

(DRAFT - Do Not Quote)

Portuguese-Speaking Groups in New Bedford and Fall River:

Old-timers and Newcomers

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Introduction:

Located on the Southeastern Massachusetts coast, Fall River and New Bedford are two of the oldest mill towns in the U.S. A large proportion of the unskilled labor that fueled the development of textile manufacturing in the two cities was provided by Portuguese immigrants who first came to the area as sailors aboard the whaling schooners of the early 19th century. Since then, the ebbing and flowing of the economic life of the two cities has been intimately connected to Portuguese immigration. Both cities reached their economic apogee around 1920, a period which coincided with massive Portuguese immigration. A massive mill strike in the late 1920s ushered in the economic collapse brought by the Great Depression and was mirrored by sharp drop in the number of Portuguese arrivals. In fact, around 1930 the number of Portuguese leaving New Bedford and Fall River was much greater than the number arriving from Portugal (Pap, 1980:83). Because of the poor economic conditions and restrictive immigration laws, for the next forty years Portuguese immigration was negligible, by when the group began immigrating to the area again in the early 1960s New Bedford and Fall River experienced an increase in manufacturing. Factory jobs were plentiful, especially in the garment industry. Interviews with immigrants who arrived around that period indicate that most

would be working in the shops within days after their arrival. Since the 1980s, however, the cities have lost most of their industrial base and official Portuguese immigration has been reduced to a trickle.¹

Despite this economic decline, over the last ten years New Bedford and Fall River have become home to a number of new arrivals, including Portuguese-speaking immigrants from former Portuguese colonies. Some of these belong to oldtimer groups, such as Cape Verdeans, whose presence in Southeastern Massachusetts goes back to whaling times,² but the most visible are Brazilians, a group of fast-growing newcomers which is quickly transforming the urban landscape of Southeastern Massachusetts.

This paper examines Brazilian immigration into the cities of New Bedford and Fall River, Massachusetts. It investigates what has brought the Brazilians to this area; how this migration is related to cultural and religious ties linking the longstanding Portuguese communities of Southeastern Massachusetts to Brazil; and how the Brazilian newcomers are transforming the culture of the old-time, Portuguese-speaking communities of the two cities.

The data for this study come from a variety of sources, including formal and informal interviews with individuals and community leaders in New Bedford and Fall River; participant observation; newspaper articles; website materials; and official government statistics of the U.S. Census Bureau and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

¹ From 1991 to 2000 total Portuguese immigration to the U.S. averaged about 2,292 per year.

² New Bedford is home to the oldest and largest community of Cape Verdeans in the the U.S., while the number of Cape Verdeans in Fall River is negligible. Recent Cape Verdean immigrants, however, have

Theoretical Background:

Manuel Castells (1997), among others, has argued that, as the forces of globalization diffuse throughout the world bringing most peoples and cultures under the homogenizing forces of capitalism, they unleash processes that cause the erosion of the state's ability to provide social protections. As a reaction to these forces and the inequality and instability they create, people build "trenches of resistance in the name of God, nation, ethnicity, family [and] locality" (Castells, 1997:2). In an apparently paradoxical way, the transformative forces of globalization lead to a renewal of the importance of social ties based on religion, ethnicity and kinship.

I propose that Brazilian immigration into Southeastern Massachusetts can be seen as the result of these processes. On the one hand, Brazilian immigration to U.S. can be understood within the context of the international movements of labor associated with global flows of investment capital described by Sassen (1988). On the other, the secondary migration of Brazilians into the cities of Fall River and New Bedford is the result of the mobilization of social capital in order to cope with the economic instability and the high cost of housing experienced in the "global cities" they initially immigrated to, allied to lack of access to government-sponsored social protections.

The major destinations of Brazilian immigrants have been the "global cities" of New York, Miami and Boston (Goza, 1994; Margolis, 1993; Martes, 2000; Sales, 1998)—cities characterized by a post-industrial economy that Sassen (1997) has called a "new economic regime." These cities are the key sites for the production of knowledge- and information-intensive services needed by the global economy. While this new

tended to settle primarily in Brockton, Dorchester and other Boston area communities. Until their independence from Portugal in 1975, Cape Verdeans were classified as Portuguese.

economic regime provides employment opportunities for an elite of highly-skilled, high-paid workers, the profitability of the formal, high-technology sector of this economy depends on the availability of an informal, low-skill, low-wage, parallel, informal sector. This parallel informal sector caters to the service needs of the high-tech firms, as well to those of the commuters and tourists in the global cities and recreational resorts. In addition, it serves the domestic needs of the high-income population of elite workers who live in the gentrified neighborhoods and suburbs of the global cities (Sassen, 1998). The polarization of the labor force generated by this split market is a source of economic insecurity and “employment-centered poverty” (Sassen, 1998:137).

Martes (2000), who documented the experience of Brazilians living in Massachusetts, identifies conditions that are highly congruent with Sassen’s theorizing. According to her research, the majority of Brazilians in this state are concentrated in the Boston metropolitan area where they work in the informal service market, doing precisely the types of jobs described by Sassen.—They clean offices and private homes; work in restaurants, hotels, and beauty parlors; take care of the gardens and children of the rich; and (a small minority) run small service businesses of their own. She reports that besides being largely undocumented, Brazilians experience considerable economic hardship, intra-group competition and legal and economic insecurity. In addition, their sense of group identity and solidarity are low and so is their rate of attachment to formal institutions. But there is one notable exception to this last finding—church membership is high and provides a considerable source of social support and control.

Besides generating poverty and insecurity through the polarization of the labor force, globalization also generates inequality through its effects on the price of urban real

estate (Sassen, 1998). Gentrification and the high demand for commercial space in “global cities” have led to housing costs that are far beyond the reach of informal sector workers. In what can be interpreted as a new twist in the mismatch hypothesis (Kain, 1968; Kasarda, 1989), informal service sector workers find themselves in a situation where they cannot afford to live where they work. Not because the jobs have fled to the suburbs and they can only afford to live in the inner city as was initially proposed by the mismatch hypothesis, but because the jobs they perform in the city and wealthy suburbs do not pay enough to allow them to live in either location.

According to the mismatch hypothesis, workers who see their jobs migrate out of their communities will fall into the urban underclass due to their inability to relocate or commute (Wilson, 1987). They remain in the inner city and subsist primarily through government subsidies. The case of Brazilians in Massachusetts challenges the inevitability of this outcome. Unable to rely on government help due to their undocumented status, earnings that put them slightly above the official guidelines to receive help from most programs, and scarcity of such programs, they have coped with the problem of ecological mismatch by relocating to areas with lower housing costs and commuting from there to jobs in high income areas. This relocation was made possible by the utilization of social capital associated to their cultural, religious and sometimes familial connections with the Portuguese in Southeastern Massachusetts.

The use of social capital, that is, benefits that accrue to individuals as a result of their participation in particular networks or through membership or connection to particular groups or institutions (Portes, 1998:3) has long been recognized as a major force in the process of migration and immigrant adjustment, even if the term itself is of

recent coinage (Bourdieu, 1985; Coleman, 1988). The latent matrix of support afforded by these networks, however, has never been as dense or extensive as it is now. With globalization, and especially the expansion of long-distance communication and travel, these networks have also become increasingly transnational in nature (Portes, 1995, 1996). The mobilization of the social capital embedded in this latent matrix of support is facilitated by what Silver (2001) has called “transnational intermediaries.” These are the middle persons and mediating institutions, such as travel agents and churches that link individuals and communities across countries, stimulating migration, incorporating new immigrants into existing communities, and transforming the receiving society. In the case of Brazilians who relocated to Fall River and New Bedford the most common intermediaries were churches, Portuguese-language newspapers, radio and television stations and relatives.

Thus, the choice of the Portuguese communities of Fall River and New Bedford, by Brazilians relocating from other areas of Massachusetts can be seen as an example of the activation of a transnational, latent matrix of informal support networks (based on cultural, religious, and familial affinities) in order to cope with the instability and insecurity created by the restructuring forces of global capitalism and the absence of government social protections, such as welfare or housing subsidies.

At the moment, the coexistence of the two communities, old-timers and newcomers, in Fall River and New Bedford appears to be symbiotic. Since Portuguese immigration has come to a virtual halt, Brazilians have been able to move into niches previously occupied by the Portuguese. They have been able to take advantage of the institutions and economies that developed to serve the needs of the Portuguese

immigrants of the 1970s and 1980s, and at the same time have brought new life to declining Portuguese neighborhoods by filling empty tenements and storefronts, and providing clients for organizations that cater to the needs of immigrants. While at the individual, and perhaps even at the group level, both Brazilians and Portuguese have benefited, it is unclear how the influx of these new immigrants is affecting the cities as whole. New Bedford and Fall River are now depressed cities with few job opportunities, increasingly impoverished population and declining budgets for social programs. The new immigrants, through their cheap labor are contributing to the development of the economies of the richer communities where they work, like Boston and Hyannis, but their demand for services falls upon the cities where they live, at a time when these are the least prepared to meet their needs.

Immigration and Ethnicity in New Bedford and Fall River:

The development of New Bedford and Fall River as major industrial centers in the late 19th and early 20th century is intimately connected to the birth and growth of the textile industry in the U.S. Possessing both water power and good ports, New Bedford and Fall River were strategically positioned to become major textile producers. Fall River's first cotton mill went up in 1811 and by 1830 the city already had seven. In New, whaling was the dominant industry until the discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania in 1859. By that time, however, the city also possessed a growing manufacturing base and with the decline of whaling, the production of textiles grew at a rapid pace and became the major economic activity. Between 1881 and the beginning of World War I, 32 new cotton manufacturing companies employing 30,000 people, were incorporated in New

Bedford and in 1898 a textile school was installed in the city. During this period, Fall River and New Bedford became major textile centers of the world attracting a steady wave of European immigrants. As a result, by 1900 Fall River had the largest percentage of foreign residents of any U.S. city.

Initially composed of large numbers of English, Irish, French and Poles, by the first decade of the 20th century this migration came to be dominated by the Portuguese who had first been attracted to the area by the whaling industry of New Bedford. From 1901 to 1920, Portuguese official immigration to the U.S. reached 158,881 (See Table 2) and the majority of these immigrants ended up in New Bedford and Fall River. In fact, 61 percent of those arriving between 1900 and 1910 said that they intended to live in Massachusetts, which was home to close to 40 percent of the total Portuguese population of the U.S. of that time (Williams, 1991).

Being largely of rural origin and possessing scant human capital, the Portuguese provided the bulk of the unskilled factory labor for the local economies, pushing earlier immigrant groups up the occupational ladders of the mills (Silvia, 1976). Time of arrival and origin dictated a group's placement within the social and occupational hierarchy of the time. New immigrants would enter the mills taking the jobs of those standing ahead of them in the occupational queue. In the case of Fall River and New Bedford, the top of the occupational ladder was occupied by the English, followed by the Irish. Then came French Canadians and some Italians and, at the bottom, were the Poles and the Portuguese (Silvia, 1976).

For over a century, these groups have defined the character of both cities. Even though the relative proportions of each group have changed over the years, Fall River and

New Bedford have remained largely white, Catholic and working class (See Table 1 and

Table 1. Racial and Ethnic Composition of New Bedford and Fall River in 1990 and 2000

	Fall River			
	1990		2000	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<u>Race</u>				
White	90,076	97.2	83,815	91.2
Black	952	1.0	2,283	2.5
Hispanic	1,577	1.7	3,040	3.3
Other	98	0.1	2,800	3.0
<u>Ancestry</u>				
English	7,558	8.2	6,085	6.6
French	22,596	24.4	17,801	19.3
Irish	10,902	11.8	9,029	9.8
Italian	3,547	3.8	3,293	3.6
Polish	4,313	4.7	3,148	3.4
Portuguese	46,329	50.0	43,253	47.0
Other	2,542	2.7	9,329	10.3
Total Population	92,703	100.0	91,938	100.0
	New Bedford			
	1990		2000	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<u>Race</u>				
White	87,486	87.6	73,950	78.9
Black	4,069	4.1	4,112	4.4
Hispanic	6,653	6.7	9,576	10.2
Other	1,714	1.7	6,130	6.5
<u>Ancestry</u>				
English	9,893	9.9	6,863	7.3
French	18,387	18.4	14,090	15.0
Irish	8,455	8.5	7,412	7.9
Italian	2,383	2.4	2,707	2.9
Polish	4,088	4.1	3,134	3.3
Portuguese	45,091	45.1	36,239	38.6
Other	11,625	11.6	23,323	25.0
Total Population	99,922	100.0	93,768	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table A1 in the Appendix). In 1990, for example, the population of Fall River was still more than 97 percent white, while in New Bedford the proportion of whites, although

smaller, accounted for over 87 percent of the total population. In 1990, the percentage of the population belonging to ancestry groups known to be primarily Catholic (i.e., French, Irish, Italian, Polish and Portuguese) was about 95 percent in Fall River and 83 percent in New Bedford. For the same year, the proportion of the population that had professional and managerial occupations was only 16 percent in Fall River and 18 percent in New Bedford (See Table A1 in the Appendix). In terms of ethnicity, the Portuguese are still the dominant group, followed by the French and the Irish (See Table 1). Although the relative proportions of these groups have been declining, in 2000, the Portuguese were still 47 percent of the population of Fall River and 39 percent of the population of New Bedford. The French were 19 percent of the population of Fall River and 15 percent of New Bedford and the Irish, 10 percent of Fall River and 8 percent of New Bedford. One of the possible reasons for this stability in ethnic composition is the lack of dynamism of the local economy since the 1920s.

Although during the first quarter of the 20th century, New Bedford and Fall River had been major textile centers, with over 100 mills operating in Fall River alone, at the time of World War I, by the late 1920s both cities were in severe economic decline. After a number of severe labor strikes, many of the mills closed and moved to the South. Shortly after, the Great Depression gave the *coup de grâce* to the ones left behind. In 1930 the city of Fall River declared bankruptcy and its finances were managed by the state until 1941. New Bedford did not fare much better and many of the residents of the two cities were forced to leave. This decimation of the economic underpinnings of the area posed severe limitations to the occupational mobility of the remaining inhabitants, especially the last arrivals, that is, the Portuguese (Silvia, 1976). Many returned to

Portugal, others moved to other parts of the country, especially to the New York City area but the large majority remained in the area (Pap, 1981).

Table 2. Portuguese Immigration by Decade, 1821-2000

Decade	Number	Decade	Number
1821-1830	145	1911-1920	89,732
1831-1840	829	1921-1930	29,994
1841-1850	550	1931-1940	3,329
1851-1860	1,055	1941-1950	7,423
1861-1870	2,658	1951-1960	19,588
1871-1880	14,082	1961-1970	76,065
1881-1890	16,978	1971-1980	101,710
1891-1900	27,508	1981-1990	40,431
1901-1910	69,149	1991-2000	22,765

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Services

In the meantime, the passage of the immigration quota laws of the 1920s put a virtual stop to immigration from Southern and Eastern European countries, including Portugal, Italy, and Poland. From 1930 to 1950, for instance, only slightly more than 10,000 Portuguese entered the U.S. (Table 1). But with the resurgence of the economy after World War II, there was a renewed demand for labor, and views on immigration changed. Even before the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, a special piece of legislation, the Azorean Refugee Acts of 1958 and 1960, designed to help the victims of a volcanic eruption in the Azores, opened the door to Portuguese immigration. The almost 5,000 persons who entered the U.S. under this legislation were later instrumental in sponsoring a large number of Portuguese into the country after the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. In 1969, Portugal was the seventh largest contributor of immigrants to the United States, with 16,528 persons, and

during the 1971-1980 decade almost 102,000 Portuguese immigrated into the United States.

As with the first wave of Portuguese immigration, a large proportion of these immigrants settled in New Bedford and Fall River. At the time, the two cities experienced a kind of economic renaissance, fueled by the influx of cheap immigrant labor. Factory work was widely available, especially within the apparel industry, which had relocated many of its shops from New York City to the area. The Portuguese immigrants bought and renovated many of the rental tenements in the two cities leading some to joke that the urban renewal program of the two cities was called “Portuguese immigration.” Portuguese bilingual programs were instituted in the schools, social agencies developed to meet the needs of the new immigrants, cultural and religious institutions were created, and Portuguese ethnic enterprises sprung up in both cities. Bakeries, fish markets, restaurants, coffee shops, grocery and liquor stores, gift and clothing shops, car repair shops, travel agencies, realtors, barbers, hairdressers, photographers, etc. Little by little Portuguese-speakers began to move into all sectors of the economy including many of the professional occupations. A Portuguese person who lived in New Bedford or Fall River did not need to know English in order to carry out his or her daily routines. They could shop in Portuguese markets, attend Portuguese churches, get their news from Portuguese media, see a Portuguese dentist, etc.

In the meantime however, fundamental structural changes were going on in Portugal and the U.S. that would have a significant impact on the two cities, and stand as an example of the global nature of seemingly parochial economies. On April 25, 1974 a coup d’etat in Portugal put an end to more than 40 years of fascist dictatorship. This

event led not only to the democratization of the country, but also to significant economic development. The influx of investment capital into the Portuguese economy, and Portugal's integration into the European Union, generated wealth and employment opportunities never before experienced by the Portuguese. The need to emigrate, which had been a constant in Portuguese life, became a lot less pressing.

The number of Portuguese arrivals in the U.S. declined drastically. While from 1971 to 1980, Portuguese immigration to the U.S. averaged over 10,000 per year, from 1981 to 1990, it was only about 4,000 per year, and in the following decade, less than 2,300 per year (See Table 2). In addition, those that came did not necessarily choose New Bedford and Fall River as their destination. Global cities like New York were now the major centers of attraction (Williams, 1982). When the figures of the 2000 census were made public, community leaders were surprised to learn that in just ten years, the relative size of the Portuguese population had decreased from 50 to 47 percent in Fall River and from 45 to 39 percent in New Bedford (Table 1). In large part, this was due to the fact that finding a job in the New Bedford/Fall River area had become a difficult task.

With the demise of "fordism" and the ascendance of "flexible accumulation" (Gereffi, 1994) and "global commodity chains" (Harvey, 1990), most of the area's sources of industrial employment were lost to the global economy. In the late eighties and early nineties, the apparel shops and other manufacturers went the way of the textile mills, to Mexico, China and other places with cheaper labor costs, leaving behind empty factories, warehouses, stores and tenements. The rate of unemployment in 1990 was over 12 percent in New Bedford and 10 percent in Fall River (Table A1 in the Appendix) as opposed to six percent nationwide. By 1989, employment in manufacturing, the

mainstay of the local economy, accounted for less than a third of total employment. In the next decade it continued to go down. From 1989 to 1999, it declined by almost 28 percent in New Bedford and 26 percent in Fall River (Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix). In 1999, only 21 percent of the New Bedford labor force and 24 percent of Fall River's worked in manufacturing (Table A2). In New Bedford, fishing is still an activity dominated by the Portuguese, but in 2000, it accounted for only about one percent of the total labor force. A related activity, fish processing, on the other hand, employs primarily undocumented Central Americans. Construction, another traditional employment category for Portuguese men, comprised 6 to 7 percent of the total workforce. A considerable number of men travel to construction and manufacturing jobs in other areas or the state and even to other states. Many of the Portuguese immigrants who had arrived in the early seventies retired. Their children and those who remained in the labor force found jobs in the low-skilled service sector. About 12 percent of the workforce of the two cities worked in retail sales during 1999. Another 21 percent worked in education, health and social services. Service work is particularly common among the women, whose typical occupation went from stitching to being a health aide or house cleaner.

When the economy was still thriving, many of the Portuguese who had formerly occupied the tenements of New Bedford and Fall River bought their own homes and moved to suburban towns like Dartmouth and Somerset. This resulted in a high vacancy rates in the rental housing market, which led to relatively inexpensive rents in both cities. According to figures from the U.S. Census, the median monthly rent in 2000 was \$428 in Fall River and \$455 in New Bedford, while the equivalent statistic was \$874 and \$803 for

Somerville and Boston, respectively (Table A2). According to local social service providers, officials and newspapers (cf., *The Standard Times*: 9/11/01; CHAPA: 9/02), the availability of inexpensive housing attracted a number of underprivileged groups to both cities.

Compared to Fall River, New Bedford always had a sizeable black community, but their proportion continues to be comparatively small and shows no significant signs of growth. Blacks were 4.1 percent of the total population of the city in 1990, and 4.4 percent in 2000 (Table 1). The early presence of Blacks in New Bedford partly reflected the role played by the city in the Underground Railroad and the large number of Cape Verdeans who began settling in the area during whaling times. Although Cape Verdeans have continued to immigrate to the U.S., recent arrivals have settled primarily in the Boston and Brockton areas or Massachusetts.

In the 1980s, New Bedford also began to attract Hispanics, primarily Puerto Ricans, who came from other areas of the country, especially New York and Connecticut. In 1990, Hispanics were 6.7 percent of the population of New Bedford and by 2000 their proportion had risen to 10.2 percent (Table 1). At first, Puerto Ricans tended to live disproportionately in public housing projects, but as these filled up, they moved into some of the Portuguese neighborhoods as well. Dominicans, also primarily secondary migrants, followed the Puerto Ricans and settled among them. Then, in the late 1990s, a new immigrant group arrived—Central Americans, primarily undocumented Mayans from Guatemala, who went to work in the fish houses and settled primarily in the neighborhoods that had previously been occupied by and are still owned by the Portuguese.

In contrast, Fall River has little of the racial diversity of New Bedford. Until the 1990s there were only a handful of Black families in the city and very few Hispanics lived outside of the plentiful public housing. As the housing crunch grew in the Boston area, many poor minority families, including Blacks, came to Fall River and New Bedford in search of housing, creating a public uproar in which racist elements are only very thinly veiled. Claiming that the surfeit of public housing is harming the city's small landlords and contributing to drug trafficking and other types of crime, in 2001, the city's administration proposed the razing of the Watuppa Heights housing project (The Standard Times: 9/11/01, 2/17/02).³

But not all of those who came to Fall River looking for housing are meeting with this level of rejection. One of the latest and largest groups of newcomers to Fall River and New Bedford is Brazilians, and they are very much being extended a welcome mat. Like most Hispanics, they are secondary migrants who come primarily from the Boston area or from Cape Cod, and like the Mayans, a large proportion of them, perhaps more than eighty percent, according to informants and newspaper articles, is undocumented.

Brazilian Immigration to New Bedford and Fall River:

Like the United States and Canada, Brazil has traditionally been a country of immigration not of emigration. In contrast, Portugal has a long history of emigration, especially to Brazil. Until the middle of the 20th century, Brazil was the largest destination of Portuguese emigration, absorbing more than half of all Portuguese emigrants from 1900 to 1950 (Arroteia, 1985), for example. In the early sixties, there

³ In 2002 the Fall River city council approved a home rule petition to demolish the project (CHAPA, 2002), but in the following year the tenants of Watuppa Heights filed a law suit against the Fall River Housing

was a shift in Portuguese emigration away from Brazil and into other European countries, Canada and the United States, but emigration to Brazil continued, albeit at a lower rate.

As a result of the extensive Portuguese emigration to Brazil, especially during the first half of the 20th century, many Brazilians have close family ties with Portuguese residents of New Bedford and Fall River. These family connections have been used by some Brazilians to come to the U.S. In fact, the earliest Brazilian immigrants to the area arrived shortly after the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, which was based on family reunification, relying on Portuguese family ties.

But in the 1960s and early 1970s, when the most recent wave of Portuguese immigration took place, the Brazilian economy was doing relatively well and the need to emigrate was low. From 1940 to 1980 the economy grew at an annual average of 7 percent and real GDP grew at an average of 4 percent per year (Goza, 1994:136). The few Brazilians who came to Fall River and New Bedford at the time tended to blend into the larger Portuguese community and were not easily identifiable, except by other Portuguese speakers.

In the second half of the 1980s, however, the Brazilian economy went into decline. Racing inflation and unemployment forced many Brazilians to emigrate (Goza, 1994; Margolis, 1993; Martes, 2000; Sales, 1998). According to data provided by Sales (1998:15), between 1985 and 1988 1.25 million Brazilians left their country. Many went to countries from where they had previously received immigrants, like Portugal, Italy and Japan, but a large proportion also came to the U.S. In 1990, the U.S. census counted slightly over 57,000 persons of Brazilian ancestry and in 2000, according to the same source, there were 181,076 Brazilians living in the U.S. By all estimates, however, this

Authority (Herald News: 12/10/03), thereby putting the demolition plans on limbo.

appears to be a severe undercount. Given that a very large proportion of Brazilians are undocumented the fear of detection by immigration authorities is likely to have led many not to participate in the census as was argued by Margolis (1995) in relationship to the 1990 census. Brazilians are also difficult to identify visually, given their racial diversity. “We are a people without a face,” explained one of my informants when asked about the undercount.

Lacking an emigration tradition, and the close family connections necessary for immigrant visas, most Brazilians that have come to the United States did so as tourists, with the intention of staying only temporarily, making some money, and returning to Brazil (Margolis, 1993). In 1991, the U.S. issued 265,752 tourist visas to Brazilians. These represented 4.4 percent of the total non-immigrant visas issued by the U.S., and made Brazil the number four recipient of such visas (Goza, 1994: 138). The majority of these sojourners ended up in the so-called global cities, such as New York, Boston and Miami and entered the low paid, often informal, service sector that has evolved to meet the needs of the high-income, professional and managerial elites (Sassen, 1998). They have become dishwashers, waiters, janitors, housekeepers, nannies and chambermaids, often working more than one job to make ends meet (Martes, 2000).

In Massachusetts, most of the Brazilians were initially concentrated in the Boston area, especially in Cambridge and Somerville, where they shared the same neighborhoods as the Portuguese. Later on, they began to radiate outward to Alston, Framingham, Quincy and other surrounding towns. Currently, the largest concentration of Brazilians outside the Boston Metropolitan area is Cape Cod, where most are employed in the

tourism sector. According to information provided by the WGBH website, for example, Brazilians now make up about one fourth of the population of Martha's Vineyard.

The movement into the communities of Fall River and New Bedford is very recent development (the last five years or six years) and dependable statistics are hard to come by and often contradictory. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the year 2000 there were only 1,272 persons of Brazilian ancestry living in Bristol County, where New Bedford and Fall River are located. For the state as a whole, the number was 30,583, but this appears to be only a small fraction of the actual number of Brazilians residing here. *O Jornal*, a Fall River-based Portuguese weekly, has quoted estimates by the Brazilian Consulate, and the INS office in Boston that put the number of Brazilians living and working in the Bay State at 180 to 200 thousand. Following the same ratio of census to consulate figures, one might expect the Brazilian population of Bristol County to be about 5,000. Indeed, a source from the consulate told this author in 2003, that they estimate the Brazilian community of Fall River to number about 4,000. They had no estimate for New Bedford, but thought that it was considerably lower. Another informant, a New Bedford shop owner who lives in Fall River, thought that this was an overestimation. According to him, there must be about 2,000 Brazilians in Fall River and 500 in New Bedford. Both he and the source from the consulate suggested that I contact "religious leaders" to get a more accurate sense of the community, attesting to the importance of religion in helping Brazilians adjust to life in the area.

As pointed out by Martes (2000), churches appear to be the only institutions trusted by Brazilians and a reliable, non-threatening source of support in a community struggling with economic and legal insecurity. cursory fieldwork conducted by this

author confirmed the importance of religious connections in helping Brazilians relocate to New Bedford and Fall River. Contrary to Martes' (2002) findings, however, it also revealed that solidarity is far from absent among Brazilians and between Portuguese and Brazilians in New Bedford and Fall River. A brief description of some the interactions observed by this author during fieldwork in New Bedford, in the spring of 2003, illustrates the patterns hypothesized in the theory section of this paper, that is, the role played by the mobilization of ethnic networks of support in helping Brazilians cope with economic difficulties of the "global city" economies and get settled among the Portuguese communities of Southeastern Massachusetts.

The exchanges described took place during an informal interview with a Brazilian shop owner. The store sells an array of Brazilian goods, such as music, videos, books, candy, personal care items and lingerie. In addition to those who just came in to shop, the store was visited by a Portuguese immigrant who owns the restaurant next door and delivered the shop owner's lunch; and a young Brazilian man from Framingham who came in asking for information about renting an apartment and finding workers for his janitorial business. "The rents up there make our life impossible," he offered as an explanation for his request. The shop owner gave the Brazilian entrepreneur a copy of the *O Jornal*, the Portuguese weekly mentioned previously, and the phone number of a minister of a Protestant church in Fall River. "Look at the ads in here and talk to Pastor ...," he advised. As it turned out, the Brazilian young man did not have to look very far. The owner of the Portuguese restaurant next door, who was eavesdropping on the conversation, had a vacant apartment that he would be more than glad to rent to him and his wife.

The “Brazilianization” of the Portuguese Communities of New Bedford and Fall

River:

The ties that bind the Portuguese and Brazilians go beyond the commonalities of their history and language. Because of the continual migration of the Portuguese to Brazil over half a millennium, these ties have remained vital and often personal. With the emigration of both groups to other parts of the world these ties have expanded beyond the geographical confines of both countries, including the U.S. As pointed out by Glick-Schiller (1999:111-112), the Portuguese are truly a “transnational” community with a “global nation” identity. Indeed, it has been argued that the Portuguese have tried to replace their lost colonial empire with a web of transnational cultural, economic, political and legal networks involving nationals of former colonies and Portuguese emigrant communities throughout the world.

As mentioned before, a large portion of the Portuguese who came to the U.S. after 1965 had familial connections to Brazil. Many had, in fact, migrated to Brazil themselves. In addition, they had been widely exposed to Brazilian popular culture in Portugal. As they settled in the Fall River and New Bedford areas, this background was influential in creating a transnational web of economic and cultural exchanges. The exchanges were facilitated by an array of what Silver (2001) terms “transnational intermediaries,” and include, besides individual entrepreneurs, performers, and various types of professionals, institutions, such as import businesses, travel agencies, radio and television stations and networks, newspapers, etc.. These “transnational intermediaries” made use social and cultural capital to keep Portuguese-Brazilian networks current. Brazilian music and soap operas, for example, constitute the mainstay of local Portuguese

television and radio programs. Over the years, Brazilian singers, musicians, and actors have routinely toured the major Portuguese settlements in the area.

At first, the exchanges were primarily cultural and economic, but soon the profane was joined by the sacred, and the businessmen and the artists were followed by the preachers. Initially almost one hundred percent Roman Catholic, in the last 20 years or so, the Portuguese communities of New Bedford and Fall River have been the object of a steady stream of Protestant proselytizing campaigns conducted primarily by Brazilian ministers. These developments have made some Portuguese talk, ironically, about a reversal of colonization, which is not only cultural, but also religious—the Brazilians are rechristianizing the Portuguese.

In New Bedford and Fall River, the majority of the Portuguese Protestant churches have Brazilian ministers or ministers of Portuguese origin trained in Brazil. Although initially aimed at the Portuguese immigrant community, these ministers have played a major role in helping Brazilians settle among the Portuguese. According to articles published in the *O Jornal*, and information provided by various informal sources, a large proportion of the Brazilians who came to New Bedford and Fall River relied on help from these ministers to find housing and jobs, enroll their children in school, and obtain other services and information. These Brazilians came not directly from Brazil, but from other areas of Massachusetts where the rents were too high for their low wages, and where language barriers made it difficult for them to access services.

As shown in Table A2, in 2000, median monthly rents in Somerville, for example were more than twice as high as Fall River (\$874 vs. \$428), but rent differences alone

cannot explain the migration. Why did the Brazilians and not other groups? The answer has to do with the affinities of culture and family and the role of mediators.

In new Bedford and Fall River they found affordable tenements left vacant by the Portuguese; Portuguese school programs in need of children to keep the Portuguese-speaking teachers employed; Portuguese-speaking doctors and lawyers; and social services agencies designed to meet the needs of Portuguese immigrants, such as ESL classes and advocacy programs. Some of these agencies and programs were languishing due to the slowing of Portuguese immigration and are now dependent on Brazilians for clients. However, the shift toward serving the Brazilians has not been without costs.

Many of the Brazilians who reside in Fall River and New Bedford continue to work elsewhere. One of my informants told me that the two cities are just bedroom communities; most Brazilians work in Boston or Cape Cod.⁴ Although at some level the influx of Brazilians has helped maintain some of the social programs designed to meet the needs of the Portuguese, budget cuts and the characteristics of the Brazilians, where a large majority are undocumented, present a challenge to these institutions. Their staffing and funding is geared to the problems of legal immigrants. Given the new budgetary constraints, it is difficult to obtain grants and services to meet the needs of the Brazilians.

One of the major problems facing the community is health care. An informant told me of a case of Brazilian who works as a janitor in a local upscale supermarket and has been diagnosed with hepatitis B. He is not being treated because he cannot afford the medical visits and medications. Another example of the inability of cities to cope with

⁴ This appears to be especially true of New Bedford where the Brazilian population has a larger proportion of single men.

the influx of the Brazilians is related to the provision of adequate educational services. Although New Bedford and Fall River have the personnel to offer bilingual education to the newcomers, for example, they may not be able to provide it due to the dismantling of the bilingual programs at the state level. This is likely to lead to increases in the dropout rates in the area, a problem that is already quite severe. A similar problem is occurring at the college level. Many of the Brazilians who have graduated from secondary schools are now finding out that they cannot enroll as residents in state colleges because of their undocumented status.

Given these challenges, it is likely that religious and other private institutions, based on ethnic and familial connections will be called upon to play an even larger role in helping Brazilians adjust to life in America. However, the social capital provided by these sources is limited. The value of this social capital depends, to a large degree, on what Light (1972, 1980), called *ethnic* (e.g., revolving credit institutions) and *class resources* (e.g., education, wealth, bourgeois values). As a group, the Portuguese are not very well endowed with either (Mulcahy, 2003). Neither are New Bedford and Fall River, as communities. In 2000, for example, 17 percent of all New Bedford families lived below the poverty line, as compared to only six percent of Framingham's families; and only 10.7 percent of the residents of Fall River and New Bedford had a Bachelor's degree or higher levels of education, compared to 42.6 percent of the residents of Framingham (Table A2). In order for these communities to help the Brazilians succeed and avoid the lack of solidarity that ensues from scarce resources, they need the kind of resources that can only come from increased government investment in social protections.

From a cultural point of view, given current trends, it is expected that the Brazilian presence in Fall River and New Bedford will increase and give a Brazilian flavor to what for more than a century was very much a Portuguese cultural stronghold. Already, Brazilian shops and restaurants are cropping up in both cities. Brazilian telecommunication companies are beaming music and soap operas into Portuguese households. Brazilians are participating in local celebrations, including, Fall River Celebrates America and the Day of Portugal in New Bedford. Brazilian professors are becoming common in Portuguese studies programs at local universities (including the former president of Brazil, Fernando Enrique Cardoso, who began teaching at Brown University in 2003). More and more Brazilian expressions and idioms are creeping into the speech of the Portuguese of the area. Although many welcome the changes, some will no doubt be shocked hear comments like the one of a Portuguese elderly lady in Fall River: “I don’t like to watch the television programs coming from Lisbon; I understand the Brazilians better.”

Appendix

Table A 1: Labor Force Characteristics of New Bedford and Fall River, 1990

	New Bedford		Fall River	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
LABOR FORCE STATUS				
Persons 16 years and over	77,502		72,868	
In labor force	45,998	59.4	44,823	61.5
Civilian labor force	45,777	59.1	44,679	61.3
Employed	40,185	51.9	40,226	55.2
Unemployed	5,592	7.2	4,453	6.1
Not in labor force	31,504	40.6	28,045	38.5
Unemployment rate		12.2		9.9
OCCUPATION				
Employed persons 16 years and over	40,185		40,226	
Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations	2,809	7.0	2,924	7.3
Professional specialty occupations	4,014	10.0	3,441	8.6
Technicians and related support occupations	1,087	2.7	1,080	2.7
Sales occupations	3,682	9.2	3,551	8.8
Administrative support occupations, including clerical	6,178	15.4	6,092	15.1
Private household occupations	56	0.1	37	0.1
Protective service occupations	1,033	2.6	979	2.4
Service occupations, except protective and household	5,105	12.7	5,247	13.0
Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	1,033	2.6	394	1.0
Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	4,801	11.9	5,195	12.9
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	6,719	16.7	8,071	20.1
Transportation and material moving occupations	1,354	3.4	1,232	3.1
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	2,314	5.8	1,983	4.9
INDUSTRY				
Employed persons 16 years and over	40,185		40,226	
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	1,248	3.1	399	1.0
Mining	23	0.1	39	0.1
Construction	2,440	6.1	2,555	6.4
Manufacturing, nondurable goods	6,143	15.3	8,611	21.4
Manufacturing, durable goods	5,014	12.5	4,486	11.2
Transportation	1,345	3.3	827	2.1
Communications and other public utilities	826	2.1	1,061	2.6
Wholesale trade	1,746	4.3	1,040	2.6
Retail trade	6,835	17.0	6,496	16.1
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1,649	4.1	2,468	6.1
Business and repair services	1,257	3.1	978	2.4
Personal services	1,064	2.6	788	2.0
Entertainment and recreation services	270	0.7	288	0.7
Health services	3,370	8.4	3,901	9.7
Educational services	2,813	7.0	2,416	6.0
Other professional and related services	2,184	5.4	1,918	4.8
Public administration	1,958	4.9	1,955	4.9
CLASS OF WORKER				
Employed persons 16 years and over	40,185		40,226	
Private wage and salary workers	32,548	81.0	33,189	82.5
Government workers	5,880	14.6	5,552	13.8
Local government workers	3,393	8.4	3,083	7.7
State government workers	1,764	4.4	1,196	3.0
Federal government workers	723	1.8	1,273	3.2
Self-employed workers	1,684	4.2	1,371	3.4
Unpaid family workers	73	0.2	114	0.3

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3)

Table A2: Selected Economic and Educational Characteristics of New Bedford, Fall River and other Cities with Significant Brazilian Communities, 2000

	N. Bedford	Fall River	Boston	Framingham	Hyannis	Somerville
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
In labor force	57.7	59.1	63.6	68.5	61.9	70.6
Unemployed	5.0	4.1	4.6	2.4	2.9	2.5
Not in the Labor force	42.3	40.9	36.4	31.5	38.1	29.4
Unemployment rate	8.7	6.9	7.2	3.5	4.7	3.5
INDUSTRY						
Agric. & fishing	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.1
Construction	7.1	6.3	3.8	4.5	9.3	3.6
Manufacturing	20.7	24.3	6.1	11.5	4.7	7.7
Wholesale trade	4.4	3.7	1.9	3.1	2.1	1.9
Retail trade	12.1	12.5	8.5	12.6	14.7	8.6
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.7	3.4	4.1	2.4	4.6	3.1
Information	2.3	2	4.4	4.5	2.9	5.2
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	4.1	5.4	10.4	7.2	5.5	7.7
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	5.9	5.9	14.9	16.3	8.7	18.5
Educational, health and social services	20.9	20.8	26.8	21.2	23.6	26.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7.4	7.1	9.2	7.3	12.6	8.4
Other services (except public administration)	5.1	4.3	4.7	5.8	5.8	5.3
Public administration	5	4.1	5.1	3.4	4.9	3.5
INCOME IN 1999						
Median family income (dollars)	35,708	37,671	44,151	67,420	54,056	51,243
Male full-time, year-round workers	31,388	31,330	37,435	46,122	41,494	36,333
Female full-time, year-round workers	22,278	22,883	32,421	35,931	30,442	31,418
POVERTY STATUS IN 1999 (percent below poverty level)						
Families	17.3	14.0	15.3	6.0	6.3	8.4
Individuals	20.2	17.1	19.5	8.0	8.8	12.5
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS						
Median monthly rent (dollars)	455	428	803	835	742	874
Median value of owner occupied units	113,500	132,900	190,600	216,700	171,500	214,100
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT (population 25 and older)						
Percent with bachelor's degree or higher	10.7	10.7	35.6	42.3	32.2	40.6

Source: U.S. Census, 2000, Quick Tables

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Table A2: Selected Economic and Educational Characteristics of New Bedford, Fall River and other Cities with Signifi

	N. Bedford	Fall River	Bos
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
In labor force	57.7	59.1	
Unemployed	5.0	4.1	
Not in the Labor force	42.3	40.9	
Unemployment rate	8.7	6.9	
INDUSTRY			
Agric. & fishing	1.1	0.3	
Construction	7.1	6.3	
Manufacturing	20.7	24.3	
Manufacturing		3.7	
Wholesale trade	4.4	3.7	
Retail trade	12.1	12.5	
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.7	3.4	
Information	2.3	2	
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	4.1	5.4	
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	5.9	5.9	
Educational, health and social services	20.9	20.8	
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7.4	7.1	
Other services (except public administration)	5.1	4.3	
Public administration	5	4.1	
INCOME IN 1999			
Median family income (dollars)	35,708	37,671	44
Male full-time, year-round workers	31,388	31,330	37
Female full-time, year-round workers	22,278	22,883	32
POVERTY STATUS IN 1999 (percent below poverty level)			
Families	17.3	14.0	
Individuals	20.2	17.1	
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS			
Median monthly rent (dollars)	455	428	
Median value of owner occupied units	113,500	132,900	190
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT (population 25 and older)			
Percent with bachelor's degree or higher	10.7	10.7	

Source: U.S. Census, 2000, Quick Tables

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Wholesale trade	4.4	3.7	1.9	3.1	2.1	1.9
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Federal government workers	723	1.8	1,273	3.2
Self-employed workers	1,684	4.2	1,371	3.4
Unpaid family workers	73	0.2	114	0.3

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3)