Mobility strategies, visas and borders: Trajectories of Haitians towards Argentina

Estrategias de movilidad, visados y fronteras: Trayectorias de haitianos y haitianas hacia la Argentina

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Abstract

This article aims to address different aspects related to the configuration of borders and the development of male and female Haitians mobility strategies that reside in Argentina, from mid-2000 to the present. The frictions between the "ideal destinations" and the "possible destinations", the different ways in which Argentina is incorporated into the definition of migratory projects, and the transformations that occur between border crossing experiences and state control regulations, are some of the dimensions that allow highlighting the tensions between mobility, nationality, racialization and borders. Thus, from a qualitative methodological approach, based on participant observation and in-depth interviews with Haitians in the cities of Córdoba and Rosario, the links between migrant strategies, their trajectories over time and state regulation are analyzed through of visas and border controls. The consideration of these trajectories at various times and spaces shows how visa policies not only imply clear restrictions on mobility but also that their absence does not necessarily translate into unrestricted admission to foreign territories.

Keywords: borders, visa policies, control, Haitian migration, trajectories, racialization processes.

Resumen

En el presente artículo se abordan diferentes aspectos referidos a la configuración de las fronteras y el desarrollo de las estrategias de movilidad de haitianos y haitianas que residen en Argentina, desde mediados del 2000 al presente. Las fricciones entre los "destinos ideales" y los "destinos posibles", los distintos modos en que Argentina se incorpora en la definición de los pro-

yectos migratorios, y las transformaciones que se producen entre las experiencias de cruce de frontera y las regulaciones estatales de control, son algunas de las dimensiones que permiten poner de relieve las tensiones entre movilidad, nacionalidad, racialización y fronteras. Así, desde un enfoque metodológico cualitativo, basado en observación participante y entrevistas en profundidad a haitianos y haitianas en las ciudades de Córdoba y Rosario, se analizan los vínculos entre las estrategias migrantes, sus trayectorias a lo largo del tiempo y la regulación estatal a través de los visados y controles fronterizos. La consideración de estas trayectorias en diversos momentos y espacios muestra cómo las políticas de visados no solo implican claras restricciones a la movilidad sino que, además, su ausencia no se traduce necesariamente en posibilidades de admisión irrestricta a los territorios extranjeros.

Palabras clave: fronteras, políticas de visado, control, migración haitiana, trayectorias, procesos de racialización.

Introduction

In recent decades, it has become increasingly evident that the development of global capitalism has established a differential and hierarchical system through which social inequalities are both reinforced and simultaneously reproduced as unequal access to mobility (Neumayer, 2006). In an era of globalization, states thus seek to reconcile the economic and political benefits offered by global mobility with their prerogative to control their borders (Sassen, 2007). In this scenario, tensions among mobility, borders and nationality emerge and intensify, and the range of markers involved in structuring mobility—class, race, gender, ethnicity, age and religion, among others—become more visible (Glick-Schiller & Salazar, 2013). Different nationalities thus become part of an unequal system of power, in which certain citizens and their passports are more valuable than others (Balibar, 2012). It is therefore unsurprising that national groups with fewer possibilities for mobility on a global scale—i.e., who require consular visas—correspond to nationals of Haiti (the passport with the largest number of restrictions at the Latin American level), Cuba, most countries in Africa and some countries in Asia and the Middle East ("Estos son los pasaportes [These are the passports]," 2019; McKirdy, 2019; Yu, 2016).

Since the mid-1990s, there have been profound transformations in the field of international politics and, as a result, in the different ways of understanding sovereignty (Mezzadra, 2012). In general, while the notion of a "globalisation of migration control" (Düvell, 2003) makes it possible to account for the specific mechanisms, discourses and practices through which "administrative techniques of control, technical 'standards' and 'capacity building' programs circulate at the global level, deeply influencing the formulation of national migration policies" (Mezzadra, 2012, p. 169), the regionalization of migration policy refers to, among other issues, the infiltration/adaptation of different aspects of the migration governance model that has been observed during the last two decades in Latin America, along with the emergence of new ways of classifying and organizing migration and migrants

(Domenech, 2007; 2013; 2017). This article thus proposes to connect the experiences of young Haitians migrating towards Argentina with the reconfiguration of migration and border control policies and the increase in visa restrictions, based on different scales, spaces and temporalities.[1]

Studies carried out in other contexts, such as the United States, Canada and Europe, have defined consular visas as a specific form of border control that involves the preselection of potential travelers for entry into the different national territories (Guild & Bigo, 2003; Neumayer, 2006; Salter, 2006; Salter & Mutlu, 2010; Zolberg, 2003). Relocating the function of the border would thus allow states to classify the behavior of travelers while they are outside their physical boundaries. Arguably, limiting entry into a territory is the most effective way for states to avoid taking on a series of obligations for non-nationals considered "undesirables"; passport and visa controls therefore become the "first line of defense" for controlling entries and admissions (Torpey, 1998). While the significance of visas in the South American space has been indicated by some authors (Domenech, 2017; Salmón, 2017), there has been no systematic study of these policies. However, different investigations in the field of studies on migration policies make it possible to address and consider the treatment of this subject using a socio-historically situated analysis.

Similarly, within the field of border studies, scholars have noted that many studies limit their analysis of borders to the work of state and para-state actors (Casa-Cortes, Cobarrubias, De Genova et al, 2015). This article thus proposes a constructivist approach to the border, allowing it to be understood as a site of constant encounter, conflict and negotiation and, consequently, to address its production using not only government logic but also migration movements themselves (Casa-Cortes, Cobarrubias, De Genova et al., 2015; Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias & Pickles, 2015; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017; Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013). From this perspective, the notion of a border regime makes it possible to think about the heterogeneous set of actors, practices and discourses that converge—not without contradictions—in the historically situated processes that configure borders, moving from an analysis of the border to an analysis of the processes that constitute it. Taking the border as a social institution and set of social relations thus sidesteps proposals that define it in exclusively territorial and/or geopolitical terms and instead postulates an approach based on border proliferation and heterogenization (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017).

On this point, the processes of racialization present in the configuration of migration and border control schemes are particularly relevant. Namely, Quijano's idea of the "coloniality of power," referring to formation of the capitalist world system, is founded on:

> […] the imposition of a racial/ethnic classification of the global population as the cornerstone of that model of power, and it operates on every level, in every arena and dimension (both material and subjective) of everyday social existence, and does so on a societal scale (Quijano, 2000, p. 342).

[1] This analysis is also guided by a proposal that seeks to connect the participants' experiences with more general processes in the structuring of inequalities, considering different scales, spaces and temporalities (Feldman-Bianco, 2015; 2018).

In parallel, as argued by Segato (2011), race as a historically constructed social category responds in each country to national formations of otherness; in each case, the construction of the nation entails a certain production of "race as a mark of exteriority in relation to the centers of national power" (Segato, 2011, p. 7). In the case of Argentina, the formation of the nation involved the implementation of different mechanisms aimed at ethnic homogenization through specific processes of whitening. Reference to the "melting pot" in Argentina thus refers exclusively to European national groups, while denying and erasing the presence of indigenous and Afro-descendant otherness in the national project (Segato, 2007).

Within this framework, building upon the idea that the practices of individuals can be understood in terms of strategies—i.e., their dispositions to act, think and orient themselves according to their social position and a practical sense of the social game (Bourdieu, 1997)—it is important to understand their developments in connection with the formation of borders. In this direction, there is an emphasis on analyzing strategies that—deployed in contexts of mobility—make it possible to account for the tensions and reconfigurations that result from the intersection of border crossing practices and border reinforcement practices (Vila, 2000), with a particular emphasis on the effects of national categories (Sayad, 2008) and state practices that intervene in logics of control. Accordingly, the tourist visa imposed in Argentina for Haitian nationals in August 2018 can be seen as part of a broader policymaking context, in which different actors, practices and discourses converge. Without losing sight of that convergence, this article is focused on analyzing the experiences of young Haitians living in the cities of Córdoba and Rosario, examining both the preparation of their migration plans in Haiti and the shaping of mobility strategies towards Argentina as well as the changes observed in perceptions of migration and border control and the development of border crossing strategies along the different trajectories.

Using a qualitative methodological approach, based on participant observation in different social spaces and in-depth interviews with young Haitians living in the cities of Córdoba and Rosario, this article analyzes excerpts from interviews and field records that refer to different experiences, with the objective of highlighting certain transversal axes as well as a number of differences that account for the heterogeneity present in the different trajectories.[2] By addressing their experiences in relation to visa policies, the intention is thus to contribute to the debate on relations between the state, nationality and borders within the framework of South-South mobility and the reconfigurations that have been observed in Argentina and the region during the last two decades. To this end, concrete practices that account for the selective nature and filtering function of borders are analyzed, as well as their porosities and possibilities for crossing. By placing the emphasis on the participants' trajectories, the intention is to show that the existence of consular visas not only involves clear restrictions on mobility but that their absence does not necessarily translate into unrestricted entry into the territory.

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[2] The real names of my Haitian interlocutors and certain specific data will not be disclosed, in order to maintain their anonymity.

The article is organized into three sections. First, some specific characteristics of the migration trajectories of Haitians living in the cities of Córdoba and Rosario are discussed, in order to perform a situated analysis. Second, the role of visas in the migration plans of young Haitians is examined with respect to countries such as the United States, France or Canada, in contrast to the ways in which Argentina is defined as a "destination" according to different temporalities. Finally, the implementation of the visa policy in Argentina is discussed to highlight the tensions between mobility strategies and border rejections, based on some of the social markers that operate in border control along the different trajectories.

Migration Plans of Young Haitians towards Argentina

It is important to highlight some general, yet significant, aspects of the mobility of Haitians towards the cities of Rosario and Córdoba for a situated analysis of their relations and connections with migration and border control. By re-inscribing their trajectories within the framework of different global and regional processes, it is possible to shed light on the tensions and reconfigurations that are established between mobility, borders and nationality at different scales and in different spaces and temporalities. Previous investigations of Haitian migration in the region have examined a number of elements.[3] Many of the studies analyze the mobility of Haitians towards South American countries such as Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Chile and even Argentina following the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, which exacerbated the already fragile and unstable social, political and economic conditions in the country. Furthermore, although Haitian migration to South America is considered recent, it is often stressed that it has a long history, traditionally directed towards multiple destinations, particularly to certain countries in the Caribbean (such as the Dominican Republic and Cuba), the United States, Canada and France. Haitian migration in general, including the new movements towards South American countries, is therefore fundamentally associated with the structural conditions that situate it as one of the poorest countries at the regional level, alongside the recurrent instability and political violence observed at the institutional level.

In the case of the cities of Rosario and Córdoba, the migration plans of young Haitians have primarily been made based on personal and/or family interest in studying at a university in Argentina. Over the years, these aspirations have encountered different obstacles—cultural, social and political—that have caused many to abandon their university studies, enter precarious labor markets and/or move to other cities or countries, or even return to Haiti. Without providing specific details about those difficulties, this analysis focuses on the experiences of Haitians who—regardless of whether or not they are working—are still linked to the university educational project, either trying to enter

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[3] Among them, Alarcón, 2015; Berganza, 2017; Burey, 2018; Ceja, 2015; De Heusch, 2016; Duffard, 2016; Fernandes and Faria, 2017; Nieto, 2014; OBIMID, 2016; OIM-FCCAM, 2017; Pedemonte, Amode and Rencoret, 2015; Pedemonte, Amode and Vásquez, 2017; Silva, 2015; Thomaz, 2013; Véran, Da Silva and Fainstat, 2014.

university, currently studying for different careers or, having finished their university studies, entering the professional labor market in different fields.

With regard to the preparation of migration plans, the cases of three young people will be analyzed below, as they express—in a paradigmatic way—some of the characteristics found in many different experiences, in particular those referring to the familial and transnational character of migration plans and the social and generational trajectories that create the conditions to carry out those plans.

The first case is that of Robert, one of many Haitians who arrived in the mid-to-late 2000s. He explains that his parents, both merchants, did not have access to education, but they worked their entire lives in Port-de-Paix, a region in northwest Haiti, to ensure that he and his brothers could have access to university education and become professionals. This 29-year-old man, who arrived in Argentina in 2008, belongs to an association in Rosario and is an example for many young people living in the city, who come to him to ask questions about different topics. Referring in particular to the preparation of migration plans by young Haitians who come to this city, Robert's account shows a close connection between family, education and their transnational character. In his words:

> […] in Haiti, your family says, I'll pay for university; I'll pay for school, you study; I'll work, don't worry; I'll work and you study; all I ask is that you study, just study. That's how families are in Haiti, when you arrive— this is very important—when a Haitian arrives, a family arrives, a neighborhood arrives, an entire area, an uncle, an aunt, they're here; a neighbor, an uncle, an aunt, a father, a mother, siblings, everyone calls you. How are you? How are your studies going? Because they have faith and they are waiting for good news, when you arrive, they feel like, "My son is a doctor," "my neighbor is a doctor; he studied in Argentina," "my cousin is a doctor," all the glory is for them. If you fail here, there is a group of families that fail with you; when you arrive, a group of families arrives (Robert, November 16, 2017).

The next case is that of Joseph, a 31-year-old Haitian man who spent his entire life in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, and arrived in the city of Rosario in 2011. Although Joseph does not belong to any association, he actively promotes and participates in different activities that aim to present Haiti and its culture but also to reflect on the situation and condition of Haitian migrants in Argentina. Like Robert, Joseph comments on his parent's efforts to ensure that he and his siblings could have access to education and the meaning it had for them: "they didn't know how to read [...]. This is often the case with parents, as there are many people there who can't read. They say 'I didn't have that opportunity' or 'that luck' as they say there; 'that isn't going to happen to my son.' So they work very hard" (Joseph, November 17, 2017).

The third case is that of Moise, a 22-year-old man who arrived in Córdoba in 2016 from Les Cayes, a region in southern Haiti. Moise is also an example for Haitians living in Córdoba and belongs to one of the three associations that exist in the city, where the number of Haitian residents is much lower than in Rosario. While Moise says that his parents were able to finish high school and his mother studied teaching, he also shares Robert and Joseph's view of the importance that parents place on education:

> The Haitian father…There is something in his head that says, "I don't care if I have to go barefoot to pay for my children's studies, it is what matters most to me." What matters most is his children's studies, and he will go barefoot if it is necessary. […] Because in Haiti, there is a saying that children are their parent's wealth; we say [...] you work so that your children can get to a higher place, as high as they can [...] because they know that one day, if that child is faithful, if they have a good heart, they will reach out their hand and pull them up out of their situation. This happens with many Haitian families, that the parents make an enormous effort and then when the children reach a certain level, they are able to send their parents on vacation…That is to say, give them a better life (Moise, April 6, 2018).

In these three cases, as in most of the young people's accounts, there is a shared idea about the difficulties of entering public universities, the cost of private universities and the higher value placed on degrees obtained abroad, in contrast to those obtained at universities in Haiti. Moreover, in several instances, studying abroad was also seen as a typical experience had by young people with professional aspirations after completing their secondary studies. There was also an emphasis on the importance of having family members in other countries such as the United States, Canada or France, who contribute financially to their plans in the early months or who can be asked, if necessary, for financial assistance in order to continue their studies. It is thus possible to say that Haitian trajectories towards the cities of Rosario and Córdoba are linked to a family project, in which education appears in most cases as a strategy for social mobility that is constructed generationally and is generally linked to different types of family migrant trajectories. Migration plans are thus considered a strategy for the social reproduction of the family, understood in the long term not as conscious intentions but, rather, as a set of actions aimed at increasing or conserving its heritage, maintaining or improving its position in the structure of class positions (Bourdieu, 2011). In turn, this familial trait also illustrates the transnational nature of the plans and the connection between different places and practices. In other words, the comment made by one of the interviewees that "when *a* Haitian arrives, the entire family arrives" refers precisely to the formation of networks of social relations (Feldman-Bianco, 2015; Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004), which simultaneously connect the practices of young people in their place of residence with not only Haiti but also the different places where their family and friends live.

The Visa as a Regulator of Mobility: Between "Ideal Destinations" and Possible Destinations?

> With a Haitian passport, you don't have a lot of access. For example. I once had a discussion with a French woman. I said, "Well, now there are more Haitians in Chile than in France." And she said to me, "No, there are better countries to travel to." I said, "Well, you can travel all over the world with your passport," but a Haitian doesn't have that option. For example, "Let's go to

Denmark," but no, in order to go to Denmark, it's like, "What is a Haitian going to do in Denmark?" The paperwork you have to go through… (Joseph, November 17, 2017).

Considering the specific characteristics mentioned above, this section will address the space occupied by migration and border control practices when young people are making their migration plans as well as their mobility strategies towards Argentina. It will thus analyze perceptions and practices around visa policies: first, in connection with the historically constructed "destinations" of the United States, France and Canada and, second, based on the contrast between these countries and the "new" South American countries and, particularly, the different ways in which Argentina is constructed as a "destination."

With regard to the former, many of the conversations and interviews suggest that there is a differentiation and hierarchy among the countries considered to be the most "desired" or "ideal" for migration, i.e., the United States, France and Canada, and the "new" South American countries that have emerged as a possibility in recent years. Within this framework, references to "ideal destinations" appear in the accounts, most often as reflections on the participants' thoughts about those countries when they were making their migration plans. However, there are also comments—and occasionally critiques—of Haitian ideas about migration and the idyllic representations that many young people and their families have of those places. Moreover, in several cases, those countries are referred to as part of current migration plans, i.e., some young people living in the cities of Córdoba and Rosario still consider those "destinations" as the primary objective to be achieved.

As argued by Michele (March 14, 2018), one of the young women interviewed, "in general, Haitians have a tendency to go to the United States and Canada. Why? Because there are always family members there. Because of an idea that they have, let's say, about the kind of life there [...]." Moise refers to this same idea when he talks about his high school friends: "the ones who went to high school, [...] one of the best ones there, the idea that middle and upper middle class people have is children who finish high school and go to France, Canada or the United States. So, I have a lot of classmates who are in the United States, the majority of them. The rest are in Canada or France" (Moise, April 6, 2018). In turn, Joseph notes that those "destinations" are still considered to be the "highest rung to reach" for many young people and states that "we keep thinking about it (traveling to the United States, Canada or France). But every day, it's more complicated [...]; they ask for a lot of things..." (Joseph, November 17, 2017). With regard to the enduring desire to travel to those countries, according to Robert, "going to the United States, Canada or France is what was most sought after; in reality, many still think about it. They are here, but their heads are there" (Robert, November 16, 2017). What was expressed by Robert is exemplified in the case of Pierre, who at the time of the interview was taking the necessary steps for travel to France, a country that had initially been his "destination", but he was forced to abandon the plans, as he was unable to meet all the requirements for a visa. He therefore chose Argentina, although, as he argues, "in reality, Argentina was never a place to come or to stay [...]. And now I'm thinking about going to France. Yes, because France has always been a dream. Yes, I have to go."

It is thus possible to see that for many of the young people currently living in the cities of Córdoba and Rosario, the "destinations" of the United States, Canada and France have an enormous significance in their ideas about migration. Given the historical relationship of Haitian migration with those countries, the existing family networks and the images constructed around them, it is understandable that these countries are still the most desired destinations for many. As argued by Salazar and Smart (2011), in an unequal global space, the construction of potential places for migration—whether based on solid knowledge or rumors—is filtered through migrants' personal aspirations. While the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Mexico and—now part of a distant past—Venezuela are possibilities considered for university studies, they are not described in the same way as the United States, France and Canada. Although the reference to "ideal destinations" in defining migratory projects is not total, that is, it is not part of the reconstruction that takes place in all projects, it is significant, whether critically or not, both for those who came to half 2000 and those who arrived more recently. This leads to a consideration of not only the gravitational weight of those "ideal destinations" but primarily to the different perspectives and strategies that are configured around the migration and border control mechanisms associated with them and their possibilities for crossing.

It is thus possible to analyze the tensions between mobility, borders and nationality through the perceived difficulties in obtaining the visas required to travel to the United States, Canada or France. These tensions are particularly visible in the emergence of the mobility strategies towards Argentina that took place from the mid-2000s to—with different variants—2014, 2015 and 2016. In those years, as will be seen in the following section, perceptions about border control in Argentina and what the visa waiver for entry into the territory means and involves begin to mutate significantly. If we begin by examining the experiences and perceptions of mobility by Haitians who arrived before 2016, there is a clear contrast between Argentina (and certain South American countries) and those that are considered "ideal destinations" for migration. This contrast is clearly visible, for example, in an interview conducted at the end of 2017, in which Lyne, a Haitian woman who arrived in the country in 2005, indicates what she considers to be one of the reasons why many Haitians choose or chose Argentina as a "destination":

> In Argentina, as in Chile or Brazil, we are very new because only two years ago—more or less—in Brazil because of soccer...before you absolutely had to have a visa. Since they needed people to work, they opened the door for a Haitian to travel without a visa. Everyone who was able to travel took the opportunity to leave. And now in Chile, which doesn't require a visa, they take advantage of the opportunity to travel [...]. But in the United States or Canada, you need a visa. It is very difficult to get one. So for that reason, if there is a place you need a visa for and another one where you don't, obviously you're going to choose a place that you don't need a visa. Besides, it's not just that you have to go and apply; you have to pay money even though you don't know whether you'll get it, to go to the United States, or to Canada or France. You don't know if they're going to give it to you or not. It's very hard to get. So instead of spending that eight hundred dollars to apply for a visa without

knowing whether or not they're going to give it to you, you take that eight hundred dollars, or a little more, and you buy a ticket to Brazil or Chile or come here to Argentina (Lyne, December 15, 2017).

In another case, Emile, a young Haitian man who had unsuccessfully applied for a scholarship program in the United States before coming to Argentina in 2009, argued the following:

And for the United States, if your parents are residents, you could travel. But if you had relatives who didn't have citizenship, you couldn't. [I: Is that right?] Yes. First you have to apply for a visa. If your parents are residents, they fill out the application for you to visit and live with them. They show their salaries...all that is a long process. And they create an important filter because they know that if your parents live there, then you're going to go. But they can make you wait years. [I: Years?] Yes, because it's a process of attrition too; they do it so that Haitians always place a high value of going...For Haitians, the United States is a paradise. In actuality, when you think about it, it isn't.

Through these accounts, it is possible to begin to notice some of the perceptions that young Haitians have about migration and border control in different countries. The restrictions on mobility that are imposed through visas arise from the selective nature of borders but are also part of the reasons—understood in terms of "practical sense" (Bourdieu, 1997)—that lead to the development of new mobility strategies, in which new "destinations" and borders come into play. It is in this context that Argentina—a country that until only a few years ago was known solely for soccer or the presence of Argentine soldiers through the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (Unstamih)—emerges as a "possible" but not necessarily "desired" destination. As Robert argues:

(Haitians) didn't know much about Latin America. We know Argentina and Brazil aren't developed countries and that they have their own problems and maybe they can't, in quotation marks, sustain us, and we know Brazil and Argentina just because of soccer. But lately, they're coming because that generation is desperate; they want a better future, they want to have an adventure, and they arrive here; they arrive here, and there are a lot of Haitians who think, as I said before, that any place in the world is better than Haiti; it doesn't matter where they are (Robert, November 16, 2017).

The lack of knowledge about the country constantly appears in the young people's plans, and many accounts show the more or less casual way in which Argentina emerges as a "destination." For example, in a group interview with two Haitian men and one Haitian woman, the dialog below unfolds as one of them, who arrived in Argentina in 2015, spoke about how, in his experience, Argentina emerges as a place established by his family for travel:

And so, so… my mother grabbed her cell phone and called one of those brothers, asking them what the process was, what they had to do. But also, aside from studying in the capital, Port-au-Prince, there was also the idea of going to study in Canada. In Canada, they are asking for a lot more. But when

my mother spoke to people in Argentina, they told her that she needed a letter of invitation and practically nothing else. And to buy a ticket.

Wilguens: Really?!

Michele: Sure, compared to the United States…

Stéphane: It's like entering paradise.

Wilguens: I think the visa application costs a lot …

Michele: And you don't know if they will give it to you! [Laughter] (Wilguens, Michele & Stéphane, March 7, 2018).

The emergence of Argentina as a "destination" appears in a similar way in different accounts. It is thus possible to see how the visa represents an almost indisputable element of restriction when describing the control of any country and it is therefore understood as an essential element for mobility strategies—or, at least, for plans considered in terms of "legality." In other words, the importance of the visa is understood in relation to the particular characteristics mentioned above: family plans with the goal of studying at a university; entry into foreign countries is therefore considered based on the administrative options covered by different migration regulations. The differentiated—and hierarchical—construction of "destinations" present in the eyes of these young people thus contrasts with the actual possibilities of entering the most desired countries, producing a distance between the "desired destination" and the "possible destination." When examining these possibilities, borders play an essential role, which is largely defined by the existence—or lack thereof—of entry visas. In many cases, Argentina is constructed as a "destination" for the family migration plans of young Haitians in opposition to countries such as the United States, Canada and France, based on the perceived impossibility of obtaining the necessary entry visas or personal experiences with visa rejections. However, as will be seen below, the visa waiver in effect in Argentina until August 2018 did not involve unrestricted entry into the territory for Haitian nationals, and it is thus important to analyze the development of their mobility strategies based on the different temporalities of their trajectories.

Recent Arrivals, Changes in Migratory and Border Control Schemes?

They (migration agents) have a particular definition of what it means to be a tourist [...]; you have to be European or American—they are tourists. But as long as you have a passport from the Haitian Republic, you are no longer a tourist, or some countries in Africa, you are no longer a tourist; you are coming to do something else; you are not a tourist (Fátima, April 10, 2018).

Understanding the visa as a relocation of border control that allows the state to participate in the preselection of travelers in order to deter the arrival of nationals considered undesirable (Bigo & Guild, 2017; Neumayer, 2006; Salter, 2006) seems to substantiate the way in which Argentina emerges as a "destination" for many young people, i.e., thinking about whether or not there is a visa, compared to other countries considered to be "ideal destinations." Haitian mobility therefore appears to be structured—at least in part—by what some authors have called a "global visa regime" (Salter, 2006; Salter & Mutlu, 2010). As shown in different publications using data from the Passport Index ("Estos son los pasaportes", 2019; McKirdy, 2019; Yu, 2016), Haiti is one of the nationalities with the greatest number of restrictions on entering foreign countries in the world. In 2017, those with Haitian passports were allowed to enter 53 countries, but only 17 of those countries did not require a visa or any other type of document. Those 17 countries included Chile and Argentina, which implemented consular visas for Haitians in 2018. In addition to understanding visa restrictions as a differential and selective form of control that contributes to reinforcing social inequalities between countries and between subjects (Neumayer, 2006), it is essential to examine the historical process that configures the visa policy for Haitian nationals in Argentina, based on the different ways in which the subjects experience, dispute or negotiate control practices. As explained above, this means considering not only governmental logics of control but also the practices of migrant individuals (Casa-Cortes, Cobarrubias, De Genova et al, 2015).

In particular, it is important to highlight the tensions that are produced between rejection at the border for being considered a "false tourist" and Haitian mobility strategies towards Argentina along different trajectories. As mentioned above, the perspective of Argentina as a "destination" and the mobility strategies towards the country show relevant differences according to the temporality of the different trajectories. Although the visa waiver for Haitians in Argentina remained in effect until August 2018, the border crossing experience for someone who arrived in the mid-2000s is not the same as it was for someone who arrived after 2016. Nor will it be the same for those who arrived in the years following the earthquake in 2010, when certain ideas about this national group and specific humanitarian practices for them had begun to circulate. There are thus important nuances not only in terms of their prior knowledge about the country based on the year of their arrival (in part, facilitated by more consolidated networks and access to new technologies) but also in terms of changes to the state regulations for entry and admission into the Argentine national territory as well as different border crossing experiences at Argentine airports. However, this does not suggest that control and surveillance practices had been absent before 2016, nor that the tourist visa for Haitians—and the border rejections that were co-constitutive— are the product of a transformation in the migration and border control schemes, which would take place concomitantly with the change in the national government in

2015.[4] In South America, advances in security and surveillance technologies applied to migration control have been identified in different studies (Domenech, 2013; 2017; Santi, 2018). In Argentina, in particular, the introduction of the use of biometrics in 2011 and the Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Registration (PNR) systems at airports since 2014 (Resolución 618/2014, 2014) and the creation of the National Border Commission (*Comisión Nacional de Fronteras*) in 2017 (Decreto 68/2017, 2017) are critical to understanding the development of migration and border controls. It should also be noted that the use of the figure of the false tourist in Argentina has followed a historical route from the first regulation in 1985 to the most recent modification in 2014 through Resolution 4362/2014 (Disposición No. 4362/2014, 2014; Alvites, 2018). It is not a minor detail that in 2014, for example, 2 374 Haitians requested to enter the country, of whom 208 were rejected. In other words, 8.7% were not admitted into the Argentine territory. Although this analysis is not based on quantitative data, it is significant to mention that following a decrease in border rejections for people of Haitian nationality in 2016, with 59 rejections, 221 cases were registered in 2017, and as of August 2018—when the tourist visa was imposed—900 cases had already been counted that year (Trabalón, 2018).

Without ignoring the restrictive and criminalizing bias that accompanies the different normative regulations, practices and official discourses for the migration policy of the Cambiemos (in English, "Let's Change") government, the logics of control that underpin the visa policy, rejections and individuals' experiences around and through them can be better understood if they are inscribed within the regionalization of migration policy (Domenech, 2013; 2017) and, more generally, within the framework of the establishment of a global migration and border regime (Mezzadra, 2012). These developments offer an analytical field that is more conducive to understanding the interweaving of the different local, national, regional and global scales (Glick-Schiller & Caglar, 2010; Feldman-Bianco, 2015, 2018) operating in the various control practices and experiences, not only through the effects produced by national borders and categories (Sayad, 2008) but also beyond them.

In this context, the experiences of young Haitians towards Argentina, which have been ongoing since the mid-2000s, are connected to the reconfiguration of migration and border control practices and the increase in visa restrictions for certain national groups in the South American space. Of course, there were border reinforcement processes during this period in and between different South American countries (Alvites, 2019; Domenech, 2013, 2017; Ramírez & Alfaro, 2010) as well as the development of security and surveillance technologies applied to migration control (Domenech, 2017; Santi, 2018). Moreover, the implementation of consular visas is closely linked to the emergence of new migratory movements and patterns, as evidenced by those that have been implemented for national groups from the

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[4] Following Domenech (2017), since the mid-2000s, different transformations and specific events have contributed to establishing a dominant representation in the field of migration policies associated with a supposed South American exceptionality, compared to the control and surveillance schemes observed in other parts of the world. In contrast to this view, which argues that there would have been a movement away from a security and control approach and towards a human rights approach, this article intends to recognize "the coexistence between specific regional processes and events and the control and surveillance practices that currently operate in different countries, in different spaces, at different scales and through numerous actors in the South American regional context" (Domenech, 2017, p. 38).

Caribbean, Asia and Africa as well as—more recently—Venezuelan nationals. Among several examples found in different reports (oim-oea, 2016; oim, 2017, Cepal, 2018) is the case of Ecuador: following the suspension of the visa requirement in 2008, the government reimposed consular visas for nationals of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Somalia in 2010, and Senegal and Cuba in 2015. Similarly, shortly after consular visas for Chinese citizens were suspended in Ecuador in 2008 and in Colombia in 2007, they were once again re-imposed in both countries. With regard to nationals of the Dominican Republic, tourist visas were established in Argentina and Chile in 2012 and in Uruguay in 2014. In the latter, a tourist visa for Cubans was also implemented in 2015. With regard to Haitian nationals, tourist visas were established in Peru in 2012, in Chile in April 2018, and in Argentina in August 2018. Furthermore, humanitarian visas became available for Haitians in Brazil in 2012 and in Chile in 2018, for family reunification, and travel with advance notice in Ecuador in 2015. A similar trend is now being observed in regulations for the movements of Venezuelans in the region, who now require a humanitarian visa for Peru and Ecuador and a tourist visa for Chile (Cepal, 2018; oim-oea, 2016).

Although Argentina's migration policy has specific nuances, it is no stranger to regional and global processes. This can be confirmed by considering, among other elements, how rejections and visas have been implemented in recent years based on certain traveler profiles and sharply different treatment of Mercosur and non-Mercosur migrants; its constitution and substantiation based on security and humanitarian arguments; and the particular effect that the figure of the false tourist has had on the movements of Haitian nationals from the mid-2000s to the present.

In this context, the increased state violence that has been observed in the current political climate of the national government goes hand in hand with more general processes associated with the structuring of inequalities and mobility on a global scale (Feldman-Bianco, 2018). It is thus understood, for example, that many young Haitians perceive changes in the direction of the migration policy, while they also consider that being rejected in Argentina has always been a latent and concrete possibility. As noted by Joseph, who arrived in the country in 2011:

> It is also difficult here. Any Haitian who is here in Argentina, before their trip, or when they're at the airport, well, the guys always say, "it's a 50/50 trip," a 50% chance you can enter and a 50% percent chance they'll send you back. The same thing happened to me when I came. I got on a plane, and I said, "Well, they can kick me out at any point" (Joseph, November 17, 2017).

It is also true that for many, the significance of the visa and rejections cannot be understood outside the Argentine political climate, as well as certain practices, regulations and discourses promoted by the current government,[5] which are also associated—in different cases—with the economic crisis in the country. At the beginning of the fieldwork in December 2017, one of the first issues that emerged from the young people during the conversations was the topic of entering the country and, more precisely, the problems that Haitians were experiencing with being admitted

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[5] A detailed overview of the regulatory changes and certain discourses and practices in the current political climate of the Cambiemos government can be seen, for example, in Canelo, Gavazzo and Nejamkis (2018) and García and Nejamkis (2018).

to the country when they arrived in Argentina. Throughout 2018, this situation took on greater visibility as they observed—in an increasingly worrying way—a gradual increase in border rejections of acquaintances, friends and family who tried to enter the country through different Argentine airports. Until the implementation of the tourist visa for Haitian nationals in August 2018, border crossing practices and false tourist rejections[6] became central elements in the daily lives of the Haitian migrants living in the cities of Rosario and Córdoba. Based on the relationships maintained with some of the young people, it was clear that at the beginning of the fieldwork, when the topic turned to border rejections, opinions were divided between those who viewed the rejections critically, those who understood them as a legitimate exercise of state sovereignty (often attributed to the travelers themselves lacking the necessary requirements) and those who, while identifying them as a problem, demonstrated a certain tolerance, as if it were an admissible or valid risk for travelers who are migrants to other countries. However, as time went by, it was possible to observe that for many, this tolerance began to collapse, as evidence mounted that rejections of Haitians at the airports were systematic and discretionary.

In this context, through the different perspectives and experiences of border crossing, detention and rejection, it is important to examine how the racial and ethnic component linked to national origin intervenes in the configuration of control practices at different airports in Argentina and the reconfigurations of the border for Haitian nationals traveling to the country. At different moments, situations were reported in which, for example, when disembarking from the plane and waiting in the line for non-Mercosur migrants at the Ezeiza airport, migration agents came over to separate those who were "black" into a different line. According to Emile, "they separate us first for being black and then for our nationality," while for Fátima, "because of our skin color they consider us to be different, as if we were something else," and for Carl, "because we are black, and a black person isn't something that any country wants." At the same time, another recurring event at border crossings involved them being questioned by migration agents based on the association between the poverty in Haiti and hence the impossibility that people of Haitian nationality could be considered tourists, as argued by Moise:

> And do you know what they say to you, what they ask? "We know the situation in Haiti, don't tell me that you're coming here to Argentina as a tourist; tell us the truth, that you're coming here to live, to do something else." In other words, they clearly state that a Haitian cannot come to Argentina as a tourist. [...] Because they are Haitian, because of the situation in the country. They look at the situation in the country and put it in front of you. The situation in your country doesn't allow you to enter as a tourist [...] (Moise, April 6, 2018).

These accounts highlight some of the ways in which the racial and ethnic component intervenes in state practices of migration and border control. As stated above, the practices of racialization in Argentina derive from both the European colonial system

6 The figure of the false tourist does not emerge immediately alongside the rejections, in part because the Haitians that were rejected had no knowledge of the reason why they were prevented from entering Argentina and subsequently returned to Haiti.

and the historical formation of "Argentinity." In this line of thought, racism as a "total social phenomenon" (Wallerstein & Balibar, 1991) exists and persists as a device that aims to postulate the existence of races and,

> […] ultimately deals with the persistence of racialization, which, as a cognitive and value process sustained by and sustaining power relations, constructs biological "data" for the existence of races, which sustains racism (Caggiano, 2008, p. 34).

The intersection between migration, racialization and ethnicity should thus be located within the framework of the construction of the idea of a nation "without black people" and "without indigenous people"[7] and should also be based on the way "racial borders" (Fassin, 2011) have been reconfigured in Argentina since the mid-2000s, through the increased visibility of African and Afro-descendant migrants as part of the new movements and migratory patterns observed during the last two decades in the region.

This analysis sheds light on key dimensions for understanding control practices and experiences in Argentina. The material and symbolic violence exerted through the border control and rejection of Haitians at different airports is based on the fundamental mediation that operates along racial and ethnic markers linked to nationality—and an assumed social class. In border control, racial identification thus precedes ethnicity, but both—linked to national origin—ultimately configure the social condition that refers to or materializes through the figure of the migrant as different as the foreigner and, therefore, the tourist. Following Sayad's analysis:

> […] immigrant increasingly designates a social condition, while foreigner corresponds to a legal-political status; the latter can change without anything changing at first or without changing anything at all. If all foreigners are not (socially speaking) immigrants, all immigrants are not necessarily foreigners (legally speaking) (Sayad, 2008, p. 103).

Racial, ethnic and national markers would thus make it possible for travelers or tourists to be transformed into potential migrants and, consequently, into potential risks or threats to the national order. The category of tourist—and its counterpoint, the false tourist—can therefore be interpreted through this differential regime of the foreigner, through which some foreigners remain as such, while others come to be considered migrants—or, for that matter, potential migrants. This regime passes through border practices that concern entries and admissions, whether through forms of "remote control" (Zolberg, 2003), such as visas, or at border crossings in airports. There are thus particular forms of control that configure the immigrant as a "bearer of the status and position attributed to their country on an international scale" (Sayad, 1998) and, at

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[7] While processes of ethnicization have been addressed in relation to border migration by some authors from the 1990s to the present (Caggiano, 2005; Grimson, 2010), processes of racialization are still nascent, in part because the migration of Africans and Afro-descendants began to gain greater visibility in Argentina in the mid-2000s, with African migration—and Senegalese migration in particular—being the most prolific.

the same time, reveal the state production of racial borders (Fassin, 2011) in the forms of regulation, surveillance and blocking of mobility at Argentine airports.

Conclusions

Different studies on visa policies show how visa restrictions produce a highly unequal system, which encourages the transnational mobility of passport holders from privileged countries (rich), at the expense of severe restrictions that seek to deter the arrival of those considered undesirable. Existing inequalities are thus reinforced through a regime of differential access to foreign spaces. Visa policies are therefore presented as a form of regulation essential to the structuring of mobility, which offers the possibility of understanding control mechanisms operating outside the national territory as well as how they are established within the framework of different border configuration processes, involving different actors, practices, discourses and, in particular, the migratory movements themselves. This first approach to visa policies for Haitians in Argentina and the region thus made it possible to not only show how borders have changed substantially for this national group over the last decade but also to examine certain critical aspects of their migrant experiences. In the case of Haitian trajectories towards the cities of Córdoba and Rosario, there are clear links between the impossibility of obtaining visas for certain destinations and the implementation of mobility strategies that include the pursuit of new horizons. There is also a strategic use of certain categories—such as the tourist—along the different trajectories, the crossing experiences and the reconfigurations that occur over time in terms of state control.

For Haitian nationals, the visa is thus considered a border practice, which—defined within the framework of the dominant mobility policies—operates as a corrective regulation mechanism, as Haitian mobility strategies towards Argentina—through porosities at the borders—become a problematic factor. What is normatively reflected in the tourist visa established in August 2018 is thus the result of a historical process in which different actors, discourses and practices converge. The figure of the false tourist in particular operates as a state category based on a prior social construction of the figure of the migrant. The migrant designates a social condition that is inextricably associated with an idea of suspicion, which allows the state—based on racial and ethnic criteria for control—to equate it with a subject that is dangerous—or at least risky—to the national order and that therefore should be—and is—legitimately rejected. In this scenario, understanding the border as a social relationship makes it possible to address its historical, heterogeneous and mobile character. Borders are therefore present in these young people's migration plans and in the implementation of their mobility strategies towards Argentina but also in everyday life, in the rupture of family and social ties, and in the perceptions of objections or challenges to their presence, caused, for example, by border rejections and tourist visa regulations.

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