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A CASE STUDY OF HAITIAN MIGRATION, 2010-2025: SELECTIVE COMPARISONS OF TRENDS AND GOVERNANCE BETWEEN BRAZIL AND CHILE

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ABSTRACT

The chaotic history of Haiti in recent decades has led to a significant flow of migrants to Brazil and Chile in search of better living conditions, peace, and prosperity. Each host country has welcomed these migrants, implemented governance policies, and treated them differently. This article aims to comparatively illustrate the context experienced by Haitians in both countries. Theoretically, the study includes a description of the precariousness of their past and present living conditions, their individual and collective resilience strategies, the impact of racism and discrimination on Haitian identity, and the government's adoption of a migration governance model based on management and control. Methodologically, this is an exploratory, qualitative, hypothetic-deductive study, grounded in specialized literature on Haitian history, culture, and migration, as well as statistical data on their socio-demographic profiles, information from public documents, and reports from key civil society organizations and migrant collectives. Although living conditions for Haitians are precarious in both countries, the study concludes that racism and discrimination — based on skin color, nationality, class, and language — have exacerbated their vulnerability. Nevertheless, Haitians have developed successful subjective and intersubjective resilience strategies. However, collective resistance remains incipient, although it appears to be more developed in Brazil.

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, almost 10 % of Haitian individuals lived outside their country of origin (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, 2016), largely induced by the earthquake of 2010 and the subsequent cholera epidemic (Brutus & Chalmers, 2010). According to news disseminated by the website G1.globo.com from Brazil, on January 12, 2011, one year after the tragedy, the then Haitian Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive, informed that the earthquake had killed around 316,000 people, left 350,000 wounded, and 1,500,000 individuals displaced. From then on, the migration pattern changed from one where migration to Northern countries predominated to an interregional migration directed almost exclusively to the Dominican Republic (Nieto, 2014) and from then on, towards other countries in the region, including Brazil and Chile (IOM, 2017). During the Census period 2000-2010 in the Latin American and Caribbean Region, Haiti showed one of the most elevated increments in migration that reached almost 400 %. Migration´s increase and diversification in the last two decades challenge the society of reception to make legal, administrative, political, and cultural adjustments, mainly in the case of African descendants. Haitians often need to overcome multidimensional and financial poverty, and their social integration at the labour,

educational, housing, and engagement levels needs to be actively and publicly promoted (DEM, 2018). Data from the Observatory of International Migrations(OBMigra) show that in 2022, 6,770 Haitians had been registered in Brazil, a much smaller number that the one observed in 2020 (23,567) and in 2016 (42,423).In Chile, according to official data from the Department of Foreigners and Migration (DEM), Haitians represented 0.2% of the foreign population, totalling 6,007 individuals in 2014 (DEM, 2014). By 2023, this number had increased significantly to 188,131 migrants, based on data provided by the National Service for Migration (SERMIG, 2025). In general, this is a population with prior experience in territorial mobility (Valenzuela et al., 2014) and tends to perceive settlement in countries such as Brazil and Chile only as transitory. Despite the general trend towards the feminization of South-South migration in the region, Haitian migration to both countries remains predominantly male, although there has been a growing participation of women due to family reunification processes. This reunification, approved under the current migration laws in both countries — Brazilian Law No. 13.445 of 2017 and the Chilean Law on Migration and Foreigners No. 21.325 of 2021 — has, at times, proven practically impossible to implement due to high costs and excessive bureaucracy. Nevertheless, in Brazil, a relevant advancement occurred in April 2023 with the approval of the Inter-Ministerial Ordinance MJSP/MRE No. 38, which authorized the granting of temporary visas for family reunification to Haitian

nationals and stateless individuals with family ties in Brazil. The two most recent migration laws in each country under analysis contrast in various aspects with the highly securitized approach of the previous Foreigners' Statutes, which were formulated under military dictatorships — in Chile, Decree Law No. 1094 of 1975, and in Brazil, Law No. 6815 of 1980. The Brazilian statute remained in force until the democratic elections of 1985, while in Chile it continued, with substantial amendments, until 2021. Both laws were characterized by restrictive and repressive measures against foreigners, who were often portrayed as dangerous or potentially subversive to the established order. As a result, political persecution targeted activists, political militants, foreigners, students, and other groups, forcing many to flee to Europe, the United States, or countries such as Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, where many became asylum seekers. The most recent migration laws — Brazilian Law No. 13.445 of 2017 and Chilean Law No. 21.325 of 2021 — incorporated, to a certain extent, a humanitarian perspective aimed at protecting migrants' rights. However, they did not entirely abandon the national security logic embedded in the previous legal frameworks, although some relevant changes were introduced. In Brazil, the most progressive provisions of the new migration law were vetoed by the administrations of Michel Temer and Jair Bolsonaro, resulting in significant setbacks to the humanitarian principles originally proposed by the 2017 legislation (Acero, 2025). Among other restrictions, decision-making on migrant entry and the issue of visas was delegated to the Federal Police, border mobility for migrants was constrained, gender considerations were removed, and family reunification was limited to the traditional concept of direct kinship.

It is worth noting that the initial version of the 2017 Brazilian law emerged from an extensive process of civic participation at national, state, and local levels, involving migrants, refugees, stateless persons, and specialized authorities, initiated in 2014 under the name COMIGRAR.

This process organized two National Conferences on Migrants, Refugees, and Stateless Persons, held in 2014 and 2024, and remains active to this day. The primary objective of these conferences was to gather updated information on the needs of migrants. Proposals were discussed and democratically voted upon for inclusion in future legal frameworks. In addition, the National Migration Council (CNIg) was established to institutionalize this participatory governance approach.

According to Redin (2020), with the support of UNHCR, the Brazilian migration control policy has remained within the discretionary scope of public administration, which continues to constitute an unresolved dilemma. The law did not explicitly recognize migration as a human right, understood as the right to enter and remain in a country. For some authors, although the 2017 law expresses, *on paper*, a concern with the prevention of human rights´ violations against migrants and refugees, many of its provisions are similar to those contained in the former Statute of Foreigners (Machado, 2025). Despite receiving international recognition, Brazil remains behind other countries in the region, including Chile, particularly because it does not grant migrants and refugees political voting rights unless they acquire Brazilian nationality (Dacilien, 2025). Currently, the law is undergoing revision through a process of broad public engagement to establish the National Policy on Migration, Refuge, and Statelessness (PNMRA), already envisioned in the original version of the 2017 law before its modification through presidential vetoes. In Chile, the current migration law of 2021 was also formulated with elements of social participation, although to a lesser extent and with a more selective character than the process observed in Brazil. Migrants and refugees were often invited to participate through their associations or via the main pro-migration civil society organizations; however, their proposals were not systematically incorporated into the legislative text, as they did not possess voting rights within the process. Consequently, this participatory dynamic functioned more as a consultative mechanism than as a genuine representational participation (Acero, 2025a; Acero & Zuleta Pastor, 2024a, 2024b). The 2021 Chilean law was enacted under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Security, which also established the National Service for Migration to replace the previous Foreigners' Service. The reform reorganized migration visas into four

categories: transitory, temporary, definitive, and official. Nevertheless, the law focuses predominantly on the biometric registration and regularization of the large number of undocumented migrants — an approach that has generated significant academic and social controversy. This most recent legal framework has been widely criticized for its inherent contradictions, as it simultaneously promotes migrants' rights while retaining numerous elements of the national security logic embedded in the repressive 1975 legislation (Roessler et al., 2022).

The main aim of this article is to analyse, between 2010 and 2025, the social integration of Haitian waves of migrants in two very different countries: Brazil and Chile. For this purpose, the present article sets out to explore the following interrelated questions:

- When, why, and how have Haitian migrants arrived and settled in Brazil and Chile?
- What are the shared and differential characteristics of Haitian migration in the two countries under study?
- How far does racism influence Haitians´ vulnerability and affects their social integration?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Considerations on theory: Many interconnected factors affect the social integration of migrants and refugees, among them: the socioeconomic, political and survival conditions experienced before migration, the process of migration itself, the level of material and emotional welcoming experienced upon arrival, their access to legal documentation, the pathways of socio-economic and cultural integration into the country of resettlement, the specific public policies designed to protect them, the open recognition of their rights, the quality of the interpersonal relationships established, their capacity to mourn numerous losses, their level of collective organization and lastly, though not least, the daily level of discrimination or racism faced by them. Migration governance has been defined as a paradigm to approach international migrationinvolving the possibility of governments to reconcile the characteristics, causes, and effects of migration movements with the expectations and social demands about them and the effective possibilities of states to respond (Marmora,2003; Domenech, 2018). Governance has been portrayed as a global or regional project of management and control of the displacement of people, often supported by the standards and actions taken by international organizations within spaces of regional integration, specialized forums, seminars, assessment work, and joint projects. Security and regulation tend to be emphasized over rights. This approach allows to legitimisethe human rights´ rhetoric linked to efficient management and administration – the functional role that migration control performs in contemporary societies. In this perspective, the closure of borders to migrants is not prioritized. Instead, there is an orientation towards regulated opening; the state channels and directs flows (Mezzadra & Nielson 2016). The perspective does not necessarily criminalize migrants but often deals with them as victims.

Collins (2008) develops the notion of the matrix of domination to include a complexity of contexts – social, interpersonal, subjective, and intersubjective -where simultaneously, different axes of oppression become articulated, e.g., race, sex, nationality, and so on. In each domain of this matrix, there are different possibilities of agency or resistance on the part of the oppressed directed to dismount the conditions of oppression. Resistance can also be expressed emotionally, at intrapsychic, subjective, and intersubjective levels, as willpower, desire, and awareness that opposes oppression, self-defines group or nationality identities, and is expressed as self-determination and /or as public or political activism. However, vulnerable populations also develop individual or collective resilience strategies. Resilience refers to the ability of an individual or a community to respond to different forms of shock, risk, adversity, and disturbances in ways that enable social adaptation, renewal, or transformation (Ungar, 2012). Migrants´ resilience is shaped by

personal attributes, experiences, and histories, and also depends upon the perceptions and expectations of the social world that surrounds them (Simich et al., 2012), as well as by the socioeconomic and political contextual conditions (Brown, 2016). Gerard Bouchard (2013, p. 267) sets forth three main ways by which communities and individuals can face shocks and recover their former capacities of functioning. These are: (a) the conservative strategy – resisting stress and returning to the system´s prior state; (b) the adaptive strategy – using various adjustment methods and compromises between social actors; and (c) the progressive strategy – creatively responding to risk and stress and restructuring and changing power relations while facing adversity. Racism and discrimination are crucial factors within Collin´s (2008) domination matrix. Racism refers to the belief in the existence of hereditary biological differences between human groups, which results in valuing certain capacities and moral aspects; some races are regarded as superior to others (Benedict & Weltfish, 1943). It constitutes the base for rejection and discrimination and justifies contempt, exploitation, and even extermination of those races considered as inferior (Pedemonte, et al, 2015; 2016).

However, in modern societies, racism has often adapted to general anti-racist awareness, substituting racist categories for cultural determinism. Neo-racist narratives are structured around stigmas of alterity, no longer codified in racial terms, but replacing them with concepts such as ethnicity and even migration (Tijoux, & Rivera, 2015). Racism can manifest itself simultaneously, at least, at three different levels: structural racism involving institutions; the interpersonal level where discrimination is at stake; and at the subjective level where it operates as internalized racism (Jones, 2000). Structural racism is embodied in norms and policies that provide differential access to goods, social services, and power. In interpersonal discrimination, prejudices on the qualities, capacities, intentions, and value of people are defined according to their phenotype or nationality and lead to discriminatory active behaviour or omissions, e.g., police abuses, hatred, distrust in the Other´s capacities, and so on. In internalized racism, racialized populations incorporate the negative beliefs and stereotypes assigned to them, which restricts the possibility of implementing resistance strategies and agency against racism. (Jones, 2021; Speight, 2007). Those three types of racism will be found in the analysis of the behaviour towards Haitians in Brazil and Chile. Despite the tendencies described in State governance and social racism, there are everyday struggles developed by migrants to overcome these controls that need to be better made visible (Avilez, 2020). In summary, the theoretical concerns informing our case-study analysis on Haitian migrants and refugees in Brazil and Chile, include the precariousness of their past and present living conditions, their individual and collective resilience strategies, the impact of racism and discrimination upon Haitians´ identity and the government´s adoption of amigration governance model based upon management and control.

METHOD

Methodologically, this is an exploratory qualitative study of a hypothetic deductive nature, based upon specialized literature on Haitian history, culture, migration and refuge; on statistics produced by public and private institutions, on information from documents and news collected at the websites of government agencies, of key civic society pro-migration associations, such as, in Brazil, CARITAS-Pares, Mission Peace, the Migrant Pastoral, VIVARIO (*Haiti Aqui*) and migrant Haitian collectives like: MOWAN, MigraMundo, LGTB+Movement and Association Venezuela Global. Similarly, in Chile, data was gathered from government websites and from those of the Jesuit Service for Migrants (SJM) and the Foundation for Social Help of the Christian Churches (FASIC), as well as the social media of Haitian migrant collectives listed in the website of the National Platform of Haitian Organizations in Chile (PNOH Chile) (pnohchile.weebly.com). Online press information has also been selectively analysed.

The themes covered by this documental analysis describe the Haitians´ socioeconomic situation prior to the journey, during it, and in settlement. Content analysis was applied to the information obtained, considering statements that represent, to a certain extent, certain recurrent meanings found in social discourse (Castro, 2004). The topics explored are centred around the following criteria: well-being in their country of origin, quality of reception in initial and subsequent resettlement, support networks, access to public services and welfare, effects of policy governance, discrimination experiences, and forms of resilience and resistance. The main factors that converge and diverge are observed in both countries and are then selectively compared (Mulkay, 1993).

RESULTS

A brief history of Haiti: Haiti is a reference in the region for its struggle for independence from the colonies carried out throughout the XVII to the XIX centuries and obtained in 1804.It was also a rebel to the fundamentals that sustained slavery (Pedemonte et al., 2015). The country showed the contradiction existing between the principles of social justice and the system of reproduction of oppression and exploitation (Buck-Morss, 2009). Initial social cohesion was established through the Creole language and the cultural aspects of the vodou religion that transcend the mere religious practice (Gabriel SJ; 2011). However, the shaping of the state was complex and entailed a mixture of a 'shared epic', a logic of class structuring, and one of ethnic-racial belonging, which resulted in a fracture between the first and second type of liberated blacks (Casimir, 2012). The Haitian diaspora has a history of decades before the arrival of Haitian migrants to Chile (Nieto, 2014; IMO, 2017). Three main factors induced the different migration waves. First, there was the invasion of the USA, between 1915 and 1934, that was oriented to the use of Haitian labour in the production of rubber, the transit of the Panama Channel, and the design of migration regulation with the Dominican Republic for the exploitation of sugar cane in Dominican territory by Haitian labour. A second moment is characterized by international economic sanctions and the presence of dictatorships, such as that of François Duvalier in 1956 and then of his son Jean-Claude in 1971, overthrown in 1986. These were years of terror under gangs like "*Tonton Macoute*" and the "*Leopardos*". Political persecution usually affected qualified Haitians with family networks and contacts, who fled towards the Northern countries. This process has been called 'the historical diaspora'. There was also an impoverished migration, of rural origin and looking for subsistence-level jobs, that often travelled to the Dominican Republic to work in the sugar mills.

Subsequently, there were successive *coups d etáts* during the decades of the 90s and 2000s. This period involved the decline of the collective action of the movement *Lavalas,* until the overthrow of Jean Bertrand Aristide in 2004. Then, Haiti was occupiedby an international United Nations military mission between 2004 and 2017 (Mission of the United Nations for the Stabilization of Haiti-MINUSTAH). Given this prolonged period of political instability, conflict, and the rise of extreme poverty, the State began to be known as failed, weak, or fragile. A humanitarian crisis, brought about by the 2010 earthquake and the subsequent cholera epidemic, took place (Nieto, 2014). As a result, a tendency towards an accelerated or expulsive migration then developed, with Haitians often seeking to obtain refugee status. A third moment, can be described as a continuity of the representational crisis that involved, among other: a two-year delay in the election of two-thirds of Parliament; the resignation of Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe; social protests against the election of President Martelly that, since 2015, had started governing the country by decree, when Parliament was dissolved. Parliamentary elections were carried out in that same year, with low popular participation, and Presidential ones with 54 candidates. There was also a strike of local transporters due to the rise in the price of fuel, and an increase in cases of cholera, together with a reduction in international aid. A deterioration of diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic also happened when the nationality of Dominicans with Haitian ancestry was not recognized, and local

Haitians invaded the Dominican Consulate. To this complex scenario must also be added the closure of frontiers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the strike of Dominican transporters, and the reduction of Dominican imports by Haiti. (Pedemonte et al. 2015). The Haitians´ chaotic socio-political and economic conditions directly impacted the migration decisions taken by these nationals. Next, the context of Haitians´arrival and settlement in Brazil will be described.

The Haitian Migration Context in Brazil: Traditionally, Haitian migration was directed to the USA, Canada, France, the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean countries, while between 1940 and 2000, there were approximately only 200 Haitians in Brazilian territory - a country perceived by them solely as one of globally recognized football players (Handerson, 2015; Dacilien, 2020). Meanwhile, this situation changes significantly, between 2010 and 2020, when Haitian presence increased enormously, according to OBMigra (2020), to more than 150 thousand individuals. The specialized literature refers to three main causes of the Haitians´ last migration wave. One was the 2010 earthquake, of a magnitude of 7.3 on the Richter scale, and the subsequent cholera outbreak. Two other reasons are: (a) the leadership of Brazil in the United Nations Mission (MINUSTAH) to stabilize Haiti, due to the extreme violence and terror being inflicted by armed gangs, and (b) the assistance work carried out within Haiti by the Brazilian social firm VIVARIO.Between 2004 and 2010, the policies of proximity developed by Brazilian soldiers with the local people, e.g., joint football games and competitions, helped create in the Haitians´ imaginary an idealized vision of Brazil as a country of opportunities. Magalhães & Baeninger (2017) argue that a significant relationship between Haitians and Brazilians had already started in 2004 through the OAS Building Corporation, a Brazilian firm that had a contract to expand and upgrade the train network n° 7 in the South of Haiti. VIVARIO, a social firm based in Port Prince in Haiti since 2004, and with a solid previous experience of social work in the periphery of Rio de Janeiro, was invited by the United Nations to complement the work of MINUSTAH. It developed projects oriented to the reduction of violence and the promotion of a peace culture in education, health, community security, sports, and cultural activities.

These actions contributed towards the decrease in conflicts, facilitated communication flows, strengthened Haitians´ support networks, and established new connections between Haiti and Brazil (Acero, 2025). Moreover, during this period, there was an important socioeconomic growth in Brazil led by the government of Luis Ignacio da Silva (2003-2011), as this country had not been directly impacted by the global financial crisis of 2007 and 2008. Lula also managed a vast opening of the country to the international market, organized new institutions such as the association of emerging economies (BRICS), and positioned Brazil as a superpower in the Region. An important increase in the Brazilian labour force was required to work in the large infrastructural projects to hold three major world sports events: the World Cup in 2014, the Olympic Games in 2016, and the Cup of America in 2019(Handerson, 2015). Haitians saw their opportunity to find work, and30% of them were employed in civic construction, mainly in the city of Rio de Janeiro. For this purpose, a high proportion of them took advanced training courses at the National Service for Industrial Learning (SENAI) (Costa, 2018). The profile of Brazilian migration then changed in racial terms. While in 2011 black migrants represented 13.9% of the employees in the formal labour market, at the end of the decade, they became the majority (54,4%), with Haitian migrants occupying the first position (OBMigra, 2021).

The forced dislocation of Haitians started in 2010 when they arrived at the Triple border between Brazil, Colombia, and Peru and entered Brazil through the Amazon. A new flow of Haitians entered, in the same year, through the frontier between Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru, arriving at the State of Acre (Handerson, 2017). They required to have previously obtained visas from the Brazilian Consulate at Port Prince and often the mediation of professional agencies that provided their tickets, usually at overrated prices, and information on the routes to be taken. Almost half of these Haitian migrants self-financed their

ticket or got help from relatives and friends (Silva & Souza, 2015). They faced obstacles such as long queues at the Federal Police control headquarters in the Amazon and initially, very inadequate lodging provided by the Federal and the State of Acre´s governments, but subsequently, they were moved to a farm in the outskirts (Mamed & Lima, 2016). There they waited for their journey to São Paulo, which was also ill-prepared for their reception. In 2012, 1,021 of them were sent to other States, half of them to Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul (Costa, 2016). Private networks, both confessional and lay NGOs, played a central role in the initial shelter provided to this massive wave of Haitian migration. They managed it, facilitated their mobility within Brazilian territory, provided lodging and food, helped them develop a production of tradeable goods, taught cooking and sewing courses, created a crèche, and contributed to their search for jobs. The Pastoral Care for Migrants, an organization of the Catholic Church, present in various cities and regions of Brazil, was a key leader in these tasks. The Evangelic Churches offered places of cult in Creole and otherwise, Haitian relatives and friends helped each other. Internet connection favoured the creation of support networks among Haitian migrants themselves. In São Paulo, Mission Peace created a space for employers to contract workers under the condition that firms signed a 'term of conduct' committing to maintain Brazilian labour legislation.

At the end of 2011, there were almost 1,200 Haitians in the Northern States, and by January 2012, already 1,500. Initially, one of the main destinies of Haitian migrants from the North was the city of Rio de Janeiro. OBMigra (2021) shows that in 2020 there were overall 2,410 foreigners in this city and that Haitian migrants represented 1.7% of the total population in the country. When the situation became chaotic, another facilitator of Haitian migration to Brazil was created. Dilma Rousseff´s government issued the normative resolution n° 92 in January of 2012, creating a temporary visa for Haitians for humanitarian reasons that was conditioned to five years and allowed for a quota of 1,200 visas per year to be emitted at the Brazilian Consulate in Port Prince, though it was revoked in 2013 due to its inefficiency. Brazilian entrepreneurs´ interest in this labour force was enormous. Cavalcanti, Oliveira & Tonhati (2015) show that between 2011 and 2013, Haitians found formal employment mainly as industrial workers. Employment rose from 475 workers in 2011 to 10,910 in 2013. Secondly, Haitians worked in services, as salesmen/women in commerce within shops and markets, and their numbers increased from 182 in 2011 to 2,534 in 2013. This means that 73.59% of Haitians worked at the base of the Brazilian industrial production pyramid - a trend that continued at least until 2020. However,Magalhães & Baeninger (2017) comment that these workers were often abusively exploited, suffered violations of rights, and a devaluation of their labour force. They perceived an average monthly rate of 298.75 US dollars (almost the minimum Brazilian wage of 2025) which represented the lowest wages among all migrant nationalities. [For example, French foreigners receive 13.5 times higher wages than Haitians]. These disparities are to be explained not only by structural causes but also involve racial prejudices and linguistic constraints. For example, Angolan migrants, who are also black but speak Portuguese, gained an average monthly wage of 687.35 US dollars, more than double that of the formally employed Haitians. The number of Haitians working in the informal sector- without a work card, self-employed, or involved as micro entrepreneurs- is difficult to estimate. However, they face more severe economic difficulties, as low incomes plus a lack of legal protection place increase their vulnerability (Oliveira & Oliveira, 2020).

Tonhati e Macedo (2020) found that Haitian women´s main occupations included cleaner, production line feeder, assistant in food services, and meat processing. These jobs fall under what has been termed "3D jobs: Dirty, dangerous, and demeaning", which often entails work in environments that are unsanitary, hazardous, and socially undervalued, despite being part of the formal labour market. Cleaner, hotel chambermaid, and worker in cleaning and conservation services for public areas grouped together, form the main labour niche for Haitian female migrants in the 2010s, accounting for 27%

of their occupations (Oliveira et al, 2024). According to Junger et.al. (org) (2024), the number of Haitian refugee requests in Brazil analysed by the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) in 2023 reached a total of 7,735- representing 5.6% of those analysed. Among them, 2,679 corresponded to men, 2,449 to women, and sex orientation was unspecified for 607 of them. Interestingly, in that same year, 7,700 requests in total were made extinct with a similar distribution by gender and unknowns. Those requests that were archived in that same year were 35 in all, 21 of men and 14 of women. These estimates show that very few of Haitians´ refugee requests were approved, as well as that Haitians do not tend to apply for refuge on a large scale as much as Venezuelans. The reception of Haitians by the Brazilian State has been insignificant, and mainly limited to providing a provisional document to each migrant. Family reunion means a lot to Haitian migrants. It favours their emotional and social stability and extends their rights to their family members (Wermuth, 2020). However, specialized academics have shown that Haitians face considerable difficulties to access this right, mainly due to bureaucracies, the lack of direct flights between Haiti and Brazil, and the high costs involved (e.g., Crawley, 2023).

Over time, Haitians have had access to different types of welfare programmes. The principle of universal social welfare was included in the Constitution of 1988. But beyond this, Brazil,in 2014,signed adocument known as 'Action Plan Brazil', which forms part of the obligations established in Latin America towards the respect of migrant´s , refugee´s, and stateless people´s rights. The document proposed several programmes, among them, "Safe and Solidary-based Borders"; "Local Integration", "Solidarity-based Resettlement", and "Labour Mobility". (BRASIL, 2014). However, for example, in the State of Rio de Janeiro, there are few public institutions that offer social assistance exclusively to migrants. Welfare plans tend to be universal, though the needs of migrants are often different from those of locals (Jean Baptiste, 2018; Silva, 2017). In Rio de Janeiro, there are three main public welfare centres for migrants: CRAI-RIO, CRAAI-RIO, and CRAS. The Reference Centre for the Service of Migrants (CRAI-RIO) was created by the City Hall in 2023 to offer migrants exclusively: legal and social advice, Portuguese courses, and digital inclusion services. It works in partnership with the Special Secretary of Citizenship, CORE Response, IOM, and UNHCR and was created as a result of the protests carried out by the leadership of migrant collectives and pro-migration civic society organizations. CRAAI-RIO provides emergency accommodation to migrants for 30 days. CRAS aims at the prevention of vulnerability situations, poverty, lack of access to public services, and social risks, such as abuse, violence, and discrimination. It helps migrants to access the Single Registry (*Cadasdro Ùnico*)- a pre-requisite to apply for social programmes that provide financial resources, e.g. the family scholarship (*Bolsa Familia*), students´ aid from public Universities, discounts in household services, reduced ticket prices for cultural and sports activities and internal travel tickets, access to basic food baskets and orientation to obtain documents (BRASIL, 2023). Other NGOs collaborate in a similar direction, most especially the civic society organization CARITAS-Pares of the Catholic Church and VIVARIO with its programme "Haiti here" (Acero, 2025b).

However, there tends to be a great inadequacy between the existence of these social programmes and the real access to them. Important barriers for Haitians include the institutional bureaucracies, the handling of Portuguese, the lack of available local interpreters for migrants/refugees and professionals, the excess of documents required, as well as institutional racism (Dacilien, 2020; Handerson, 2015). Structural racism in Brazil operates in different ways upon different sectors of the population. This situation goes back to the colonial period when, after being the last country in the region to end slavery, Brazil did not consider any form of reparation for the liberated black people (Almeida, 2018; Moura, 1992). Structural racism not only limits access to fundamental rights but also reinforces pre-existing inequalities, perpetuating cycles of exclusion and vulnerability. Racism in Brazil is not only structural but also institutional. For Haitians, it is not only related to the colour of their skin but also to their nationality of origin and follows ' a social class

imaginary' that predominantly perceives them asborn in one of the poorest countries in the Region. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, "all Haitians, whether academics, professionals, or others, are considered equally by locals. The social image built for them is that they are people with problems that need help" (Dacilien, 2025, p. 56). It makes invisible the specific demands of the Haitian migrant populationand deals with them as if they had the same historical and social conditions as Brazilians, including black Brazilians. Many Haitians have left Rio de Janeiro for other States, because they considered this city as a center of production of social and racial inequalities. Those that stayed – mainly students in graduate or post-graduate programs at public Universities or artists and craftsmen/women- privileged the city´s similarities with Haiti: the warm climate, the beaches, life outdoors, carnival, its cultural activities, and so on. Haitian migrants are well organized into active collectives in Brazil, most especially in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. MAWON from Rio de Janeiro, for example, promotes Haitians´ rights, provides assistance for the cultural and socioeconomic integration of migrants, intercultural mediation, and trains them in entrepreneurship. As advocacy delegates, the collective participates in several public, municipal, and State-level forums, including the initiatives of the first and second National Conferences of Migration, Refuge, and Statelessness (COMIGRAR). In this sense, they are quite politically oriented (Acero, 2025a).

However, in other cases, testimonies on some of the websites of Brazilian Haitian migrant/refugee collectives are contradictory. They show that their attitude sometimes tends to be to naturalize racial discrimination as something unjust, though common in all countries. However, they emphasize their pride about the early independence of their country, their cuisine, their music, their crafts, and other cultural activities, i.e., the opportunities they bring to Brazil. As Collins (2008) states, resistance and agency can also be expressed as willpower, desire, and an awareness that opposes oppression, self-defines national identities, and shows self-determination and /orpublic or political activism. Haitians' optimism about their lives and the future, as well as their activism,is oriented in these last directions. Their resilience strategies, following Bouchard's (2013) definition in the second sectionof this paper, are either the adaptive strategy or the progressive one, and not many cases of internalized racism are to be found (Jones, 2000).

The Haitian Migration Context in Chile: Foreign population increased significantly by December 2019 in Chile, reaching 7.8% of the total population with the predominance of Venezuelans (30. 5%), Peruvians (15.8 %), and Haitians (12.5 %) (Jesuit Service for Migrants (SJM), 2020). In less than a decade, Haitians grew from representing 0.4 % of the total number of foreigners in 2010, to being the third largest group of migrants (12.5 %) in 2019 (SJM, 2020). Haitians, differently to other South American flows, arrive in Chile directly at the International Airport, which results in a low percentage of clandestine entry and migration irregularity. The rate of refugee visas is almost null, while in the period 2010-2013, 42.8% had a visa subject to a work permit and 54.5% a temporary visa, according to the Department of Migrations´(DEM) registries for the period. They tend to be segregated and concentrated in low-income, peripheral neighbourhoods within the Metropolitan Region of Santiago, the capital. This spatial distribution results in scarce access to quality public services and high exposure to everyday insecurity.They often live in overcrowded housing in extremely bad conditions, especially in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago. Moreover, they declare a strong vulnerability to respiratory disease due to the low temperatures experienced, and to which they are not used. They tend to work in salaried jobs with longer working hours than the legal standard, perform unqualified work, often resulting in a waste of their resources and qualifications. Male employment is frequently found in car-washing centres, gas stations, small workshops and wineries, and in the case of women, in cleaning and sales jobs, which, in general, are all easy to find. They are favoured by their regular kind of visas and the positive value attached to their work by Chilean employers who consider them more responsible and disciplined than other South American migrants (Solimano et al. 2012).

A report by DEM (2016), based on a survey, states that Haitians are transversally characterized by sociocultural exclusion marked by racism, which affects their labour insertion into low-paid, unqualified, and precarious jobs with high risk levels and an abusive workload. Professional training is neither formally nor socially recognized, and hence, capacities are wasted. Language difference operates as an important barrier in the search for jobs, as well as in the defence of their rights when faced with labour abuse. Their access to public services –especially, in education and health- is also limited by similar reasons (Oyarte *et. al.,* 2023). There is plenty of evidence that the Haitian population in Chile, has suffered exploitation, discrimination and racism at the job level (Bustamante, 2017; Rojas & Koechlin, 2017), sexualization towards women (Fernandez, 2019; Valenzuela et al., 2018) (but also men), very precarious and overcrowded living arrangements (Bonhomme, 2021), an underestimation and lack of recognition of their educational qualifications and training (SJM, 2020), discrimination towards children and adolescents in educational spaces (Pavez et al, 2019; Pavez et.al.,2019) and a higher level of multidimensional poverty than nationals and other migrant collectives (DEM, 2017). They have faced challenges different from other migrant nationalities, partly due to the distance from their country of origin, their different language, the colour of their skin, and their nationality associated with poverty. An important part of this population experiences significant vulnerability (Rojas & Silva, 2016) and faces strong sociocultural exclusion due to the transversal experience of racism (Rojas *et al.,* 2015).

To counteract the massive arrival of Haitians, the difficulties described about work, abuse, communication, and living arrangements, and also related to a general social imaginary based on racial discrimination, the Chilean State designed specific restrictive policies for this nationality of migrants. In 2012, during the Presidency of Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014), an informal letter of invitation from a national and a thousand dollars were requested from Haitians for entry into Chile. Later on, other restrictive measures were designed under the guise or pretext of a 'humanitarian type of action'. Stang et al (2020) consider these policies as rhetorical humanitarian measures or they have been defined as"politics of control with a human face" (Domenech, 2013). They form part of a regional paradigm of migration governance, an approach that sustains the global regime of management and control of migration (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2016) and that has become part of the Chilean state since the half of the 2000s. The three main legal measures applied solely to Haitian migrant refugees have been: the establishment of a Simple Tourist Consular Visa of entrance to the country, a Humanitarian Family Reunification Visa, and the implementation of a "Humanitarian Plan of Orderly Return to their Country of Origin for Foreign Citizens". Although the last seemed general, i.e., attending any nationality, it was oriented to Haitians, according to media coverage and the principles that appear in the document that created it. According to the 2018 Yearbook of Consular Assistance from the Ministry of External Relations, during 2018, 112 consular visas of simple tourism were approved for Haitians and 114 humanitarian visas of family reunification, while in 2017, 111,761 tourists of this origin had entered Chile.

The tourist visas were created by a Decree of 2018, and they had to be obtained at the Chilean Consulate in Haiti. This type of visa allowed permanence in the Chilean territory for only 90 days for leisure, sports, religious, and other similar activities, but prohibited any purpose of residence or performance of paid work. The humanitarian visa for family reunification was issued to partners, underage siblings, and those under 24 years old who studied in Chile for 12 months, and it was renewable only once (Demétrio, et. al,2023). The pre-requisite was the inexistence of penal records in the applicant and a maximum of 10,000 yearly visa approvals. In both cases, the logic prevailing is that of a de-territorialization or displaced administration towards the country of origin to filter migration (Trabalón, 2018). These measures were officially presented as based on an emphasis on tourists' illegality and on the pretext of protecting migrants from trafficking networks.

The third measure, in principle, was directed to all regular and irregular foreigners and refugees who wanted to return to their own country individually or as a family. The state would pay for their transport if some requisites were fulfilled: having valid journey documents, having their decision taken voluntarily and freely, having no legal obstacles, and agreeing not to pursue any other kind of visa or refuge application. However, if included in this Plan, they could not return to Chile for 9 years. This sole aspect, plus Haitians ' precariousness in Chile, questions the extent to which the Plan was voluntary. For this pretext to have been valid, it would have required the freedom to choose without coercion and a decision-making process that was well informed about the conditions to be faced upon returning to Haiti. Moreover, even if there is no international legal framework on the conditions of assisted and voluntary return plans, the International Organization for Migration (AVRR,IOM, 2018) has elaborated reference standards that involve, at least, he need to attend to migrants´ reintegration sustainability, economic sufficiency, social stability in their communities and psychosocial wellbeing in the country to which they return. None of these conditions are fulfilled by the Chilean Plan. The justification presented by public agencies to take these regulatory initiatives refersto the vulnerability of Haitian populations in Chile due to: their supposed failure in social integration, the absence of means of return to their country, and the apparent quality ofvoluntary displacement. The Plan explicitly pretends to be oriented towards an orderly, safe, and regular migration governance. The resolution´s arguments, place the responsibility for this situation of vulnerability upon the Haitians, following a neoliberal approach, for their incapacity to achieve an adequate integration, sustainability and regularity in Chile. This is mainly attributed to language differences, sociocultural traits, lack of jobs or access to only precarious and unqualified work and so on; and considered as the result of their own will. In this way, the State´s responsibility for the generation of adequate public policies to improve the conditions described becomes diminished, diluted, or dissolved. (Mercado Ordenes & Figueiredo, 2023).

As held by Stang et al. (2020) – on which this section of the paper is largely based - the three selective public measures mentioned on visa approvals show how this nationality is incorporated into the public security agenda through the regulation of migration movements. The state declares that they were issued to protect their human rights – a sheer appearance. In the specific case of the Return Plan, it could be considered as an indirect, selective, and discriminatory measure of expulsion or deportation where a temporal prohibition of re-entry is also established (Muñoz Ruiz, 2014), as has also been argued by Haitian migrant collectives. As a result, in 2019, there was a high rejection of visa applications by the Chilean Consulate in Haiti, with 193 visas approved out of 2,254 requested (Bellolio & Valdes, 2020). Haitians' entry to Chile shows a continuous descent from 110,166 in 2017 to 39,263 in 2018 and 7,515 in 2019. Moreover, the number of Haitians who left Chile in 2019 surpassed that of those who entered (SJM, 2020). Haitians have generally a negative evaluation of the Chilean culture in terms of its low solidarity, lack of education and individualism and the way that they are treated with disdain (Villanueva (s/d). Maybe partly for this reason, the number of Haitians that left Chile in 2019 surpassed that of those that entered the country (SJM, 2020). Chile is a country whereblack population is rarely found, so initially, nationals were in awe of Haitians. However, as Cárdenas (2006: 102) argues, in Chile "the mythical construction of the idea of a Nation was always accompanied by unquestioned statements about the racial, cultural and religious homogeneity of our population" – a fallacy that excludes, for example, the historical presence of several types of indigenous populations in the country. According to the interviews analysed for the Chilean research project funded by the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) (See, Acknowledgements), although some Haitians have formed migrant collectives, these tend to relate through social media (Avilez, 2020), and concentrate on the dissemination of information useful for their social integration, such as, documentation and registry procedures. Those Haitians participating in that research have an attitude of avoiding or denying everyday and work discrimination. Their resilience strategies are

usually individual and based upon their capacity as family providers (in the case of men), their ability as workers, theirreligious practices, and a protestant ethics of discipline. They tend to protect themselves from racism by living together, in the same building or neighbourhood, and relating mainly to other compatriots, if they do not have their own family. In other words, interaction with nationals is extremely limited, and even more so, the establishment of friendships. There are very few cases where racist attitudes of Chileans are openly confronted, and this tends to happen in extreme cases, for example, a woman trying to be pushed out of a bus or with the Federal Police, when they did not search for a migrant´s car that had been robbed and has not appeared for over a year. In cases of more subtle prejudice, e.g., bad looks directed at them, devaluation of their Spanish accent or their work performance, resistance is often intra-subjective and involves cultural pride and personality traits of strength and endurance. Locals´ discrimination attitudes are blamed on a lack of education and respect and diminished in their objective and emotional importance. Often, the experience of racism towards them is denied and attributed to the attitudes or ill-handling of Spanish by other compatriots. Racism and discrimination are either internalized or function in an intra- and intersubjective model (Cook, 2008). Moreover, resilience strategies are usually individual and based on a neo-liberal view of success, i.e., they would like to become "subjects of credit", meaning having access to financial credit, instead of aspiring to be "subjects of rights" (Pedemonte et.al., 2015). Of course, there are many exceptions to this general argument.

DISCUSSION

Selective Comparisons between Haitian Migration in Brazil and Chile: There are a few aspects of convergence between the characteristics and integration of Haitian migrants/refugees in Brazil and Chile. The main ones are: (a) Haitians tend to hold unqualified precarious jobs, work longer hours than nationals and have lower wages than the rest of migrant nationalities, as well as that of nationals; (b) they suffer work abuse, institutional and interpersonal discrimination, as well as sexualisation of their bodies; (c) language is an important barrier for socioeconomic and interpersonal integration; (d) state policies for the protection of their specific rights have either not been designed, are inadequate or are not put into practice, The state has not implemented policies targeted specifically to this population to diminish their vulnerabilities, protect them and guarantee their rights in either country; (e) the access to documentation is cumbersome, as well as the access to public services, like education and health, and that to welfare policies has to overcome many obstacles; (f) professionals and officials are ill-prepared to deal with the cultural specificities of this population; (g) collective social engagement is still limited, though in different ways in both countries; (h) they rely heavily either on their personal traits to succeed or upon their relatives and compatriots to shape their main support networks; (i) racial discrimination against them is dominant in both countries, though it operates in different ways; (j) theirforeign educational degrees are difficult to be validated, and (k) the status of refuge approval is quite small in both countries. It has been civic society organizations that have mainly sheltered and supported this population and not the local or national states.

Haitian conditions as migrants diverge in Brazil and Chile in several ways. The process of arrival and initial settlement in Brazil of this population has encountered more obstacles than in Chile, but also more social support from civic society. Interpersonal relations, institutional integration, and collective organization are stronger in Brazil than in Chile. Opportunities for access to public or private financial resources are higher in Brazil than in Chile, including the support of international aid for pro-migrant civic organizations and migrant collectives. Racism, present in both countries towards this nationality, has been more openly expressed by authorities, the public, and the mass media in Chile than in Brazil, where prejudices are formulated more subtly and often as part of structural racism against all the black population, Brazilian or otherwise. Resilience strategies adopted seem more of the collective type in Brazil than in

Chile, though this has been hard to prove in this study. The right to vote is absent from Brazilian legislation and restricted to citizens, while the opposite is the case in Chile, where those holding permanent visas for five years are allowed to vote. Lately, legal instances in Chile have tended to Haitian migrants´ expulsion or reduction, though Brazil has been more flexible and inclusive of this community, most especially, through their representatives at COMIGRAR, regarding visa renewals and migrants/refugees´ engagement in the preparation of the future new Migration Plan. In 2023, Brazil returned to the United Nations Global Pact for a Secure, Orderly and Regular Migration (Pact of Marrakech, Morocco, 2018)- a non-binding international cooperative framework approved by 164 countries- after President Jair Bolsonaro had resigned from it. Meanwhile, in Chile, President Piñera refused to sign it, and the situation with the present President, Gabriel Boric, is undecided and unclear.

CONCLUSIONS

Returning to the initial questions of this study, it has been shown how the unstable, chaotic and often violent political and socioeconomic situation in Haiti, extreme poverty and the frequent climatic and health disasters- most especially, the 2010 earthquake and the cholera epidemic - have led different waves of Haitians to leave their country following different types of routes, towards Brazil or Chile. Their choice of country was influenced by different factors, including the leadership of Brazil in the Region and the economic growth of Chile, the exaggerated global reporting of those countries´ employment successes, as well as the local presence of MINUSTAH and the Haitians´ favourable contact with their members. Moreover, the presence of relatives, friends, or relationships in the countries chosen or available for migration was another source of motivation. Haitians left looking for survival and/or the prospect of a better and more peaceful life, which was often not fulfilled. Moreover, the histories lived in their country of origin have left psychosomatic traumatic marks, whether acknowledged or not, in many of them. Though forms of arrival and settlement vary between the two countries, they do not constitute a population that is particularly prone to remain undocumented or illegal. Jobs, though extremely precarious, have become available to them quite quickly on arrival. The Haitian migrants have socially integrated somewhat more systematically in Brazil than in Chile. This last country has made a political move towards the reduction of Haitian flows through, for example, making permanent residence difficult and lengthy and resourcing to repatriation. Haitians´ vulnerability is substantively increased by racism in both countries based upon colour, their difficulties with the languages and culture in the countries of resettlement, prejudices regarding their class and Haiti´s poverty, though they have been more forcefully socially excluded in Chile than in Brazil. They have faced these constraints drawing on resilient strategies based upon personal traits, like discipline, hard work, and good labour preparation, but also on collective endurance, religious beliefs, and solidarity among compatriots. However, collective resistance and political confrontation are incipient, though on the rise. But in the case of Chile, many of them have not been able to deal successfully with the labour market, Spanish and mainly, social discrimination and have left the country searching for better opportunities.

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