

Identity Constructions of Haitian Immigrants in Santiago de Chile from an Intersectional Perspective

Construcciones identitarias de inmigrantes haitianos en Santiago de Chile desde una perspectiva interseccional

Mercedes Mercado Órdenes¹ & Ana Figueiredo²

ABSTRACT

This work focuses on the identity constructions of Haitian immigrants in Chile. A qualitative study was conducted based on in-depth semi-structured interviews, which included analyzing thematic and intersectional contents in order to understand the identity constructions of the participants in their migration trajectories from Haiti to Chile. Results associated with the work and social experiences of the participants are presented, along with the ethnic-racial and sex-gender orders, bringing together differentiating axes such as religion, nationality, social class, and immigrant status. We found that the articulation of dimensions of oppression in Chile configures a Haitian-migrant-worker identity positioned as a radical otherness; incipient changes in sex-gender identities are also reported, emerging from subaltern social positions and as adaptation strategies in an adverse context.

Keywords: 1. identity, 2. intersectionality, 3. migration, 4. Haiti, 5. Chile.

RESUMEN

El trabajo presentado se centra en las construcciones identitarias de inmigrantes haitianos en Chile. Es un estudio cualitativo, a partir de entrevistas semiestructuradas en profundidad, que incluye el análisis de contenido temático e interseccional, para comprender las construcciones identitarias de los participantes en sus trayectorias migratorias desde Haití a Chile. Se presentan resultados asociados a las experiencias laborales y sociales de los participantes, junto a los órdenes étnico-racial y de sexo-género, incorporando los ejes de diferencia de religión, nacionalidad, clase social y estatus. Se concluye que la articulación de dimensiones de opresión en Chile configura una identidad de trabajador-migrante-haitiano posicionada como otredad radical, y se informan incipientes cambios en las identidades sexo-género, que emergen desde posiciones sociales subalternas y como estrategias de adaptación en un contexto adverso.

Palabras clave: 1. identidad, 2. interseccionalidad, 3. migración, 4. Haití, 5. Chile.

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¹ Universidad Diego Portales, Chile, mercedes.mercado@mail.udp.cl, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7011-0294>

² Universidad de O'Higgins, Campus Rancagua, Chile, figueiredo.anacm@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5233-4622>



INTRODUCTION³

International migration is an increasingly growing phenomenon in several parts of the world. Chile is no exception to this trend, and in recent decades it has become one of the main receiving countries for immigration in Latin America (Jesuit Refugee Service [SJM, acronym in Spanish for Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes], 2020), a fact derived from a favorable international perception of the country when it comes to conditions of economic and political stability (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC, acronym in Spanish for Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe], 2016). From the 1990s, migration to Chile has been characterized by an increasing trend and a feminized and intra-regional character (Stefoni, 2011); subsequently, migration to Chile has continued to increase and diversify since 2010 with the arrival of people from Caribbean countries such as the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Thus, as of December 31 of 2019, there were 1 492 522 immigrants in Chile, 7.8% of the total number of residents, while in 2010, this population represented only 1.8% (National Institute of Statistics [INE, acronym in Spanish for Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas], 2020).

Currently, the most represented migrant communities in Chile come from Venezuela, Peru and Haiti (INE, 2020). Comparatively, the Haitian population has particular characteristics: less cultural proximity to Chile, greater geographical distance from their country of origin, a language other than Spanish (Creole or Haitian Creole), and to a greater extent than other groups in this country they face discrimination, not only because of their immigrant status but also due to their nationality and/or their skin color (SJM, 2020).

Within this context, it becomes relevant to understand how Haitian immigrants adapt to life in Chile. This article represents an empirical study, carried out from a qualitative approach with the aim of analyzing the daily experiences of Haitian immigrants in Chile from an intersectional perspective (Brah, 2011; Collins, 1991), particular attention given to ethnic-racial and sex-gender elements that determine their experiences. Likewise, this paper shows how the daily experiences of the subjects rearticulate and transform their identity constructions. In this sense, identity is understood as a location-specific, provisional and contingent articulation, which allows understanding the experiences, subjectivities and historical memories of individuals in interaction with changing socio-historical, cultural and structural factors (Brah, 2011).

Next we will introduce the context of Haitian immigration in Chile, including a description of the legal and administrative conditions that frame it, as well as background information extracted from previous research on their living conditions in this country. Subsequently, a brief characterization of the conceptual framework of this study is included, followed by the methodological procedures implemented and the strategy deployed to incorporate the intersectional perspective into the analysis of the information. The results of our research are also presented, taking them into account from the lens of intersectionality, then wrapping up this investigation with a discussion and our closing remarks.

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Haitian Migration in Chile

Haitian migration to Chile is characterized by a growing trend from 2010, after the earthquake that devastated the Haitian territory, and until 2017, showing a sustained increase since 2012. Between 2010 and 2015 there were three periods of percentage growth of Haitian immigration in Chile: the first from 2010 to 2011, with an increase of 396%; the second from 2013 to 2014, with an increase of 162%; and the third from 2014 to 2015, with an increase of 144%, corresponding to 420 permanent residence permits granted.

The presence of Afro-descendants in Chile responds to a labor motivation associated with the introduction, in 2015, of visas dependent on employment contracts (International Labor Organization [ILO, acronym in Spanish for Organización Internacional del Trabajo], 2016), which were eliminated by administrative means in 2018. In 2016 and 2017, 82% of the visas issued in Chile for work reasons were received by Haitians, and 68% of them were granted to Haitian men of productive age (Debandi et al., 2017).

The legal-administrative context of Haitian immigration in Chile has undergone dramatic transformations in recent years. Administrative modifications to the current Migration Law were implemented in April 2018, one month after Sebastián Piñera assumed the presidency, with the express objective of allowing the Chilean State to regulate the entry of foreigners to the country. In this way, temporary residence visas were reformulated, the visa for work reasons was eliminated, and two measures of immediate effect were implemented for the Haitian population in particular: first, the requirement of a simple 30-day consular tourist visa, which excludes work purposes; and second, a 12-month family reunification humanitarian visa (SJM, 2020). In October of the same year, the Humanitarian Return Plan was implemented, which provided free flights to the country of origin for immigrants who voluntarily decided to undertake this return, establishing a nine-year ban on the eventual re-entry into Chile for their beneficiaries (SJM, 2020).

As pointed out by Stang Alva, Lara Edwards and Andrade Moreno (2020), the set of administrative measures described constitute manifestations of migratory governance aimed at toughening and limiting the arrival in Chile of the Haitian migrant group, and have had a restrictive effect on this migration flow. Likewise, the Humanitarian Return Plan failed to comply with international standards in humanitarian return matter due to focusing on a particular nationality (96% were Haitians), not providing follow-up to the returnees in their country of origin, and establishing unjustified restrictions for an eventual re-entry to Chile of the returnees (Center for Human Rights [Centro de Derechos Humanos], 2019). This last measure has been understood as a covert deportation protected by a humanitarian rhetoric. and as a manifestation of State racism towards the Haitian population in Chile (Ceciliano-Navarro & Golash-Boza, 2020; Stang et al., 2020).

The restrictive effects of these measures resulted in a decrease of Haitian entry to Chile, from 39 263 entries in 2018 to 7 515 entries in 2019, compared to 110 166 entries in 2017. Likewise, the migratory balances (difference between entries and departures) decreased from 103 827 people in 2017, to 27 613 in 2018, yielding a negative balance of -2 963 in 2019, this implying that the number of Haitians who left Chile in 2019 was higher than that of those entering (SJM, 2020).

Another example of the effect of these measures is the high number of rejections of consular visa applications, with 193 visas granted out of the 2 254 requested in 2019 (Álvaro Bellolio & Gonzalo Valdés, 2020).

In addition to the restrictive measures implemented by the Chilean government, the information on the social inclusion status of this population has evidenced conditions of sociocultural exclusion and racism as transversal elements in the experience of this group of immigrants (Rojas Pedemonte, Amode, & Vásquez Rencoret, 2015).

Regarding the living conditions and experiences of Haitian immigrants in Chile, the Chilean academy has produced little literature. However, it has indeed documented experiences of discrimination, exploitation and racism in the workplace (Rojas Pedemonte, Amode, & Vásquez, 2017), sexualized labor exploitation of Haitian women (Bustamante Cifuentes, 2017; Valenzuela et al., 2018), precarious housing conditions characterized by overcrowding (Bonhomme, 2021), in addition to wasted educational qualifications (SJM, 2020). In terms of educational spaces, there is racism and discrimination against Haitian boys and girls or children of Haitian people (Pavez Soto, Olguín, Ortiz López, Sepúlveda, & Jara, 2019), and a higher level of multidimensional poverty when compared to the native Chilean population and other immigrant groups (SJM, 2020).

Within such a context marked by state racism, job insecurity, sociocultural exclusion and gender discrimination, this article provides knowledge on the daily experiences of the Haitian immigrant population in Chile, reflecting on the complex interaction of elements that constitutes their social (ethnic-racial, sex-gender, social class, immigrant status and nationality) oppression experiences and shape their identities. Likewise, the research carried out contributes to raising an informed and critical awareness committed social justice and the defense of the human rights of this population.

The Notion of Social Identity

The concept of social identity, central to social psychology, has made it possible both to understand how psychological phenomena interact with different social and cultural processes, and to carry out dynamic analyzes of the human being in diverse contexts (Ibáñez Gracia, 2004). Social identity is defined as “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). However, despite the validity of the social identity theory in contemporary social psychology, our study distances itself from this concept given that it tends to reify identities, and here we opt instead for interdisciplinary approaches to the studied identity or identities, coming from intersectional perspectives (Brah, 2011; Collins, 1991).

Such intersectional perspectives challenge single and static notions of identity, highlighting that “identity is always plural and in process, even when it might be constructed or represented as fixed” (Brah, 2011, p. 226). Likewise, in contexts of migration or diaspora, identities are understood as formations that combine the global and the local in different relationships, configuring new “imaginary communities” (Brah, 2011, p. 227).

On the other hand, although the notion of identity has been associated with the risk of focusing analyses and political and social action on a single axis of oppression or social category, thus

rendering invisible the most oppressed members within each category (Brah, 2004), the authors of this study understand the formation of identities as dynamic processes intertwined with social and political demands directed at the emancipation and/or representation of the people on which this research was conducted (Collins, 1991; Spivak, 1988). Consequently, we state that the formation of social identities holds important psychological and political potential for oppressed groups, by allowing the socialization of individual discomfort and the implementation of collective coping strategies in the face of social oppression.

The Intersectional Perspective

The concept of intersectionality emerged in the second half of the 20th century, from a variety of social movements dissatisfied with the vision of the humanistic, centered and universal subject (Brah, 2012). Before entering the mainstream arena of social sciences, the notion of intersectionality was mainly part of the rhetoric of black other racialized women, who perceived as incongruous the attempts of some feminisms to homogenize the condition of all women (Yural-Davis, 2012).

Intersectionality is presented as a way of understanding one's social position in terms of the intersection of different systems of oppression, where the axes of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation and age shape each other, building the characteristics of a social organization and shaping the experiences of subjects (Collins, 1991). From there, our study explores the interactions of the sex-gender and ethnicity-race axes, bringing together axes of difference that emerged in the course of this research (social class, nationality and immigrant status), analyzing how these articulations are linked to the configuration of and the changes in the identities of the participants, in terms of their migration trajectories from Haiti to Chile.

METHODOLOGY

Participants, and Information Production Procedures

Our study consisted of a sample of sixteen residents of Santiago de Chile, ten men (62.5%) and six women (37.5%), aged between 21 and 44 years; twenty-nine semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with them, averaging between half and one hour in duration, at the rate of one or two interviews with each participant.⁴ The interviews followed a semi-structured script based on four thematic axes, constructed in accordance with the research objectives: 1) migration trajectory and experiences in Chile; 2) ethnic-racial order; 3) sex-gender order; and 4) perceptions and evaluations of Chile as a destination country.

A theoretical sample with two inclusion variables was made use of: first, the relationship between the educational level of the participants and their work in Chile at the time of the interview, taking into account that a negative relationship in this dimension, that is, that trained people performing in low-skilled work, can stress identity imaginaries; second, the sexual orientation of the participants was deemed a relevant element in understanding their positions in

⁴ The time in-between interviews was approximately one week.

the sex-gender axis and its intersectional spaces. This way, the sample included five enunciation positions: 1) basic / secondary education, optimal education / work relationship; 2) technical / professional education, optimal education / work relationship; 3) technical / professional education, negative education / work relationship; 4) homosexual person, optimal education / work relationship;⁵ 5) homosexual person, negative education / work relationship.

The participants were recruited by means of the snowball method, after contacting various organizations (civil society, schools, companies); those who agreed to participate in the study were informed on the purposes and conditions of the interview, as well as read and signed an informed consent approved by the Ethics Committee of the university to which the first author belongs. Finally, the interviews were fully transcribed and anonymized to protect the identities of the participants.

Information Analysis and Interpretation Strategy

At first, a thematic content analysis was carried out, defined as a set of message content analysis techniques from which indicators (quantitative or not) are obtained, which allow inferring knowledge regarding the production and reception conditions of messages (Bardin, 1996).

In this process, the coding and categorization strategies were carried out sequentially (Bardin, 1996) based on the debate and permanent and systematic review among the authors of this paper, thus preventing potential interpretation biases and ensuring high-quality research.

The coding, or transformation of textual hard data, was guided by the following rules: 1) presence or absence; 2) intensity; 3) direction; and 4) order (Krippendorff, 2013). Thus the elements of the textual material or registration units were selected, to which codes were assigned according to their references to the topics of interest (for example, identity references and/or experiences associated with the ethnic-racial and sex-gender axes), taking into account the importance given (intensity) and the positive or negative evaluations contained in the text (direction). Likewise, the textual material was coded in relation to the points in time of the participants' migration trajectories (order), for example, recording their experiences in the country of origin and the country of destination.

The categorization, or process through which the recording units are distributed according to their references to the topics of interest, was guided by the rules of: 1) exhaustiveness; 2) mutual exclusion, and 3) formation of significant categories (Bardin, 1996). In this way, categories and subcategories were constructed, distributing each coded recording unit in a single category according to their specific significance references, and only meanings related to the established research objectives were incorporated.

Subsequently, the material produced was subjected to an intersectional analysis, defined as a knowledge approach oriented to the study of social privilege/oppression (Collins, 1991), which does not have defined methodological strategies (Brah, 2012). The strategy employed to incorporate an intersectional lens included carrying out various inference processes, that is, the

⁵ This position was filled by a transgender woman participant.

construction of deductions or explanations of what is found explicitly or implicitly in the texts (Krippendorff, 2013). These inferences were made according to the research questions of this study and within an explicit context that served as a guide (Krippendorff, 2013).

RESULTS

This section reports the results obtained from the research regarding three of its thematic axes (migration trajectory, and work and social experiences in Chile; ethnic-racial order, and sex-gender order), describing the categories/subcategories arising from the discourse analysis and bringing the intersectional perspective into the analysis.

Migration Trajectory, and Work and Social Experiences in Chile

Next, categories and subcategories are presented that account for the motivations of the participants to emigrate from Haiti to Chile, as well as their work and social experiences in the host country.

The category *Reasons for migration* includes perceptions about living conditions in the country of origin, associated with emigration. *Migration as a family project* is included as a subcategory.

My dad says: “Marcelo, what do you think? Chile gives all foreigners a chance to earn some.” And I say: “if you want to, I want it too, because you are my father and you know what is good for me” (Marcelo, position 3, personal communication, April 30, 2019).

Unemployment or layoff experiences are also associated with emigration to Chile.

I was working in Haiti and then I lost my job, and I have friends here (...) I spent about ten months without a job and spent everything I had, so I know I can come (...) and here I can get a job (...) to take care for my family (Pedro, position 1, personal communication, April 10, 2019).

The negative effects of the *political crisis* in Haiti are also linked to emigration to Chile:

In Haiti (...) I was studying at the university (...) in Port-au-Prince, but the situation in Haiti was not good, political matters were not good, so I decided to come to Chile to study and finish my studies” (Alejandra, position 3, personal communication, February 26, 2019).

Finally, sexually-dissident participants reported acute *homophobia and transphobia* as their reason for emigration to Chile.

I have two aunts in the United States, and I told them: “I can’t live in this country” (...) “I don’t feel well,” and she told me: (...) “where do you want to live?,” and I told her that I want to live where there is no discrimination because I have to live my life as I want (...) and she called me one day and said: “do you have a passport?,” “I told her, yes” (...) she said “alright, I’m going to send you some money,” and (...) [laughs] I traveled here (Mario, position 5, personal communication, July 17, 2019).

Within the category *Work and social experiences in Chile*, statements on the work environment and the social interaction of the participants in this country are included. There, the perception of *having to endure poor working conditions* is identified, associated with the need to regularize their immigration status by means of a visa that depends on an employment contract.

They put me to work eight *lucas*⁶ a day, Saturdays and Sundays too (...) when the [employer] handed me the contract, I asked him to apply the contract's considerations to me (...) and he told me that "no, take it or leave it," and I told him: "well, it's fine because I have papers in process," so I'll keep working there until I'm given my visa and then I'll leave that job (Marcos, position 2, personal communication, August 17, 2019).

On the other hand, the participants see themselves as the most discriminated workers in Chile (*Haitians as the most discriminated workers*), reporting worse working conditions compared to Chilean workers or workers of other nationalities:

The boss treats Haitians very badly, worse than people from other countries, they don't mistreat Venezuelans, they treat them just like Chileans (...) but not the Haitians, they have to work more (Alejandra, position 3, personal communication, February 26, 2019).

When I make any mistake, all Chileans talk to my boss. When Chileans make some mistake, no one says a thing, nothing happens (Cristian, position 1, personal communication, April 30, 2019).

Participants also stated that Haitian women face more significant conditions of labor discrimination and exploitation than Haitian men, such as "the boss wants to work with Haitian women only, he does not want any Haitian men (...) you have to work fifty hours a week and only one day off, no Chilean is going to accept that" (Alejandra, position 3, personal communication, February 26, 2019). This contributes to discouraging their participation into the labor market, as pointed out by Marcos when referring to his wife: "she is not working because there is a lot of discrimination in jobs here, they mistreat Haitian women, that is why I am not very interested in her working" (position 2, personal communication, August 17, 2019).

In another area, our interviewees referred to their participation in evangelical religious organizations (Baptist, Presbyterian or Pentecostal): "Pentecostal (...) every week (...) we have a Haitian group, and we meet there" (Marcos, position 2, personal communication, August 17, 2019). These appear to be important spaces of social belonging and identification: "I go to church. (...) I play bass, guitar, and piano (...) almost all Haitians (...) like to worship God (...) I cannot miss it" (Pedro, position 1, personal communication, April 10, 2019).

As for the motivations for emigrating from the country of origin, the social class and sex-gender-sexual orientation oppression described by the participants seems to act independently of other axes. However, as will be seen later, these dimensions of oppression act in conjunction with other axes of difference in both cases. Thus, social class oppression is articulated in conjunction with the ethnic-racial axis, while in the case of sexual dissidence, the sex-gender axis is articulated with social class, being linked in both cases with the decision to emigrate.

On the other hand, the Chilean labor environment is perceived as a racialized, precarious, xenophobic and sexist space, where oppression is articulated in the axes of social class, nationality, ethnicity-race, sex-gender and the migrant condition itself, giving rise to the construction of an identity as Haitian-migrant-worker. In contrast to this subordinate identity, as pointed out by the

⁶ Chileanism that refers to the thousand pesos bill.

participants, religious identification provides elements for the construction of more positive and liberating social identities.

Ethnic-Racial Order

This section collects perceptions, experiences or assessments of the participants regarding the order and the articulations of the ethnic-racial thematic axis, referring to the situation in their country of origin before migrating to Chile. The *Social Hierarchies in Haiti* category includes statements on the most distinguishable social ranks in Haiti, that is, social classes, ethnic-racial castes, and nationality.

In the *social class* subcategory, participants reported to us to marked differences in living conditions in Haiti, where a minority group enjoys a comfortable lifestyle, while the majority of the population barely has the basic resources necessary for survival. Participants explained these hierarchies as discrimination towards people in disadvantaged socioeconomic positions.

The problem in Haiti is that the social distance between the richest and the poorest is so huge that you can find a Haitian and you don't think he is Haitian (...) there are Haitians who could even provide for Europeans, for Americans (...) and there are also Haitians who live from day to day, who have to go out and make it happen so they can eat that day (Carlos, position 2, personal communication, August 20, 2019).

Over there it's all about the money, (...) if I kill you, but have the money, justice will let me go (...) money is always above everything over there. That is very firmly established in Haiti, those who have the money don't care about anything, and if someone has no money they can even go to jail and nothing will happen (Maria, position 1, personal communication, September 14, 2019).

Also, privileged groups tend to invest their capital in other countries and show disinterest in the social demands of the Haitian population: "There are people who have the means but never think of helping (...) they could start businesses, that way one could find a little job, make a living, but they don't do that, they go to other countries to start their businesses there" (María, position 1, personal communication, September 7, 2019).

Those who have money (...) don't pay attention to what is happening to the poor, they do not care about the demonstrations in the streets, about strikes, that is your thing, what they are always interested in is earning money (Marcos, position 2, personal communication, August 17, 2019).

Finally, the social class dimension is articulated with the sex-gender dimension, determining the possibilities of sex-gender identification or expression for sexual dissidents. In this intersectionality, being in an otherwise privileged position can minimize the risks of suffering violence.

There is a lot of discrimination in Haiti, a lot of ill-will against people like me. You can (...) there are people who are not discriminated against (...) if you have a lot of money, people don't interfere in your life, you can do whatever you want, anything. If you don't have money, when they see you in the street they yell at you, they say: "hey, hey, hey," they throw stones at you, they can beat you up in groups, it's very bad (Fabiola, position 4, personal communication, September 13, 2019).

On the other hand, the hierarchical differences associated with the ethnic-racial axis show how a group of Haitians with European colonial ancestry (from France or Spain) and a different phenotype from the majority of the population (Afro-descendants) concentrates most socioeconomic and political power in Haitian society. “There are two races in Haiti, a rich part that is white, because it was colonized (...) by France and Spain” (Carola, position 3, personal communication, March 16, 2019).

From colonization times (...) today there is a small group of what they called “children of white people,” and society in general is black (...) this small group has a huge percentage of the country’s wealth, the big companies and the decision-making power, ruling power (...) people say that 90% [concentrates all wealth] (Carlos, position 2, personal communication, August 20, 2019).

This minority group of European descent and whitened phenotype would have their houses in socioeconomically well-off neighborhoods of the Haitian capital.

There are people whose origins are from other countries, like France, they have lighter skin, long straight hair, and live in a city or a street all to themselves (...) people of a different skin color, with different hair, in different houses. In Port-au-Prince (...) there is a part like that, where people who are sort of a different class live (Alejandra, position 3, personal communication, March 5, 2019).

Likewise, this group that owns the land, industry and trade would have a decisive influence on the Haitian government’s agendas, being held responsible by some participants for the economic and political crises in Haiti.

The people in Haiti who have more money (...) are white, but Haitians. They are mixed, children of foreigners and Haitians, they have a lot of money, a lot of land (...) warehouses and stores (...) they support the president and the president supports (...) all the things that are good for them, and that is why the rest of population does not have much to live on (Pedro, position 1, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

We were under French colonization (...) mestizo races resulted from that, children of white and black people (...) they are the ones who have the power, they are the ones who have all the money in the country, they are the ones who govern the country, they are the ones who cause all disorder (...) they are responsible for the wrongdoings, the misdirection of power (Marcos, position 2, personal communication, August 17, 2019).

Statements referring to social hierarchies by *nationality* reveal a hierarchical split in which white people-foreigners occupy a privileged position and Haitians a subordinate one: “If a white person arrives, they are paid in American, and we are paid in Haitian (...) more value is given to foreigners than to us” (Pedro, position 1, personal communication, April 10, 2019). “If I have a son with you, he is called a mulatto, and if he does not have money, he will have problems with whiter people, because they have more money in my country, even if many of them are foreigners” (Miguel, position 3, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

This manner, being of a foreign nationality, which brings together elements of prestige and socioeconomic power, articulates nationality with the whitened phenotype. However, some participants do not directly associate this hierarchy-creating nationality with specific phenotypic

characteristics, and also identify groups of non-white foreigners in positions of privilege with respect to Haitians.

My aunt is Haitian, and she has a Dominican husband (...) when she wants to come visit to my mother (...) that Dominican who is my aunt's husband doesn't want to (...) as we are Haitians and he is Dominican (...) he doesn't want to (...) you know there's people who are racist (Jorge, position 1, personal communication, September 8, 2019).

In the thematic axis described, colonial memories are articulated with ethnic-racial and social class oppressions. This configuration is in turn articulated with national hierarchies, giving rise to an identity positioning heir to a subordinate history, crystallized as a subordinate national identity. In this sense, the articulation of the positions of social class, ethnicity-race and nationality, and colonial memories, provide keys to the understanding of Haitian identity as a subordinate national one.

Sex-Gender Order

This section deals with experiences, descriptions, prescriptions and evaluations, in reference to the sex-gender system, throughout the migration trajectories of the participants.

The first category, referring to the country of origin, is the *traditional sex-gender order in Haiti*, including references to *homophobia/transphobia*, linked to the risk of suffering violence and/or lack of police protection due to dissident sex-gender identifications/expressions:

On the street where I lived over there, there was a man-man couple who rented a house, and we kicked them out (...) the first time we told them how they can't do that (...) then we got into the house and beat them (...) it was normal for us (...) for the government it was also normal (...) the police can come, the chief of police can come, but nothing will happen because they are also with them (Juan, position 1, personal communication, March 7, 2019).

In Haiti (...) people kill homosexuals, they cannot walk in the street (...) it is very dangerous (...) they are shot down with guns, and the police will not defend them (Jorge, position 1, personal communication, September 8, 2019).

The aforementioned finds another institutional expression in the lack of public services to carry out a gender transitioning: "For women they have contraceptives, but like, for a woman like me, if I want to transition there's no way, you have to cross into the Republic Dominican" (Fabiola, position 4, personal communication, September 13, 2019).

Secondly, the subcategory *Violence against women*, expresses the acceptance of aggression towards women in relationships, and the lack of police/judicial control before it.

In my country, when you have a woman, if the woman does something wrong, I can [gesture of hitting] (...) hit her and nothing happens to you (Cristian, position 1, personal communication, April 30, 2019).

The law is no real safety, because the man (...) fights with the woman, and sometimes nothing happens (...) when the justice system goes after them, they go to Santo Domingo (Pedro, position 1, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

Thirdly, in the subcategory *Traditional female roles and stereotypes*, the responsibility for carrying out household chores, and the persistence of attitudes and behaviors of subordination, respect or obedience towards men are included.

They treat them very badly, they believe Haitian women are just house maids, to take care of the house and their children (Fabiola, position 4, personal communication, September 13, 2019).

Over there women do their thing, which is the house, that the house is clean (...) and men go out to work (...) it is not like here in Chile that the woman is demanding (...) over there it is not like that (Juan, position 1, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

As can be seen, gender stereotypes are strongly rooted in the sociocultural imaginary of the participants' country of origin, and are still maintained even in situations where women assume non-traditional gender roles.

There are some who work, who do business, but that doesn't mean their word is respected. It has always been the same (María, position 1, personal communication, September 7, 2019)

When my wife goes to work, if I don't work, even if I don't have something going, my wife is respectful, she respects me, my wife will not be in charge of the house because she knows that it is me who is the man of the house (Cristian, position 1, personal communication, May 7, 2019).

The last subcategory, *Traditional sexual division of labor*, evidences the different and complementary gender roles for men and women, from which women are assigned to the private sphere and reproductive tasks, and men to productive tasks in the public spaces of society.

The priority of having to work belongs to the man, the man has to work (...) and the woman stays at home taking care of the children (Pedro, position 1, personal communication, April 10, 2019).

Men work more than women, women stay at home to take care of the house (Alejandra, position 3, personal communication, February 26, 2019).

The second category, *Sex-gender order in Chile*, has as its first subcategory *Rejection of the recognition of homosexual rights*, which deals with the participants' perception, acceptance and recognition of the rights of these people. Such rejection appears to be associated mainly with the religious beliefs of the participants, which expressly prohibit this type of sexual identities/expressions.

God does not like that (...) and it is not accepted in the Bible (...) it is bad, it is cursed (Cristian, position 1, personal communication, April 30, 2019).

God has warned us of this through His word, He said that men do not have to lay with men and neither do women (Carola, position 3, personal communication, March 16, 2019).

The second subcategory, which operates in the opposite direction to the previous one, accounts for a *positive evaluation of the acceptance of homosexual or transgender people in Chile* and includes the experiences of sexually-dissident participants.

Here I can do everything I want, yes, I have no problem with this country, I'm happy, I don't want to go live in my country [laughs] (Mario, position 5, personal communication, July 17, 2019).

In Chile there is little discrimination, they will talk about you to make you feel bad (...) there are few people that will confront you and say bad things to you. It's a different life in Chile than in Haiti (Fabiola, position 4, personal communication, September 13, 2019).

On the other hand, the third subcategory, *Negative assessment of female power*, includes descriptions and evaluations against the power of women in Chile, which is perceived to lead to the breach of their duties of obedience or respect towards men. Likewise, this subcategory includes negative evaluations of the impossibility of men of exercising violence towards their partners (women) and of the high number of perceived separations or divorces.

In Chile women are always bossing men around (...) I don't like that (...) why do women boss men? No (...) not there, not in my country (Miguel, position 3, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

Chilean women have a husband (...) they have other boyfriends⁷ and the husband can't say anything about that, only be jealous (...) he can't hit them. No, not in my country (Cristian, position 1, personal communication, May 7, 2019).

Here a woman separates from a man right away, just like that, that's why I don't want a relationship with a Chilean woman [laughs], when you marry bad things can happen, but we can (...) talk to each other; but not here, they divorce after one year, one year or eight months, they separate (Cristian, position 1, personal communication, May 7, 2019).

On the other hand, some participants make a *positive assessment of female power* in relation to their perception of the power exercised and the roles played by women in Chile.

What I like the most about the gender order here is that women are respected just like men, that is, just like a man has their say, women also have their say (María, position 1, personal communication, September 7, 2019).

Women work in Chile (...) in Haiti, men do everything (...) Here in Chile (...) they always go to work (Jorge, position 1, personal communication, September 8, 2019).

As a counterpoint to the above, the participants also reported on Chilean couples that follow the traditional forms of power distribution between men and women:

Here (...) women work harder (...) harder than men (...) I know of men who stay at home smoking, drinking, while the woman works (...) I saw this woman cry because she is working and the man doesn't want to work, the money this woman earns, she can't hide it (...) the man, although he doesn't work, he controls the woman (Alejandra, position 3, personal communication, February 26, 2019).

The category *Changes in the sex-gender order from Haiti to Chile* includes *Permanence of gender roles and stereotypes* as a first subcategory, with respect to those roles assumed in the country of origin. "We keep to our customs, because there the husband is always respected, the husband has the power and that is respected" (Ada, position 2, personal communication, September 14, 2019). "I have no problem, things remain the same with my wife, it's the same as always" (Marcelo, position 3, personal communication, April 30, 2019).

⁷ Chileanism that refers to the concept of boyfriend.

On the contrary, the second subcategory, *Changes in the exercise of gender roles*, includes statements about experiences of a more egalitarian role distribution, greater male participation in domestic tasks, flexibility of the male role as exclusive provider, and greater participation of women in decision making. “This is a country where there is no time (...) that is why he helps with things, everything in the house, cleaning, ironing, washing, all of that” (Daniela, position 1, personal communication, March 7, 2019); “He got used to still ask me even if he makes the decisions (...) he behaves like that now. We both decide (...) it’s been better this way, much better” (María, position 1, personal communication, September 7, 2019).

In Haiti, when I go to a restaurant to have something with a woman, I pay for everything, but in Chile (...) I want to pay for everything, but she [Chilean girlfriend] tells me no, no, half and half (...) that’s the difference (Jorge, position 1, personal communication, September 8, 2019).

Thirdly, the subcategory *Decrease in violence against women* is linked to the perception of legal-police controls in the face of this phenomenon.

He changed, because he says you can’t hit women here (...) he is somewhat afraid, because he knows they can still send him to his country, they can put him in jail, so he changed a little like that (Maria, position 1, personal communication, September 7, 2019).

Finally, the subcategory *Positive attitudes towards homosexuality* displays incipient attitudes of greater acceptance towards these sexual expressions/identities in Chile.

It’s freely done here, it is legal. For that reason I have no problem with a person who does that (...) because it’s their life, they have their life, and I have mine (...) I see two men kissing, but I have no problem (Marcelo, position 3, communication staff, April 30, 2019).

These attitudes are followed by attempts at expanding their own interpretive frameworks of reference in order to explain these sexual identities/expressions, outlawed in Haitian society but perceived as accepted in Chilean society.

I talked to a Chilean friend and asked her: “why two men here?,” and she said: “it’s love, Miguel” (...) you must accept that, if you like a woman then it’s the same for two men that they can have sex, and I can’t have a say there (Miguel, position 3, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

The categories and subcategories of this thematic axis suggest incipient identity adjustments in the participants regarding their constructions in the sex-gender axes. These adjustments seem to be strongly influenced by the material and institutional conditions experienced and perceived in Chile, and by the subordinate social position of the participants within the articulation of dimensions of nationality, ethnicity-race, social class and migrant status.

Thus, this articulation of oppression dimensions places the participants in a subordinate position, from which they legitimize the perceived power of Chilean women. The same thing happens particularly in male participants, with the incipient acceptance of the expression of dissident sex-gender identities, at the same time discouraging violence against women. However, other participants maintain a position of hierarchy with respect to women and sexual dissidence; that is, they maintain the position they held in the sex-gender relationships prior to their arrival in Chile, without the articulation of dimensions of oppression in the host country modifying their identity constructions.

DISCUSSION

From an intersectional perspective, our postulate is that identities are constructed from the articulation of different dimensions of oppression (for example, sex-gender, ethnicity-race, social class), contexts, subjective experiences and historical memories in transit (Brah, 2011). These memories are highly represented in the results presented and operate by establishing a framework of analysis that allows participants to explain the situations of privilege/oppression and the living conditions of their country of origin. The historical memory of French and Spanish colonization is linked to their explanations regarding the matrix of power in Haitian society, characterized by an ethnic-racial, social class and nationality hierarchy (where Haitian citizens occupy a subordinate position). From social psychology, the concept of colonial memory refers to these memories that are shared by all members of a group, in terms of the characteristics and consequences of colonialism (Figueiredo, Oldenhove, & Licata, 2018). The field of study of colonial memory shows that these are not mere discourses built around a distant past, evidencing how their consequences impact on the identity constructions of previously colonized populations. In this sense, the colonial legacy builds and frames ethnic-racial differences based on the previously existing colonial structure, updating and reinforcing dynamics of power, oppression and otherness that interact when building different subjectivities in today's world; in this case they are marked by historical processes of discrimination and oppression that are reflected in the identity constructions of our study's participants (Figueiredo et al., 2018).

In addition to the memories of a colonial past, the ethno-racial, social class and nationality hierarchies described are heirs to the internal colonial inequality that persists to this day, despite the formal Haitian independence from European conquerors (Mignolo, 2007). In this way, the conditions of oppression in their country of origin described by our participants occur at the hands of mestizo-whitened people and/or children of former white settlers, who concentrate economic and political power, occupying positions of privilege and domination in the intersection of ethnicity-race and social class. Quijano (2000) explains this phenomenon with the concept of coloniality of power, pointing out that the social division of the world population according to the notion of race, installed with the conquest of America, configures a pattern of colonial-capitalist world power persisting to our days, even after the delegitimization of race as a valid scientific category.

Crossed by the coloniality of power, the participants build subordinate national and ethnic-racial identities in a process that can be understood as a manifestation of internalized racism (Speight, 2007). This concept refers to a phenomenon arising from the structure and dynamics of domination of a racialized society, leading racially marginalized populations to accept negative beliefs and stereotypes about themselves, to cease their self-definitions, and to think, feel and act according to a devalued vision of their group and of themselves (Speight, 2007).

Although Chile (the country of arrival) shares a Hispanic colonial history, it is perceived by the participants as a white territory, or one populated by white people, and the Chilean nationality is signified in a position of greater prestige with respect to their own nationality. In the construction of Chilean national identity, the current indigenous and Afro-descendant presence has been

suppressed from official history, in a modernizing effort in which these ethnic-racial elements were deemed unsuitable for modern times (Larraín, 1997). In Chile, as in Haiti, the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) and an internal colonial inequality (Mignolo, 2007) can be felt.

The articulation of ethnicity-race, social class, and nationality axes, experienced by the participants in their country of origin, finds continuity in the host country. However, this configuration is then rearticulated according to the social positions occupied in Chile by the participants as migrants and precarious workers. Consequently, the identity constructed by the participants in Chile, as Haitian-migrants-workers, summarizes the determinants of context, history, subjectivity and social relations described above. Being Haitian in Chile implies positioning oneself from otherness in all areas of social life, and significantly so in the face of the restrictive and arbitrary legal-administrative actions aimed at stopping Haitian arrival in Chile (Stang et al., 2020).

On the other hand, the sex-gender dimension described by the participants, appears articulated from a traditional-patriarchal pattern, a “form (...) of gender relations in which women inhabit a subordinate position” (Brah, 2004, p. 212), which is in tension with the perceived sex-gender order in Chile. However, recent empirical information regarding the distribution of gender roles and stereotypes in Chile is not in line with the perception of the participants. The results of the Social Longitudinal Study of Chile (COES, 2020), show the validity of the norms and expectations that uphold gender prejudices (for example, a lower expectation of job success for women), ambivalence regarding women’s rights and gender roles (for example, a high level of agreement with the statement that family life suffers when women have a full-time job) and a null participation of men in performing unpaid domestic work (24.7% of women compared to 0% of men). Along the same lines, research on the living conditions of the transgender population reports transversal experiences of exclusion and violence in family, institutional and work spaces (Organizing Trans Diversities [Organizando Trans Diversidades], 2017).

Consequently, from the research results shown here related to the sex-gender order, we propose to delve into the importance of not overestimating the cultural differences evidenced by the research in the field of migration, considering that doing so would incur in the risk of introducing racist and coloniality elements to the interpretation (Quijano, 2000), likely to reproduce ethnic-racial stereotypes.

Along with this and from the intersectional perspective, it is assumed that the dimensions of oppression/privilege do not behave independently but rather act in articulation with other systems of oppression, in addition to different contexts, historical memories, social relations and subjectivities (Brah, 2011; Collins, 1991). Thus, phenomena such as violence against women, as an expression of a traditional-patriarchal sex-gender order, can be understood in relation to colonial processes and their legacy of violence and deterritorialization, both material and of subjectivities (Lugones, 2008). For Lugones (2008), the sex-gender order constitutes an artifact introduced by colonialism, that is, it does not correspond to a pre-existing colonial order. The installation of this patriarchal, colonial and heterosexist order produced a radical alteration of

previous communal relations, introducing into conquered territories the problem of “the subordination of colonized women in relation to colonized men” (Lugones, 2008, p. 1).

In turn, the incipient changes in the sex-gender order reported by the participants (exercise of roles and attitudes towards sexual diversity) can be understood as processes of cultural adaptation to the new context, which emerge from their subordinate positions in the intersectionality of ethnic-racial, social class, nationality and migrant condition dimensions. These processes of cultural adaptation reflect not only their previous identities and subjectivities, built in their country of origin, but also the way in which these are articulated and transformed during the migration trajectory, and the way in which migrants are inserted in the Chilean context.

In this sense, the strong Christian-Evangelical religious identity of the participants is reflected in their limited ability to provide normative guidance regarding gender and sexuality. From the results presented here, a strong tension is evidenced between the important role that these religious identities play in the lives of the participants (enjoyment, social support, recognition), and their immediate needs for social and cultural adaptation. Future research is expected to address the consequences of this process of cultural adaptation on the subjectivity and identity of the population studied.

Limitations of this Study and Suggestions for Further Research

One limitation in this study was the difficult access to Haitians with technical-university level education practicing their professions or trades in Chile, which can be linked to the lack of formal agreements for the validation of secondary and university studies between Chile and Haiti (Rojas & Silva, 2016). Likewise, it was difficult to access sexually-dissident participants; the outlawing of these identities in Haiti, as described by the participants, may explain these difficulties. Another important limitation was the interviewer’s lack of knowledge of Haitian Creole; conducting interviews in the participants’ own language could have contributed to a better understanding of some aspects of their subjectivity, this being an issue to be taken into account for future research. Finally, most of the phenomena analyzed and discussed from this study (for example, identities, racism, sex-gender elements, colonial memories) in relation to Haitian migration in Chile are presented as areas of study that require further deeper delving, both at their particular levels and in their complex interactions.

CLOSING REMARKS

The research presented here studied the identity constructions of Haitian immigrants, throughout their migration trajectories from Haiti to Chile and from an intersectional perspective. In this regard, the social and subjective positions of the participants in the country of origin were shown as giving rise to identities in which oppressions of social class, ethnicity-race, sex-gender and nationality are articulated in a context of coloniality. In Chile, these elements are rearticulated with their condition as migrants, configuring the identity of Haitian-migrant-worker, one that displaces the oppression described in the country of origin towards a position of radical otherness.

In this scenario, the incipient changes reported in the sex-gender identities of the participants serve their socio-cultural adaptation into a context that systematically expels them and/or hinders their chances of social integration.

Translation: Fernando Llanas.

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