

RELATIVE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND THE PROBABILITY OF MIGRATION: A  
STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF RELATIVE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON THE  
DECISION TO MIGRATE TO THE UNITED STATES.

A Thesis Presented

by

ALEXANDRA S. V. BARKER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,  
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## ABSTRACT

### RELATIVE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND THE PROBABILITY OF MIGRATION: A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF RELATIVE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON THE DECISION TO MIGRATE TO THE UNITED STATES.

August 2010

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This study measured the level of association between one's Relative Socioeconomic Status (SES) and one's probability of migration to the United States. The objective is to identify a concept that explains not only migration decisions for economical purposes, but also migration decisions made based on educational, social, cultural, religious, health, political purposes, etc.

Three hypotheses were tested: 1) the higher the relative SES of one's household during childhood compared to one's current SES, the more likely this individual will be to emigrate; 2) the higher the relative SES of one's peers, friends, or relatives in the home country compared to one's current SES, the more likely this individual will be to migrate; and 3) The higher the relative SES of one's peers who have migration, experience compared to one's current SES, the more likely this individual will be to emigrate.

Data collected from a sample of Brazilian immigrants living in Massachusetts that participated in the Relative Socioeconomic Status Survey (2006-2007) provided evidence that Relative SES is a relevant determinant in the decision of Brazilians to emigrate to the United States.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the committee, friends, and family: their guidance, patience and support were critical during the development of this thesis.

I thank Professor Charles Cnudde for encouraging me to move forward with my ambitious survey project and for providing the necessary tools to carry out the project. The relevant findings of the Relative SES Survey is a result of Professor Cnudde's extraordinary knowledge of research methods and his dedication to this project. I also would like to thank Professor Tim Sieber for his guidance on the analysis of the behavior of immigrants, and for his support during my first academic presentation of this project at the University of Lisbon (Portugal) during the summer of 2008. I would like to thank Professor Carlos Eduardo Siqueira for sharing his experience and knowledge about the Brazilian immigrant population in MA. Prof. Siqueira provided me with relevant literature on the matter.

I would like to thank my friends Maria Natálicia R. Tracy for her support and guidance. Her dedication to academic research and generosity are inspiring. I also would like to thank my friend Caroline Flor, who helped me with important logistical aspects of the survey.

I am grateful to my family, especially my parents Ademir and Aurea Vieira, who have dedicated their lives to provide great educational opportunities for me, have always had faith in me, and continue to sacrifice so that I pursue my dreams.

I thank to my in-laws, Frederick and Theresa Barker who continuously make me feel capable of making great accomplishments in this new land. I also thank Aunt Diane Car who generously reviewed the final draft this study.

My most special gratitude goes to my husband Frederick Barker III and my son Frederick Barker IV whose love and support I could not live without. Their lives have been directly impacted by my dedication to this project and, yet, they were always there for me. My husband encourages me every day to continue investing on my education and to stay involved with the Brazilian community.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to every Brazilian immigrant who generously shared life stories and experiences with me, and introduced me to the world of Brazilian immigration to the U.S. Many thanks to my compatriots, who have embraced this country as their own and, because of it, have made projects like this relevant.

Alexandra Barker

## PREFACE

Why do millions of people leave their native country deliberately to encounter the challenges of a new land? What are the motivations and gains behind international migration movements?

Because the answers to these questions have great implications on the elaboration of successful immigration policies, this study seeks to provide a new approach to the analysis of non-forced migration movements. Economic centered approaches alone are no longer satisfactory for the study of migration movements. In order to offer a new light for policy makers, this research presents a new approach to the understanding of migration movements: the study of the development of the migration decision process through the analysis of the relative socioeconomic status of an individual migrant candidate.

The claim of this approach is based on the hypothesis that the decision to migrate is built on the necessity of an individual to enhance his/her relative socioeconomic status in comparison his/her SES during childhood, the SES of the peer group and the SES of friends and relatives with migration experience. If the individual concludes that his/her SES is lower in comparison to these three groups, this individual will seek for means to enhance it. When the home country does not provide this individual with means to enhance his/her relative SES, this individual is very likely to migrate. In conclusion, migration becomes a mean to enhance relative SES.

The importance of looking at relative SES instead of economic push and pull factors alone, rests on the fact that education, personal relationships, consumption power, property ownership, relative income, occupation, social pressures, etc, are taken under consideration. Most mainstream migration theories have provided some valid and important economic centered explanation, however they have underestimated the importance that an individual's personal life experiences have in his/her migration decision.

In order to test the level of association of the relative SES of an individual with the probability to migrate to the United States, this paper analyzed qualitative data collected from a sample of 20 Brazilian immigrants living in Massachusetts. Data from the American Community Survey 2005-2007 will also be used to provide socioeconomic characteristics of the Brazilian immigrant population in the State. Last, this study will investigate the importance of social status among Brazilians, and their pre-constructed perpetuated notion that migration to the United States enhances SES.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Even during a short walk on the streets of Boston, Massachusetts, one will notice people of many different nationalities sharing the same urban space. In Boston alone, according to the American Community Survey, 27.5% of the population are foreign born, 56.3% are non-citizens, and 35.5% of the households speak a language other than English.<sup>1</sup> This is a small reflection of a portrait that is spread across the United States: a mixture of people from different cultures, ages, races, educational and economic backgrounds, immersed into the daily routine of the country. The relevant number of immigrants living in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> – 12.5 % of the total population - raises some questions: why would an individual emigrate from his native country, to which he has been so accustomed? What are the motivations and gains behind this international movement? Can receiving countries formulate effective policies to welcome or to inhibit newcomers based on their knowledge of the purpose of the migration trips of different population groups? Is relative socioeconomic status one of the most efficient variables to measure the probability of an individual to migrate to the United States?

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.

<sup>2</sup> 2006-2008 ACS.

The importance of the responses to these questions lies on the implications that migration movements have on public policy. In recent years, especially before and after the 2008 presidential election, a lot has been said about the necessity of a comprehensive immigration policy. However no government official has yet conveyed a detailed explanation about the government's understanding of a comprehensive immigration policy and how it will seek to pursue it. This study may shine a new light on the understanding of the migration decision process and offer policy-makers insights into the formulating of efficient policies that deal with immigration from its origins.

This study's approach is that in order for governments to determine efficient migration policy it is necessary to have a multi-level understanding of the migration decision process, including the following:

1. The individual experiences of a person before migration lead to the decision to migrate. This explains the reason why one person decides to migrate while one of his/her peers does not consider this possibility;
2. The aggregation of individual decisions, under influences of contextual<sup>3</sup> factors such as the economy and social networks, determines the population migration flow.

By addressing migration from its origins, and by knowing how the migration decision process unfolds, policy-makers may be able to identify a more efficient solution

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<sup>3</sup> Factors that cannot be controlled by an individual but have relevant influence on this individual's behavior.

to induce or to prevent the migration of specific population groups. As a result, the government will gain more control over the migratory flow.

Reality shows that once the migration decision is made, the individual will consistently try to enter the destination country. For instance, according to Thomas J. Espenshade et al, after the United States 1996 Immigration Reform and Welfare Act, the number of unauthorized apprehensions at the Southwest border as well as the number of unauthorized entrances increased with the high investments in border patrol and security technology, (776 – 777; 782 – 788).<sup>4</sup> Economist Barry Chiswick affirmed that these investments will not be efficient as long as the migrant sees the border as a “revolving door” (113-114).<sup>5</sup> Sociologist Douglas Massey et al. explained in the book Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration that “by the end of the 1990s, U.S. taxpayers were buying apprehension probabilities that were no higher than they had been in the early 1980’s, but they were paying five times as much” (118).<sup>6</sup>

These security measures make it difficult, but not impossible for individuals to cross the border illegally. In “Implication of the 1996 Welfare and Immigration Reform Acts for U.S. Immigration”, Espenshade calculates that it takes an immigrant an average of 3 attempts to successfully enter U.S. territory. The number of attempted entrances +1

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas J. Espenshade, et al., “Implication of the 1996 Welfare and Immigration Reform Acts for U.S. Immigration.” Population and Development Review 23.4 (1997): 776 – 777 and 782 – 788.

<sup>5</sup> Chiswick, Barry R. “Illegal Immigration and Immigration Control.” Journal of Economic Perspectives 2.2 (1988): 113-114

<sup>6</sup> Douglas S. Massey, et al; Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002: 118

represents the number of attempted entrances in comparison to the number of apprehensions. From the moment one decides to migrate, one will enter the U.S. regardless of how many tries it takes. Thus, the high investment in border security is inversely proportional or at best indifferent to the reduction of the number of individuals crossing the border every day, according Espenshade (783). The estimated number of unauthorized immigrants entering the U.S. doubled from about 6 million in 1996 to about 12 million in 2006 (table 4: 783).<sup>7</sup>

Taking into consideration the arguments of Massey and Espenshade, we may conclude that managing unauthorized inflows becomes more difficult and expensive when the U.S. government mostly addresses migration issues after the individual migrant is at the border or has already reached the U.S. territory. Therefore, a preventive approach may be more effective and less costly. To prevent or/and to manage migration inflows it is critical to acknowledge that:

1. Immigrants are individuals that will make their decisions based on personal experiences and the experiences of their peers. Contextual factors are take into consideration when determining the location and viability of their trip;

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<sup>7</sup> Espenshade et al., table 4: 783

2. Variables that motivate the decision to migrate may vary from culture to culture; therefore the development and implementation of policies should be guided by cultural expectations.

### **Why is it Important to Know the Reasons Why People Migrate?**

Identifying the reasons why people migrate may provide new light for policy-makers when developing policies to regulate migration flows.

In order to help policy makers understand the design of a migration decision, this study introduces concept that focuses on the Relative Socioeconomic Status (SES) of an individual, of an individual's household, and of an individual's peers as the first determinant of the migration decision process.

The Relative SES concept has its roots on what Oded Stark and Edward Taylor called Relative Deprivation (1989).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Oded Stark and J. E. Taylor. "Relative Deprivation and International Migration." *Demography* 26.1 (1989): 1-14

## CHAPTER II

### OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this research are:

1. To measure the level of association between an individual's Relative SES and the probability of migration of this individual. In other words, this study seeks to find evidence that Relative SES is a determinant of the migration decision process.
2. Based on the analysis of Relative SES as a determinant of the migration decision process, to determine if this concept is able to explain migration trips for various reasons such as economic, educational, social, health, faith, political purposes, etc.
3. To provide a new perspective about the migration process to policy-makers and researchers when examining the behavior of foreign-born individuals and populations to determine their probability of migration.

The first step to determine if Relative SES is a determinant of the migration decision process is to analyze how migration has been previously explained. This study will review the six mainstream migration theories - Traditional Neoclassical Economics, Segmented Labor Market, World Systems, New Household Economics, Social Networks, and Cumulative Causation - to identify which elements within each theory is capable of explaining the reason why people migrate.

Second, this research will examine the concept of Relative Socioeconomic Status, and explain how it may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the migration decision process. Lastly, to test the applicability of the concept of Relative SES to foreign-born immigrant populations, this study will look at qualitative data collected from a sample of Brazilian immigrants residing in Massachusetts. Demographic data from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey, and 2000 Census data analyzed by Lima and Siqueira in the publication Brazilians in the U.S. and Massachusetts: A Demographic and Economic Profile will be also taken into consideration.

## **Motivations Behind this Study**

### Personal Motivations

There are a few reasons why I have been interested in testing the association of Relative SES with the migration decision process, as well as why I chose to use Brazilian immigrants living in Massachusetts as the sample population to test the hypothesis presented in the following chapter. First, as an immigrant myself, and a Brazilian citizen who has been living in the United States since 2002, I have always wondered whether existing migration theories were able to explain my personal decision to migrate to the

U.S. After thinking about my own experiences and the experiences of many of my compatriots with whom I have shared life stories, I decided to examine a concept that could better account for the reasons that brought me and many of my compatriots – some from very different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds in Brazil - to the U.S. At the same time, I would like to identify a concept that would account for the reasons why many of our peers and relatives from Brazil did not migrate to the U.S, maybe never considered such a possibility, or even after some consideration, have decided not to migrate.

Secondly, when choosing a population to serve as the testing group for this analysis, the Brazilian population in Massachusetts was very appealing to me, not only because I belong to this group and have personal interests in learning more about Brazilians in Massachusetts, but also because of the importance that this population has gained in the immigration scenario in the United States within the last decade. Even though there are records of large migration flows from Brazil to the U.S. since the 80s, according to 2006-2008 American Community Survey data, more than 50% of Brazilians currently living in the U.S. arrived in the country after 2000.

#### Factual Motivations

Regardless of my nationality, there are other important reasons why I chose to analyze the inflow of Brazilian immigrants to the United States, specifically to Massachusetts.

## **Why the United States?**

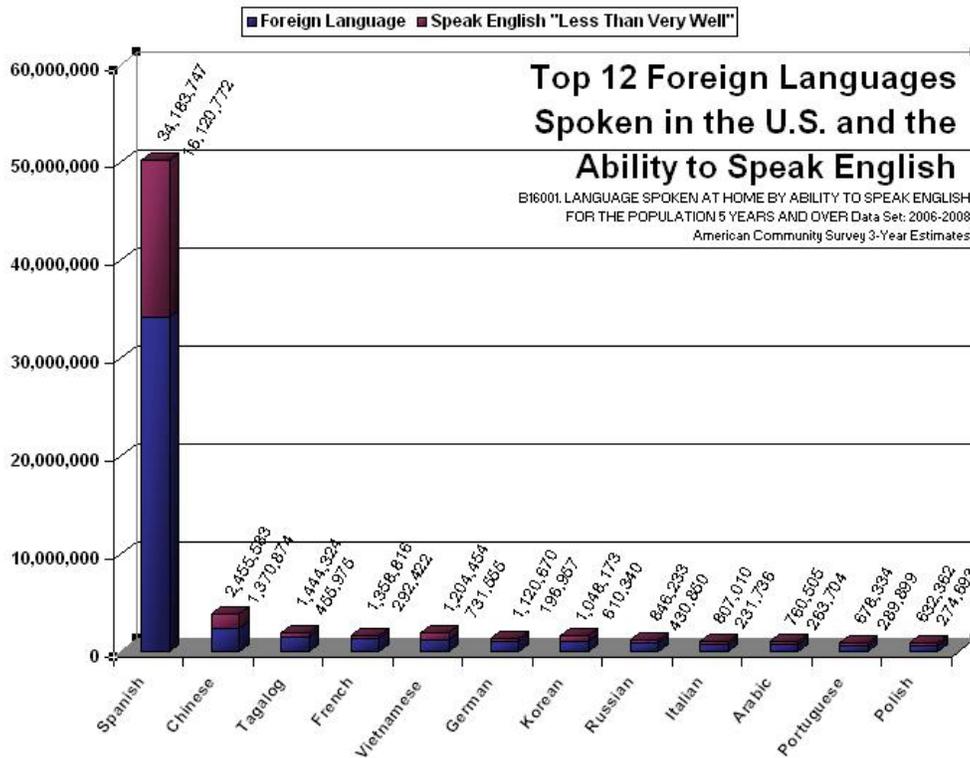
The United States was chosen as the receiving country analyzed for this study because of the relevant number of foreign-born persons living in the country and its history of political struggles to control inflows.

1. According to the estimates of the American Community Survey 2006-2008 there are about 37.6 million foreign-born persons residing in the U.S., which represents 12.5 % of the country's total population. The foreign-born population in the U.S. consists of more than 100 different communities by country of birth, who speak more than 150 different foreign languages.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

**Chart 1: Top 12 Foreign Languages Spoken in the U.S. and Ability to Speak English**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey.  
 B16001. Language Spoken at Home By Ability to Speak English For the Population 5 Years and Over

- There was a rapid increase of the foreign-born population in the last four decades:  
 In 1970 there were 9.6 million foreign-born persons living in the U.S. In 1980, the foreign-born population was estimated in 14 million. In 1990, these numbers increased to about 19.7 million. The 2000 Census estimated that about 31.1 million people living in the U.S. were foreign-born, representing 11.1% of the total population. The most recent ACS data release (2006-2008) shows that this

number has increased to about 37.6 million. Thus, in more than 3 decades, the foreign-born population in the U.S. has almost quadrupled its size.<sup>10</sup>

### **Why Massachusetts?**

According to ACS 2006-2008 data, 14.2% of Massachusetts's total population is foreign-born. This number is higher than the percentage of foreign-born person living in the U.S. (12.5%).<sup>11</sup>

1. Massachusetts is among the 10 major immigrant-receiving states in the U.S.<sup>12</sup>
2. According to the ACS 2006-2008, Massachusetts is the state that receives the largest flow of Brazilian Immigrants, and hosts the largest population of persons born in Brazil living in the U.S., with about 70,867 persons.<sup>13</sup> However, non-profit organizations such as the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS), the Brazilian Women's Group, and the General Consulate of Brazil in Boston claim that both the ACS and the 2000 Census have underestimated the Brazilian population in MA by about 50%. These organizations explain that there is an undercount of Brazilians by the ACS because a large number of Brazilians

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<sup>10</sup> 2006-2008 ACS, 2000 Census, 1990 Census, 1980 Census, and 1970 Census.

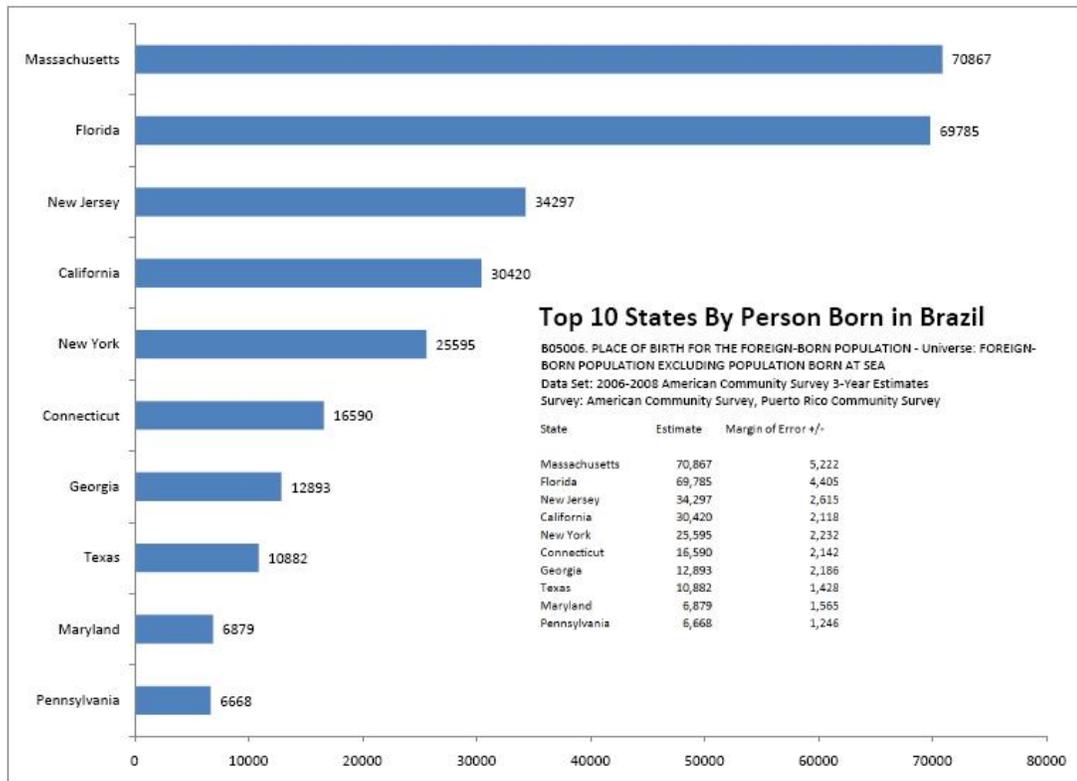
<sup>11</sup> 2006-2008 ACS.

<sup>12</sup> 2006-2008 ACS.

<sup>13</sup> 2006-2008 ACS.

living in the U.S. are undocumented, therefore less likely to respond to government surveys.<sup>14</sup>

**Chart 2: Top 10 States by Brazilian Nativity**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey.  
 B0006. Place of Birth For The Foreign-Born Population – Universe: Foreign-Born Population Excluding Population Born at Sea.

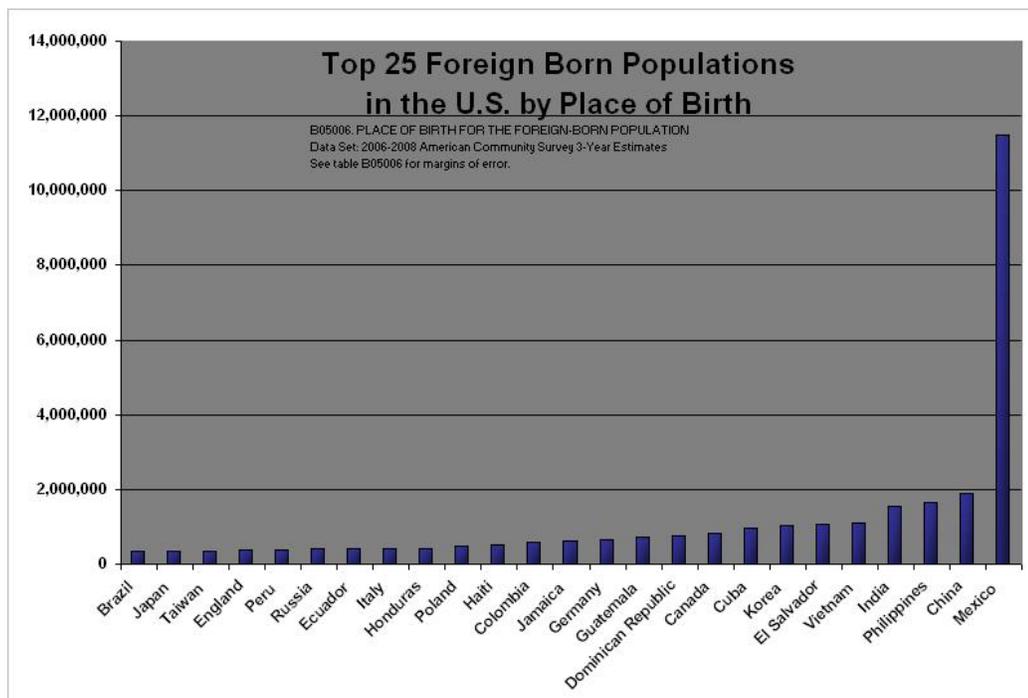
<sup>14</sup> Alvaro Lima, *Brasileiros na América*. São Paulo: CIP-Brasil Catalogo Nacional de Publicacoes & Sindicato dos Editores de Livros, 2009.

## Why Brazilians?

As a Brazilian Immigrant myself, I am interested in studying this population. Data also shows that Brazilian populations are becoming more prominent in the U.S:

1. ACS 2006-2008 estimates that approximately 339,771 native-Brazilians reside in the U.S. It is the 25<sup>th</sup> largest foreign-born group in the country.<sup>15 16</sup>

**Chart 3: Top 25 Foreign Born Populations in the U.S. by Place of Birth**



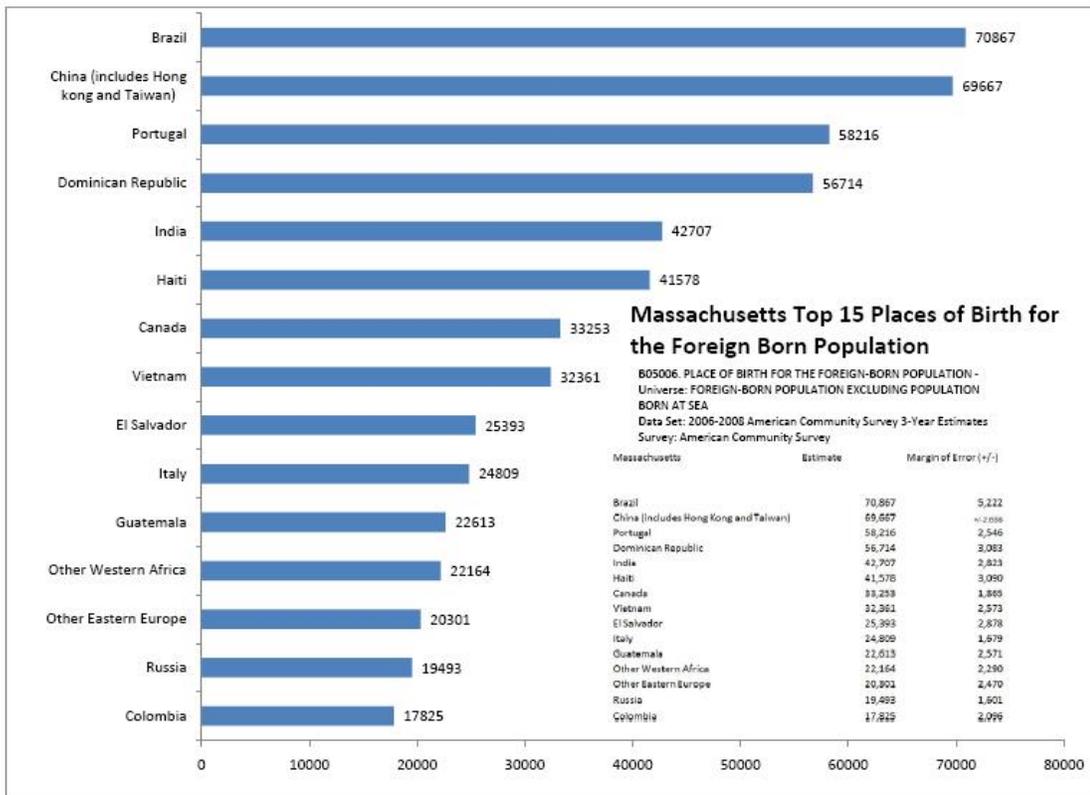
Source: Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey B05006. Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Populations..

<sup>15</sup> 2006-2008 ACS.

<sup>16</sup> Brazilian non-governmental organizations claim that there are about 2 million Brazilians in the U.S and about 150,000 in Massachusetts.

2. In Massachusetts alone, 70,867 persons living in the State were born in Brazil. In other words, nearly 21% of the total Brazilian population in the U.S. lives in MA. Persons born in Brazil constitute the largest foreign-born population in Massachusetts.<sup>17</sup>

**Chart 4: Massachusetts Top 15 Places of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population**

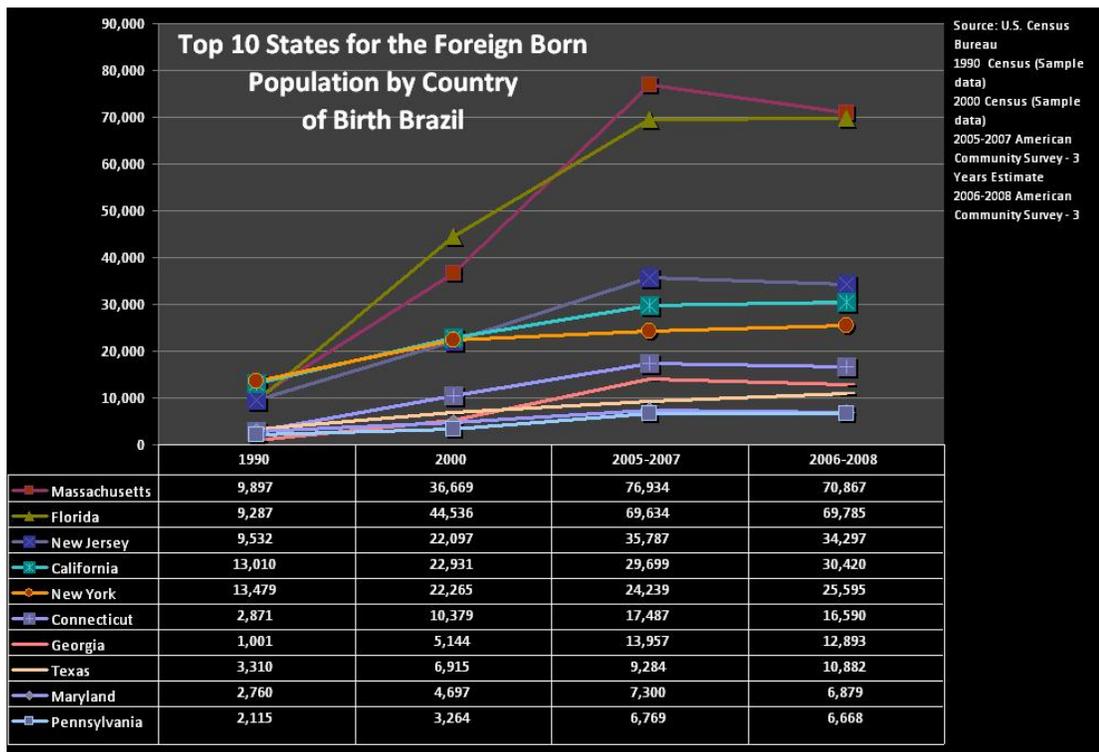


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey.  
 B05006. Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Populations – Universe: Foreign-Born Population Excluding Population Born at Sea.

<sup>17</sup> 2006-2008 ACS.

- The Brazilian immigrant population has been growing rapidly since the beginning of the last decade (20% per year).<sup>18</sup> ACS data show a small decrease in the size of this population after 2005-2007. The enforcement of strict immigration policies and socioeconomic instability in the U.S. may account for this decrease.

**Chart 5: Top 10 States for the Foreign-Born Population by Brazilian Nativity**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau  
 1990 Census (Sample data)  
 2000 Census (Sample data)  
 2005-2007 American Community Survey  
 2006-2008 American Community Survey

<sup>18</sup> Alvaro Lima and Eduardo Siqueira, *Brazilians in the U.S. and Massachusetts: A Demographic and Economic Profile*. Boston: The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, University of Massachusetts Boston, 1997: 2.

## **Methodology: Relative Socioeconomic Status Survey**

### Socioeconomic Status and Social Class

Before introducing the methodology used to collect information from the sample population, it is important to highlight that in every aspect of this study the definition of socioeconomic status used is:

A prestige-based position of an individual in a social group that can be determined by his/her place in a social hierarchy. Family and individual's income, education, occupation, political and social participation, and properties and goods ownership are the major elements used to measure SES.<sup>19 20</sup>

Individual and collective perceptions play an important role when determining the place of an individual in a social hierarchy. The perception of one about his own SES is always relative to one's perception of the SES of one's peers. Because SES is not an absolute concept, its relative aspect will be used to explore the effects of perceived SES on the decision to migrate of an individual. The emphasis on the relative aspect is pointed out on the title of the main concept analyzed in this study - Relative SES - to reinforce the idea that in the case of a migration decision of Brazilian immigrants, the relativity of SES is determined in relationship with 3 variable: 1. The SES of one's parents during one's

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<sup>19</sup>The elements that determine SES Status in each region may vary from culture to culture. The elements considered by an individual as determinant of SES Status in his/her home country may also change when this individual migrates to a different country. 2. The SES status of a child (SES during childhood) is measured by analyzing the SES Status of the parents.

<sup>20</sup> Krieger, Nancy. "A Glossary for Social Epidemiology." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 55 (2001):693-700

childhood; 2. The SES of one's peer group; and 3. The SES of one's peers with migration experience.

Social class is also not an absolute concept and indeed is an important notion taken into consideration in this study. The approach to social class used in this study is not pre-determined or guided by any existing sociological definition of class such as defined by Karl Marx and Max Weber<sup>21</sup>, neither as defined by contemporary authors such as Santos and Quadros<sup>22</sup>, who specifically analyzed the social class stratification in Brazil. It is based on the perception of class provided by the sample interviewed for this study which may sometimes relate back to classic sociological definitions or not, but were a clear picture of the complexity of class stratifications in contemporary society. Class segmentation and the elements determining class stratification seemed to be a very important but complex concept for the sample interviewed. Their understanding of class was relative to their perception of the elements that determine class within their own social groups. No social class category was pre-given to the sample when they were asked to identify the social classes in Brazil and to determine to which social class they belonged before migration.

Karl Marx, throughout his works, talked about perception of social classes, what he called class consciousness, as one of the factors determining social class. For Max Weber, however, social class was part of a three-component theory of stratification in which

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<sup>21</sup> Oliver C. Cox. "Max Weber on Social Stratification: A Critique." *American Sociological Review*, 15.2 (1950): 223-227.  
Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*, New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2002.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*, Maryland: Wildside Press, 2008

<sup>22</sup> Jose Alcides Figueiredo Santos. "Uma Classificacao Socioeconomica para o Brasil". *Revista Brasileira de Ciencias Sociais* 20.58 (2005): 28-45

Waldir Jose de Quadros. *A Evolucao Recente de Classes Sociais no Brasil*, Campinas, Sao Paulo, CESIT – IE/UNICAMP, 2002.

social class is one of the components together with status and party. It is interesting to notice that these three distinct elements are determinants of socioeconomic status.

Overall, this study is interested on the perceived SES of individuals, as well as on their perceptions of social class stratification and their place within this stratification.

Socioeconomic status is connected to social class and both concepts cannot be analyzed separately: One's position in the SES scale is directly related to one's position in the social class stratification, and vice-versa.

### Data Collection

There are many challenges involving the collection of accurate data from immigrants and about immigrants: fear of law enforcement and lack of records and proper documentation are a few examples. It is common sense among researchers that immigrants are very likely not to share personal information, especially about immigration status, and to lie or refuse to answer questions related to immigration issues. The probability is also high that an immigrant would refuse to participate in survey, even though a number of methodologies have been developed with the objective of collecting accurate data from this population. The approach of these methodologies - such as the survey-based methodology use by David Heer and Enrico Marcelli<sup>23</sup> in the 90's to collect information about the immigration status of Mexicans in California – is that in order for immigrants to share accurate information, survey takers must be born in the same country

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<sup>23</sup> David M. Heer and Enrico A. Marcelli. "The Unauthorized Mexican Immigrant Population and Welfare in Los Angeles County: A Comparative Statistical Analysis", *Sociological Perspectives* 41.2 (1998): 279-302.

of origin as the respondents (1998). My experience utilizing this approach has been very positive.

For this matter, taking advantage of my Brazilian nationality and of the knowledge that I have about my own culture, I chose to survey Brazilians for this research. My experience working as a journalist in Brazil for a few years taught me that my peers enjoy talking about their own lives. Time and interest to listen to their long stories, a good cup of coffee, and some *pão de queijo*<sup>24</sup> is all it takes to collect accurate information from Brazilian immigrants. Because of that, during one year (2007-2008), I performed quantitative and qualitative interviews with a snowball sample of 20 Brazilians and collected demographic and socioeconomic information about them (Relative Socioeconomic Status Survey). From the sample of 20 Brazilian immigrants surveyed, 10 randomly selected respondents received a treatment and were asked to indicate comparison groups before answering the questions of the SES scale.<sup>25</sup>

The scale was developed to measure Relative SES in comparison to pre-determined groups and groups indicated by the respondent. By using this methodology, I sought to determine if respondents only compared their SES to the SES of the pre-determined groups (parents during respondent's childhood, peers and relatives, and peers and relatives with migration experience) or if they chose other comparison groups. The SES scale was developed based on the variable indicated in the definition of SES (see page 16) and measured according to the variables of comparison for Relative SES: 1. The SES of one's parents during one's childhood; 2. The SES of one's peer group; and 3.

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<sup>24</sup> Traditional cheese roll original from the state of Minas Gerais but popular among Brazilians from every state.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix IV

The SES of one's peers with migration experience. Respondents were also asked to determine their current SES to measure their perception of enhancement of their SES after migration. The sample interview was asked to indicate a location in a scale ranging from 0 to 5 for each variable that defines SES (income, education, occupation, Possession of goods and consumption, social exposure) and to provide their overall perception of their SES in the following situations: 1. Their position in the scale right before migration; 2. the position of their parents during their childhood; 3. The position of their peer group; 4. The position of their peer group with migration experience; and 5. Their current position.

Regarding other parts of the Interview with the sample, the focus was mostly on the respondent's pre-migration experience. Respondents were asked to share details about their educational attainment, property ownership, consumption habits, and their professional and social lives in Brazil from childhood until the day they decided to emigrate. A questionnaire served as guide for the interviews, which were performed in the format of informal conversations. Respondents had the right to refuse to talk about any topic as well as the right to add new elements to the main subject of discussion: socioeconomic status. The purpose of these interviews were to identify the Relative SES of each respondent before and after migration, as well as to identify the Relative SES of one's parents during one's childhood, of the peer group, and of friends and/or relatives with migration experience. Besides answering to basic demographic questions, respondents were asked to answer specific questions regarding migration experience and SES. Based on the results of this survey, this study sought to show evidence that:

1. The Relative SES comparison process is a determinant of the decision to migrate by Brazilians; and
2. Brazilians think about their own SES in comparison with the SES of the pre-determined groups;

In addition to the SES Survey, I performed many interviews with Brazilian immigrants in Massachusetts. The results of these previous interviews support my current findings. In 2004, I interviewed 50 Brazilians in order to collect data for a research project that I was developing for the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), about the profile of the Brazilian immigrant audience of Brazilian community newspapers in Massachusetts. As a student at the University of Massachusetts and a member of the Board of the Brazilian Immigrant Center, I visited Brazilian households in Somerville and Everett (MA) during the summer of 2007 to talk about their migration experiences as part of my work as a field supervisor for the Boston Metropolitan Brazilian Immigrant Household Survey (BMBIHS). These opportunities were enlightening. In addition, I randomly interviewed 20 Brazilians living in the city of Woburn in order to test the methodology of the BMBIHS, and to develop the hypothesis for this study.

CHAPTER III  
THEORIES OF MIGRATION:  
EXPLAINING THE REASON WHY PEOPLE MIGRATE

Previous studies have made attempts to explain the reasons why people migrate from one country to another. Just as any other scientific attempt to explain a phenomenon, existing theories of migration have their limitations, but overall are able to capture the fundamentals of international migration movements. Still, there is room for development of a concept that, by taking into consideration the most relevant aspects of contemporary economic theories, will build on their strengths to formulate a more comprehensive and inclusive picture of the process which emigrants go through when determining whether or not to migrate.

This study summarizes and critiques the six mainstream migration theories in order to find evidence to support the importance of developing a new concept to explain international migration, and also to support the claim that Relative SES is the most comprehensive and inclusive approach. It is important to acknowledge that these theories have critically contributed to the understanding of the migration process, and that they are invaluable when combined with the Relative SES approach, by bringing into the equation contextual factors that influence migration decision. Therefore, this study does not

seek to undermine the importance of these migration theories, but to suggest a new approach that can be more comprehensive.

The following analyses summarize each mainstream theory based on the article “An Evaluation of International Migration Theory: The North American Case” by Massey et al., (1994).<sup>26</sup>

### **Traditional Neoclassical Economics (TNE)**

The main concept of TNE is based on the assumption that an individual, when deciding whether or not to migrate, calculates the cost/benefit of the trip seeking to maximize expected income through migration.

“Expected income (benefit) = probability of employment (- employment rate) x mean of income”<sup>27</sup>

Cost = trip expenses.

In the case of unauthorized entry, the cost that becomes part of the equation is represented by:

“Cost = chances of entering the country successfully – probability of getting caught and deported”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Massey et al, 701-711.

<sup>27</sup> Massey et al, 701-711.

<sup>28</sup> Massey et al, 701-711.

Conclusion: The emigrant calculates the difference between the income at the native country and the at the destination country, discounting the costs. A positive cost/benefit relation promotes migration.

Criticism: The Traditional Neoclassic Theory claim is limited because it is based on the assumption that every migration process is only motivated by income cost/benefit calculation, excluding from the equation the possible influence of other factors such as family, social networks, health, education, professional and social life, and social hierarchy. From this model, we can assume that the migration flow will only exist while the wage disparities between destination and sending countries last. The weakness of the association between migration and income is that it does not account for migration trips for educational, health, political, and social purposes, among others.<sup>29</sup>

### **Segmented Labor Market (SLM)**

According to the SLM theory, immigrants are objects of a demand-driven factor built into the structure of advanced industrial societies. Immigrants are victims of the capitalist tendencies that rely heavily on their cheap labor since this economic system fragments the labor market into two sections:

- 1) Secure, high pay, high-skills, benefits, fair working conditions; and
- 2) Low pay, low-skills, no benefits, and poor working conditions.

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<sup>29</sup> Massey et al, 701-711.

This theory claims that there is a shortage of labor supply for the second sector in developed countries; therefore immigrants become an important tool for capitalism when hired to fill the positions rejected by native skilled workers. The SLM theory is also known to explain the pull effect of migration.

Conclusion: Immigrants are pulled to developed countries by the forces of the capitalist to supply the demand for cheap, unskilled labor.

Criticism: Based on the SLM theory, there are economic factors beyond the immigrant's control that account for his/her decision to migrate. The migrant is characterized as a passive / dependent actor, whose individual characteristics have minimal influence on the migration decision process. The migrant is a tool driven by the system in order to maintain capitalism's structure. The fact is that this theory only explains the migration process from the receiving country's perspective, undermining the importance of personal motivations that impel an individual to migrate.<sup>30</sup>

## **World Systems (WS)**

WS theory claims that migrants are objects of the demand for labor in destination areas, as well as objects of the economic conditions in sending nations (push and pull effect). The globalization of markets produces an environment prone to migration by pressuring down wages and fragmenting the labor in two sections (as described by the Segmented Labor Market Theory).

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<sup>30</sup> Massey et al, 717.

Conclusion: The high demand for lower skilled workers in developed countries, and the instability of the labor market and the economy of developing countries promote migration.

Criticism: This theory also attributes to economic factors the only motivation why people migrate. The WS theory, as well as the SLM theory, portrays the migrant as a passive actor driven by the economic system. Both theories do not provide the individual migrant with autonomy over personal decisions. They also undermine the importance of individual characteristics and life experiences. These concepts limit the possibility of migration of an individual who lives in a country with a similar level of disparities when compared to the destination country. From the perspective of these theories, if there are no disparities, there is no migration flow. However, in reality this is not true. Individuals migrate from developed countries to developed countries, or from developed countries to developing nations, and are able to improve their SES regardless of external push and pull factors.<sup>31</sup>

### **New Household Economics (NHE)**

The migration decision is motivated by a market failure in the sending country, which may threaten the household income (the push effect). Households send one or more members abroad in order to reduce risks to their income. Countries with higher wages offer more possibilities of overcoming constraints and reduce risks; therefore, households use migration in order to diversify their income.

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<sup>31</sup> Massey et al, 722 – 725.

This theory also claims that household members migrate not only to improve absolute income, but also to increase their income relative to others in the community.

Stark and Taylor (1989)<sup>32</sup> called this income comparison within the peer group as Relative Deprivation. The NHE theory says that the deprivation feeling has influence on the migration decision.

Conclusion: In order to avoid income risks, households send members to work abroad. The market of the sending country is what determines the level of risk threatening the household.

Criticism: Even though the NHE theory presents some of the same constraints of the SLM and the WS theories, it at least attempts to attribute to the migrant an active role. It allows the migrant the ability to establish income comparisons and to make the decision to migrate. On the other hand, the NHE minimizes the role of the individual in order to maximize the importance of the household. The NHE also connects the migration decision to economic factors alone.

Overall, the concept of Relative Deprivation introduced by the NHE theory is critically invaluable to the explanation of migration movements. It is the cornerstone for the development of the Relative SES approach because it considers the notion of perceived relative income a determinant of the migration decision. The Relative SES approach builds on this notion by also considering other variable when comparisons are established.

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<sup>32</sup> Oded Stark and J. E. Taylor 1-14.

## Networks

Individuals connected through ties of kinship and friendship with migrants or former migrants in origin and destination areas are more likely to migrate. Social networks lower the costs and risks of the migration process. The individual has more access to the labor market and more opportunities to have a smooth adaptation process. This theory also claims that a larger number of migrants in a specific area determine the migration location of future migrants.

Conclusion: The migration decision is made upon the ties that an individual has with migrants or former migrants.

Criticism: This theory undermines the importance of personal/individual motivation that affects the migrant's decision, regardless of others' migration experience. Thus, it does not explain migration of individuals who do not have any previous relationship to any migrant or former migrant. Sociologist Douglas Massey recognizes that an individual's first migration trip may be the result of social network influence. However, the following trips of the same individual are no longer connected to social networks, since they will depend on the individual's personal migration experience.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Massey et al, 728 - 729

### **Cumulative Causation (CC):**

CC refers to a tendency to perpetuate international migration regardless of cause.<sup>34</sup> Each migrant has different motivations and perceptions that may or may not encourage additional migration. Therefore, people who have migrated before are more likely to do it again since a migrant may develop ties in the destination country.

Conclusion: Migration decisions are motivated by previous migration experience of the same individual. It may also have become a cultural behavior.

Criticism: It does not explain precisely any reason or tendency for the first migration trip. It only opposes, without any strong evidence, the conclusions drawn by the theories mentioned before.<sup>35</sup>

### **An Overall Conclusion**

For Massey, the theories above do not provide any substantial evidence to support their claims. However, there is some empirical evidence suggesting that each theory has captured an element of the truth. Because I agree with Massey's conclusion, I believe that it is necessary to develop a concept that is able to capture most elements of migration, not only economic factors, social networks, and globalization, but individual and group SES status characteristics. "The Traditional 'push-pull' explanations of international

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<sup>34</sup> Massey et al, 733

<sup>35</sup> Massey et al, 733 - 739

migration have proved inadequate in accounting for a worldwide phenomenon of such magnitude”, wrote the anthropologist Maxine Margolis in her book *Little Brazil* (1994).<sup>36</sup>

To explain the worldwide phenomenon<sup>37</sup> of international migration it is necessary to treat the migrant candidate as an independent actor who establishes comparisons in a multi-level process by analyzing the life context to which he/she has been part of from childhood through time of migration. This study seeks to support the claim that individuals, in order to make a decision to emigrate, take into consideration their life experiences during childhood (parent’s socioeconomic status), the SES of their peer group, and the SES level achieved by those who have experienced migration. This process may not always be rational and the migrant may not always be conscious about the establishment of SES comparisons. Nevertheless, it is a natural social process.

The Relative SES approach takes into consideration the main elements of the theories analyzed above, but it also offers an additional perspective to the study of the migration decision process by acknowledging the necessity to measure the relative social economic status of each individual migrant.<sup>38</sup> Within the Relative SES these main elements are considered relevant contextual variable of the migration process such as cost/benefit analyses, economic push and pull factors, influences of social networks in determining the flow, and perceptions of income deprivation. This variable will appear on Table 2 on page 34 as contextual factors that are out of the control of the individual migrant but are actors in the migration process.

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<sup>36</sup> Margolis XV

<sup>37</sup> Margolis XV

<sup>38</sup> Massey et al, 699-751

CHAPERT IV  
RELATIVE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS:  
A DIFFERENT APPROACH

The purpose of this study is to measure the effects of Relative SES Status on an individual's decision to migrate, controlling for relative income, education, occupation, ownership of property and goods, social exposure, and social hierarchy.

The premise of this approach is that a migrant is an independent actor who thinks and decides to migrate; not only compelled by contextual factors such as economic markets and globalization, as claimed by some of the mainstream theories, but most importantly motivated by personal experiences. This individual establishes analyses of different personal and external factors in order to make a decision. In summary, the decision to migrate is made by an individual in order to enhance his/her Relative SES in comparison to the SES of his/her parents during his/her childhood; the SES of his/her peer group; and the SES of his/her peers with migration experience. And yet, it may consequently enhance the SES status of his/her household.

The concept of Relative Socioeconomic Status, when analyzed as the determinant of a migration decision, unfolds in three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The higher the relative SES of one’s household during childhood compared to one’s current SES Status,<sup>39</sup> the more likely this individual will be to migrate.<sup>40</sup>

Hypothesis 2: The higher the relative SES of one’s peers, friends or relatives in the origin country compared to one’s current SES, the more likely this individual will be to migrate.<sup>41</sup>

Hypothesis 3: The higher the relative SES of one’s peers with migration experience compared to one’s current SES Status, the more likely this individual will be to migrate.

**Table 1: Relative Socioeconomic Status Hypothesis**

	<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Independent Variable</b>
<b>Hypothesis 1</b>	Decision to Migrate	Current SES < Childhood SES
<b>Hypothesis 2</b>	Decision to Migrate	Current SES < Peer Group SES
<b>Hypothesis 3</b>	Decision to Migrate	Current SES < Peers with Migration Experience SES

<sup>39</sup> The definition for “current SES” in use refers to one’s SES status during the 12 months prior to one’s migration trip.

<sup>40</sup> The definition of childhood used in this research accounts for the period in which one was financially dependent (fully or partially) of one’s parents.

<sup>41</sup> The definition of peer group used in this paper consists of a group of people with similar social demographic conditions that are part of the daily routine of the individual examined in this research. It includes the members of one’s community, friends, family, and relatives.

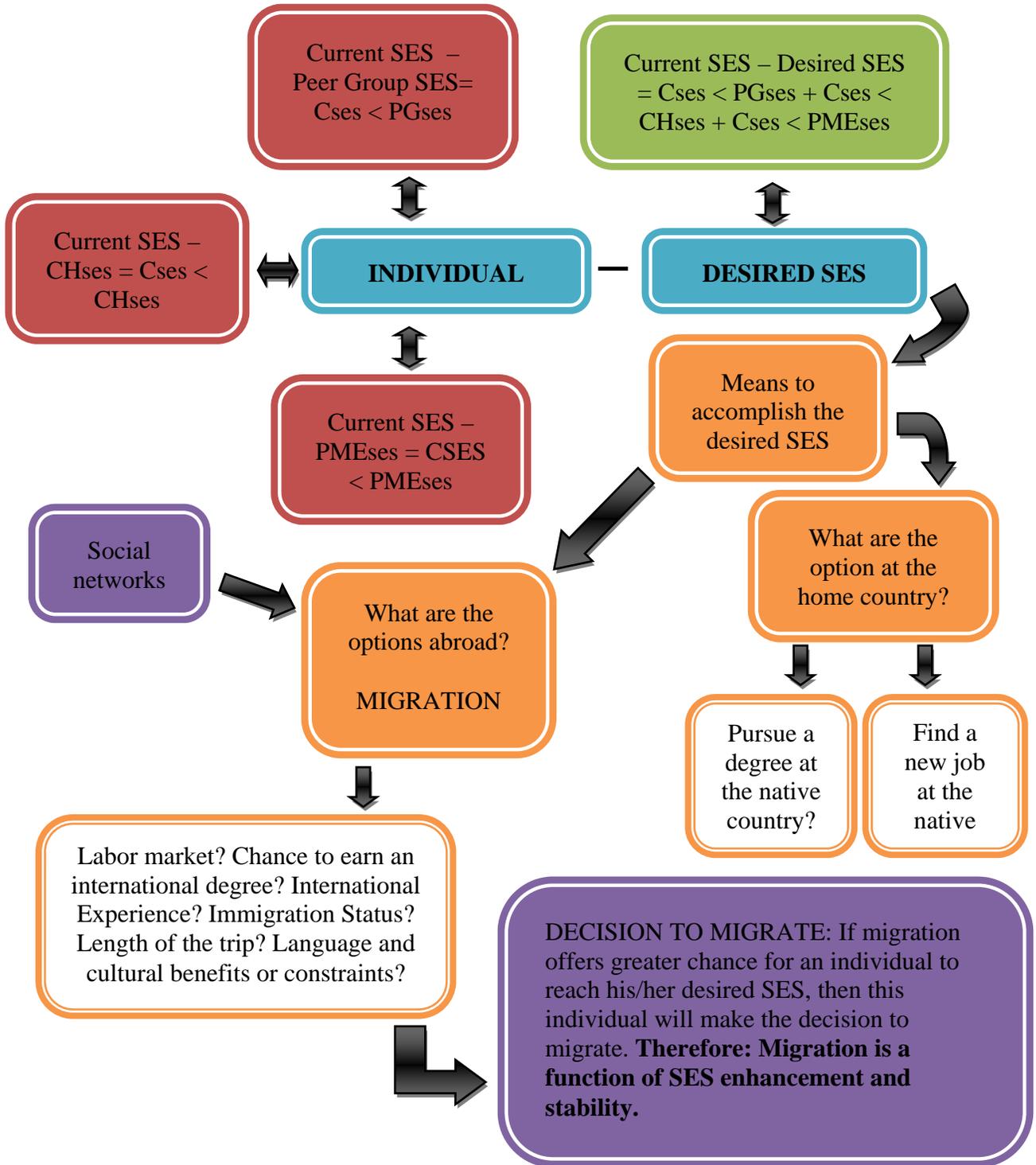
## **Understanding the Migration Decision Process**

This study examines the level of association between each hypothesis's dependent and independent variables.

When considering if migration is the best option to enhance his/her SES status to the desired level, an individual goes through a process, not always consciously, that is explained step-by-step in the diagram below:

**Table 2: Relative Socioeconomic Status – Migration Decision-Making Process**

Legend: C= current, PG = peer group, CH = childhood/parents, and PME = peers with migration experience



In summary, the migration decision process occurs as following:

1. An individual compares his/her current SES status to the SES of his/her household during childhood, to the SES of his/her peer group, and, if applicable, to the SES of his/her peers who have experienced or are experiencing migration.
2. After establishing the comparison between these elements, the individual is able to determine his/her desired SES in the near future, as well as to determine the most efficient means to attain the desired SES.
3. The decision to migrate will be made upon the acknowledgement of the possible benefits that migration will bring in order to enhance his/her SES status in comparison to all other available means, if any other means were available at the time.

Important Considerations:

1. The choice of the destination country is determined based on social networks, the time it will take for the individual to reach his desired SES status in that specific location, as well as the possibilities offered by the location.
2. The economic situation of the destination country may not have as much of an impact in the individual's decision to migrate; as it has on the his/her decision

about the location of the migration trip. At the same time, the economic situation of the receiving and of the sending country may also not have much impact in the individual's decision to migrate if the purpose of the migration trip is about education, health, politics, social networks, etc. For instance, an individual has a stable economic situation in his/her native country, where the economic system is doing well. In the meantime, this individual receives a job or educational offer abroad that will enhance his/her SES. Therefore, it is possible to have migration movements from and to countries which have a similar economic situation.

3. If the native country of an individual does not offer the appropriate means for him/her to achieve his/her desired relative SES when compared to the SES of his/her household during childhood, of the peer group, and of peers with migration experience, this individual will be more likely to migrate. On the contrary, an individual may feel that his/her SES is satisfactory in comparison to these groups. In another case, an individual may find that the home country offers opportunities to address any dissatisfaction with his/her SES, such as pursuing a degree, applying for a new job, switching careers, opening a business, joining a social group, etc. This individual is thus less likely to migrate.
4. Note that the decision to migrate may or may not happen in association with contextual factors such as an economic crisis, decrease in social welfare, violence, etc. The decision process starts when the individual notices through comparative analysis of his/her current SES status with the SES of his/her household during

childhood, of the peer group, and of peers with migration experience, that he/she is in a disadvantage or at risk of moving down in the social hierarchy scale. If the possibilities in the native country do not ensure the enhancement of his/her SES status, this individual will consider migrating.

When taking migration as a product of comparative analysis between different levels of SES, it is possible to provide an explanation for decisions to migrate that are not based solely on economic purposes. It is also possible to explain the migration movements of high skilled workers, students, etc. The six mainstream theories are not fully able to explain the migration decision of these groups. In general, individuals migrate in order to enhance their own and/or their family's SES by the effect of one or more of the following actions: producing more income, being able to afford a better education and health care to his/her family, buying properties, opening businesses, learning a foreign language, gaining international experience, joining an important multinational corporation abroad, earning an international degree, etc. As described in the definition of SES, all of these elements are responsible for enhancing the social hierarchy position of an individual and his/her family.

CHAPTER V  
BRAZILIAN IMMIGRANTS IN MASSACHUSETTS:  
A CASE STUDY

Is Relative SES a determinant of the international migratory flow of Brazilians? Do Brazilians establish comparisons between their pre-migration SES and the SES of their household during childhood, the SES of their peers, and the SES of their peers who have experienced migration? To answer these questions and to find evidence that support the hypotheses proposed, this study relies on qualitative data collected from Brazilian immigrants living in MA.

The following results are based on data collected from 20 Brazilian immigrants, through a snowball sample, between April 2006 and June 2007.<sup>42</sup>

**Findings: Relative Socioeconomic Status Survey**

**Socioeconomic Status**

Data collected from the respondents surveyed for this study reveal that Brazilian immigrants in MA are highly concerned about their own or/and their household SES in comparison to the SES of their peer group living at the home country; and somewhat

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<sup>42</sup> The profile of Brazilians who were interviewed for this study is comparable the profile described by Lima and Siqueira in 2007 based on Census data, as well as the profile of Brazilians living in New York, described by Margolis in "Little Brazil". Compared to Brazilians living in NY, however, the Brazilian community in MA is somewhat less educated and composed by a smaller number of naturalized U.S. citizens. (See Appendix II).

concerned in comparison to the SES of their peers living in the United States. Each respondent surveyed confidently affirmed that Brazilians are highly concerned about what others think about their SES. Also, 100% of the respondents agreed that Brazilians shape their lifestyle and behavior in order to enhance their SES or/and to promote the image of belonging to a privileged rank in the social hierarchy pyramid in comparison to their social group. This result is fundamental in order to support the hypotheses proposed.

If it is true that Brazilians are highly concerned about their SES status, they are also likely to establish comparisons with the objective of identifying where they stand in the social hierarchy. A constant response to the question regarding the most valuable tools used to enhance and to promote SES among peers living at the home country was: improved consumer power and property ownership, experience living abroad (especially in the United States), and the ability to speak English. In other words, the ownership of a car, a house, investments in real-estate and new businesses, the ability to speak a foreign language, are all symbols of enhanced SES among Brazilians. Anthropologist Maxine Margolis, in her studies of the behavior of Brazilian immigrants living in New York, expressed her surprise with her finding that the ownership of a car is relevant to enhancing SES among Brazilians. She accounts this fact to the difficult access to auto vehicles for the working class in Brazil: “In Brazil, car ownership, in particular, is limited to the middle and upper middle classes (1994)”<sup>43</sup>

This aspect of the behavior of Brazilian immigrants leads us to another important finding: approximately 94% of the sample interviewed has at least once belonged to the

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<sup>43</sup> Margolis 87

middle class and/or to the lower middle class<sup>44</sup> while living in Brazil. This characteristic differ Brazilian immigrants from many traditional migrant groups from Latin-America such as Mexicans, whose demographic profile shows that this population is more often original from rural and poor areas, and has low skills and levels of educational attainment.<sup>45</sup> In addition, based on responses from the sample, the most stratified social class in Brazil is the middle class, which can be divided in lower and upper middle class. The perception among respondents is that lower and upper middle classes are some type of transitioning classes that will lead an individual from middle class to rich or from middle class to poor, and vice-versa. Most respondents that self-identified as lower middle class prior to their first migration trip, were in fact respondents that throughout the survey expressed their struggled to keep up with what they perceived to be middle class standards but have somewhat failed. The Brazilian lower middle class is interesting because, based on observations, it seems that people who claim to belong to this class are is in fact part of a working class, but use this terminology as a mechanism to feel closer to what they perceived to be the Brazilian middle class. Overall, it is a mechanism to enhance perceived SES.

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<sup>44</sup> The sample interviewed was asked to determined the social class stratification in Brazil and to identify the class they belong to while living in Brazil one year before they migrated. Middle class and lower middle class were the most cited class stratification. Responses were also analyzed using as a parameter the methodology developed by Brazilian Criterion of Economic Classification – CCEB (National Research Enterprises Association - ANEP 1996 and Brazilian Research Enterprises Association – ABEP 2004) to characterize social classes in Brazil. See Appendix I.

Margolis 85 -86, Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

<sup>45</sup> 2006-2008 ACS

S0201. Selected Population Profile in the United States - Country of Birth: Mexico

Data from our Relative SES Survey provide evidence to support the claim the majority of Brazilian immigrants in Massachusetts have belonged to the middle class and/or to the lower middle class during the last couple of years before their first migration trip. Furthermore, lower middle class Brazilians compose a greater part of the migration flow of Brazilians to the U.S., migrating more often to Massachusetts than to New York. These findings challenge the assumption suggested by Maxine Margolis' throughout "Little Brazil"<sup>46</sup> that the high costs of a migration trip prevents most lower middle class, and lower classes Brazilians from migrating to the U.S.

During the year prior to their first migration trip, approximately 55% of Brazilians surveyed belonged to the lower middle-class, while 50% of them have once belonged to higher socioeconomic classes during childhood or during independent adult life.<sup>47</sup> In addition, 38% of the respondents belonged to the Brazilian middle-class during the year prior to their first migration trip.

In regards to the respondent's educational attainment, the lowest educational level indicated by a respondent was "complete middle school/incomplete high school". This aspect demonstrates that Brazilian immigrants in the U.S. are somewhat educated, challenging the general assumption that immigrant groups are less educated than the American population. According to ACS 2006-2008 data, the percentage of persons born in Brazil living in United States who have less than a high school diploma is about .03% higher than the percentage of the total U.S. population of the same category. At the same

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<sup>46</sup> Margolis 90

<sup>47</sup> Period of time an individual lived without any financial support from parents. For the purpose of this research, the year prior to the first migration trip is not part of the equation.

time, while about 15.8% of Brazilian immigrants have less than a high school diploma; this number is higher for Mexicans (60.6%) and Chinese (21%).

Previous studies about Brazilian culture have demonstrated that the Brazilian middle-class (including its ramifications to lower and upper middle classes) is the social group most concerned about SES. This is due to the fact that this class is the most unstable and vulnerable to changes of status, in both directions, but especially downward. Therefore, the Brazilian middle class lives in a constant struggle to maintain and/or enhance its SES. One of the respondents of the Relative SES Survey was very emphatic when asked if Brazilians are generally concerned about their SES:

The middle class is extremely concerned. They do everything not to lose their social position, and they would do even more to move up in the scale. The poor in Brazil does not bother anymore trying to move up in the scale, while the rich is comfortable where they belong.

In summary, the Brazilian middle class are afraid of losing SES and consequently move downward in the scale. In fact, the middle class is eager to move upward in the just to feel more privileged than their peers; especially, when moving upward in this socioeconomic hierarchy becomes a challenge that only a few can accomplish. It generates even more status.

## The Jackpot

The perpetuated notion that those who have migrated to the U.S. hit the jackpot is one of the core elements that contribute to the relative enhancement of SES after migration. The imagination of those who stay in Brazil is fed by the amount of remittances sent by immigrants to the home country, the investment that these immigrants do there, and most important, by stories that immigrants tell to people back home.

Responses to the Relative SES Survey reveal that it is common among Brazilians to use self-promotion as a method to generate a feeling among their peers at home that they have enhanced their SES after migration. In other words, some immigrants may not have the ability to speak English as well as they would like, or to buy a property in Brazil, or to buy it without sacrificing their quality of life while in the U.S., but because of their inherent necessity to make others feel that they are privileged in the socioeconomic hierarchy, these immigrants may not provide accurate information to their peers regarding their lives as immigrants. The fact that friends and family who live in Brazil may not be able to check the accuracy of the information provided by the immigrant allows these immigrants to misrepresent their SES.

Methods of promotion of a successful migration journey are shaped differently depending on the focus of the trip. In general, those who migrated to the U.S. to enhance their SES through authorized migration trips, with minimal participation or no participation in the secondary labor market – such as to pursue a new degree, to work for a multinational corporation, to experience American culture, to learn English, etc - accumulate extra points in the SES scale just because of the purpose of the trip.

Brazilians give great value to any international experience, especially when it is acquired in the United States. The experience becomes even more valuable when it is accompanied by an academic degree from an American university, the promotion to an executive position abroad, the ability to speak English, etc. These trips generate great gains of relative SES.

On the other hand, when the purpose of the migration trip is to produce income alone - with considerable participation in the secondary labor market - to be remitted to Brazil in order to maintain or to enhance relative SES, the trip itself does not promote SES. This may explain why many Brazilians insist in affirming that the primary purpose of their first trip to the U.S. was to study English, and that only later they decided to produce income. Coming to the U.S. to produce income reveals loss or risk of loss of status in Brazil.

The immigrant who chooses to produce income by working in the secondary labor market in the U.S. as a mean to enhance relative SES in Brazil faces many challenges, especially in regards to occupation. Most immigrants working in the secondary labor market face an initial loss of status in the U.S when they have to take jobs that require low-skills, and offer low pay and no prestige. The loss of occupational status in the U.S. is something that Brazilian immigrants are willing to face because they consider their immigrant position temporary<sup>48</sup>.

Most people work not only to generate income but to accumulate social status.

Acute motivational problems arise at the bottom of the job hierarchy because

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<sup>48</sup> Massey 16

there is no status to be maintained and there are few avenues for upward mobility...Migrants being generally foreign labor as target earners: they are seeking to make money for a specific goal that will solve a problem or improve their status at home (such as building a new house, buying land, or acquiring consumer goods)...Finally, even though a migrant may realize that a foreign job carries low status, he does not view himself as a part of that society but as embedded within the status system of his home community, where hard-currency remittances buy considerable social status (Massey 2010, 16).

Responses to the Relative SES Survey reveal that respondents worked hard to improve their relative SES and to portray a high SES to their peer group in Brazil to make up for the loss of occupational status. Respondents expressed concerns with occupational status when the objects of comparison were both Brazilians living in Brazil and in the United States. Respondents with stronger ties to the Brazilian community in Massachusetts and who are active participants of social and faith-based groups reported a higher level of concern with their loss of occupational status and with the improvement of their relative SES in the U.S., as well as in Brazil. Respondents reported low levels of concern with occupational status when the objects of comparison were Americans and people from other nationalities.

### The Myth

Among all respondents, there was one common thought: Brazilians who have never experienced migration believe that once a person migrates to the U.S., this person

automatically becomes rich. These respondents also revealed that before their first migration trip, they had this same perception about the SES of immigrants. Most importantly, they understand that once they became immigrants themselves, they also became responsible for sustaining and perpetuate this myth.

One respondent said: “Everyone in Brazil thinks that I became rich in the U.S., that I ‘grow money’ in my back yard. When I travel back home, people who had never been part of my social group before I migrate, act like they are my friends from childhood.”

Another respondent added: “They think that I became so rich that I have money to spare. People often call me to ask for financial help. And they get mad, thinking that I am lying when I say that I do not have money to provide.”

A respondent concluded:

Of course it is hard for people in Brazil to believe that we are not rich. After we come to the U.S., we send many gifts and buy many things back home. Because of the value of the dollar in comparison to Reais,<sup>49</sup>, most of us feel empowered when we visit Brazil. I know people who like to take lots of money to Brazil to spend it all during their two weeks’ vacation there. They want to be treated as kings. They throw parties to friends and relatives and distribute many gifts. If these people say that they do not care about appearances, they are lying.

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<sup>49</sup> Real (R\$)– Official currency in Brazil since 1994.

Another important element sustaining this perception is the fact that immigrants, when contacting their peers in Brazil, can be vague and short in details about what goes wrong with their lives as immigrants. Approximately 72% of the people surveyed admitted that they have omitted details and episodes about their lives as immigrants from their peers in Brazil. Sharing details about bad working and housing conditions and, especially, about undocumented immigration status impacts negatively the relative SES of the migrant.

During one of the 20 qualitative interviews performed for the Relative SES Survey, a respondent provided an example of how Brazilian immigrants are concerned about their image among their peers in Brazil:

I have a friend from my hometown in Brazil who is also an immigrant in the U.S. Another day I told him that I was moving back to Brazil, and the first thing he did was to beg me to not reveal to our common friends in Brazil that he works as a housecleaner along with his wife. My friend always told people in Brazil that he owned a cleaning business in the U.S., which employed many other Brazilians.

This example is one among many other cases of Brazilians who make up stories to support the belief that every immigrant has a successful life in the United States.

“Brazilians make use of a variety of devices to cope with their downward social trajectories...Still others take great pain to conceal the nature of their jobs from family members in Brazil”, explained Maxine Margolis (18).<sup>50</sup>

Nearly 38% of people surveyed responded that they have alerted many of their peers about the risks and difficulties of being an immigrant. However, people have difficulties understanding that even though many immigrants are able to send large amount of remittances from the U.S. to Brazil, most of them have to endure poor living and working conditions in the U.S.

“The remittance money that migrants send home from their jobs abroad helps subsidize the lifestyle of the middle class back home”,<sup>51</sup> said Margolis when looking for a justification for the high flow of middle class Brazilian immigrants, and their acceptance of the loss of occupational status. (xvi)

Another form of coping with the objective of enhancing SES at the home country is the impulsive consumption of technology and expensive auto vehicles by Brazilian immigrants to use in Brazil and the United States. Respondents explained that while living in Brazil, they were less able to consume certain goods and properties in comparison to some of their peers. Purchase power to consume goods such as high-end computers, cell phones, TVs, cars, etc, only became available after migration to the U.S.

An interesting aspect about Brazilians in Massachusetts is that they are concerned about their SES in Brazil, and among other Brazilian immigrants in Massachusetts, but not concerned about their status in comparison to the SES of Americans. The fact that Brazilian immigrants may belong to a lower rank of the socioeconomic hierarchy when

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<sup>50</sup> Margolis 18

<sup>51</sup> Margolis xvi

compared to Americans does not concern them as much as their SES being lower compared with peers in Brazil, and Brazilian peers in Massachusetts. It is important to mention, however, that the above is true depending on the level of integration of a Brazilian immigrant in American society: less integration = fewer concerns about SES comparisons within the American socioeconomic hierarchy.

Elements capable of promoting an image of being privileged in the socioeconomic scale are different when Brazilians compare SES with peers in Brazil, and with other Brazilian immigrants living in MA. Data shows that middle and lower middle class groups living in Brazil attribute more status to those who, respectively, own new cars, own beautiful homes, buy fashionable products and new technologies, have an important occupation (such as physicians, lawyers, engineers, journalists, etc), own a degree, and are friends of important people.

On the other hand, when living in the U.S., Brazilian immigrants attribute social status to those who own a green card (permanent resident card), speak English fluently, have a white collar job, own a business in the U.S., own a fancy car, own a property, and have many investments in Brazil.

#### Socioeconomic Status Scale

If it is true that relative SES is relevant for Brazilians in order to be a determinant in their decision to migrate, what is the evidence that support this claim?

The analysis of the SES Scale<sup>52</sup> used to collect data from a sample of Brazilian immigrants in MA revealed the following:

1. Relative SES before the First Migration Trip: Eighty eight percent of Brazilian immigrants surveyed considered their SES before the first migration trip lower or somewhat lower than the SES of their household during their childhood, of their friends and relatives, and of their friends and relatives with migration experience. On the other hand, 12% of Brazilians consider their SES before the first migration trip higher than the SES of the comparison groups.
2. Relative SES after Migration: Eighty nine percent of Brazilian immigrants consider that after their first migration trip to the U.S. their SES was enhanced in comparison to the SES of their household during childhood, of their friends and relatives, and of their friends and relatives with migration experience. On the other hand, 11% of Brazilian immigrants consider that their SES is currently lower or has not changed in comparison to the SES of the comparison groups.

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<sup>52</sup> See Appendix IV: Questionnaire and SES Scale

**Table 3: Level of Enhancement of Relative SES before and After First Migration Trip.**

Relative SES Status	Before Migration	After Migration
0 to 3 (low to medium relative SES)	88%	11%
4 to 5 (high relative SES)	12%	89%

*A chi2 test of significance shows the relationship between migration and Relative SES to be highly significant,  $p < .01$ . This level of significance is accepted in social science research. In addition, according to more sophisticated views about social statistics<sup>53</sup>, statistical tests are no longer restricted to random samples. Statistical tests can be used even with snowball samples to determine the level of significance of any relationship that occurs.*

*Table Source: 2007-2008 Relative SES Survey*

The analysis of demographic and SES qualitative data collected from the sample of Brazilian immigrants in MA revealed the following:

1. Brazilians establish SES comparisons even before considering migration as a means to enhance their own relative SES. The most relevant comparison groups are: friends, family members and relatives, members of social/faith groups and networks, and peers with migration experience. Relative SES during childhood is also relevant.

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<sup>53</sup> Hubert Blalock. *Social Statistics*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Humanities, 1979.

2. Brazilian immigrants felt less privileged than their peers during the year prior to their first trip to the U.S., especially in regards to education, occupation, and possession of consumer goods.
  
3. Only after the first migration trip Brazilians acknowledge that they had a distorted idea about the relative SES of immigrants in the U.S. Based on personal comparative analysis of the relative SES of peers who experienced migration to the U.S., Brazilians assume that immigrants in the U.S. become richer and more educated than their peers at the home country, and increase their ownership of goods and membership in social networks. In other words, they believe that immigrants are able to enhance their relative SES in comparison to their own pre-migration relative SES, and to the relative SES of the other comparison groups. When these Brazilians become immigrants themselves, they challenge this notion, at the same time that they help promote it among peers who have continued to live at the home country.
  
4. Respondents to the Relative SES Survey revealed that, as immigrants, they were able to understand that the truth about the SES of immigrants is relative: While some people have enhanced their SES at their home country by purchasing properties and making investments at the expense of their quality of life as immigrants in the U.S., others have chosen to invest in education, properties, etc, in the U.S. A respondent noted that the secret of generating status through migration is to “show” the people in Brazil that there were gains - financial,

educational, or cultural – through this process. Certain circumstances may require that immigrants camouflage their low SES in the U.S. by sending home pictures that portrait them driving beautiful cars, enjoying nice trips, using new technology, etc. Although it is important to remember that there are many Brazilians who enjoy a comfortable SES situation in the U.S., especially those who are in the country to work for multinational corporations, to earn high education degrees, or to run their own business, Brazilians who enhance SES through these means also enjoy considerable SES recognition and appreciation in Brazil.

### **The Weaknesses of the Relative SES Status Approach**

As any other attempt to explain international migratory movements, the Relative SES concept has its limitations. First, there are no other data available about the influence of relative SES on the migration decision. Second, the three hypotheses were not tested among more than one immigrant population. Since SES Status elements vary from culture to culture, there is no evidence that this concept can be applied to other groups. Also, the use of a snowball sample to collect qualitative data to test the hypotheses restricts the generalization of results. Furthermore, the data collected for study did not test the influence of variables such as social networks at the destination country, labor market conditions, and educational opportunities, on the choice of the destination country.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

This study sought to measure the level of association between an individual's Relative Socioeconomic Status (SES) and the probability of migration of this individual in order to identify a concept that may be able to explain not only migration decisions for economic purposes alone but also migration decisions made based on educational, social, cultural, religious, health, and political purposes.

Evidence from qualitative data collected from a sample of Brazilian immigrants living in MA reveal that Relative SES is a relevant determinant of the decision of persons born in Brazil to migrate. Therefore, it is plausible to affirm that:

1. The higher the relative SES Status of one's household during childhood compared to one's current SES Status, the more likely this individual will be to migrate.
2. The higher the relative SES Status of one's peers, friends or relatives in the origin country compared to one's current SES Status, the more likely this individual will be to migrate.

3. The higher the relative SES Status of one's peers with migration experience compared to one's current SES Status, the more likely this individual will be to migrate.

The high levels of concern with social and socioeconomic status demonstrated by Brazilian immigrants have important implications on the migratory process of this population, especially in regards to the Brazilian middle class – including its ramification into lower middle class and upper middle class. Evidence also reveals that international migration enhances not only Relative but also Absolute SES.

Regarding the effects of Relative SES on creating large flows of emigrants from a single geographic location, it is plausible to argue that areas from where people have emigrated are more likely to become the origin of large migratory flows: People living in these areas will consider migration as an option to enhance their Relative SES because they have means to compare their SES with the SES of peers with migration experience. If these people feel less privileged than peers who are or were immigrants, these persons are likely to migrate. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is also a determinant of the increasing flow of migrants from specific geographic locations in Brazil. The variable social network, especially when many members of this network have had a positive migration experience, brings migration to the equation when individuals are trying to determine means to enhance SES. The higher the number of member of a social group with migration experience and enhanced SES, the higher the number of individual from the same social network considering migration to enhance their own SES.

## CHAPTER VII

### POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The importance of developing concepts that explain migration decisions is to provide policy-makers and researchers with a new perspective when looking at the patterns of migratory behavior of certain foreign-born populations. With the understanding of the behavior of these populations, policy makers may be able to better determine and implement more effective immigration programs and policies.

With the evidence that Relative SES is a determinant of the migration decision process, the development and implementation of policies to manage migratory flows can be problematic because it is likely that receiving countries and their policies will not directly impact one's decision to migrate. On the other hand, these countries will have a relevant influence on one's choice of destination. Even though this choice is made when one is still at home, factors such as the economy and the policies at the destination country are taken into consideration and are relevant in determining the location of the trip. Even more important in determining one's destination country, however, is the Relative SES of one's peers who have experienced migration. If a person or persons original from a single geographic location in the sending country were able to enhance his/her Relative SES at a specific foreign country, this foreign country is likely to receive a large migratory flow of other individuals from the same peer group.

Having said that, in order to better manage foreign-born in-flows, destination countries will have to improve their interaction with “immigrants to-be” at the sending country through their Embassies and Consulates. So far, this type of relationship has not been effective to manage in-flows of unauthorized immigrants because it has not been done at the grassroots level in areas where there is higher incidence of migratory flows.

#### Measures to Address Undocumented Migration for Working Purposes

If receiving countries have no control over one’s decision to migrate, how can they have an impact on one’s choice of destination? Important means to manage in-flows of unauthorized workers are the implementation of educational programs -- presentations and workshops -- at the sending country, and the implementation of a Pre-Paid Taxed Guest Work Program.

Referring back to the case of Brazilian immigrants in the United States, the recommendation is that the U.S. should:

1. Implement educational programs targeting middle class and low-income populations at the sending country to introduce to those considering migration, factual information about visas and immigration programs available. These programs should be implemented by U.S. Consulates outside consulate facilities in traditional areas of international migration in Brazil, such as in cities in the states of Minas Gerais, Goiás, Santa Catarina, Espírito Santo, and São Paulo.

The focus of these workshops should be to present the different visa programs available for “immigrants to-be” and help those who are interested in

migration to start their process. In addition, the public should be introduced to the benefits and difficulties of being an immigrant in the U.S. The content of these workshops must not be bureaucratic, and should use real life examples to help demystify some beliefs about immigrants in the U.S.

2. Develop and implement a Pre-Paid Taxed Guest Work Program in which applicants will be required to pay up-front federal taxes corresponding to 2 years of employment earning minimum wage (US\$ 7.25/hour as of Fiscal Year 2010). The pre-paid taxes will then be deducted from the annual taxes paid by the immigrant during the period of employment in the U.S.

The length of the program should not exceed 5 years and, in order to qualify, the immigrant would have 3 months from the date of arrival in the U.S. to find employment. In the event the immigrant is not able to find employment, he/she will have one month to leave the country and will have a percentage -- to be determined by the government -- of the pre-paid taxes refunded.

By the end of the 5 year period, the immigrant should have the choice to apply for permanent residency through its employer, or to return to his/her home country with a percentage -- to be determined by the U.S. Government -- of the pre-paid taxes refunded.

However, why would individuals agree with the pre-taxation of their labor? The answer to this question is simple: As it was reported by some Brazilians that responded to the SES Survey, the cost of unauthorized migration to the U.S. currently ranges between

\$ 10,000 and \$ 15,000 per person, money that is paid to human trafficking groups. While living in the United States, it takes most immigrants about 2 years of intense labor – taxed and “under the table” -- to pay back this debt. Money may also be spent in the purchase of counterfeit documents.

If people are willing to borrow, to take loans at their home country, to work illegally for a few years in the U.S. to pay about \$ 10,000 to be an unauthorized immigrant in the country, these people might not object to pay less or the same amount to the U.S. Government in the form of anticipated taxes for the income that they would produce in the country while working legally.

Such a program may help minimize dissatisfaction among American citizens about the presence of unauthorized immigrants who are accused to not pay income taxes, but receive benefits from the public system in the United States.

## APPENDIX I

### BRAZILIAN SYSTEM OF POINTS CRITERION

One of the methodologies used in Brazil to determine the consumption power of the Brazilian population is the Brazilian Criterion of Economic Classification – CCEB (National Research Enterprises Association - ANEP 1996 and Brazilian Research Enterprises Association – ABEP 2004), which is based on two systems:

Income: This system differentiates classes by monthly household income:

**Class A** – More than 20 Brazilian minimum wages (Upper class: about 5% of the Brazilian population)

**Class B** – From 10 to 20 Brazilian minimum wages or about a minimum of R\$1,000 or US\$ 618 per household member per month (Upper middle class: about 20% of the Brazilian population)

**Class C** – From 5 to 10 Brazilian minimum wages (Middle class: about 30% of the Brazilian population)

**Class D** – From 2 to 5 Brazilian minimum wages (Lower middle class: about 25% of the Brazilian population)

**Class E** – From 0 to 2 Brazilian minimum wages (Poor: about 20% of the Brazilian population). Minimum wage in 2006: R\$ 415 per month (about US\$ 257 per month)

In the second system, the System of Points examines two variables, other than income: consumption power / possession of goods, and the educational attainment of the head of the household. It also divides class A in A1 and A2, and class B in B1 and B2, with class A representing the upper and upper-middle classes, and B accounting for middle and lower-middle classes. C, D and E represent lower working class, such as the poor and those in abject misery.

Table 4: Brazilian System of Points Criteria

	0 items	1 item	2 items	3 items	4+ items
Items:	Points	Points	Points	Points	Points
Color TV	0	2	3	4	5
Radio	0	1	2	3	4
Bathroom	0	2	3	4	4
Automobile	0	2	4	5	5
Maid	0	2	4	4	4
Vacuum cleaner	0	1	1	1	1
Washing Machine	0	1	1	1	1
DVD Player	0	2	2	2	2
Refrigerator	0	2	2	2	2
Freezer	0	1	1	1	1

Educational Attainment of the Head of the Household	Points
Not alphabetized - Incomplete 4th grade	0
4th Grade - Incomplete middle school	1
Middle school - Incomplete high school	2
High school - Incomplete undergraduate degree	3
Undergraduate degree +	5

Class	Points	Percentage of Total Brazilian Population
A1	30-34	1%
A2	25-29	5%
B1	21-24	9%
B2	17-20	14%
C	11-16	36%
D	6-10	31%
E	0-5	4%

Source: ABEP 2004

## APPENDIX II

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF BRAZILIANS IN THE U.S.

Data on Educational Attainment and Citizenship Status for Persons Born in Brazil living in Massachusetts and in New York:

#### Massachusetts Educational Attainment:

Less than high school diploma	22.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	46.7%
Some college or associate's degree	16%
Bachelor's degree	11.20%
Graduate or professional degree	3.3%

#### Citizenship Status:

Brazilians who are not U.S. Citizens: 85%

#### New York Educational Attainment:

Less than high school diploma	17.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27.4%

Some college or associate's degree 19.6%

Bachelor's degree 22.1%

Graduate or professional degree 13.6%

Citizenship Status:

Brazilians who are not U.S. Citizens: 72%

Source: 2006-2008 ACS

APPENDIX III  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF BRAZILIANS,  
CHINESE, AND MEXICANS IN THE U.S

Size of the population living in the U.S. with less than high school diploma by country of birth:

Place of Birth	Population with less than high school diploma	Margin of Error
BRAZIL	15.8%	+/-1.1
MEXICO	60.6%	+/-0.2
CHINA	21.0%	+/-0.4

Source: 2006-2008 ACS

APPENDIX IV

RELATIVE SES AND IMMIGRATION QUESTIONNAIRE

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_
2. Age: \_\_\_\_ 3. How old were you when you first came to live in the U.S.? \_\_\_\_
1. Where were you born?
2. Where were you living before you first emigrated to the U.S.?
3. Marital Status: \_\_\_\_ If married, is your spouse living with you in the US? \_\_\_\_ If yes, for how long?
4. Are you the head of your household? \_\_\_\_ If no, who is the head of your household?
5. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_ If more than 0, how many are living with you in the US? \_\_\_\_
6. How many people live in this house with you? \_\_\_\_ How many belong to your family? \_\_\_\_
7. Are you pleased with the house where you live now? Who owns it?
8. Are you pleased with your neighborhood?
9. Educational attainment in Brazil? \_\_\_\_ Has it changed since you moved to the U.S.? \_\_\_\_ Are you happy with your educational level?

10. Educational attainment of each member of your immediate family before and after migration: (If any of them still living in Brazil, please mention if their educational level has improved with your financial support)

	Spouse	Children	Mother	Father	Siblings
Before					
After					

11. How do you evaluate your ability to speak English before and after migration?

Before:

After:

12. Cite every main job that you have had in Brazil? (Inform if you had your work license signed by your employer)

Position	Age	How long?	Your opinion

\* Write any extra information on the back of this page

13. Could you tell me about your parents' employment history and financial situation from your childhood until the day that you last depended on their financial support?

Father:

Mother:

14. Could you describe your neighborhood in Brazil (houses, people living in there...)?

15. How happy were you when you were living in Brazil? (from 0 being very sad, unsatisfied to 5 being very happy and satisfied)

15.1 With your family:

15.2 With your job / income:

15.3 With your neighborhood:

15.4 With your education:

15.5 With your group of friends:

16. Did you ever feel bad at any place, or situation, or with someone, for not having something such as a better house, higher education, fancier goods, important friends, international experience, etc?

### MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

1. How many times have you emigrated? \_ Cite the countries you have emigrated to, as well as the date of your arrival and departure.
2. When you first emigrated to the U.S., what was your immigration status? Has it changed since then? If yes, how did you change it?
3. City of current residence in the US:
4. Cite in chronological order the names of cities and states where you have lived since you first moved to the U.S.:
5. Jobs that you have or have had since you first moved to the U.S.: (Please, start with your current occupations)

Position	Income	Hours/Week	How long?	Your opinion

\* Write any extra information on the back of this page

6. Individual annual income in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_ Household annual income in the U.S.:
7. Remittances: \$\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_(If 0, skip to question 9)
8. Why do you send money to Brazil?
9. What kind of financial investments have you made since your first trip to the U.S?
10. Are you pleased with all your investments?
11. What is your future plan regarding your investments?

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND POST-MIGRATION EXPERIENCE**

1. Have you fulfilled your expectations about the U.S?
2. What were your initial plans and what have you accomplished them so far?
3. Do you have plans do return to Brazil, why? If yes, when?
4. Is your life in the U.S. what you have imagined it would be?
5. Do you regret any of your decisions regarding your migratory process?
6. Would you recommend to others in Brazil to migrate to the US? Have you helped any relatives or friends to migrate?
7. When you contact your relatives / friends in Brazil, what do you tell them about your life in the U.S.? Are you more positive or negative about your life here? Do you ever need to lie?
8. Overall, what have been your gains and losses since you immigrated to the U.S.?

Gains:

Losses:

9. How do you see your current social position in relation to your parents, relatives, and friends in Brazil?
10. And in relation to other Brazilians in the U.S?
11. Now that you have lived in the United States, do your family and friends in Brazil treat you any differently than they did before you migrated here? If yes, how?

12. If you have never gone back to Brazil, do you think that if you go back to your hometown people would you treat you differently now just because you have lived in the U.S.?
13. What do you think people in Brazil may think about you now that you live in the U.S., is that different from what they used to think when you were living in Brazil?
14. In your opinion, what are the elements that enhance an individual's social status in Brazil? Cite in order of importance. (For example, a fancy house, car, important friends, high education, etc)
15. Do these elements differ in the way Brazilians evaluate themselves and one another in the immigrant community in the US?
16. Do you consider yourself part of the Brazilian community in Massachusetts? What kind of services with a focus on Brazilians do you use? (For example: media, restaurants, stores, parties, church, etc.)
17. To which degree are you involved in American society / culture?
18. How and how often do you compare yourself with Americans?

### **SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS HIERARCHY**

1. Did your socioeconomic status change after you migrated to the US? How?
2. Which are the social classes in Brazil?
3. To which one did you belong when you were living in Brazil during your childhood and one year before your first trip to the US?
4. Do people in Brazil care about social status? Do they care about what others think of them?
5. Do you consider social status an important element in the Brazilian way of life? In other words, do you think that the behavior of people in Brazil is affected by social status?
6. Do you like to have the newest technology and wear whatever is in style? Were you able to do it before you came to the U.S.? And after?

*Note: The following scale has the purpose to identify the differences in SES among the respondent's current SES, his/her childhood, peer group, and friends and/or relatives with migration experience.*

**1 – Where were you located in this scale right before you migrated?**

- a) Income: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- b) Education: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- c) Occupation: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- d) Possession of Goods and Consumption 0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- e) Social exposure (includes how well known you are among your peer group)  
0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- f) SES Status 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

**2 – Where were your parents located in this scale during your childhood?**

- a) Income: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- b) Education: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- c) Occupation: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- d) Possession of Goods and Consumption 0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- e) Social exposure (includes how well known you are among your peer group)  
0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- f) SES Status 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

**3 - Where is your peer group in Brazil located in this scale?**

- a) Income: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- b) Education: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- c) Occupation: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- d) Possession of Goods and Consumption 0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- e) Social exposure (includes how well known you are among your peer group)

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

f) SES Status 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

**4 – If you knew someone with migration experience before your first migration trip, where was this person located in the scale?**

a) Income: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

b) Education: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

c) Occupation: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

d) Possession of Goods and Consumption 0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

e) Social exposure (includes how well known you are among your peer group)

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

f) SES Status 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

**5 – Where are you located in this scale right now?**

a) Income: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

b) Education: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

c) Occupation: 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

d) Possession of Goods and Consumption 0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

e) Social exposure (includes how well known you are among your peer group)

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

f) SES Status 0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5

**THANKYOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

NOTES:

Comparison group (treatment sample only):

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