race, and more generally social identity. Research participants when discussing their lived experiences never explicitly referred to or considered race, or racial identity. The experiences of black immigrants is completely absent in the findings which could be considered troubling when reflecting upon the totality of Brazilian national identity, racial makeup, and condition of racism manifesting across the American continent. In addition to race, this study generated few noteworthy experiences related to social identity components such as gender, sexual orientation, and class. All experiences and knowledges used in this study were procured voluntarily without probing or leading questions. This, perhaps, was the most inhibiting factor leading towards the lack of social identity components mentioned in the experiences of the primary research population.



### **Portraits-Narratives and Findings**

Portrait-narratives (PN) in anthropology and other social science academic fields are typically descriptions primarily composed through constructivist and interpretivist processes. Following ethnographic tradition, a portrait-narrative typically is constructed through data obtained through participant observation, field notes, among other data procured during the inquiry process. Attempting to follow this tradition and constructivist and interpretivist processes, these five portrait narratives were written and edited, then subsequently approved by each of the research participants; they were constructed mostly through the use of direct quotes and notes collected throughout various parts of the inquiry project and data gathering methods. However, it must be noted that, I explicitly have chosen to partially break from this tradition, and to construct these short portrait-narratives in a way that preserve as much of the participants' voices as possible including the use of first person, as opposed to simply summarizing their stories. These are my constructivist interpretation of the personal stories, not transcripts of interviews, of five immigrants who have all arrived to Fortaleza within the past year, and are all connected to one another through their academic experience with the Casa de Cultura Portuguesa (CCP) at the Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC).

The conscious and deliberate inclusion of presenting the primary research participants' intimate personal stories through PN will guide the audience's interpretation and complexity of individual and collective experiences presented in the inquiry's findings. The PN will tell part of the participants' complex life stories before having arrived to Fortaleza, other important experiences, and what it means to be an immigrant will also be discreetly revealed in these portrait-narratives. After presenting the portrait-narratives of the five primary research participants, this capstone paper will

(1) present succinct comments on the findings and interpretation of the survey results, (2) present an interwoven findings section of surveyed, interviewed, and focus group research participants, and (3) provide an interpretation of participant experiences through the lens of Johan Galtung's (1974) Basic Needs Approach theory.

### Portrait-Narratives<sup>5</sup>

#### Guatemalan portrait-narrative.

*I'm a proud Guatemalan, and recently married. I am twenty-three years old, and undocumented living in Fortaleza, Brazil. I was born in Guatemala City, but when I was eleven I moved to my parents' hometown after my father's employer's factory shut down. Afterwards, my father decided to go to the United States for a while to work. While he was abroad, my mother didn't want to stay in the city, because I was only twelve and my sister was only seven. Guatemala City<sup>6</sup> at the time was a very dangerous place, and still is, so the three of us moved to my parents' town, Zacapa, in northeastern Guatemala. Zacapa and Guatemala City are very different from each other—you can't really compare them. My parent's hometown is very hot and humid while the capital has a more agreeable temperate weather.*

*I am not sure why, but I've always identified with my mother's family more than my father's. When I was younger, I would watch Brazilian novelas<sup>7</sup> with my tía,<sup>8</sup> my mother's sister, and listen to famous Samba songs she'd learned in her Portuguese class. My tía even suggested my name to my parents, which happens to be Brazilian. Just to be clear, I am Guatemalan of Spanish ancestry. I always suspected that we were of Spanish ancestry, but that wasn't confirmed until talking to my maternal grandfather. One time, I asked him about it and he told me that his grandmother once said his great grandfather was Spanish. So, last May I decided to do more research and confirmed my Spanish ancestry. I don't know when or why they immigrated to Guatemala, but I know they definitely came from Spain.*

*My husband and I met through a common acquaintance, a distant relative, and talked on the phone everyday for six months. There's a distant family relationship. This somehow distant relative of ours is the son of one of my husband's cousins. This cousin's wife is my grandfather's niece. Nevertheless, we met through an online dating platform. My husband added me through common contacts, and we started chatting every day. I didn't know anything about him. He was living in the capital, and studying there. One day, I told him I was going to visit Antigua with my*

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<sup>5</sup> All portrait-narratives have been constructed from transcripts from multiple in-depth interviews and personal notes. Following constructivist methodology, I felt it was necessary to remove quotation marks, despite much of the PN being direct quotes.

<sup>6</sup> The CIA and Department of State consistently describe Guatemala City as having a "critical" level of violence. The city's Murder per Capita peaked at 116.6 in 2010. (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> PBS's Jacobson (2012) offered the best description depicting the cultural importance of *novelas* in 2012. She described them as "a cultural touchstone, especially for Spanish speakers across the globe. Popular story arcs like long-lost family members resonate with Latinos whose families may have emigrated. Religious references will appear in several of these series, another touchstone to the predominantly Catholic Latino population."

<sup>8</sup> *Tía* in both Spanish and Portuguese translates to "aunt" in English.

*university for a research project. So we decided to meet up, and met at a discoteca<sup>9</sup> with some friends. That was the first time we met face to face. That was in October and in December, on Christmas Eve, we got engaged. We dated for three years before we got married on the twelfth of December last year.*

*My husband first told me he was going to apply for the scholarship in August 2015. The results would be published in November of the same year. He had been checking the results anxiously, until one day he noticed he had not been selected for the fellowship program. So, we decided we would get married in December expecting not to come to Brazil. After we married, we moved to Jutiapa, also in the northeast, where we lived until moving to Fortaleza. Before arriving to Fortaleza, we had just gotten married, so the immigration process was very difficult. I had to enter Brazil on a tourist visa, one that has since expired. Neither the federal university nor his fellowship program would help us with my visa situation, so now I'm living here as an undocumented immigrant. Giving them the benefit of the doubt, when my husband first applied we weren't married, so there wasn't much they could do.*

*Leaving behind my life and family to come here with my husband wasn't an easy decision. Last year, I was working as a preschool teacher. I also had to quit my university classes to leave everything behind and come here. I never imagined that immigrating to Brazil would be something that happened in my life. It came as a tremendous surprise considering everything that had just happened. Overall, my family has been largely supportive, but I can't say the same for his. They have a more conservative idea of what marriage is supposed to be like, and it's neither helpful nor supportive. We left Guatemala in early March and arrived two days later with the initial idea of me staying for six months, but now I'm just going to stay. It will make our relationship and marriage stronger. We have been talking about the future a lot recently, and after he completes his master's degree if we have the opportunity to continue working in Brazil or in another country, we would do it. We've already broken the ice and barrier of leaving Guatemala. We've always accepted this opportunity as a blessing for us.*

### **Argentine portrait-narrative.**

*I'm from Tandil, a relatively small city in the Buenos Aires province with the majority of immigrants arriving from Italy or Spain, and am thirty-eight years of age. I first moved to Brazil during the 2015 carnaval<sup>10</sup> celebration. I moved to Sao Paulo and from São Paulo to Fortaleza after the 2016 carnaval. Like most immigrants, I suppose, I immigrated to Brazil for a somewhat personal reason. I had a girlfriend for whom I had a lot of affection, and then she suddenly became pregnant.*

*Out of a sense of mounting responsibility and pressure, I felt the need to move to her country. Before immigrating to Brazil, my girlfriend and I discussed whether to even have the child or not, and whether our child should be raised in Brazil or Argentina. Ultimately, we made a rational decision. We chose Brazil mostly because we thought it was the best alternative between the two countries to raise a child. We believed it offered the best conditions for our child's*

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<sup>9</sup> A *discoteca* is a word commonly used to refer to local nightclubs throughout much of the Spanish speaking countries in the Americas.

<sup>10</sup> *Carnaval* (Portuguese) is traditionally Roman Catholic celebration that takes place prior to the fasting season of Lent. In Brazil, it typically starts the Friday before Ash Wednesday, and embraces cultural aspects unrelated to religious faith. The religious and cultural celebration takes place throughout most countries in the Americas, but is internationally known for how it's celebrated in Brazil.

*life. My wife would continue working; I would search for work, and help support our family in any way or condition possible.*

*I had to leave a lot of things behind when I moved to Brazil. Although it was perhaps the best thing that happened in my life, it was also a very traumatic experience because everything happened so fast. I had to leave everything I was doing at home, that was a difficult and demoralizingly tough experience. I had to quit work and stop studying to look after my son. I had to abandon a lot of relationships at work and in my university courses in order to perform domestic chores just to help our family survive. It was also very traumatic because I knew I was losing my sense of collective belonging and my sense or construction of personal belonging. And also by losing all that, the mirror, or the opposite of these losses had to do with starting all over again here in Brazil. Leaving everything was traumatic and painful, but my family, my parents and my sister helped me a lot so that I could come here in the best conditions possible. Throughout my migration process I felt I lost a lot of things, I sometimes have nostalgia or "saudades"<sup>11</sup> or experience the conflict of migrants who miss their past. At first, I couldn't believe that it happened to me, to my personal path in life. I had to leave or I decided to leave and then I migrated. But when I think about it in social terms, or even in terms of my family's trajectory, all my family is marked by immigration. It's an ever-present pattern in my family history. My grandfather, who being 9 years old took a ship in the 1900 new year's day from Galicia to Buenos Aires not even knowing where he was heading for, or the Italian that came with his family in the year 1913 and ended up meeting another Italian in Tandil.*

*I guess, I feel permanently staying in the same place or having a family that never moves out is just a variable in the much larger history of migration. I always thought the situation I was in was a unique, personal and exceptional experience when the reality is that immigration is the rule not just for my generation, but for the population as a whole. Immigration is part of the history of humanity. Especially in this modern age of industrial capitalism, the last two or three centuries, migration has been a constant phenomenon. So, being an immigrant is a part of a normal existential experience.*

### **Salvadoran portrait-narrative.**

*I am one hundred percent Salvadoran. I'm 33, and I was brought up in Planes de Renderos, San Salvador, but when I was six I moved to the United States for two years. During that time, the civil war<sup>12</sup> became more complicated. I lived part of the war, actually for its entirety, I was in El Salvador. Fortunately, for the most part, it was more concentrated outside of the city and I lived in the city and I was also very young so I was not aware that we were at war. But during my last year in El Salvador, in 1989, I did come to the realization that we were at war. I had no idea how dangerous it was because I was an innocent child. I was in the middle of shootings and bombings but I wasn't aware of how dangerous it was, nobody told me it was dangerous.*

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<sup>11</sup> Saudades (plural) or saudade (singular) is a word that has no direct communicable translation between any languages other than Galician and Portuguese. In English, it has been often translated as "the love that remains," but is most commonly described as a deep emotional state of nostalgia with feelings of melancholic yearning, uncertainty, love, and often for something that is lost. Interestingly enough, the research participant recalls the immigration of his ancestors from Galicia to Tandil, Argentina.

<sup>12</sup> The participant in this context is referencing the civil war that occurred in El Salvador from 1979 to 1992. In many ways the war ended with the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords, but it is still an ongoing event that has provoked the migration of tens of thousands, many of which are children fleeing north.

*As an adult, I think when I was a bit younger, I underestimated the degree to which the war and maras<sup>13</sup> has affected me, but I always thought it wasn't so relevant in comparison to most people, or poorer people who were affected by the mareros<sup>14</sup> at a criminal level. But if I think it over in a more profound way, yes it all did affect me. I couldn't go out and I was afraid and felt kind of paranoid.*

*Like I mentioned previously, I moved to the States but it wasn't because of the war as most Salvadorans. I had a brother suffering from cancer, leukemia. He was treated in El Salvador but logically we are much less developed than the United States, and in those days there was no specific treatment for leukemia or any type of cancer. Doctors only applied symptomatic treatments. If he were throwing up, for example, they would just treat the symptom. There was no specific cancer or leukemia treatment available. Eventually, my parents got help from a Kennedy Foundation, I think, and they got a visa. My parents went to the United States, first to the Children's Hospital in Boston with my brother suffering from cancer, while I stayed in El Salvador with my older brother.*

*We didn't have a visa right away, but then the guerilla<sup>15</sup> spread to the city. They started attacking the capital, both the guerillas<sup>16</sup> and the military waged war on the people of El Salvador. Our parents became worried and secured us visas so we could travel to San Francisco and be reunited there. My younger brother continued his treatment at the Children's Hospital in Oakland. We spent almost 3 years there and once chemotherapy had an effect and once he was in the remission process we decided to return to El Salvador. Eventually, my brother was cured, but then once we were in El Salvador his cancer returned just two years later. Fortunately, we were better off by then and we had a home" at least. He died in Oakland 9 months later. It was a striking experience, for me, I was in a country so different than mine, and I was very young.*

*I was not afraid to face something different. I think that's where my openness comes from, the capacity to understand people and different cultures and knowing that once you overcome the cultural shock you will be able to lead a normal life, study and make friends. I was not worried about not being able to speak the language. That was my experience in the US, when I arrived I couldn't even greet in English but I was not afraid.*

*When I first immigrated, I may have experienced negative things like not understanding the language or what people were saying to me and that was frustrating but these are things you have to go through to overcome them and then be able to enjoy the good moments later on. With these behavior patterns in mind, the same happened when I came to Brazil, I was not concerned about learning to speak another language, or surviving.*

*Back in El Salvador, I continued my law career. I worked for different institutions, educational, private, government institutions. I did everything I wanted. I got involved in sporting and artistic activities, music, arts and intellectual activities. At one point, I moved to Chile to work for Google. Then I returned to the United States for my Masters Degree in California where I lived with some family members. After finishing, I decided to return to El Salvador, and I applied for my fellowship to go to Brazil. One of the reasons I applied for this doctoral program in Brazil was to escape from this reality, to change my future and see if there's*

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<sup>13</sup> *Maras* (plural) or *mara* (singular), is predominately used by Spanish speakers from Central America, to reference the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), and other criminal enterprises or gangs with origins both in Los Angeles, California and the Northern Triangle.

<sup>14</sup> *Mareros* (plural) is an adjective used to describe an active member of a mara.

<sup>15</sup> *Guerilla* (singular) in Central American Spanish refers to the civil war.

<sup>16</sup> *Guerillas* (plural) in Central American Spanish refers to both insurgents and the paramilitary death squads involved in the war.

*a better life for me outside El Salvador, as unfortunately I don't know how my country will be in four years.*

*I applied for the fellowship and didn't expect to be chosen for it, and now here I am. I would prefer that they gave a scholarship to one hundred poorer folks in El Salvador. I don't consider myself poor. I live well and so does my family. There are poorer people in my country and I would like these people to have better opportunities. I am grateful but in a way I also felt kind of uncomfortable for being chosen, but on the other hand I suppose they must have chosen me for a reason and I have to make the best of the opportunity. I thank life for having the opportunity to travel. I am aware that I may not be able to return soon for reasons you can imagine. It's hard but I know I may return to my country in four years or I may not. Something I've learned is that, there's going to be frustration but it is part of your path, you have to be aware that you'll have these moments. I learned to be more tolerant and not feel depressed or frustrated simply because I am so far from home.*

### **Pakistani portrait-narrative.**

*So, I am from Pakistan, from the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa state. I am like Muslim. I am a Sunni Muslim specifically. I don't believe there is a big difference, but for me everyone is Muslim. I have two sisters, two brothers, and my father belongs to a teaching institution, as a professor. I am here doing my first PhD, at the Universidade Federal do Ceará, in a branch of electrical engineering: teleinformatics and wireless communication. I will spend a lot of time in Fortaleza, like four years here just to finish my PhD. Contrary to what many Brazilians seem to believe, I did not flee from a war. In our country, there is more peace for the citizens when compared to Fortaleza.*

*I am a student here, I am a doctoral student, so I came here to Fortaleza because the area in which I am currently investigating, teleinformatics, has many advisors, researchers, and professors in this university who are also working in the field. So I decided to just come here on the topic like on my PhD basis. However, I barely came here to earn my doctoral thesis. I am only here because on the board that I am currently working on, and the professor are from the same area of study. I am the second person from my country to attend this university. The first person was also from Pakistan, but he was in biochemistry department. He did his PhD and post-doctoral, and graduated from here and he just left recently. So, I am the second student here. There is no other student from my country at the school; however, there are several other Pakistani immigrants and Muslim immigrants in Fortaleza.*

*This is less important though, because human beings, all over the world, are the same thing. We have a human relation that exists when I go here or when I go to, for example, the United States. This simple relation to other people helps. If we see we are from the same species, it is impossible not to adjust in one part of the world despite the fact humans are living in one culture and in the other part of the world humans are living in another culture. I feel proud in my culture, not in Pakistan, because I have human relation. My family built me like so strong. My family built my values and this idea so strong that that is not easily changeable.*

*In our country, the people are living in a very tightly woven family system. In our country, if we move abroad, all of our family members suffer a lot, because we are all a very important part of our family. We hold many responsibilities in our homes. So, by leaving abroad, I am handing all of those responsibilities over to my brothers and my father. And of course they miss me a lot, but after some time they can adjust. Of course, I will want to go back to my*

country, but for me if I want to do a job further, stay here longer, or further study I don't have a problem.

### **Venezuelan portrait-narrative.**

*First and foremost, my experience migrating to Brazil was very traumatic, just as much for me as my family. Mostly because it was never in my plans, it was never in my plans to leave my country. I was even studying, taking university courses in Venezuela. It was something very forceful that happened to my life. What happened to me in Venezuela was a totally different story, you can imagine. I didn't experience any physical violence, but it was traumatic nonetheless.*

*Venezuela, at the moment is experiencing a terrible crisis<sup>17</sup>. There's a government that's stripped the power of the people, a leftist government. Clearly, with ideals that are socialist, but they have other motives. Venezuela is one of the most unsafe countries in the world. We have the highest rate of inflation<sup>18</sup> and least amount of security in the world. Corruption is something very disgusting and disgraceful that our government owns.*

*Life in Venezuela is hard. So, we, the students, took to the streets to protest, two years ago, over disputed policies and other government actions we were in disagreement with. So we organized a group, a very large group of students, and took to the streets to protest against our country's political and economic situation. We took to the streets to rally against the quality of life that has fallen so low, it's fallen so low because of the government. So, since the initial protest, the government has reprimanded and gone after a lot of the students who participated. There are some students who now live in the United States. There was another student in Colombia. Colombia has already deported him, and now he is in jail in Caracas.*

*Anyway, the government was able to identify me in a published photo. My mom is an employee for a state-owned government company, PDVESA,<sup>19</sup> it's an oil company, and she found out through back channels that I was identified. When she found out, she immediately came home sobbing, telling me that I had to flee the country because they are looking for me to interrogate me about the manifestation. They had enough evidence to lock me up like many of the other students that protested. So, I left the country.*

*It took me three days to leave my country, and I had to do something incredibly difficult, imagine, three, that they tell you have just three days to flee your country. You are relaxing, you are studying, you're working, and you're doing everything you are supposed to be doing. I had to leave my family and friends behind. My family has been very hurt by everything. Imagine, I've never left my family for more than a month or more than a month and a half. I believe it was a small vacation and now it has been fifteen months since I first came to Brazil.*

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<sup>17</sup> Venezuela is currently experiencing what many have deemed one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. There are major food and medical treatment shortages resulting in an epidemiological catastrophe related to malaria and reported widespread hunger. Violence is compounding the situation of the country as Caracas has been cited with the highest homicide rate in the world. Time last reported the rate to be at 119 per 100,000 residents (Time, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> According to the most recent World Bank data, the country's inflation rate was 35.5%; however, since then TradingEconomics.com has estimated it to reach 180.9% as recently as November 2015, and currently estimated at 48.65%

<sup>19</sup> Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVESA) is a state-owned natural gas and oil company. According to many sources, the company provides a great amount of revenue and substantial funding resources. Venezuela has the largest amount of oil reserves in the world.

*When I left for Brazil, I couldn't leave by plane, so I had to cross the border by bus, through Roraima. I did the entire journey, the entire route, and then I officially applied for refugee status. At first, I entered Brazil as a tourist, but after a few months, I found out I could formally apply and, if necessary, appeal for refugee status. Not too long ago they approved my status, it took longer than a year, but they granted my refugee status application. I had to do an interview with the federal police and an organization in charge of the process, and that's my history. That's how I got to Brazil.*

*Before settling in Fortaleza, I did research to find out where I could go to live. Fortaleza is a city with few Venezuelans, there isn't a consulate or embassy in the city, and I read it was a progressive city. That's why I chose to live there. It made me feel like there was a better sense of security. They approved my refugee status. Thank God Brazil approved my refugee status.*

### **Survey Findings and Interpretation**

The inquiry project's initial survey played a role in the inquiry that was twofold: (1) to classify and identify potential project participants who were willing to participate in a semi-formal in-depth personal interview and/or participate in a focus group; and (2) to establish a baseline or pattern of core thematic concepts in comparison to those outlined in my initial project proposal. Ultimately, the survey findings played an initial role in pinpointing or grounding recurrent and persistent themes and points of interest, and were a microcosm of reflected primary inquiry findings. For expediency, these findings will be interwoven into the following inquiry findings section.

In the initial survey, interestingly enough, respondents expressed one unaddressed doubt and confusion, in response to the first question<sup>20</sup>. The purpose for this question had two objectives: (1) to give survey participants the option to self-identify or the generally afford them the Right to Personal Identity<sup>21</sup> without any outside imposition by the researcher or others; and (2) to subsequently eliminate candidates during the selection process for further participation in the primary inquiry research gathering methods. This sense of confusion was clearly displayed in the survey results.

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<sup>20</sup> "Do you identify as an immigrant, emigrant, or migrant?"

<sup>21</sup> Jill Marshall discusses the Right to Personal Identity in the context of International Law granted as a human right through the UNDR and the ECHR (Marshall, 2014).



Seven of twenty survey respondents indicated that either they don't identify as any of the three choices, were unsure, or indicated "other" and subsequently wrote an alternative identity associated with immigration; one of which was "refugee."

As previously mentioned, the survey was distributed deliberately to a clearly defined immigrant population, composed of residents of Fortaleza, associated with the UFC and the CCP. As a researcher, I initially felt that it would be obvious if someone is or isn't an immigrant, emigrant, or migrant, thus eligible to participate in the inquiry; however, this survey question's results complicated that presumption. Why is all of this important? Often the immigrant narrative is over-politicized, thus resulting in perceived "songs" that do not necessarily encompass the social and personal realities of the immigrant experience. In the United States,<sup>22</sup> immigrants are often characterized and portrayed in two separate lights dependent on political affiliation. Generally, conservative politicians and institutions tend to present immigrants as "lazy," "people who live off state-provided benefits," "people who subvert borders and customs laws and processes," "people who steal jobs for locals," while more progressive or Liberal politicians and institutions declare immigrants to be "hard-working," "job creators," "boost the economy," and people who "can't receive state provided benefits while paying into systems like Social Security." The purpose of mentioning this dichotomous representation of immigrants in the United States isn't to debate its veracity, rather to highlight the over-politicization and contrasting image that potentially could affect how

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<sup>22</sup> Critics might shed light on the fact that the context of the United States might seem irrelevant to this particular inquiry, but I disagree. The impact of the US media's depiction of immigrants, specifically as a direct result of president-elect Donald Trump's explicitly targeted, bigoted, xenophobic, and racist campaign message aimed almost exclusively at immigrants of Mexican and other residents of the Americas rests in the collective consciousness of immigrants throughout the Western Hemisphere (Holpuch, 2016). Eighty percent of the inquiry's survey participants were born in the Americas, and all other primary research participants and focus group participants identified as either Muslim, another target of the presidential candidate, or from the Americas.

some immigrants might self-identify in a simple survey process independent of the migratory patterns and other factors.

This over-politicization also occurs in Brazilian politics, is accounted for in the media today, and has occurred historically throughout the South American country's history. It's important to note that this phenomenon occurs in Brazil despite allowing much fewer refugees and immigrants than any other nation-states of similar geographic and population size (Economist, 2015). In 2015, Jair Bolsonaro, a congressional representative of Rio de Janeiro, declared refugees immigrant to be a "threat" and "scum of the world"<sup>23</sup> in an interview explicitly referencing Bolivians, Haitians, Senegalese, and Syrians (Vitor, 2015). Some argue that the Brazilian press deserves significant criticism in over-politicizing the issue, as well. Barreto (2015), a prominent Brazilian sociologist, in an interview with BBC, argues that the media plays a crucial role that perpetuates and drives stereotypes of immigrants. He highlights the Brazilian media's failure to characterize immigrant narratives in any complete or purportedly just representation.

Barreto (2012) cites that since 2000, immigrants have only been represented in media through themes related to exploitation, disappearances, and violations related to human rights. He argues the media's narrative lacks any complexity, and only reports on problems they experience, how new immigrants "are generally being portrayed as problematic to society," while simultaneously never discussing policy solutions. Barreto (2015) adds that, this "problematizes the issue" and never results in policy or legislation related discussions. He also demonstrates that in one particular instance the media

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<sup>23</sup> Bolsonaro's comment was made in an interview with *Jornal Opção* while critiquing the Brazilian Armed Forces: "Não sei qual é a adesão dos comandantes, mas, caso venham reduzir o efetivo [das Forças Armadas] é menos gente nas ruas para fazer frente aos marginais do MST, dos haitianos, senegaleses, bolivianos e tudo que é escória do mundo que, agora, está chegando os sírios também. A escória do mundo está chegando ao Brasil como se nós não tivéssemos problema demais para resolver."

almost entirely ignored coverage related to immigration when the government's judicial branch's organized a national conference related to the issue. Barreto (2015) concludes that:

In the context of the current political and economic crises, the way in which immigrants are portrayed in the press must be carefully observed because they are an excellent scapegoat for problems. They don't have a great chance at defending himself or herself nor integrating into the country, or are considered an "other" or different that brings challenges [to Brazil]. Unemployment, inflation, and crises tend to make the view of immigrants more negative.

Additionally, Jeffery Lesser (2013) offers salient historical points highlighting the over-politicization of immigrant identity in the context of Brazil, and how Brazilian politicians, lawmakers, and the media have consistently manipulated public perception and systematically affected the racial and demographic make up in the country.

Lesser (2013) points out that in the 1930s Japanese immigrants received "unusual support" during constitutional debates highlighting in large advertisements in major journalism outlets their "high levels of production" while also "hailing [Japanese] emigrants for their contributions to international harmony" (p. 159-164). While the efficacy of this advocacy strategy is less important to this study, the hyperbole associated with the over-politicization of an immigrant group's national identity in an attempt to affect public perception is key. This is generally supported by Amartya Sen's (2006) remarks in *Identity and Violence* highlighting the component dual component of identity, declaring:

Our freedom to assert our personal identities can sometimes be extraordinarily limited in the eyes of others no matter how we see ourselves. Indeed, sometimes we may not even be fully aware how others identify us, which may differ from self-perception (p. 6).

This is considerable especially when investigating whether immigrants self-identify or not. The shaping of the immigrant narrative is indispensable both for public perception

and in self-identifying as an immigrant. Overwhelmingly, survey findings revealed that respondents struggled with deciding whether or not they are self-identify as an immigrant.

### **Inquiry Findings**

The most widely discussed overlapping components, or themes, discussed by both survey respondents and primary participants were: (1) language and communication; (2) professional opportunity both economically incentivized labor and related to academia; (3) personal growth; and (4) saudade and sense of belonging. The following section will individually highlight and summarize the participants' experiences related to each of the aforementioned the themes.

**Language and communication.** Throughout the inquiry project research participants indicated almost entirely negative experiences related to language and communication. For the purpose of constructively organizing this for this section of the capstone paper, I have broken them down into two separate shorter sections: (1) Barrier to employment; and (2) Feeling understood.

**Barrier to employment.** Overwhelmingly, general frustration was expressed in regards to the participant's ability to learn and communicate with Brazilians in Portuguese. One participant explicitly communicated: "My main challenge has been to enter the labor market and to achieve that I need to learn to speak and write Portuguese well." Another indirectly referenced this point highlighting his urgency "to apply for jobs that he would never have imagined working for minimum wage just to survive" because he can't speak Portuguese yet. In the inquiry's initial survey results, five participants indicated challenges finding gainful employment, as well.

*Feeling understood.* In addition to difficulty entering the labor force, or finding gainful employment, multiple participants experienced language and communication issues related to communicating their needs and feeling understood. There were three defining underlying features mentioned by participants that characterized this phenomenon: (1) time; (2) discrimination and denial of services; and (3) mixing languages.

Multiple research participants talked about their ability to communicate in Portuguese, in relation to the amount of time they've been living in Fortaleza. One participant noted that, "During the first months it was hard, it was very difficult for me to talk, I felt insecure and it was very limiting. It would take me a long time to make myself understood." Two additional participants reinforced this sentiment affirming that the amount of time they've needed to adjust to the language "at a level that makes them feel comfortable" hasn't been reached after nine months of studying in a master's program in a federal university. Another participant concluded, "After nine months, I still feel frustrated when I ask for something and they keep staring at me. That's the biggest challenge." Survey respondents overwhelmingly cited unexpected difficulties with the language learning process, one respondent reporting, "difficulties with Portuguese acquisition has affected me more than what was expected."

Another manifestation of not feeling understood, arose out of the refusal of services characterized as discrimination by participants. At least two research participants, and three survey respondents mentioned and described instances where they felt discriminated against as a result of their inability to communicate effectively at banking institutions. One participant recalled:

An experience that perhaps made me feel a bit insecure or vulnerable being here was something that happened to me at the bank, they refused to help me because I didn't understand the language fully. People here are not very open to trying to understand your language. In El Salvador, even if we don't understand you we try to help you, even if it is through signing or miming. We don't close the doors to you but here it happens, they were not very patient, they were very intolerant despite receiving a lot of tourists. So that has changed me in a way, I don't expect to go to a service provider company or an institution and get any help or any solutions.

This participant ultimately concluded that, "they knew I was an immigrant and I felt they discriminated against me for not speaking Portuguese. This one was the most negative experience as I felt being an immigrant was working against me, it didn't help me at all." Another participant explicitly mentioned discrimination when reflecting on his inability to explain his culture or religion in Portuguese to Brazilians often leading to situations where he was described as a terrorist:

Once I was out with a friend and some lady asked my friend, "Who is this guy? Oh this is a Muslim, oh so you are with a Muslim? He will kill you. Why are you walking with this Muslim guy?" This lady just knows from the media, if he is a Muslim guy. He is a terrorist.

This often prevented him from being able to dispel stereotypes he often says are presented in the media, or for people with more innocuous motives. In addition, one survey respondent mentioned, "when you go anywhere, it doesn't matter where, people think you are strange because you have a different accent than they do."

The last underlying feature that characterized participants' ability for self-expression as a result of language and communication is the challenge that has arisen as a result of confusing or mixing languages often resulting in *Portunhol*.<sup>24</sup> Every Spanish speaking intra-American participant indicated their use of *Portunhol*, particularly as their language progressed. In the focus group, one participant indicated:

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<sup>24</sup> *Portunhol* is commonly referred to, in the Southern continent, as a mix of Spanish and Portuguese languages. This is often a linguistic phase that either Spanish or Portuguese speakers pass through before fully being able to use the languages independent of each other

I see it [the challenge] in the words I use; I have a mixture of everything. It affects you because you change the way you express yourself... especially in the language, I mix words a lot between languages, I speak Portunhol now.

Another participant noted that, "It's just like trying my luck, if I can make myself understood fine and if I don't it's quite frustrating both for me and for the other people."

It is also important to note that many participants throughout the interviews and focus group consistently reverted to using the mix of the two languages in situations where they felt they couldn't articulate a meaning fast enough.

Inquiry project participants frequently expressed sentiments that highlight the importance of language and communication to their experience as immigrants in Fortaleza. There were experiences that revealed that language commonly presents a barrier to finding gainful employment, to communicating their needs, or to generally feeling understood in Portuguese. Often participants indicated language and communication related issues resulted in refusal of services, explicit discrimination, or a feeling of disappointment related to the language adjustment and mixing languages.

**Professional opportunity.** It became clear throughout the inquiry process that a recurrent and persistent theme was access to professional opportunities. For organizational purposes, I have broken the theme into two sub-sections: economically incentivized labor and academic opportunity.

***Economically incentivized labor.*** The second most widely discussed theme by participants, after language and communication, was loosely related to professional opportunity. I made the conscious decision to distinguish categorically as: (1) economically incentivized labor opportunity; and (2) related to academia. As previously mentioned, the profiles of research participants varied greatly, ultimately leading to very mixed experiences in relationship to professional opportunity.

At least half of the research participants reflected issues with finding gainful employment. Often their experiences differed from a range of factors such as being hampered by legal status, experiencing “bureaucratic” issues related to qualifications, and educational legitimacy. One participant struggles with the prospect of the labor market:

Here, the regional economy is much more complicated and difficult for my professional capabilities, so much so that I still haven't seriously found a job because the salary they offer isn't worth the value of me staying at home with my child.

Another participant isn't legally authorized to work as a result of her visa status, and as a result has had to rely on friends of friends to find work “under the table” or in the “informal economy.” She describes her only other option as having to take more drastic measures to obtain a proper visa:

As an [undocumented] immigrant it is very difficult for me to get a Brazilian work permit. I could only get one through very extreme measures like marrying a Brazilian, which is obviously out of the question, seeing as I am already married, or having a child in Brazil, which in this moment would make our budget even tighter.

As a result of her inability to find work, her husband, currently in graduate school, has to divert time working digitally and remotely for a friend's company cutting into his school hours. Another participant, who also self-identified as a political asylee recounted that he's had to look for jobs that he'd “never have imagined working” after receiving a college education. Despite having a university education, he can't “obtain the proper paperwork to work in his job sector.” He emphatically stated, “I have had to start from zero. My education and degree isn't considered legitimate for whatever reason.” Instead he works at a fast food restaurant. Another participant recounted a similar experience stating, “The recognition of qualifications that would allow me to get a job that I am qualified for in Argentina, leave me managing a big bureaucratic problem



here.” At least two survey respondents reported bureaucratic issues related to work, one stating, “[there is] way too much bureaucracy and negligence perpetrated by public and private service workers to speed up or execute the process for us to work.”

Conversely, some participants had more positive outlooks often referring to future opportunity and their willingness to continue living and pursuing opportunities outside of their countries, or seeing more fruitful opportunities than the others. One participant, a doctoral candidate stated:

Often I see job offers that ask for these requirements and I know I will be able to fulfill the requirements and be successful, so I am happy about that. I know I will be able to apply for many job openings and I see this as something very positive.

Another participant noted that after being here for just eight months, she’s already discussed future options with her husband:

So we were talking with my husband that if in the future after his master’s degree, we have the opportunity to continue working in Brazil or in another country we would do it, as we already broke the ice and the barrier of leaving Guatemala. When you realize there are things that are much better outside Guatemala you accept that your future may be better abroad.

While another participant confirmed that if more opportunities appeared in Fortaleza or Brazil in general, he would continue living in Brazil since he’s already adjusted culturally.

*Academic opportunity.* In addition to professional opportunities that are economically incentivized, nearly every inquiry participant referenced or spoke at-depth about academic related experiences and opportunities. The participants’ responses varied possessed considerable feelings of content and discontent, often noted the lack of available programs, and mentioned situations of being treated differently than Brazilians in the same academic practicum or internship opportunities.

One participant recounted a situation in which she wasn't able to audit a Portuguese class at her husband's university, a private class being cancelled, and then another course also being canceled:

My husband and I were going to take this Portuguese course together, one that was a requirement for his master's degree. We thought about asking the teacher for permission so that I could audit the course, but first we consulted with some colleagues to make sure there wouldn't be any problem. Eventually, we asked the teacher and she said that since I wasn't a matriculated student studying, I couldn't audit the course. That was really bad news for me. I wondered how I could study Portuguese, as I don't have a CPF<sup>25</sup>. Instead, I enrolled in a private course that was later cancelled due to low enrollment. My neighbor told me about a course for foreigners at the Casa de Cultura Portuguesa, so I finally managed to participate in a class. Unfortunately, that class was then cancelled the following semester.

Other participants reflected feelings of discontent with their academic classes and practicums where they feel treated differently than their Brazilian counterparts:

They [participant's Brazilian classmates] are more involved in academic issues, and at times I don't even know what they are doing. I try to get involved, but they don't care much. They always say, "It's going to be all right" and "whatever." It feels like they are not very eager to teach me as a foreigner.

A survey respondent reflected similar sentiments:

Sometimes at our university, our [Brazilian] classmates don't believe we have the capacity to produce work at a professional capacity just because we are from another country. It's worse when you come from a third world country like mine. It makes me want to return to an environment or place where they value your efforts.

Another participant relayed a similar sentiment of discontent in her internship at a medical facility:

I am now at an internship at a medical center and for example they don't let me physically touch the patients. Why, if I have the same training and experience as them? I understand there is bureaucracy and some things are done different in

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<sup>25</sup> CPF or *Cadastro de Pessoas Físicas* (Brazilian Portuguese) is Brazilian individual taxpayer identification registry number. Generally, it is required for many public and private services in order to allow the Brazilian Revenue Service to track and calculate income taxes due by both Brazilians and foreign residents.

Brazil, but nobody cares to explain me anything. I don't know to which point they know I am not a Brazilian student, but regardless they don't care to explain anything to me or to make me feel comfortable. So, sometimes I go back home feeling that I am invisible.

Another participant offered an opposing sentiment, but agreeing that she is treated differently in the classroom:

Students are pretty open and try to help me out and also the teachers have been helpful but I suppose my experience is different because I haven't worked at a hospital. My contact is at a classroom level. I think the demand is different, they feel that as I am a foreigner, I don't have the capabilities to do everything at the same level so they are less demanding.

An interesting sub-theme expressed in participants' sentiments of feeling treated differently was the perceived lenience or tolerance given towards immigrants and foreign students:

Sometimes you can have advantages because they are more tolerant with you because they think you have more difficulty as a foreigner, but sometimes it's also a disadvantage when you can't express your opinions in public in politics, regulations etc.

Multiple research participants confirmed this experience with similar accounts. One participant noted, "In the beginning, the professors would let me give presentations in Spanish or English... at the university, because I am a foreign student, they are more flexible with me and they try to help me." Another stated, "Sometimes they let you do anything because you are a '*gringa*.'"<sup>26</sup>

Participants also had several positive experiences related to academic opportunities, as well. One participant offered feelings of gratitude declaring that, "getting a masters degree is a great reward" and the diverse nature of classrooms gives her exposure to people who "more passionate about debates and about coursework"; she

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<sup>26</sup> *Gringa* (Brazilian Portuguese) is commonly understood to refer to any "foreigner" or non-Brazilian, unlike Spanish where it reserves a unique distinction for people from United States typically of European heritage.

concluded that her university experience affords her the opportunity to gain more from her classmates and academic opportunity.

Inquiry project participants discussed individual and collective experiences that generally relate to professional opportunity. Their experiences reflect a wide range of negative and positive experiences highlighting perceived bureaucratic issues, the prospective regional job market, and immigration legal status issues. In addition, participants reflected on academic opportunities in Fortaleza and how they have ultimately shaped their stay in the country often pointing to the lack of opportunity and individual instances and experiences in internships, practicum, and classroom environments.

**Personal growth.** Participants consistently revealed experiences reflecting the personal impact of immigrating and how it has altered their lives in a way that afforded them a sense of personal growth. Participants' stories and moments of personal growth, or development,<sup>27</sup> attributed as a result of immigrating, were mostly related to professional opportunities and recognition of behavioral and cultural changes.

One participant referenced the migration process as being the force that has allowed him to continue his personal cycle of development:

For quite awhile, I have wanted to study again, and I was maybe stuck a bit in a comfort zone, I felt a sort of inertia. As the years flew by, I was making some personal progress, but in retrospect I was always moving too slow. I intended to get a master's degree. It is something I've always visualized myself doing, but for a long time I never got there. I think the migration process and my current circumstances has pushed me to move forward... almost against my will.

Another participant who also experienced personal growth forcefully declared, "It has been a professional and personal experience that has allowed me to grow."

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<sup>27</sup> In this sense, development is defined as "a process progressively satisfying basic human needs" (Galtung, 1974, p. 4).

This sense of personal growth seems to teach people intercultural awareness, and build resilience. Multiple participants spoke to a great degree about how they have changed and learned to adapt to circumstance as a result of living in Brazil. One participant added: "I think that's where my openness comes from, the capacity to understand people and different cultures and knowing that once you overcome the cultural shock you will be able to lead a normal life, study, and make friends." Another participant provided an account of how it has afforded pushed her to grow and now she accepts herself more as a result:

I think [by immigrating] you learn or reinforce who you are. When you are alone you can make your own decisions and accept the consequences of what you decide. You are on your own here, we have friends but it's different. You learn to get to know and accept yourself more. It pushes you to grow.

In response to a follow up question related to how being an immigrant has affected them in Fortaleza, a participant stated that, "Now I give value to some things I didn't use to value as much or that I didn't think they were important or particularly good or special." Not all accounts of personal development have been positive. One participant reflected upon how long it has taken to adapt to living in Brazil:

I don't know how I would feel if I lived here by myself, perhaps I would adapt in a different way. However, the process of adapting to Brazil has taken me a long time and it's difficult from an emotional perspective. But I've changed for the better.

Inquiry project participants highlighted the role of personal growth in their experiences as immigrants, and how the experience of immigrating has directly contributed to changes in their lives; resulting changes were described as both negative and positive. The sense of personal growth participants described was a form of personal development related to educational pursuit, perceived cognitive behavioral and cultural adaptations, and an improved sense of self-acceptance.

**Saudade and belongingness.** Each participant in the inquiry project referenced their sense of belonging and what could be described culturally as saudade<sup>28</sup> for aspects of their home country or culture. The contexts of each sentiment varied greatly, but all seemed to be grounded in a sense of the difficulty or friction. I made the explicit decision to group saudade and belongingness as a single theme because of the inherent degree of interconnectedness.

*Saudade.* Nearly every research participant directly or indirectly referenced their sense of saudade or yearning and fondness of birth country and culture. The scope of each sentiment varied, but generally reflected a degree of difficulty. One participant commented that, "Although you may feel good and make friends at times, you will always miss your country, your family, your food... it's an incredibly difficult experience at times." Another participant described how she copes with the longing she has for her country:

I definitely have some patriotism lapses from time to time. When that happens, I like to listen to songs from my country, or will prepare food from my country. I have never been away for so long. I miss my city, the language, the feeling of being there.

Some participants indicated that they know they will return home, and that their decision to immigrate to Brazil is temporary resulting in varying senses of saudade for their home country. One participant reflected on another times she has immigrated before:

I miss my country, El Salvador, but I've lived abroad before. I once took a job in Santiago. I know I'll always return. It may take longer, an unexpected trip may occur, and my plans may be delayed, but I feel I'll always make my way back home.

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<sup>28</sup> Please see the explanation for saudade on page 20.

She ultimately concluded that having the option to always return home has allowed her to adapt more easily and has allowed her to enjoy “learning from others,” and that the experience has become “a very rich exchange.” Another participant commented that, initially it was a difficult experience, but she has adjusted despite her longing, and is anticipating her return home:

When I first arrived here, there was a lot of shock, the new culture, the language, the food, but now I am used to it. I have adjusted for the most part. Now, I'm just spending my time, studying, and waiting for the moment I will return home.

Other participants who referenced their longing for their home country and culture are unsure of when they can return back to their birth countries for differing reasons. One participant, who immigrated to Brazil because of his unexpected child, said that while he has a sense of saudade for Argentina and its “unforgettable moments”—and thinks he would like to return again one day--ultimately he has a child to raise in Brazil. He says “perhaps in ten years” it will be an option. In the case of one participant, whose is a political asylee, says, despite missing his culture and family, returning to his home country would endanger his life citing others who have returned and are currently imprisoned and others whose whereabouts are unknown.

However, saudade wasn't a universal sentiment among participants. One inquiry participant, when asked if she had a longing for her home country, stated:

I don't believe that to be the case. No! I don't feel “saudade” for Mexico. I am a very adaptable being. I do not feel that I need my family or the food or feel that urge or anguish to go home.

*Belongingness.* Participants described varying degrees of their belongingness from the time they immigrated to Fortaleza. One participant described moving to Brazil, specifically Fortaleza, as traumatic in part because he lost his sense of belonging:

I felt what was most traumatic was that I had many aspect of my life that I was going, most of which were related to my job, my sense of group belonging, and

the construction of my personal sense of belongingness. And also by losing all that, the mirror, or the opposite of these losses had to do with starting all over again here in Brazil, and the need to build again a space to study and for professional development, and belongingness that enables me to lead a life within a level of at least average happiness.

He later indicated that “finding interesting culture is a challenge” in Fortaleza, and “feeling more involved with [his] environment is very important for [him] to achieve happiness and develop a feeling of belongingness.” As a result of the division of labor in his family, and “making contact with few Brazilians here in Fortaleza” has affected his sense of belonging.

Sense of belongingness seemed to vary among experiences recalled by inquiry participants in Fortaleza. One participant explicitly discussed how inclusion and the perceived identity of Brazilian have affected her sense of belonging. She specified, “When I first arrived [to Fortaleza], I used to feel I really like I belonged here at first, but then... if they don't feel they belong to Latin America they can't totally integrate you.” Several other research participants conveyed similar sentiments that they believe Brazilians don't feel Latin American, as well.

At least two participants cited feeling a degree of connectedness to other residents from other predominately Spanish speaking countries of the Americas. One participant stating, “I've met people from other Latin American countries that helped me both emotionally and financially. They make me feel they are like family.” While another added, “Here I notice that we [other Latin Americans] are all in the same situation so we understand how we feel and we feel the same way.”

Another participant reflected that her decision to come to Brazil has allowed her to value her home country more despite the few opportunities that exist there:

Looking back, I was excited to leave my country, but now I realize it's my country and perhaps, I want to go home, because it's like my place of refuge.



When I return though, I will see the usual family shit, and my job, and how few opportunities I have. I will wonder what I am doing there, but it's still my place to retreat. It may be emotional or financial chaos but it's my place. I've learned to value that.

While the sentiments related to belongingness varies, one participant ultimately reflected:

If I feel I don't belong somewhere, I've learned that this is ok. I've also learned to respect people more after meeting so many different people from so many different places. I try to respect everyone and have a good coexistence.

Inquiry project participants overwhelmingly indicated that saudade and belongingness were critical to their experience as immigrants. Their experiences revealed experiences related to yearning, coping mechanisms, adaptation, acknowledgement of being able to return home and the inverse, culture shock, and the general lack of necessity to feel connected to their home country and culture. Participants also revealed experiences related to leaving everything behind, starting over, not being able to fully integrate, connecting with other intra-Americans, having minimal contact with Brazilians, increased value in native culture and home country, and a general acceptance of not fully belonging.

Immigrants of all backgrounds who make a calculated decision to migrate to another country have valuable experiences, theories of knowledge, and perspectives that frequently get buried, aren't heard, or simply implied to be "non-existent." These findings worked to convey some of these valuable experiences of recent immigrants to Fortaleza, Brazil through organized the previously described sub-themes of expressed importance.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

In this section of the capstone paper, I will utilize Johan Galtung's (1978) BNA to conduct an expedient analysis of the relationship between conflict and identity, insofar as it exists, through interpreting IN and needs satisfiers, and identifying where conflict

emerged or could emerge. Using the data collected, inquiry findings suggest that conflict rarely emerged, as a result of a collective and shared immigrant identity. Throughout the triangulated research approach, participants didn't offer contexts related to their social identity to examine conflict in a traditionally defined by Galtung, Amartya Sen, and other conflict and identity experts. I attribute this primarily to the demographics of the original surveyed population and the relative homogenous nature of the participants' home countries, and the lack of racial diversity. However, personal conflict was commonly expressed, and exchanges of latent interpersonal conflict seemed to manifest sporadically as a result of a collective immigrant identity. Both personal and latent forms of interpersonal conflict emerged, as participants worked to satisfy universal IN while seemingly attempting to avoid alienation in *Fortalecense* society.

***Language and communication.*** The need for adequate, intelligible communication with those in society, in a way that "makes [them] feel understood" is a shared IN that participants referenced. The BNA typology categorizes this particular IN as "self-actuation," and could fit into the others such as "well-being." If immigrants need to feel heard, be understood, and more explicitly communicate basic ideas, needs, and desires verbally, a non-material needs-satisfier is simply successfully learning Portuguese (conversationally or professionally), or alternatively a needs-satisfier could be considered availability or access to language classes. The immigrants' inability to make themselves understood or communicate in Portuguese is largely where latent conflict emerged in participants' experiences. In instances of discrimination or denial of services, language and communication is, in fact, a consistent barrier that prevents inclusion into *Fortalecense* society irrespective of country of origin, education level, legal status, or other significant circumstances. In the case of Spanish speaking Intra-Americans, conventional

wisdom suggests that the linguistic proximity between Spanish and Portuguese would aid the language learning process, consequently making verbal communication less of an issue. I found that while they were able to communicate basic needs, participants overwhelmingly conveyed sentiments of difficulty, and a sense of resignation as a result of a variety of factors such as time relative to progress and not being able to separate the two languages entirely resulting in *Portunhol*. Other less explored sub-themes that emerged were related to language and communication were multilingual family concerns, cultural resistance, professional opportunity, vulnerability, safety, language attrition, assimilation, and priorities.

***Professional opportunity.*** The need to feel respected and to actively participate in a professional capacity that adequately reflects their skills and education levels was an IN that participants referenced frequently and shared. The BNA typology categorizes this particular IN as “self-actuation” and “self-expression,” and could fit into the category of “well being.” In this particular instance, to avoid alienation, participants needed to satisfy this IN through professional opportunities, either academic or economically incentivized, while being validated by needs-satisfiers like adequate pay, external benefits, or respect, praise, and consideration. Participants frequently discussed dissatisfaction with both gainful available opportunities and feeling treated differently as a result of their foreign or immigrant identity in their practicum experiences.

Participants also relayed that other factors haven't been able to enter the labor force entirely, ultimately affecting their ability to realize their potential. The inability to satisfy these IN led to participants reflecting negatives experiences related to professional opportunity opening the window for conflict to manifest. Other less explored sub-themes that emerged related to professional opportunity were perceived bureaucratic

issues, language and communication, lack of access to English speakers, freedom, institutional support, and cultural resistance.

*Personal growth.* The need for being active and subject was alluded to by many participants typically through sentiments of personal growth and behavioral adaptation. The BNA typology categorizes this particular IN as “being active and subject in society” and “self-actuation.” Research participants often indicated positive reflections about how, specifically, immigrating to Brazil, and living internationally has afforded a sense of development. Some indicated that it has been a difficult and emotionally taxing process, while others positively described the experience as overcoming inertia. For the case of being active or achieving a sense personal growth, a needs-satisfier is the generalized sense of growth and accomplishment through contacts such as professional experiences like practicum experiences and gainful employment or academic endeavors, language acquisition, familial concerns and duties, and general recreation. When there is an absence and/or perceived absence of achieving this sense of personal development through the aforementioned needs-satisfiers, the tendency for internal conflict emerged. In describing negative experiences participants often indicated feelings of anxiety, deception, confusion, and general disappointment. While not indicated explicitly by any participants, there was a nuanced message often conveyed by one participant that cultural friction and dissatisfaction pushed her harder to change. Other less explored sub-themes that emerged, in the context of personal growth, were related to belongingness, professional opportunities, self-esteem, cultural resistance, and co-existence.

*Saudade and belongingness.* Participants often alluded to the need to achieve a general sense of belonging often characterized by saudade and yearning; here, this is

reduced to the ability to connect with other people from a similar background and feeling a general sense of connectedness with those around them (i.e. *Fortalacenses*). The BNA typology categorizes this particular IN as “roots and sense of belonging.” In the case of Spanish speaking Intra-Americans, *Latinidad*<sup>29</sup> represented this interconnectedness or identity needs-satisfier. After many experiences, many participants suggested that their personal interactions with Brazilians reflect that they “don’t feel like they are part of Latin America,” hence, this suggests they are experiencing an absence of *Latinidad*, or shared sense of belonging with Brazilians. Interestingly enough, this was specifically something participants said they expected to embrace considering perceived regional, language, and cultural proximity between their countries. As a result of this absence, participants’ sense of belongingness was affected negatively, thus resulting in both latent forms of interpersonal and personal conflict. However, it was noted that a sense of belonging with other Intra-Americans was established, in part, fulfilling that void, but not necessarily fostering a sense of inclusion into Fortaleza. Other less explored sub-themes revealed through the inquiry process related to sense of belonging were: isolation, dependence, support and dependence, language and communication, cultural maintenance, cultural celebrations, reception, and general difficulties living abroad.

To conclude the interpretation of the findings, it must be noted that the less explored sub-themes listed at the end of each section and shared BNA’s typology characterizations within the sub-themes suggest that significant overlap exists in relation to each separately analyzed IN. This intersection or overlap suggests that, perhaps, these experiences should not be analyzed independently of each other, but rather holistically.

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<sup>29</sup> *Latinidad* is a term used in both Spanish and English that generally refers to the attributes and characteristics that all Intra-Americans purportedly share without necessarily reducing them to anything specific. This term was originally coined a sociologist from Chicago named Felix Padilla.

## Conclusion

### Fortaleza's Immigrant Song

This inquiry was able to shed light on recent immigrants' motives and life stories prior to relocating to Fortaleza, examine the relationship between conflict and identity through the lens of Galtung's Basic Needs Approach, and uncover general overlapping and recurrent themes expressed within participants' experiences. This was carried out by using a theoretical framework grounded in ethnographic principles, guided by the social theory presented in *Epistemologies of the South*, and analyzed using a constructivist ground theory approach.

Recent immigrants residing in Fortaleza often experienced identity needs, characterized by Galtung's BNA typology as (1) self-actuation, (2) self-expression, (3) well-being, (4) being active and subject in society, and (5) roots or a sense of belonging as described in the presented recurrent and persistent themes. The fulfillment and satisfaction of these identity needs are considered to be critical to ultimately achieve "closeness" and integration into *Fortalecense* society. Often, these identity related needs were satisfied or resulted in personal or latent interpersonal conflict. Instances of emerging latent interpersonal conflict occurred as a result of cultural norms being purportedly violated, and instances where a perceived social equilibrium failed to be respected, meaning that cultural norms were disturbed and allegedly disrupted by research participants. It must be noticed that most noteworthy experiences referenced by participants never escalated to instances of direct or physical violence, and comparatively could not be considered as identity-conflict in more traditional or academic senses, but at times did lead to polarization, isolation, and degrees of cultural resistance and friction as a result of a basic immigrant identity.

The stories shared by research participants in this rendition of Fortaleza's immigrant song reflected varying experiences relatively consistent with those lived by historical immigrant populations in other regions of Brazil, as discussed previously, and more general experiences lived by immigrants across the world. These often untold, under-reported, and purportedly "non-existent" immigrant experiences of the Global South are infinitely diverse, valuable, rich, and testaments to the lived effects of colonialism, neocolonialism, capitalism, and globalization. The immigrant song often played in the public sphere isn't perfectly tuned, and often distorts the ability for immigrants' voices to be heard.

### **Practicable Applicability**

The findings of this inquiry project can be utilized to inform educational institutions, universities, and other governmental or non-governmental organizations about the experiences and challenges that Global South immigrants encounter in Fortaleza. Through learning about the experiences and challenges of recent immigrants, organizations can work to provide improved support related to language development, academic and economically incentivized professional opportunities, and, more generally, inclusion and integration into *Fortalecense* society created as a result of globalization, capitalism, and colonialism. For immediate impact, the UFC, CCP, Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Linguística Aplicada, and Coordenação de Assuntos Internacionais are best positioned to positively affect and provide support for the recent immigrant population of the city. Other local institutions that work to provide aid to immigrants and international students will also have a practical use for the inquiry's finding. In addition, any future researchers, completing similar projects, or studying

trends or recurrent themes in immigrant experiences in the Global South could benefit from this inquiry project.

### **Considerations for Further Inquiry**

Immigrant experiences will always remain a topic of interest for any educational institutions, service providers, or governments working with recent immigrant populations. As noted in the subjectivity and limitation section of this capstone paper, there were at least three limitations that affected the findings of this inquiry project. In any future related studies for Fortaleza, there are four specific recommendations that should be taken into consideration: (1) the experiences of recent immigrants of African, specifically former Lusophone colonies, should be prioritized to shed light on the effects of racial identity; (2) lead researchers must make a greater attempt to reach out to local organizations to examine, compare, and contextualize recent immigrant experiences and challenges in Fortaleza from an organizational standpoint. This perspective could better serve studying the relationship between conflict and identity; (3) to complete a three to five year in-depth ethnographic study, potentially Feminist Participatory Action Research, with lines of questioning that explicitly target experiences related to social identity beyond the generalized “recent immigrant” label. The length of this study was limited to a period of six to nine months, which considerably affected inquiry findings. All data collected must be used to construct a responsible narrative (or song) that recognizes and valorizes the experiences and knowledges of recent immigrants of the Global South. These experiences represent a resistance towards the negative effects of capitalism, neocolonialism, and globalization.



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## Appendices

**Appendix A**

Brazil has a history of “whitening” immigration policy that discriminately gave preference to migrants from European countries, and often denying immigrants from the African or Asian continents (Canofre, 2014; C.P., 1937; Demartini, 2008; Lesser, 2013; Mitchell, 2016; Nunes, 2004; Santos and Hallewell, 2002). According to Demartini (2008) and Santos and Hallewell (2002), this general *embranquecimento* (whitening) policy was a consequence of the abolition of slavery in 1888 to promote “free labor.” It was the prohibition of slavery was an immediate concern that linked policies to provide incentive for Europeans to immigrate.

The whitening policy also was reinforced by deeply rooted anti-miscegenation racist thought often characterizing the “black and yellow races” as inferior to the whites, with “subservient and immoral character,” and as “barbarians.” While on the other hand, prominent government officials and Brazilian elites touted the “ethnic virtues” of white workers (Demartini, 2008). Generally, Brazilian politicians and community leaders feared the “mongolization” and “Africanization” of the country and drafted law that explicitly excluded them from the process. One congressional immigration decree declared that immigration is to be:

Completely free the entry, in the Republic’s ports, of individuals capable of working, who are not subjected to their countries’ criminal actions, excepted the Asian or African aborigines, who, only with the authorization of the national Congress, will be admitted, according to the conditions to be stipulated (Decree No. 528 of June 28, 1890) (Demartini, 2008; Vanier, 1996:43).

This explicit policy example isn’t unique to Brazil’s immigration history; rather one example of a laundry list of anti-African and anti-Asian immigration policy used to whiten the country’s racial demographics in post-slavery Brazil. In addition to easy

migration access to the country, there were long standing government colonization policies that paid trans-Atlantic passage to bring people from Italy, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Poland, Russia and other European countries to Brazil (Canofre, 2014; Santos and Hallewell, 2002), but were never offered to any non-European countries.

Interestingly, the immigration destinations within Brazil also helped influence the racial geographic makeup of the country. Nunes (2004) points out that the northeastern region of Brazil received far less European immigrants than Southeastern Brazil resulting in it having the largest African presence in the country. This is an important fact to consider when examining the current socioeconomic and political issues embroiling the country today; the most recent example being the clear divides and highlighted geographical importance indicating approval or disapproval of the impeachment or political coup deposing of president Dilma Rousseau. It is important to note that the geographical proximity between West Africa and Northeast Brazil plays an important role in migration patterns from other Lusophone countries like Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Equatorial Guinea.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brazilian politicians and other elites started rejecting notions of white superiority, and began to accept and valorize racial mixing, thus promoting Brazil as a “racial democracy” (Andrews, 2004; Borges 1993; Cunha 1985; Guimarães, 2012; Hanchard, 1994; Mitchell; 2016; Schwarc, 1999; Santos and Halewelle, 2002; Skidmore, 1993). The legitimacy of Brazil being a racial democracy has long been disputed, some scholarly works often refer to it as a “myth” that came about in Brazil’s attempt to leverage the concept that racial mixing set Brazil free of racial conflict (Mitchell, 2016; Sousa and Nascimento, 2008). It is important to note that the effects of

colonialism and imperialism have long embedded racism and social injustice into Brazilian society despite purportedly being “one of the most culturally integrated society (sic) in the world” (Nunes, 2004, p. 71).

The current racial makeup of Brazil is a testament to the country's history of immigration reflecting both the country's diversity and its reversal of affects of long standing structural “whitening” policy or the desire and decision making that explicitly preference immigrants of European descent as opposed to immigrants of African and Asian continents, and how those racial identities, more specifically Black and *Pardo* (multiracial) Brazilians currently impact socioeconomic and other political issues around the country. With more than 200 million residents of Brazil, race continues to stand out as one of the most salient features that has defined Brazilian immigration. According to the 2010 census, 50.7 percent of the Brazilian population identified as black or *pardo* signaling the first non-white majority since the late 1800s.

## Appendix B

The figure below is the basic typology proposed by Galtung in his initial BNA writings.

IDENTITY NEEDS (needs for closeness) - <u>to avoid alienation</u>	
- for self-expression, creativity, praxis, work	JOBS
- for self-actuation, for realizing potentials	JOBS + LEISURE
- for well-being, happiness, joy	RECREATION, FAMILY
- for being active and subject, not being passive, client, object	RECREATION, FAMILY
- for challenge and new experiences	RECREATION
- for affection, love, sex; friends, spouse, offspring	PRIMARY GROUPS
- for roots, belongingness, support, esteem: association with similar humans	SECONDARY GROUPS
- for understanding social forces; for social transparence	POLITICAL ACTIVITY
- for partnership with nature	NATURAL PARKS
- for a sense of purpose, of meaning with life; closeness to the transcendental, transpersonal	RELIGION, IDEOLOGY

*Figure 1.* Galtung's typology reflecting example identity needs (1974). This figure illustrates a framework or basis for identity needs and examples of needs satisfiers.

### Appendix C – Data Collection Methods

**Initial survey.** After completing an preliminary literature review, an initial survey was designed via SurveyMonkey.com and distributed electronically via an identifiable personal Gmail account to non-Brazilian residents of Fortaleza with an established relationship or ties to the Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC) via the Casa de Cultura Portuguesa (CCP). The survey served two fundamental purposes: (1) to classify and identify potential project participants who were willing to participate in a semi-formal in-depth personal interview and/or survey; and (2) to establish a baseline or pattern of core theoretical and thematic concepts in comparison to those outlined in my initial project proposal.

As a result of the diversity of the project's potential participants, the initial survey was written in English and translated into Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Spanish. A professional translator living in Amman, Jordan was contracted to translate the MSA version of the project's survey while I translated the project's survey into Spanish; however, as a result of the interviewer's dominant language (L1) being English, the Spanish copy of the survey was reviewed and redacted by a colleague, a lawyer and university doctoral student, native to El Salvador. All persons involved in the translation and redaction of the initial survey contributed critical and constructive criticism related to cultural context and historical reference points to ensure the most effective form of communication between participants and the interviewer.

**Survey population.** The initial survey yielded 20 legitimate or admissible self-selecting responses from respondents of Latin American, South Asian, and Middle Eastern and/or North African countries, that contributed to the project's findings and identified all participants who collaborated in the other data collection research



methods: semi-formal in-depth personal interviews and focus group. Of the initial survey respondents, 16 were from the Americas, two from Pakistan, one from Morocco, and one from Bahrain; 9 of the survey respondents identified as women and eleven as men; all survey respondents indicated that their age fell between the range of 18 and 54; all 20 survey participants have been residing in Brazil for less than two years; 13 respondents positively identified as either an immigrant, emigrant, or migrant, one respondent self-identified as a refugee, three respondents were unsure; 11 participants currently hold temporary residency, seven participants hold permanent residency, two respondents identified as undocumented or without proper legal status; all survey respondents have at least started undergraduate coursework with nearly half completing graduate school or doctoral work. More information on the survey's demographics can be found in Appendix A.

**Semi-formal in-depth interviews .** Throughout the inquiry process five semi-formal in-depth interviews were conducted with participants who expressed interest in further participation in the inquiry from the list of survey respondents. All research interview participants indicated, in the aforementioned initial survey, their willingness to participate by voluntarily leaving personal contact information for further follow up. The selected inquiry project's interview participants were chosen based on the inquiry's criteria or profile for ideal candidates. The criteria for narrowing down self-selecting candidates included: (1) regional preference; (2) gender; (3) age; (4) whether or not respondents closely positively identified as "an immigrant, emigrant, or migrant;" (5) communication potential and language capabilities; and (6) time among other indicators used to assess interviewee suitability.

*Interview population.* The primary research participants (interviewees) were four Latin Americans (Guatemalan, Salvadoran, Argentine, and Venezuelan) and one Pakistani all of which either are currently affiliated with the UFC or have been throughout the inquiry project. Three participants have self-identified as men, and two as men. The ages of the primary research participants were: 38, 33, 23, 26, and 30 years of age and all have resided in Brazil for 3 years or less; all participants self-identified as an immigrant, emigrant, or migrant, and hold varying legal statuses such as refugee, undocumented, or temporary resident.

*Intercultural processes and translation.* Four of the five interviews were conducted in Spanish and were translated and transcribed by a local professional translator from Argentina. Each of the five interview participants and I all share either an L1 or L2<sup>30</sup>, thus minimizing the potential for intercultural communication errors. One interview was conducted in English. Interviews varied between 40 minutes and an hour and ten minutes. In some cases, follow up interviews occurred to provide more insight for the participant portraits. Please see Appendix B for a list of preliminary interview questions. All interviews were recorded in an audio only feature on an Iphone 6S, uploaded them to a Macbook Pro computer, and stored in encrypted files before translation.

*Additional notes.* All interview research participants had zero obligations to participate in further research methods and all voluntarily shared their stories without compensation. All interviews took place at various UFC libraries in Fortaleza; however, one participant provided key information via voice messages through a prominent application, WhatsApp, using encrypted technology due to traveling issues. In some

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<sup>30</sup> L1 and L2 are language acronyms that refer to first and second languages respectively.

instances, transportation costs and or refreshments were provided for interview research participants.

**Focus group.** After completing the semi-formal in-depth interviews process, I subsequently conducted a focus group with three participants who were pooled from the initial survey respondents. In the same manner as the interview participant, all focus group participants indicated, in the aforementioned initial survey, their willingness to participate by voluntarily leaving personal contact information for further follow up. The selected focus group participants were chosen based on the same criteria or profile for ideal interview candidates as the in-depth semi-formal interviews.

**Focus Group population.** The focus group participants are three Latin American women from Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Mexico. All three participants are established medical professionals currently pursuing graduate level degrees at the UFC; focus group participants all fell within the age range of 27-28 years old, and have resided in Brazil for less than one year on temporary residency visas. All focus group participants positively self-identified appropriately as either an emigrant or immigrant.

**Intercultural processes and translation.** The focus group was conducted entirely in Spanish with occasional responses from participants including Portuguese vocabulary. The focus group lasted approximately an hour and was recorded in an audio only feature on an Iphone 6S. The file was uploaded to a Macbook Pro computer, and stored in encrypted files before being transcribed and translated by a professionally certified translator into English. In order to maintain continuity, the same translator was used for both the semi-formal in-depth interviews and the focus group.

**Additional information.** Focus group participants voluntarily shared their stories for the inquiry project without compensation. The focus group took place at a UFC

library in Fortaleza; in some instances, transportation costs and or refreshments were provided for focus group research participants.

### **Appendix D- Data Analysis Methods Details**

As mentioned throughout the capstone paper, this inquiry was shaped by three specific data collection methods: (1) an initial survey; (2) five semi-formal in-depth interviews; and (3) a focus group. Upon the completion of data collection, audio recordings were transcribed and translated by a locally based Argentine translator. On multiple occasions via telephone and email, I spoke with the translator to iterate the importance and need of precision and accuracy of the material to be translated. We also reviewed the ethical research standards outlined by the SIT Reflective Practicum Phase Handbook and the National Institute of Health (NIH). As proof of his professional competency and experience, the translator provided a CV with more than 35 years of translation experience.

Throughout the analysis process, I was able to categorize, memo, and code data through Microsoft Excel, and subsequently transfer them to NVivo II for Mac, a QDA software tool. In the QDA software program, I was able to code interviews line by line using “nodes,” analyze nodes where any intersections occurred, pull block quotes and data to start to analyze any emergent themes. Subsequently, I decided to write the research participants’ portrait-narratives so I could conceptualize the participants’ lives prior to coming to Fortaleza, and gain a more comprehensive understanding of what they are experiencing after immigrating. In some instances, subsequent interviews were carried out informally to fill any information gaps.

### Appendix E – Initial Survey Question Guide

Please note that these are the preliminary questions proposed, and may not represent the totality of questions used for the initial survey for this inquiry project:

1. Please select the age range that corresponds to your identity (multiple choice range)
2. What is your highest level of education attained (multiple choice range)
3. What is your nationality (Fill in the box)
4. What is your sexual orientation? (multiple choice range/Fill in the box)
5. If you identify with any particular gender, please choose one of the answers below or provide one in the write-in-space. (Multiple choice range/Fill in the box)
6. How long have you been residing in Brazil? (Multiple choice range)
7. Please describe your legal status. (Multiple choice range)
8. Do you identify as an immigrant in Brazil? (Yes/No)
9. From which region of the world/country did you immigrate? (Multiple choice)
10. Briefly describe any experiences related to the immigration process to Brazil.
11. Briefly describe one lived experience as an immigrant in Brazil.
12. Would you like to participate in either a focus group or in-depth personal interview for an ethnographic research project related to immigrant experiences?
13. If you answered 'yes' to the last question, please include your name and contact information.

### Appendix F- Initial Interview and Focus Group Guiding Questions

Below are some sample interview questions and prompts that may have been used throughout the course of the data collection process:

1. What was the experience of coming to Brazil like for you?
  - a. [Alternatively] What was this experience like for your family or loved ones? How has it impacted you?
2. What motivated you to immigrate to Fortaleza, Brazil? What were the underlying motivations or rationales?
3. How has this affected your relationship with the culture of your home country?
4. How has your identity been impacted since moving to Brazil? Have you experienced any cultural or behavioral changes?
5. How do you maintain culture values and tradition from your birth country?
6. Please talk about some of the cultural challenges you have experienced as a recent immigrant to Fortaleza, Brazil.
7. Please describe any situation when you believe your social identity has impacted an experience in Brazil.
8. Describe any positive or negative experiences you've had as a result of being perceived as an immigrant.
9. How does language play a role in your experience as a newer immigrant to Brazil?
10. What have you learned about yourself after immigrating to Brazil?
11. Describe any other important experiences you've had as a recent immigrant.