

The struggle to belong

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Brazilian territories-networks in urban Suriname

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This paper looks at the emergence of territories-networks of Brazilian migrants in Suriname and particularly Paramaribo, the country's capital. Increasing in numbers since the 1980s due to the cross-border expansion of gold mining in the Amazon Basin, Brazilians make up close to 5% of Suriname's population. Many of them maintain an irregular migration status and move back and forth between mining areas and Paramaribo. In the latter, the Brazilian presence is particularly conspicuous in a quarter popularly known as *Klein Belém* (Little Belem), where there is a cluster of businesses catering to miners with a broad range of goods and services from work supplies to personal items. With Portuguese also widely spoken on the streets and public spaces, the quarter constitutes a territorialized expression of Brazilian migration to Suriname, which migrants use as a platform to maintain fluid ties with both mining settlements in the rain forest and their homelands. Yet the consolidation of this territory-network also responds to the highly stigmatized position of Brazilians in Surinamese society and the generalized perception of migrants as illegal miners and sex workers. Furthermore, the increasing demographic presence and economic significance of this ethnically distinct migrant group destabilizes the precarious social order achieved in multicultural Paramaribo through the communalist politics of *apanjaht* after the decades of post-independence turmoil. Relying on field-based observations and interviews as well as media research and secondary statistics, the paper focuses on the causes and consequences of Brazilian stigmatization in urban Suriname. The paper has three sections. The first section delineates the economic and political factors in both countries leading to increasing migration related to gold mining. The second section explains how stigmas translate into important consequences for the everyday lives of migrants and their right to participate in the social production of urban space. The third section engages with their coping strategies and the spatial practices whereby they establish distanced social networks while also negotiating a place in the city of a hostile receiving society. Engaging with the geographies of Little Belem not only contribute a little-known case study to research on migration to the cities of the Global South, it also contributes a spatially explicit approach to studying the various mechanisms behind

their multiple instances of inclusion/exclusion.

FIRST SECTION

Between the mid-1980s and early 1990s, gold mining in Brazil underwent structural changes due to several factors including gold price fluctuations in world markets. Restructuring provided a new scenario of cross-border migration for Brazilian miners in search of other areas for development activity in the Amazon Basin, and particularly the Guianas. During that same period, Suriname was experiencing one of its most delicate political episodes since independence in 1975 - the civil war, which divided the country and deepened the isolation of Maroon groups. Their access to state-provided goods and services was limited further, if not cut off altogether as e.g. in education and health services and energy supply. Maroons were hence forced to develop survival strategies based on gold extraction, which generated a labor demand for waves of Brazilian migrants entering the country irregularly. Migrant networks consolidated within this complex historical context of major shifts in both countries.

In the 1980s the Brazilian Amazon experienced a gold rush, which rapidly resulted in unprecedented migration to the region (UN, 2002). The search for ore boomed, fueled by attractive international prices. Yet, due to regulatory weaknesses, most of the activity developed informally and hence faced growth constraints that limited production and employment. Informality and the sector's invisibility also resulted in widely varying estimations of the extent of mining in the region. While MacMillan (1995) estimates 300,000 miners, their numbers reach one million according to Feijão and Pinto (1990).

Oversight problems and risks of incalculable capital flight led the Brazilian state to impose stringent restrictions on gold mining, which not only strengthened surveillance over environmentally sensitive areas but also repositioned migratory flows beyond national borders, which not only affected mining but also ancillary activities. A clear example is found in networks of sex workers. Prostitution trailed along the expanding mining front and previously national operations were hence reconfigured to complex transnational networks of Brazilian sex workers as well as women trafficked for sexual exploitation (OLIVEIRA, 2011).

Rapid technological, economic and geopolitical changes occurred before Brazil's Mining Code of 1967 could be adapted to the new context (Mathis, 1993; Pinto, 1993; Cleary, 1992; Höfs, 2006). Of particular significance for the activity's expansion was the US decision to abandon the dollar/gold parity amid a major macroeconomic crisis in the early 1970s, which propelled international prices (Mathis, 1995a: 3). Therefore, gold miners rushed to the Amazon Basin, with important consequences not only for Brazil but also other countries in the region such as Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Guyana and Suriname (Cleary, 1992).

With rising prices, miners sought more effective techniques to scale up extraction. Rapid mechanization occurred; extraction moved over to previously untapped areas by incorporating more powerful drudges and barges; and miners' settlements (*baixões*) were enlarged (Mathis, 1995a, Macmillan, 1995). Several areas witnessed the arrival of thousands of mining pioneers. Prominent examples are found in Serra Pelada (Pará) and the state of Roraima state in mining for two reasons. These sites are of critical importance for the present discussion for they developed into important nodes near international borders from which Brazilian miners would later move to neighboring countries but they were also the object of the most conspicuous state intervention and used as exemplars for the need of enhanced sector-wide regulations.

The implementation of stricter controls occurred in two phases distinguished by the overall goals of the Brazilian state within each period as well as its external economic and political constraints. The institutions created in the late 1970s, such as e.g. the National Department for Mineral Production (*Departamento Nacional de Produção Mineral* or DNPM), were guided by the imperative to diminish the country's trade and fiscal deficits of major concern after the abrupt rise of international oil prices. While the goal was to regularize extractive activities and subject it to taxation through official miners' registries, environmental degradation was not an explicit state concern. Furthermore, framed within prevailing developmentalist approaches to the Amazon at the time, interventions focused on the protection of national territories and borderland areas and the region's integration to the country's metropolitan cores.

Yet, major changes occurred in supra-national arenas in the 1980s. Increased calls for environmental protection and the rights of indigenous populations pressured the Brazilian state to further regulate gold mining in order to play its role as "partner of the new global ecological awareness" (Costa, 1992: 70). A new mining code passes in July of 1989 (Law No. 7.805) and the miners' registry is eliminated. Mining is now seen as an enterprise-based, rather than individual or artisanal, activity and miners are increasingly construed as environmental predators (Mathis, 1995b: 07). Initial lack of compliance leads President Collor de Mello to announce the Operation Free Forest (*Operação Selva Livre* - OSL) military-backed intervention in 1990, which in less than a year translates into a virtual end to illegal mining in the Brazilian Amazon. Enforcers blast illegal jungle runways for airplanes transporting gold and they destroy mining machinery so that owners cannot restart their activity in less monitored areas. Many displaced miners move to neighboring countries where regulations are less stringent and the allure of unfettered profit larger, thereby extending networks based on gold and diamond mining transnationally. Articulating the new commodity chains requires not only negotiation with their political systems, often based on corruption and bribery, but also the establishment of new platforms for the supply of goods and services in their cities and transportation nodes.

Among receiving countries, Suriname stands out for both its internal complexity and the growing numbers of Brazilian migrants arriving particularly after OSL. The initial wave of miners arrives in the midst of the country's civil war (1986-1992) and the rural Maroon population's upheaval against the urban-based military regime. Violent military repression of the Suriname National Liberation Army or Jungle Commando translated into the looting and destruction of numerous villages believed to be supporting them. It also led to local populations to establish strategic partnerships with arriving miners from Brazil, who in exchange of support supplied them economic resources and new extractive techniques critical to their survival at a time of governmental shutdown and complete lack of public services. In fact, the partnership has continued and is destabilizing the country's inherited socio-economic and racial order, whereby rural Maroons were traditionally subordinated to coastal urban populations from different

ethnicities. It also creates tensions between Brazilian newcomers and the latter, adding to the challenges that irregular migrants face in the receiving country.

Estimating the number of Brazilian miners in Suriname is challenging due to lack of official records, their social inconspicuousness and high transiency. Yet some estimates put their number at 20,000 strong, scattered in hundreds of mines through the country (ABS, 2006; Theije, 2007). In addition to miners, other Brazilians also cross the border without proper documents in search of gold from mining-related activities. Their routes are more complex and estimating their numbers more challenging. However, most Brazilians in Suriname are originally from the states of Pará and Maranhao, even though they enter the country from border areas through various multimodal routes that lead them directly to mining areas such as Benzdorp and Antino.

Hence, Brazilians have contributed to the development of gold extraction in Suriname that has surpassed bauxite mining and agriculture as a pillar economic activity for the country and become a main source of foreign currency along drug trafficking and remittances from the Surinamese diaspora in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the expansion of mining stimulated the development of ancillary economic activities in towns, sometimes located hundreds of kilometers away from extractive sites. These include food, clothing and prostitution, and are predicated upon complex flows of goods and workers oscillating constantly between mines and towns (Hoogbergen; Kruijt, 2004; Höfs, 2006).

SECOND SECTION

As explained in the previous section, since the mid-1980s and especially since the beginning of the 1990 Suriname has received thousands of Brazilians, especially the northern region, whose route is also becoming more dense and complex by account the increased number of people seeking that fate. Data published by the Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek (ABS, 2009) demonstrate the character of this flow has increased Brazil → Suriname at the time of today. Since the early 1990s, the Brazilian contingent of migrants has increased accordingly - in 2004 was recorded the entry of 4,260 Brazilians, while in the following years: 5818 (2005), 7013 (2006) and 7474 (2007). It should be noted that despite the existence of several established networks

with several countries due to historical formation of Suriname, the Brazilians currently represent the third group that migrates to this country, then only the Netherlands and Guyana.

Mostly the entrance is granted through the tourist visa, but the vast majority of quantitative shifts to work in the mines through the woods and stay there for years. In addition to the areas of extraction, concentration Brazil in Suriname is more significant in Paramaribo, which are located mostly in Tourtonne (*Ressort Blauwgrond* situated in the north of Paramaribo) that due to the large number of Brazilians in place is widely known as Klein Belém (or Belenzinho).

The invisibility and secrecy of the activity performed complicate the analysis regarding the number of them Brazilians who live and work in the mines in these countries, either in extract or in the activities and services offered in *corrutela*¹. According to the censuses, the number of Brazilian residents representing approximately 6,000 in Paramaribo (*Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek Censuskantoor*, 2006), which had the largest concentration of Brazilians in urban areas in the country. However, there are unofficial estimates that between 30,000 to 40,000 recorded in Suriname, thereby introducing a significant number of Brazilians in this intense floating-stream mining, mining town, whose majority live illegally (THEIJE, 2007). Many people, after spending months in the mines (and even years), moving to the capital in order to relax and enjoy the *bamburro*² in hotels and night clubs filled with Brazilian working in sex work. The hotels have a high turnover rate, considering that miners and there are always girls coming and going off to the mines.

The Brazilian territoriality in this portion of the city is reflected in the landscape, with license plates and signs are in Portuguese. Walking through the main streets of Tourtonne is like being in a city, dedicated prospectors in northern Brazil: Products sold, music and language practiced in environments no way resembles the Dutch language foreign to the vast majority who are illiterate Brazilian adventure neighboring country.

¹ Location where commerce clusters, together with recreational and socialization activities. This center, for the most part, has an open street in the middle of the forest with some improvised camps acting as markets, radio broadcasters, nightclubs and bars.

² An expression used by miners (*garimpeiros*) when someone hits rich quick by finding a large amount of gold.

The city of Belem, state capital of Para, is the main referral center of Brazilians who live and work in Suriname. This important city in northern Brazil, Brazilians lead to Suriname from products and consumer electronics, such as machinery and tools for mining, ethnic foods, clothing, household items and hygiene products and cleaning (Höfs, 2006: 53) .

Thus, Brazilians reterritorialise constituting an infrastructure and a *modus vivendi* to accommodate facing newcomers in their social networks already established. However, such networks and relationships, according Höfs (2006) are constructed and marked from the access and transit in one of four groups defined at the heart of the Brazilian community in Suriname: traders (considered the "elite" community), the miners, the *plocs*³ and religious (mainly Protestant religion). However, despite such distinctions exist within the Brazilian community are not airtight and inert, since many individuals are present in more than one category, whose position is closely tied to identity interests and circumstances imposed. Another point to be stressed concerns the Belenzinho which is the central Brazilian city of territoriality in Suriname, in which even the existence of distinct groups, those living and traveling in the same spaces, participating in a common routine and obeying the rules established in these spaces. It should be noted that traders are seen by the Brazilian community as the "elite" because they act in the collective representation with the embassy and other agencies, besides being responsible for the promotion of most parties and social events. This "elite" of the Brazilian community in various interviews, is positioned unfavorably and the presence of the miners as *plocs*, seconded by TLC (46 years, a merchant who lived for more than 11 years in Suriname): *"The Surinamese review and not like the Brazilians because of the miners who live and plocs getting in trouble, fighting and tarnishing our image of Brazil in Suriname"*. However, despite identifying several narratives of merchants complaining about the presence of negative and *plocs* miners, their businesses are installed in Suriname and develop their activities geared almost exclusively to serve the mining and prostitution (which are the activities that most Brazilians are directly involved). In this case, although traders do constantly question the distinction between groups of Brazilians in Suriname, such activities carried on by

³ A miners' expression to refer to a sex worker ("She is a ploc").

groups are inextricably linked. Although they are doubly discriminated against and passed over (by other Brazilians and Surinamese society) and the miners *plocs* are the classes that have the highest purchasing power and that move the economy from much of the country because they are responsible for the circulation of gold in relations everyday and the delivery of remittances to Brazil. Thus, the gold miners and *plocs* are the pivot points between the production areas of mining and trade in Paramaribo, and the stigma of prostitution and the miner extended to other Brazilian immigrants living in the city. Although not representing the Brazilians in their totality, the Surinamese associates the Brazilian imagination closely linked to gold mining and sex, the references have a decisive influence in interpersonal relationships even those that perform other functions (Höfs, 2006).

In Suriname, especially in the city, the Brazilians are perceived as a constant threat to the “ethnic balance” because the Brazilian community in spite of not being represented only by miners and *plocs* is closely associated with those two actors. Both the Brazilians and the miners are constantly harassed *plocs*, which is considered the first in the imagination as Surinamese usurper of its natural assets (for extracting the gold and send illegal remittances to Brazil without paying taxes to the country), while the second is seen as unworthy according to the traditions of the country, as well as perform a detailed activity contributes to destabilize the family harmony Surinamese society. During the interview, a Surinamese highlights the main reasons that cause the bias of many of his fellow miners in relation to – *“they come here illegally, withdraw our gold, do not pay taxes, send our wealth to Brazil, and disrespect our culture Brazilian traditions and even destroy many families”*.

Accordingly, we affirm that the miners and *plocs* are the amalgam of the Brazilian community in Suriname, which represents the meaning of life and spring proactive economic relations, in addition to stigmatize all Brazilians involved or not with these two activities. Such stigma is directly reflected in business development, even for traders in the country legally. The absence of a statutory legal framework hinders the ability of Brazilians seek to legalize the shop and renting a property in his own name (Höfs, 2006). This situation leads to a significant degree of aid dependency of Surinamese to

answer for them, resulting in a vulnerability regarding the ease of their socio-territorial practices.

Another aspect to note is the popping sound territorial than most Brazilians emphasize in his speeches, because faced with a society as complex and based on the ethnicization division of labor, the Brazilians feel their refusal to be labeled, in the face of collective identities Surinamese, and relegated to hard labor in the mines and the practice of prostitution. This ethnicization in Suriname is so striking that easily perceive that territorial division of labor: i) have the Hindustani and buildings are predominant presence in electronics stores, ii) the Chinese act as owners of markets, grocery and sale of products imported from China; iii) the Javanese in shops selling products geared toward the needs of day-to-day, and iv) the blacks occupy most public offices.

In this sense, it is clear that the exclusion and racism is manifested through the ethnicization. These exclusionary practices have explicit contours of discrimination and segregation manifested not only at work but in the spaces where the Brazilian suffered various forms of racism. That said, this produces ethnicization enclosed territories that impose boundaries of social exclusion even within the company in Suriname, where the practice of access-control-deprivation freedom, humanity, inhumanity most emphatic win denotation (Fernandes, s/d). So look for the Surinamese and the imaginary, Klein Bethlehem is the locus of capital dominated by prostitution, violence, drugs, and especially the lack of morals and good character, being a miner and *plocs* stronghold, thus concealing true meaning and role of the Brazilian community in this country: how foreign labor force that increasingly contributes to leverage the country's economy and handle the trade and established businesses in the capital.

Another way that contributes to the spread of prejudice against the Brazilians is the media, especially local newspapers. Thus, the media are part of a logic of production and / or co-production of racist imagery in society, influencing the development and dissemination of stereotypes and prejudices (Wieviorka, 1998). In Suriname we have several examples, such as coverage of Operation Clean Sweep conducted by Surinamese state, according to the version of the report, aimed to monitor the mines and the miners to *“fight crime and restore law and justice in Suriname”* (Zandgrond, 2008).

It should be mentioned that the Surinamese society does not consider the notion of Apanjaht for the Brazilian community, because it does not recognize as part of their society, despite the Brazilian more than 5% of the population (the numbers on the Brazilian presence in Suriname oscillate between 3% and 10%, considering the fluidity of the Brazilians and the constant mobility Brazil-Suriname-Brazil, we are considering 5% as a quantitative community resident in the country). Although the Surinamese Apanjaht be the expression to understand its plural society, which seeks to aggregate the different instead of consolidating a single speech focused on the we Surinamese absence at its core the dominance of a narrative about the Surinamese, but several on different social groups - Indians, Chinese, Creoles, Maroons, East Indians and Javanese (França, 2004: 71) - the Brazilian is summarily excluded because it is considered only as an ethnic group facing the gold mining and prostitution, which aim is to accumulate wealth and return to Brazil.

THIRD SECTION

The predominant presence of Brazilians illegally added to the hostility of the Surinamese, both in daily practices in media discourse, contribute to the Brazilian establish strategies for survival and solidarity, in addition to structuring networks in Brazil. The purpose of this section is to discuss the survival strategies of the Brazilian community as well as their social networks as a distant landmark, this Brazilian reterritorialized, but living in a situation of “territorial detachment” in Suriname.

That said, the group of Brazilian migrants in Suriname is experiencing an inter-territoriality, by extrapolating the scales toward the world interrelacional through networking inter-territorial, whose alliances, joints and connections (from many different directions, from the economic up even emotional) constructed by the actors involved in different territories, thus creating networks and flows between them (Vainer, 2008; Almeida, 2009). So, those territories network-emerge at the heart of inter-territorial nature of individual and collective practices as a result of the imperative of networks, the growth of mobility, new temporalities and territoriality.

This territoriality, as pointed out by Bourdieu (1995), is of power and manifests itself due to the diffusion in the social life of concrete and symbolic ways. Klein in

Bethlehem, the Brazilian establish a territorial dimension based on the relation of belonging to the group, whose range of reference is the community itself (Haesbaert, 2005), establishing benchmarks for these parameters from their practices and strategies of survival and territorial identities. In this sense, the migrant group (the Brazilian community) is to find the flow of networks a way to reterritorialize, establishing territories-articulated network of reference with their territories in Brazil.

In this context, the Brazilians who live and work in Suriname live in the middle of this inter-territoriality, for the maintenance of relations with Brazil, it's closest relationship in areas linked to their country of origin than with regions of conviviality everyday life in Suriname. We can illustrate strategies for consolidation and development of this fluidity of closer relations between territories in Brazil and Suriname through two characteristic examples: the central radio and remittances.

The radio stations play an important role in communication among Brazilians living in Suriname and their links with Brazil, as well as all communications in mining. Search jobs in *baixões*, send orders, requests, conversations with relatives and even dating are some of the many uses of radio in the mines of central Suriname and Klein in Bethlehem. This is the primary means of communicating with the mines "outside world", as many men and women come to stay year without leaving the mines. Through a central radio you can talk anywhere and with any cell phone, and the clerk of the mediator talks (up to repeat what was said for the other person). In mining the radio stations are in the shops or nightclubs, while in the cities, work in homes or even in some trades. It is common to find several radio stations operating in neighborhoods of Brazilian cities that have arisen or been found during the El Dorado ahead of expansion of mining in the Amazon. There are few advertisements on radio stations (both in Suriname and Brazil), because disclosure of the locations of operation occurs by means of verbal information between the miners and other stakeholders.

The radio stations were built from the demand of the mine (initially in Brazil and then in other countries with a strong Brazilian presence), and a communication strategy with suppliers, friends and relatives that persists to this day. Through communication by radio stations, you can request purchase of utensils for the mining, clothing and food products that are shipped from Brazil to supply the stores in Bethlehem and Klein

corrutela mining. This same media close family ties, in which relatives maintains regular communication, and contribute to attracting new Brazilians to work in the mines in Suriname.

The identity of referential links from the home country, and producing a territorial sense, it also fosters relationships based on trust. This situation can be exemplified by a remittance services to families living in Brazil, because they are based on verbal agreements, which Brazilians claim to rely only on the service to send money achieved by Brazilians who work in this sector.

Another aspect to be highlighted is the ethnic solidarity, as is common in Brazil help their fellow newcomers in Suriname providing shelter, food and even alert to work in the mines in Suriname. In discussing the subject JPR (49 years, a businessman who lived for more than 14 years in Suriname) notes: *“If the Brazilians do not help the newbies who arrive suffer much, because they depend on the Surinamese they let us go hungry .. . they do not like us!”*

Another element present in Klein Belém Klein Neopentecostals religions are run by Brazilians, in which several churches in the Portuguese language thrive on spreading the Christian faith to the Brazilian community living and working in Suriname (THEIJE, 2008). The church, in addition to guide their activities for the evangelization and conversion of the Brazilian, also plays an important role in strengthening the relationship between the Brazilian community in Suriname and their families in Brazil. The language becomes a decisive factor for the strengthening of territoriality in these Brazilian neo-Pentecostal religious spaces. As highlighted Theije (2008: 74), spiritual leaders and not dominate the Dutch, nor the Sranantongo, whose activities and religious services are conducted in Portuguese, thus attracting many Brazilians who are members of churches to be like *Deus é Amor* (God is Love) and *Assembleia de Deus* (Assembly of God) in the English language. Amid religious network established between the parish churches in Brazil (almost all from Belem do Para) and the subsidiaries in Suriname, Brazilians send letters, memories, photos to relatives and family members who live in Brazil.

These practices contribute to Bethlehem Klein play practices and dynamics of Brazil, and foster the desire for much of that migrants return to Brazil. It is common in the midst of talks with the Brazilian's desire to return, as the testimony of the PSC (38

years, gold miner who lived for 09 years in Suriname): *“always send money to my children. I plan to soon add some money and go back to Brazil, to build a house and open a small business. This is the dream of almost all the Brazilians in Suriname - back to our land. There we met is that no people ... here they do not like us!”*

However, while these territories produce-network approach to social networks and suppliers, the Brazilians claim to its insertion and its place in the city of Paramaribo, Suriname. Brazilian traders and representatives of the miners seek to participate in the discussions surrounding the legalization of Brazilians working in the mines and live in an irregular situation and also the possibility of establishing their business without having to resort to partnerships with Surinamese. Among such actions, recognition of their participation and claiming the rights of the Brazilian community in Suriname highlight the *Stichting Ontwikkeling Brazilianen in Suriname* (Brazilian Foundation for Development in Suriname - BRASUR Foundation), and a foundation created and run by Brazilians, among them traders and miners, who seek with the authorities to get Surinamese mechanisms to regularize the situation of Brazilian citizens, establish agreements on aid and economic cooperation between Brazilian and Surinamese, and to promote Brazilian culture in Suriname. Thus, territoriality Brazilian embodies not only the internal mobilization at the core of their ethnic group, but rather serves to establish any political, economic and cultural rights through the seizure of their territories and negotiate their integration into society Surinamese.

CONCLUSION

Klein Belém shows the growing territorialization of Brazilians in Paramaribo amid the city's ethno-cultural diversity. This establishes an additional boundary in the plural and complex constitution of Surinamese society. Brazilian migrants left their country due to the deterritorializing forces of capitalism but re-territorialized on Surinamese soil seeking opportunities for a better life (GUATTARI, ROLNIK, 1986: 323). Their narratives translate Brazilian nationality into an ethnicized identity that have the northern metropolis of Belém do Pará as its most clear territorial reference (HÖFS, 2006: 113). Vulnerability and insecurities are more constant than gold riches in the life of the Brazilian diaspora who negotiate their right to the city on a daily basis. In the face of

weakened positions in Suriname and its capital, these actors establish mechanisms to reinvent social, economic, political and cultural relations in the spaces they occupy, also creating strong ties to Brazil, through dense network-territories that function in two ways: money transfers outbound and foodstuffs, clothing and other trinkets inbound, both flows in largely clandestine formats. This network-territory redirects flows towards garimpos through the services it provides for them, e.g. sex work implicating Brazilians, which constitutes a major illegal network for drugs and human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

Brazilian residents in Suriname, particularly business people and evangelical religious leaders, have a perceived need to be recognized by the receiving society as a group with social and economic relevance within the unique context of ethnocultural balances established by the *apanjaht* system. Their biggest hurdle is the identification of all Brazilians with *plocs* (prostitutes) and *garimpeiros* (miners), who are denied the possibility of social ascendance. A major advocate for such a recognition is the Stichting Ontwikkeling Brazilianen in Suriname (Foundation for Brazilian Development in Suriname or BRASUR), created and managed by Brazilians, merchants and miners, who are working with Surinamese authorities to regularize the immigration status of Brazilians; establish aid and economic cooperation agreements between corporate entities from both countries; and promote Brazilian culture in Suriname. Hence, Brazilian territoriality is not only mobilized internally but it also helps to advance political, economic and cultural claims for a better embedding in Surinamese society

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