The Production and Negotiation of the 'Good' and the 'Bad' Migrant

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The final group I want to talk about today are illegal immigrants. […] We've got to be so much better at finding these people and getting them out of our country. How do we know when we are getting immigration right? It's when we are getting the right people we need for our economy … and when all those who come here do so for genuine reasons and join with the rest of society in making our country stronger, richer and more secure.

David Cameron, then UK Prime Minister, 2011

I think that the people coming here illegally do possess values which are at odds with our country. We are seeing heightened levels of criminality when related to the people who've come on boats, related to drug dealing, exploitation, prostitution. We need to ensure that we bring an end to the boat crossings. It is becoming a notable feature of everyday crime-fighting in England and Wales. Many people are coming here illegally and they're getting very quickly involved in the drugs trade, in other forms of exploitation.

Suella Braverman, then UK Home Secretary, 2023

Introduction

This chapter explores the role of the state in the production and negotiation of difference in a 'world on the move'. In particular, it is concerned with the consequences of the divide between the 'legal' and 'illegal' migrant, at

both a material and symbolic level, for how Brazilians live and structure their lives in London.

Although political discourse about immigration often works to homogenize the 'migrant' as a symbolic figure in opposition to the 'citizen', immigration policies also work to split migrants into different types according to reason for entering the country (student, family reunion, refugee, temporary worker, highly skilled and business migrant) or legal status ('legal', 'illegal'). Yet categories employed by the state for its own administrative purposes are volatile and do not map onto the realities of the lives of people who move (Anderson, 2013). Most people classed as 'migrants', for instance, enter a country or remain in it for several reasons simultaneously (Martins Junior, 2020a). Nevertheless, the earlier excerpts from both the 2011 speech of then UK Prime Minister David Cameron and the 2023 speech of then UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman illustrate how these administrative migration categories are often taken as fixed, natural, neutral and descriptive, reflecting person's identity (the 'illegal', the 'bad migrant', the 'criminal'), rather than referencing and shaping particular types of relation with the law (Anderson, 2013; Goldberg and Giroux, 2014). As Goldberg and Giroux (2014) observe, this is done within a context of neoliberal policies that criminalize and racialize migration through discourses that deny social structures and individualize the issue of 'illegality'.

This chapter explores how administrative (and moral) categories, the 'legal' and the 'illegal' migrant, impact on how people can live and plan their lives, what rights they have, how they imagine themselves and what forms of sociality they construct in their daily lives. Drawing on empirical research that combines an 18-month ethnography in places of leisure with 33 in-depth interviews with Brazilians in London, the chapter examines the material and symbolic consequences of institutionalized illegality (De Genova, 2002) on the ways in which migrants navigate their lives in London. It is argued that due to the stigma against the 'illegal' migrant, as well as to the exploitation and symbolic violence facilitated by the production of (il)legality, legal categories of migration help to instil perceptions of conflict and division inside the Brazilian population in London, not solidarity derived from common ethnic/national ties – 'ethnic solidarity' (Light and Gold, 2000).

Denaturalizing the state and its (moral) categories

Because of Brazil's history of 'race', class and nation, Brazilians are a particularly interesting lens through which to examine migrants' experiences of legal statuses and their socialities. After the abolition of slavery in 1888, Brazil, influenced by eugenic racial assumptions, embarked on a Whitening project and incentivized European immigration in order to 'civilize' the new

nation by 'improving' its mixed 'blood' (Schwarcz, 1993). A new population of European (and Japanese) migrants was encouraged, concentrated almost entirely in the south and south-east of Brazil. These were regions that, since independence, had acquired a central position in the national economy, initially thanks to the production of coffee and, later, industrialization. At the same time, without access to land or any form of state compensation, an entire class of Black and 'mixed' people – the formerly enslaved and their descendants – as well as lighter-skinned poor Brazilians (often from the north-east) were marginalized both in the configuration of urban space and in the labour market, facing daily exclusion, discrimination, degradation and state violence. This has given a historical spatial feature to the intertwined configuration of 'race' and class in Brazil. (Guimarães, 2002).

Today, Brazil's colonial and racial histories play an important role in determining whether and how journeys are undertaken by Brazilians in Europe. The middle-class, lighter-skinned descendants of European participants in Brazil's Whitening project enjoy greater freedom of movement in Europe than others, since their ancestry means they can acquire European Union passports. Thus, alongside the legislative framework at the time of their arrival, nationality and 'race', as well as the volume and composition of their capital, differently shapes Brazilian migrants' arrival in the UK. Speaking English (cultural capital), having money to pay for a student visa (economic capital), having a partner/family visa or a contact who provides an invitation letter (social capital), having a European passport (national and 'racial' capital), for instance, all shape the social, legal and economic conditions of their journey and stay.

Bourdieu (2014, p 115) draws attention to an 'amnesia of genesis' in which we tend to 'dehistoricize' and naturalize the state and its internal mechanisms. Within these processes, the state – as well as its categories – are taken as 'an object that seems to exist by itself or that was created by nature' (Sayad, 2004, p 280). Such a naturalizing and dehistoricizing process results from the continuous reproduction in our everyday life of what Bourdieu (2014, p 108) calls 'state thought'. This is a form of thought that reflects the mental structures that the state has produced and inculcated in each one of us. This mode of naturalized dehistoricized thought is inscribed within the line of demarcation that in Brazil, for instance, divides lighter and darker-skinned people, and across the world separates nationals from non-nationals, 'legals' from 'illegals', citizens from non-citizens.

'Illegal migration', for instance, is understood by the Home Office as:

> a collective term for many forms of abuse of the immigration rules. It may be entering the country illegally – by attempting to get through the controls we have overseas, or at our border through fraudulent or clandestine entry – or by breaking the immigration rules in the UK – by

working full time having been allowed in to study, or by failing to leave at the end of their stay. (Home Office, 2007, p 8)

In this sense, as Gutierrez-Garza (2013, p 88) states, the term 'illegal migrant', for the Home Office, constitutes an alien-like subject who, by virtue of their 'lack' of proper documentation to enter, stay and work in the country, commits a criminal offence. As a consequence, 'illegality' is framed and naturalized as absence of status (Anderson, 2010). And, yet, as many scholars have shown, 'illegality' is produced by the state through legal frameworks that construct different statuses within immigration categories, and this institutionalized production of 'illegality' has direct consequences for how people can live their lives (Coutin, 2000; De Genova, 2002, 2004; Anderson, 2010). Besides having to deal with exploitation and restricted physical and social mobility due to legal constraints, being categorized as 'illegal' also means being subjected to a symbolic violence that sequesters migrants in 'a space of forced invisibility, exclusion, subjugation and repression' (Coutin, 2000, p 30). This is because 'legal' migrant and 'illegal' migrant are part of a system of differential social judgments and opportunities, consecrated by the state, as well as referencing legal standing (Sayad, 2004). The state – and the law – has the power to create social divisions and a symbolic system of classification that generates moral values and functions based on representations (signs and objects), which places people in differential positions in social space, some of which are heavily stigmatized (see Sayad, 2004; Loyal, 2014).

But immigration law and its categories are in constant flux, changing alongside shifts in the broader social, economic and ideological context. In this sense, '(il)legality', both as a legal category and as social representation, is historically produced within specific contextual power struggles to define what is 'legal' and 'illegal', and in relation to the value that those representations carry (see De Genova, 2002; Loyal, 2014). As the remainder of the chapter shows, the stories of my Brazilian research participants contribute empirical grounding for the effort to denaturalize the institutional divide between the 'legal' migrant and the 'illegal' migrant, in line with Bourdieu's (2014, p 114) broader project of historicizing the state and its categories.

Differential inclusion structuring lives

Drawing on the cases of those who have experienced long periods without regular documentation, the institutional production of the '(il)legal' migrant has differential consequences, both material and symbolic, for Brazilians' lives in London. Some are integrated with different levels of rights, while others are marginalized as 'illegals' without rights. In this sense, border control and immigration policies more generally play an important role in the legal and cognitive production of difference, since they allow both the

establishment of taxonomies and the conceptual hierarchies – such as 'legal' migrant and 'illegal' migrant – that structure the movement of people and thought. Thus, they are centrally involved in the production of symbolic domination and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1987), as physical and political borders are designed to divide the 'other' from the 'citizen', fuelling tensions and projecting as threats those who are – or should be – on the other side of the 'wall' (Goldberg and Giroux, 2014, p 140). Yet, borders, as well as immigration law, are intended to be porous and do not stop all people entering state territories. Rather than putting an end to 'illegality', porous borders result in a (classed and racialized) differential inclusion, leading to differential material distribution and access to goods and services, (re)producing relations of domination, exploitation and subjection, power and resistance (Foucault, 1975; Balibar, 2002; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012; De Genova 2013). The journeys of Brazilians without a European passport and with lower economic and cultural capital are an excellent illustration of such differential inclusion (see Martins Junior, 2020a).

The space of possibilities to enter the country 'legally' is considerably more restricted for those lacking economic capital, who in the case of Brazilians tend to be darker-skinned people without European ancestry. Relying on their social capital and the limited amount of money at their disposal, most try to enter the country as tourists, and information provided by social networks plays a pivotal role in making this attempt successful. As Mezzadra and Neilson (2012, p 69) argue, a constellation of other actors – such as labour brokers, migration agencies, NGOs and go-betweens (including personal friends and relatives) – work along the hierarchized boundaries between 'legality' and 'illegality', profiting, often through exploitation, from the process. These actors are important for these migrants both in the process of border crossing and after they have entered, as they help them develop and employ tactics to live and, sometimes, to regularize their situation in their destination country.[1] But these social networks are directly involved in producing as well as alleviating the multiple personal and economic precarities migrants face once in the country. This can be seen in the case of Brazilians without regular documentation in London, who experience inclusion through multiple layers of precarity.

The differential status of migrants, created by the state, is directly reflected in the stratification of the labour market, which produces different levels of precariousness and exploitation. In particular, as Anderson notes, a cheap and flexible workforce is 'structurally produced by the interaction of employment and immigration legislation' (2010, p 311). Among Brazilians, this precariousness is often realized in interactions with their co-nationals. Unable to obtain formal work because of their lack of regular documentation and low economic and cultural capital (such as the inability to speak English), some Brazilians must rely on their social capital to find informal work and

survive. This, however, can result in a variety of forms of exploitation, including labour exploitation but also exploitation of social reproductive necessities. Take the situation of Adriano, a 44-year-old Black working-class man from São Paulo who arrived in the UK without regular documentation.

> I lost too much money in this city because I didn't have documents. I was cheated and exploited at houses – paying a deposit and then later they wouldn't give it back to me, by working for people who never paid me, and being robbed. The first one who exploited me was my cousin. I called him after I arrived in London. He told me a friend had a room for me, £90 a week, plus a deposit of two months' rent. Later my housemates said they were robbing me – the room was £60 per week and two weeks' deposit. Then, a Brazilian guy, who was the landlord in my second house, offered me a job helping him to refurbish the house. I worked for him for two weeks, non-stop. He said my work was worthy of only one week's rent and did not give me any money. From the contacts at this house, I got a few other jobs and was exploited again. I helped a guy who had a van and worked moving people around London. After two weeks of work, he gave me £100 and said he would give me more later. Of course he didn't. As I was illegal, I kept quiet, better to not pressure. Then I paid a Brazilian guy who told me he would manage to open a bank account for me, without documents, for £150. Later a Brazilian guy who works for a British bank said his bank open accounts for people for free, and I didn't need a visa.

Adriano's journey without regular documentation brings up several analytical points regarding the ambiguous legal production of 'illegality' and its multiple consequences for those subjected to immigration control.

First, we can see that besides being fundamental to entering the country, social capital continues to play a critical role in migrants' lives in London (Tilly, 1990; Portes, 1995). It is through their contacts that they acquire the skills to navigate in the city, find jobs, buy 'fake' documents needed to find work, open bank accounts and access goods and services. Nevertheless, this does not result in a 'generalised reciprocity', as Putnam (2001, p 21; see also Putnam, 1995) calls it, between Brazilians, in which members help each other because they see 'themselves as belonging to the same group of people, who are "in the same ship", and have to co-operate to "survive" in the strange and maybe "hostile" environment they have migrated to' (Den Butter et al, 2007, p 49). Often, the access provided by social networks comes with exploitation and precariousness. As Adriano said, since entering the UK, he has been constantly working for people who don't pay him, receiving far less than the minimum wage and having to accept it because he does not have documents.

Second, the production of hierarchical migratory statuses is consequential not only for the positioning of migrants in the labour market, but also the creation of exploitative conditions in other spheres of migrant life, such as personal relations. Adriano 'was cheated and exploited' by his cousin, by landlords and by people who got him work and documents. Thus, being subject to immigration control becomes an important structuring element in the ways that Brazilians without documentation interact with their co-nationals in London.

'Illegality' also produces lack of solidarity, isolation and fear. Brazilians without regular documentation tend to say they do not trust Brazilians in London, since those with more experience and access to goods and services frequently exploit undocumented newcomers. Thus, instead of talking about 'ethnic solidarity', they talk about the *lack* of solidarity among Brazilians, and about isolation, not community. Adriano told me:

> Life here showed me that I can't trust people until they prove the contrary. I had to develop a defensive mechanism here: not involve myself with Brazilians. I have become a very isolated person. When you are illegal, you are always inferior, so when a Brazilian knows you don't have documents, they automatically feel superior to you. They exploit and threaten you and you can't do anything because you don't have rights. Last month, a Brazilian girl who used to work with me said she wanted to see me. I met her in Elephant and Castle; she took me to a building saying a friend lived there. When I got there, there were four men waiting for me. They punched me and put a knife to my neck. They took my cards and I gave them the pin numbers. I lost £1,500. They let me go after that, but I couldn't do anything, because I don't have documents.

Being an irregular migrant places Adriano in a 'rightless condition' (De Genova, 2010, p 116), in which he cannot access any kind of state protection. This allows him to be easily exploited by others. Thus, being 'legal' or 'illegal' results in a perception of hierarchy inside the Brazilian population, and those positioned on its bottom rung see no solidarity among Brazilian migrants in London. Rather, they speak of Brazilians preying on their vulnerability and subjecting them to violence and exploitation. Becoming isolated is Adriano's way of dealing with the vulnerabilities that result also from the 'production of illegality'. As this production results in social differences that are also inscribed in the symbolic order, through discourses and cognitive classifications, it exercises symbolic, as well as physical, violence (Bourdieu, 1987; Loyal, 2014) on those subjected to migration control. Moreover, as Willen (2007, p 9) argues, 'illegality does not only affect the external structure of migrants' worlds but also shapes their

subjective experience of time, space, embodiment, sociality and self'. One of the primary examples of such symbolic violence shaping the subjective experience of irregular migrants is the constant fear of being deported.

Fear of deportation facilitates subjection and exploitation, exposing irregular migrants to high levels of abuse and humiliation in every sphere of their lives. As we have seen with Adriano's journey, migrants who are without regular documentation tend to accept any kind of working conditions without complaint, as the threat of denunciation and deportation always hangs over their heads. They live in a constant state of 'deportability', as De Genova (2004) calls it, and fear of denunciation facilitates their subordination as a docile and highly exploitable workforce. Another research participant, Guilherme described how he felt in the years he lived in London without regular documentation as follows:

> I was illegal for four years, living in a cage, taking many injustices and being quiet, leaving my house in the morning to go to work not knowing whether I would return or not. It is a horrible sensation – you can't trust anyone. All the time you hear about cases of Brazilians denouncing Brazilians. You live in constant fear – at home, work, on the train. You see police officers, even if they don't look at your face, even if they don't know you're there, you are afraid of them.

For Guilherme, this kind of continuous symbolic violence structures his whole life. His comment about 'living in a cage' vividly captures his sense of 'ever-present vulnerability' (De Genova, 2004, p 178), be it on the train, at work or at home.

This vulnerability creates a continual uncertainty. Guilherme's description of leaving home not knowing if he would be coming back expresses not only a feeling of constant vigilance but also a feeling of temporariness. The fear of deportation traps migrants 'in a vacuous present fraught with anxiety and question marks about tomorrow' (Ahmad, 2008, p 315). This leads to the pressure of having to maximize the 'now', whatever the current opportunities might be, 'taking … injustices and being quiet'. Being exploited and living with constant fear, in turn, reinforces the perception of isolation and the undercurrent of distrust, since 'Brazilians denounc[e] Brazilians', as Guilherme said. But though migrants' criminalized documental status has profound consequences for their lives, they do not necessarily contest the 'state thought' that produces it.

Negotiating the 'good' migrant and the 'bad' migrant

In order to deal with and distance themselves from the stigmatized representation of the 'illegal' or 'bad' migrant, Brazilians tend to legitimate

the state thought which decontextualizes and naturalizes the 'legal'/'illegal' dichotomy and frames it as a matter of individual or class morals. As previously discussed, state categories are more than legal categories; they are part of a symbolic system, which imbues them with moral values and functions and that social agents must constantly negotiate. Citizenship, for example, has historically been a nebulous concept connected to an idea of civility, and its blurry boundaries are not simply defined by law but shaped also by notions of 'race', class and gender (see Mezzadra, 2005; Anderson, 2013).

For Anderson (2013, pp 2–5), modern states do not portray themselves only as collections of people hanging together by a common legal status, but also as an imagined 'community of value', composed of people who share common ideals and exemplary patterns of behaviour, expressed through ethnicity, religion, culture or language. The community of value is populated by 'good citizens', law-abiding and hard-working members of stable and respectable families, who feel they must protect it from those who aren't 'good'. The community of value is defined from the outside by the 'non-citizen' (migrant), who may be associated with a particular legal status, and, from the inside by the 'failed' citizen, individuals and groups imagined as incapable of or failing to live up to liberal ideals, such as criminals, benefit 'scroungers' and others. Thus, not all formal (legal) citizens are 'good' citizens, and the 'non-citizens' or the 'failed' citizens are not properly modern (civilized) compared to the 'good' citizens.

Anderson (2013, p 7) further observes that there is a strong tendency to naturalize stigmatized categories (such as racialized and classed categories) through 'genetic' or 'cultural' explanations. This allows the 'good' citizen and the state to reproduce individualizing discourses of 'success' and 'failure' that do not take into account structural constraints. Such individualizing accounts are also often used by Brazilians to justify the mass of people living as pariahs or 'sub-citizens' in the urban poor peripheries and slums of the country's southern cities (Guimarães, 2002), often represented as a 'criminal class'. When moving to London and finding themselves faced with the possibility of being framed as the pariah of British society, the 'bad'/'criminal' migrants, Brazilians in London tend to also draw on individualizing explanations to negotiate British categories and hierarchies, and my data suggest it is not only the state and 'good' citizens that deploy and reproduce stigmatized categories and the associated moral discourse; in order to deal with stigmatized representations of migrants, Brazilians with regular documentation to live in the UK tend to reproduce the oversimplified and individualizing binary distinction between the 'legal' and the 'illegal'. This is particularly true of those who enter the country with a student visa and later manage to qualify for indefinite leave to remain and/or British citizenship. Fernando, a 39-year-old lighter-skinned middle-class Brazilian man proudly told me:

> I am the living proof that you can get a British passport without doing anything dodgy, like these Brazilians do – buying a marriage and so on. There are some days that I open my drawer and grab my passport and look at it. I feel so happy, proud, I can't describe it. I get emotional when I hold it. This is why I always tell people, 'Come here as a student, get a job, make yourself indispensable to the company, and that's it. You get it.' I didn't do anything dodgy and I got it.

Despite the fact that his own journey is both structured by privilege and full of 'illegalities', he still insists that anyone can be legal 'without doing anything dodgy', following his example. Fernando had decided to come to London in 2004 to study English for one year, a skill crucial to his career development given he had graduated in marketing. Fernando arrived in London with a one-year student visa and accommodation paid for two months. With the help of a friend living in London, Fernando started working as a kitchen porter in his second week in the city, as soon as he had received his national insurance. In the first two months, Fernando managed to go to school in the morning and work in the afternoons and evenings. However, like many other 'good migrants', after a while he stopped attending classes: 'In my third month, I had already decided to stay longer, so I got a second job to be able to work to renew my visa'.

The first time I met him in a pub in south London, Fernando, who was with his friend, continually emphasized that he would never 'do anything dodgy or stay here illegally'; hence he kept renewing his visa. Yet in order to do so, he had to work more than the maximum number of hours permitted by his student visa. By working long hours in 'sub-jobs' that he 'would never do in Brazil', such as cleaning and catering, Fernando managed to stay on a student visa for four years – two years taking English courses and two years on a marketing course. After this, and through a contact made in London, he secured employment in a marketing company that provided him with a work visa.

Though Fernando had graduated with a BA in marketing in Brazil, he took an MBA in graphic design and interior decoration before coming to London. The company that sponsored his work visa informed the Home Office that he met its need for a graphic designer who specialized in interior decor. However, Fernando told me: 'my qualifications did not actually matter for the job, but it was the only way the company could justify the need for my work visa. I worked hard there. They needed me. Also, the manager had become a good friend of mine, so he helped me a lot with this'. In 2014, Fernando was entitled to apply for indefinite leave to remain, which later allowed him to apply for and eventually be granted British citizenship.

Fernando's story is similar to others I heard when talking to people who would be considered 'good' migrants, here for 'genuine' reasons and helping

to make the country stronger and richer, and who viewed themselves as 'good' and upright people who would never 'do anything dodgy'. But the tactics that Fernando used to 'legally' stay and acquire 'citizenship' – studying, working and paying tax – were dependent on his economic, social and cultural capital. He had money to pay for a student visa;[2] contacts in the company that employed him helped him with his work visa; and he used his academic qualifications to make his case in the visa application. Furthermore, his tactics to maintain his 'legality' were often technically 'illegal'. He broke rules around the maximum working hours for those present on a student visa, and the company that provided him with a work visa invented the fact that they specifically required a graphic designer specializing in interior decor. His journey thus troubles the notion of a naturalized, 'fixed' distinction between the 'good' ('legal') and the 'bad' ('illegal') migrant. It is also important to recognize that the 'good' migrant's legality depends on the 'repertoire of possibilities' that the system offers (Bourdieu, 2014). Fernando was only able to effectively deploy his tactics because of the legal context in which he arrived and lived in the UK, which enabled him to apply for British citizenship after living in the country for ten years. Timing played an important role in Fernando's journey to citizenship and, thus, his capacity to see himself and be seen as a 'good' migrant.

The student visa route to entering the country legally, which Fernando took, was also used by many other 'good' migrants. Nevertheless, from 2009, with the implementation of the points-based system and the increasingly strict immigration laws, things began to change (Allen and Sumption, 2015; Davies, 2015). The new immigration rules meant that access to student visas was now limited to people with the economic resources to stay in the country without paid work. In 2009, English-language students were allowed to work up to a maximum of 20 hours per week; in 2011, they were no longer allowed to work. The renewing of student visas was also prevented in order to continue in the country regularly, many people would have to obtain a work visa and complete the ten-year residency required for requesting indefinite leave to remain, as Fernando did. Brazilians who arrived after these changes in the law or those who, before the law changed, had not been in the country long enough to apply for indefinite leave to remain had a different experience. Indeed, changes to immigration law since 2008 have increasingly restricted the possibilities for 'good' migrants to remain so on their journeys in the UK. This did not necessarily result in them leaving the country; rather, they have had to develop other tactics to try to maintain their 'legal' status, even if this means entering into situations they thought they never would.

Fernando's meritocratic 'self-made man' understanding of his own 'legality' is a clear example of how the dominant neoliberal discourse, which stresses individual self-responsibility alongside a denial of the social, is reproduced,

confirming the legitimacy of the established order in the eyes of those subjected to the power of the state (Bourdieu, 2014). Fernando's lack of self-critical reflection on the conditions that made it possible for him to obtain his British citizenship exposes the mechanisms of a symbolic power that dehistoricizes and naturalizes 'legalities' and 'illegalities' by reducing everything to the individual's will and actions.

Burying the contradictory and structural dependency of his 'legality' and legitimating state thought by emphasizing that he acquired his citizenship in 'the right way' is a way for Fernando to distance himself from his previous stigmatized condition as 'migrant' and 'non-citizen' and move as close as possible to what Anderson (2013) calls the 'good citizen'. This move also means distinguishing himself from other Brazilians, who may have also acquired citizenship, but did so through 'dodgy' means and thus 'fail' to measure to the ideals of citizenship. The impulse to divide other Brazilians into the 'good' and the 'bad' is shared by many other research participants, and the moral boundaries tend to be drawn according to context, in class and regional terms.

Brazilians in London often negotiate '(il)legality' as a classed and racialized (moral) category. Research in Amsterdam (Roggeveen and Meeteren, 2013) and some cities of the US (Oliveira, 2003) has found that Brazilian migrants often discuss 'illegality' in classed terms, associated with skills and morality. Roggeveen and Meeteren (2013) shows how most documented Brazilian migrants describe their undocumented peers as 'vulgar' people with whom they do not wish to be associated. As such, these authors divide Brazilians in Amsterdam into two groups:

> From now on, we shall refer to these two groups as regular and irregular immigrants. […] Regular migrants are usually higher educated and from upper middle class or middle class families. Respondents from the second group are lower-educated, from lower middle class families, and they have an irregular residence status or they have a history of irregular migration. (Roggeveen and Meeteren, 2013, pp 1085–6)

Thus, for Roggeveen and Meeteren, the migrant from the lower classes is 'irregular', and those with 'regular' status are from classes further up the hierarchy and hold this status whether or not they have a history of irregular migration. Yet this blunt correlation between class and (ir)regularity is problematic. As already argued, the 'legal'/'illegal' binary does not always sustain itself empirically. Many middle-class Brazilians stay in London with irregular documentation for a while or keep their regular status through irregular means. Moreover, representations of these categories are classed and racialized in ways that go beyond the issue of actually being regular or irregular, allowing people to avoid classifying themselves as 'illegal' even

when they experience a situation of irregular documentation, as is the case for many middle-class Brazilians in London.

Those from the middle class who use irregular tactics, such as arranged marriage, to acquire European/British citizenship, tend to justify their own 'bad'/'illegal' actions in two ways. First, they blame structural conditions and deny their own responsibility. Second, by talking about class, they differentiate themselves from 'other' (inferior) Brazilians, whose acts always lack 'good faith'. This was the explanation given to me by Priscila.

Coming from a White upper-middle-class background and with a BA in business, Priscila came to London in 2007 to study English for one year. Like many others, she stayed longer than planned. In 2011, when I interviewed her for the first time, her narrative was similar to Fernando's. She was proud of being in the country 'legally', as she had always renewed her student visa, and she distinguished herself from 'those Brazilians' who were here 'illegally'. However, unlike Fernando, Priscila had not been in the country long enough to acquire permanent leave to remain before the law changed. Thus, in order to try to keep her situation of 'legality' and continue to see herself as 'good' migrant, she had to navigate differently within the new immigration legislation. Thus, when I last met Priscila, in 2011, she was applying to renew her visa with the help of a Brazilian lawyer. The lawyer's idea was to try to renew her student visa knowing the Home Office would refuse, then keep appealing, which would give her a few more years in the country 'legally'. However, after receiving £5,000 from Priscila to renew her visa, the lawyer disappeared with the money. Being left without regular status prompted Priscila to do something she had previously told me she would never do: get married for a visa.

> I am doing it, but it is with someone that I trust. I wouldn't do it if I weren't in this situation, but I am only in this situation because of that idiot who stole from me [the Brazilian lawyer] and because the law changed and I couldn't renew my visa anymore. I am not doing it like these illegal Brazilians who come here to save money and buy a piece of land in Brazil. They get here and the first thing they do is pay a stranger to get married and that's it. I always did everything right, always spent a lot of money renewing my visa, but things changed.

As we can see, even though she does something 'illegal' by arranging a marriage for a visa, Priscila still sees herself as a 'good' migrant, justifying her actions by saying the situation is not her fault. She is only doing this because the lawyer defrauded her and because 'the law changed'. Thus, when talking about her personal contravention of the law, she uses social constraints as mitigating factors. This is in direct contrast to the way she judges the 'illegal' situation of other people, which she assumes is simply a matter of individual

will. Thus, in the end, she retains the individualizing logic to distance herself from 'the other Brazilian' – the 'bad' migrant – who does not come to the UK for 'genuine reasons', as David Cameron put it in 2011.

Moreover, Priscila uses class to distance herself from 'these illegal Brazilians' who also acquire European citizenship but lack the moral qualifications to become 'good' citizens. As discussed elsewhere (Martins Junior, 2020c), middle-class Brazilians differentiate their own pursuit of cultural capital from 'other' migrant Brazilians' (assumed) pursuit of economic capital as a way to remake class boundaries and distinguish themselves from the 'economic migrant', who lacks civility, is morally inferior and would do anything for money. Priscila moralizes the class boundary when she stresses that, even though she is getting married to acquire European citizenship, she did not come to London with the intention of 'paying a stranger to get married' for her own financial gain. Seeing herself as a 'good migrant', with a 'genuine reason to be here', she does not consider that her use of 'illegal' means to achieve 'legality' makes her a 'bad migrant', or a criminal. This is not least because Priscila views herself through the Brazilian lens that has historically constructed her as 'good citizen', someone who belongs to the 'community of value' and so is quite the opposite to the poor and racialized Brazilian bodies who form the 'criminal class' and who constitute the real 'illegals' in the UK. Again, difference moves with the Brazilian migrants.

However, working-class Brazilians without regular documentation also reproduce state thought and try to morally differentiate themselves from stigmatized 'others' when discussing their co-nationals in London. This is done by negotiating 'illegality' through individual and regional morality. After telling me about his experience without regular documentation in London, Adriano explained that he was living in more fear due to the recent changes in policy on 'illegality', yet he understood and supported the government's stricter and more punitive immigration controls because

> they give everything to people here, the quality of life here is very good, and the government here has the country in hand, the way that they want it to be. So they need to keep order by coercing and curbing these illegals who come from all parts of the world wanting to take advantage of the country. These people don't come with good intentions. They come to get the money, the benefits. There are a lot of Brazilians here who are tricking the system, so the government needs to get these guys and send them out, because they are tricking the system and destroying these countries, like a lot of goianos[2] here. This is why I don't mix with them.

It is important to note that like Priscila, Adriano reproduces state thought while simultaneously differentiating himself from the 'illegals' who are

'tricking the system' and 'destroying [the country]'. Because he comes from a working-class background and migrated, in large part, to improve his economic capital, and because he is racialized as Black, he cannot use class or 'race', as Priscila does, to try to distinguish himself from the stigma of the 'illegal'. The option that Adriano has is to play with Brazilian regional differences, and he therefore uses the figure of the goiano to crystallize the representation of the inferior 'other' Brazilian in London.[3]

More generally, my conversation with Adriano highlights how the fear and subjection people experience when living irregularly can be accompanied by a certain validation of the established order. Even after telling me all the precarities in his life, caused by not having regular documentation, Adriano expresses support for the government's immigration policies. Following Loyal (2014), we can see here how the legal and cognitive classification of '(il)legal migrant' is part of a symbolic system in which 'arbitrary relations of power are masked, disguised and exercised with the complicity of those over whom it is exercised'.[4] Adriano's comments highlight the durability of state thought on migration. Here we see that its constancy and repetition (Bourdieu, 2014) can make even those who are the most affected by its real and symbolic violence imagine the 'legal'/'illegal' divide as a matter of individual choice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed how the production and negotiation of difference in a globalized world are shaped by the state creating and imposing social divisions through legal categories, namely those of the 'legal' and 'illegal' migrant. When examining the divide between 'legal' and 'illegal' migrants empirically, some important analytical points emerge. '(Il)legality' is strongly dependent on structural constraints that open opportunities for some which are foreclosed to others. Those with lower economic and cultural capital, for instance, have a more restricted space of possibilities through which to enter and live in the country 'legally'. This results in a classed differential inclusion in which some individuals are integrated with varied levels of rights, while others are only marginally included as 'illegals', without rights. Within this marginal inclusion, many migrants are exposed to high levels of exploitation in the labour market and in their personal relations. They narrate experiences of fear and isolation in which the Brazilian population in London is seen as not just 'lacking in solidarity' but also, in some cases, predatory and treacherous. Nevertheless, despite the differential inclusion and symbolic violence resulting from immigration law, state thought, which naturalizes and individualizes 'illegality', is frequently legitimized by Brazilians. This is especially evident when Brazilians try to distance themselves from the (classed/racialized) representation of the 'bad', 'illegal' migrant. As a consequence, 'being legal', as well as being a 'good citizen',

becomes a (racialized/classed) aspiration of the self. And yet the ways in which migrants are able to negotiate this representation are also circumscribed by structural constraints, such as class and region. Engaging with stigmatized representations of 'illegal' migrants is one way in which Brazilians in London reinforce social differentiations among the migrant population.

Notes

[1] For tactics developed by Brazilian migrants to enter in the country and then formalize their situation, see Martins Junior (2014, 2020b).

[2] 'Goiano' refers to someone from the centre-western state of Goiás. The figure of the goiano is generally referenced by Brazilians in London as the most 'inferior' element of their population. This crystallized figure of 'the Brazilian other' is then managed, by both goianos and non-goianos in London, through markers of class, 'race', gender, documental status and space (see Martins Junior, 2020b).

[3] For further discussion on regional differences among Brazilians in London, see Martins Junior (2020b).

[4] It is important to remember that in some cases, immigrant groups do organize resistance, such as the mass mobilizations of migrants in the US stating: "'¡Aquí Estamos, y No Nos Vamos!" [Here we are, and we're not leaving!]' (De Genova, 2010).

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