

Political and social exclusion of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic: approaching a multidimensional racism

La exclusión política y social de los migrantes haitianos en República Dominicana: acercamiento al racismo multidimensional

Alberto Maresca

Georgetown University, EEUU

aa2689@georgetown.edu

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3697-8092>

Received on: 14/01/2024 **Revised on:** 26/01/2024 **Accepted on:** 05/02/2024 **Published on:** 01/03/2024

Abstract

This paper's research focuses on a multidimensional racism suffered by Haitians migrants in the Dominican Republic, which appears to be social and political as well. The direct experience of the author in the Dominican Republic strengthens an empirical and theoretical analysis for questioning a possible correlation between Dominican politics, nationalism, and popular support for the general exclusion, within the Dominican national system of Haitian migrants. Through an initial review of relevant literature, from the fields of Sociology and Migration, this article defines the concept of Agamben's Homo Sacer. Agamben's theoretical contribution is useful to identify the state's will to exclude Haitian migrants. In addition, Sayad's concept of State-thinking will also be used. Moreover, the historical focus on community's search for national identity relies on Rappaport's works and then related to the Dominican Republic. Exclusion and marginalization of Haitian migrants is also analyzed by outlining the lack of governmental data and updated information about immigrants, leading to hypothetical correlations between State-promoted illegalization of Haitian migrants, enforced by local politics, and a social dimension of racial nationalism. With a focus on International Relations on Political Science, the study describes that the current Dominican government, headed by President Luis Abinader, shows a trend influenced by a past heritage of political realism and nationalism in its bilateral relations with Haiti, since, it is worth noting, there seems to be relevant consensus in the Dominican society for such hardline policies.

Keywords

Dominican Republic, Haiti, migration, racism, politics. social exclusion, nationalism, marginalization.

Suggested citation: Maresca, A. (2024). Political and social exclusion of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic: approaching a multidimensional racism. *Universitas XXI*, 40, pp. 91-110. <https://doi.org/10.17163/uni.n40.2024.04>

Resumen

Este trabajo analiza la presencia de un racismo multidimensional, de carácter social y político, padecido por los migrantes haitianos en República Dominicana. La experiencia directa del autor en República Dominicana motiva la búsqueda de un análisis empírico y teórico que pueda interrogarse sobre una posible correlación entre el nacionalismo en la política dominicana y el apoyo popular hacia la exclusión de los migrantes haitianos en el sistema nacional dominicano. A través de una inicial revisión de la literatura de referencia del campo sociológico y migratorio, se define el concepto de *Homo Sacer* expuesto por Agamben. El aporte teórico de Agamben es útil para identificar la voluntad estatal de excluir a los migrantes haitianos. Además, se tomará el concepto de pensamiento de Estado identificado por Sayad, mientras que el foco histórico en la cuestión identitaria dominicana cuenta con aportes procedentes de las obras de Rappaport. La marginalización y exclusión de los migrantes haitianos se estudia también cuestionando la ausencia de datos y registros actualizados por el Gobierno dominicano, queriendo proponer eventuales correlaciones entre la ilegalización estatal de los migrantes haitianos, con el aval de la política dominicana, y una forma social de nacionalismo racial. Utilizando también un enfoque propio de las Relaciones Internacionales y la Ciencia Política, se describe cómo el actual gobierno de República Dominicana, encabezado por el presidente Luis Abinader, muestra una tendencia hacia pasados elementos de realismo político y nacionalismo en las relaciones bilaterales con Haití, donde, cabe incluir, encuentra un efectivo consenso por parte de la sociedad dominicana.

Palabras clave

República Dominicana, Haití, migración, racismo, política, exclusión social, nacionalismo, marginalización.

Introduction

Haiti and migration have become a kind of semantic union. The structural crisis of Latin America's first independent country, now in its third decade, has generated a continuing exodus of Haitians who are forced to leave everything in search of a better life. Haitians represent one of the main nationalities involved in emigration to the United States, settling even in the most remote regions of the North American country, taking advantage of the vast presence of nationals in diaspora (Joos, 2023). However, given the strict immigration policies implemented by US governments, starting with Obama, until reaching the repeated restrictions with Trump and Biden (Maresca, 2023a), the Haitian migration movement has had to look to other destinations. Some

countries in Latin America have shown some level of reception for Haitian migrants. Specifically, it is considered necessary to mention the main studies that have addressed the Haitian migration phenomenon in Chile, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Rodríguez-Torrent and Gissi-Barbieri, 2022), and the work focused on the recent *diversion* of Haitian migration, from the United States to the Andean nations, such as Ecuador (Ceja and Ramírez G., 2022). In addition, Washington's harsh responses regarding the migratory pressure at the US border, is recently leading to a boom in the stay of Haitian migrants in Mexico City (Rodríguez, 2024). However, the new regional routes undertaken by the Haitian migration movement have obviously led to the adoption of more or less restrictive migration policies by those Latin American governments that have faced an immigration phenomenon, consisting of Haitians and Venezuelans among other nationalities, never seen before.

The presence of foreigners in certain territories who have rarely experienced relations with immigrant communities has given life to racist customs in both the civic-social and political spheres. A direct consequence of the correlation between migration and national politics, studied in this article, is the nationalist drift of national political contexts that construct part of their identity through the exclusion of the *other* (Avraamidou and Ioannou, 2023). Precisely, the study proposes that a significant degree of mutual ignorance between the so-called indigenous population and the immigrant community is not necessary for the politicization of this relationship. The case discussed here from the Dominican Republic (DR.), fed through the author's direct experience of the local reality, focuses on how, despite its long history of migration to the other side of the island, the Haitian diaspora continues to be subject to an exclusive politicization by Dominican politics and society. If in the countries of the Global North, main recipients of migrants, we witness emphasized phenomena of racism (Mantz, 2021), caused by the diversity between the parties and the ignorance towards the migrant as *another* and therefore considered *in toto* inferior, the same happens in a country of the Global South: Dominican Republic. Haitians and Dominicans interact daily because of the proximity of both nations, in addition to a long history of cross-border work and mutual relations (Taylor, 2014). This is not enough to avoid what Billiet and de Witte (2008) define as "political racism", being, in the case of Belgium covered by the authors, "the vote for a political party that clearly highlights anti-immigration positions in its political program and propaganda" (p. 254).

Theoretical framework

The research wants to extend towards the theorization of a *socio-political racism* underlying Dominican society, but endorsed by the political national populism present in the political scene of Dominican Republic. The hypothesis then tries to approach a form of correlation between the Dominican nationalist political narrative and the repeated political, social and legal marginalization of Haitian migrants, especially in Santo Domingo. Therefore, it will be appropriate, at first, to dwell on the bilateral relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, starting from the mandate of the current Dominican President, Luis Abinader, through a reading from the field of International Relations. Subsequently, there will be space for a specific axis of the Sociology of Migration and Political Science, where the general marginalization of Haitian migrants, their current role in Dominican society and their position of migrants legally excluded by the state system of the Dominican Republic will be analyzed. This work focuses on the broader meaning of migration policies, understood not only by the national rules that regulate migration. Rather, it speaks of a social and political practice in a given context, the Dominican, that forms a *de facto* racist dimension joined to a legal one, *de jure*, primarily studied in countries of the Global North, such as, again, the USA (William-White and White, 2011) and the Netherlands (Thomas, 1995).

This research seeks specifically to approach the relationship between politics and racism, in terms of the Haitian diaspora in the Dominican Republic. It is possible to affirm that this article consists of two methodological bases. The first, which will be detailed as purely theoretical, linked to relevant academic theories that have studied social and racial marginalization, in order to connect these contributions to the situation of Haitian migrants in DR. The main contributions to these studies come from the works of Agamben, on socio-political marginalization intentionally sought by the State (Newns, 2023; Maphosa and Ntau, 2021), and Sayad for the analysis of the positions towards the migrant as *another*. The second methodological basis is empirical, in order to combine part of the empirical experience of the author in the Dominican Republic and qualitative approaches inspired by reference research, especially those of Rappaport, which will later be discussed. In general, the theoretical contributions of Agamben, Sayad and Rappaport help to analyze *socio-political racism* as a multidimensional phenomenon.

This is not a discriminatory sentiment intrinsic to Dominican society, rather there is a historical journey that has taken this racism to a level of political promotion, i.e., state thought spread in society through the dictator Trujillo. When, during the Trujillo dictatorship, racism becomes political, it needs a stabilization of sentiment in society so that the two spheres unite, and definitively turn the Haitian into the *Homo Sacer* of Agamben. Ultimately, the current situation puts the Haitian diaspora in the condition of a subordinate group in DR., as theorized by Rappaport, but also legitimizing, always with the help of politics, the exposed *socio-political racism*. A qualitative approach has been used given the lack of current, objective and above all provided data by the Dominican State, which could be used instead to design a mixed study. However, this work has to be limited to a qualitative study, concentrating on the existing literature to offer a historical perspective of *socio-political racism* in the Dominican Republic, and try to connect what has been done in the past with the current situation. For the reasons outlined above, it promotes the continuation of similar works with a quantitative approach that could seriously contribute to the quantification of the Haitian diaspora and the creation of databases to be used by both the Dominican government and researchers and interested international organizations. Currently, there is no similar data source, constituting the main limitation for this article.

Methodology

The qualitative approach of this work benefits mostly from the concept of *Homo Sacer* created by Agamben (1998), which identifies a typical social categorization, where almost through a Marxist connotation of social antagonism, the State and some sectors of the population are confronted. Agamben argues that the state can ignore and exclude a select minority within its national territory. Thus, in the current era, certain immigrant communities can be included in the categorization of the *Homo Sacer* of Agamben, due to its precarious permanence in the country of destination, due to situations of documentary irregularity, legal prohibitions on the right to work and vote, and lack of regulatory protection in the laws of the State.

In this case, it is indicated that the Haitian migrant in the Dominican Republic has become *Homo Sacer* by the exclusion of the Dominican State. There is a situation of exclusion in which Haitian migrants, despite having

settled in Dominican territory, suffer from an enigmatic condition that leads to the impossibility of state protection, for example, because they lack documents. At the same time, the lack of attempts and willingness on the part of the authorities to solve these shortcomings generates consequences such as permanent entry into informality, social (and urban) marginalization and, finally, a general racism driven by nationalist political discourse. Methodologically, this article aims to bring Agamben's concept of *Homo Sacer* to the contemporary migratory field, considering the contributions of Dzhurova (2023) where it is emphasized that for the governments of the destination countries, there are individuals "outside society and ignored by legislators, for not having the right to vote and not participating in the set of political and social activities" (p. 1125).

In other words, "for Agamben, there are state policies that legally exclude certain subjects. Specifically, *Homo Sacer* is considered for the State not worthy of being included in the socio-legal system" (Maresca, 2023b, p. 124). Recent studies have extended Agamben's analysis to include undocumented migrants, precisely minors arriving in the US in the category of *Homo Sacer* (González-Gorman, 2023). A qualitative analysis allows to compare, in a reduced but exhaustive way, the endorsement of right-wing political actors towards the maintenance of *Homo Sacer* in the national territory. In fact, having a perpetual *other*, establishing the absence of legal protection or respect for their human rights, also creates a political discourse of nationalist character. Using the influence of Sayad's work serves to determine the theoretical and methodological foundations of this research. The specificities of the Dominican-Haitian context led to having to consider the Dominican State as crucial to understanding politics and migration in the country. Sayad (2004) focuses on state thinking, i.e. state mentality to deal with a migration crisis. We could vary this concept, highlighting the state's political custom of approaching and treating migration as a problem, a crisis, but rarely an opportunity for cultural enrichment or pure humanitarian need. Boudou (2023) gives an interesting consideration to Sayad's categorizations, stating that there is a social reproduction of "state thought, by accepting officially valid labels, and legitimizing the speech produced by the state" (p. 405).

Basically, civil society tends to repeat those state positions, in terms of the treatment of migrants, that promote the stigmatization of the *other* through legal obstacles such as the requirement of visas or immigration requirements that are justly impossible to comply by the migrant to legalize their situation.

Civil society embraces the legalization of migrants that governments promote. The situation of Haitians in the Dominican Republic goes beyond a mere legal question of whether or not to possess the necessary documentation. We speak instead of a state, the Dominican, determined and motivated by popular consensus to exclude Haitians in its territory anyway, whether they were migrants or Dominican individuals, but of Haitian origin. Theoretically, Sayad's contributions to this peculiar state will to exclude individuals from society has received significant attention and deepening. As anticipated, it is not only a phenomenon of the Dominican-Haitian context, nor only a recent trend on the part of national states. For example, it is appropriate to mention Sayad's interpretation that Avallone and Molinero-Gerbeau (2021) propose, stating that:

Migrants are fundamental to the State, since they exist not only reinforce the national community that recognizes itself as a separate unit from the presence of foreigners, but, when crossing its borders, legitimize the need to exercise control over them because if no one crossed the borders, they would not need to be controlled and, therefore, it would not be necessary to exercise control of the territory ... (Avallone and Molinero-Gerbeau, 2021, p. 5)

Well, Sayad and the interpretations of his work give a pre-existing paradigm useful for understanding how Dominicans think of Haitian immigrants, in the same way their government does. Of course, we do not want to fall into a banal generalization that covers the entire Caribbean island. Instead, a hypothesis is offered that may be applied to a trend that, in recent years, has begun to take hold in the Dominican Republic. The relevance of Rappaport's work remains a pillar for qualitative methodology in the social, and even political field. Although Rappaport (1992) has focused on the relationship between the post-colonial state and subordinates in Latin America, referring mainly to indigenous groups, here we try to understand Haitian migrants as subordinates in DR. Specifically, given the vast prevalence of Haitians among immigrant communities based in the Dominican Republic, it is possible to assume that the Dominican state has progressively considered Haitians to be the minority par excellence.

In other words, the immense Haitian diaspora in the Dominican Republic can be understood as a subaltern group. As far as this work is concerned, Rappaport's main contribution concerns the attempt of a certain political class to establish an ethnic-national identity according to their will and convenience. Rather, national leaders seek to form "ethnic nationalism" (Rappaport &

Dover, 1996, p. 37). In reality, it is difficult, at least from a purely anthropological perspective, to draw an explicit ethnic differentiation between Dominicans and Haitians, which is not influenced by a political design of nationalist and identity character. In fact, it has already been proven that there is a form of historical and independence mythology, exercised by the Dominicans and their governments, which differentiates the ethnicity, or even, mistakenly, the so-called Dominican race from the Haitian one (Tavernier, 2008). This practice is mostly based on a reactionary historical reconstruction that aims *to separate the two sides of Hispaniola*. To conclude on the methodological and theoretical influences of this research, Rappaport (2011) also contributes with his work, as for Latin America, on the “ethnic-racial classes” (p. 628), understanding the set of attributes such as skin color, speech, or economic resources that are created to forge a national identity. This necessarily gives life to an identity nationalism that needs to find as many *inferiorities* as possible in the *other*, producing a structural racism supported by the State; this is what happens in the Dominican Republic to Haitian migrants.

Results

This section focuses on the empirical study on the exclusionary status of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic. Particular attention will be paid, within the framework of International Relations, to the severity of the foreign policy of the Abinader government towards neighboring Haiti, and how this political discourse affects Haitians in the Dominican Republic. It will then be important to re-point to the power of state thought, in line with Sayad’s vision. Then, returning to the concept of *socio-political racism*, we will see the *social, political and legal exclusion of the Haitian migrant, which at the same time is shown as Agamben’s Homo Sacer*, but also constitutes, with its community in diaspora, the main subordinate group in DR, to refer to the foundations of Rappaport. The empirical contribution of the author, who has lived directly the situation in the Dominican Republic, will support the existing literature on the Haitian diaspora. It is necessary here to briefly provide the quantitative dimension of Haitian immigration in the Dominican Republic (Table 1), recalling the difficulty of data collection due to the “porosity of the border” Dominican-Haitian (Morán and Figueroa, 2005, p. 252) and the “laxity” of the Dominican migration system (Alfonso, 2011, p. 12).

Table 1

Number and percentage of migrants in the Dominican Republic by nationality reported in the latest available studies

Nationality	No. of immigrants	%
Haiti	329 281	79.2
USA	25 814	6.2
Spain	7 062	1.7
Puerto Rico	6 083	1.5
Venezuela	5 417	1.3
Cuba	3 841	0.9
Italy	3 795	0.9
Colombia	3 606	0.9
France	2 043	0.5
Germany	1 661	0.4
China	1 484	0.4
Other countries	25 477	6.1
Total	415 564	100

Note. Own elaboration based on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Center for Research and Social Studies (CIES) (2017).

* It can be approximated that the number of Haitian migrants has grown in recent years, with the data updated to 2015.

To understand the relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and how they affect Haitian migration, it is necessary to move the approach from the sociological perspective to the field of International Relations. In other words, it has to be reasoned in terms of State(s), as previously mentioned by Sayad. The parentheses for the plural are because, in fact, there is only one state that currently directs the direction of life of Haitian migrants, and that is the Dominican Republic. Before dedicating space to the current government of Luis Abinader, we try to emphasize certain historical influences on Dominican-Haitian relations, to understand that the proposed *socio-*

political racism is not a novelty, but an exacerbation of a structural feeling in the Dominican Republic.

The reason for this is the position shared by the Dominican governments of the day, and by international voices, who evaluate the last decades of Haiti as those of a failed state in all its possible forms and nomenclatures (Verlin, 2014). We are facing a paradoxical dimension, where *socio-political racism* is strengthened by the drama in the land of the *other*. The Dominican nationalist and identity cult finds fertile ground when, on the one hand, domestic politics promotes exclusive nationalism with respect to the Haitian immigrant, and on the other, Dominican foreign policy maintains a rigid antagonism that wants to differentiate itself from the chaotic condition of the Haitian state. Substantially, there seems to be, in principle, a limitation of agency on the part of society, understood as the Dominican people, with respect to the aforementioned thinking of the State. The conditions would be provided for society to justify that state “coercive power” of “realism” (Sleat, 2016, p. 7), because Dominicans are in favor of Dominican foreign policy as long as it is nationalist. Then, in addition to an international realism, there is a national, political and social realism, where the governmental foreign policy falls directly on society, finding popular consensus. The same Dominican identity is radicalized there when relations with Haiti reach, possibly, their worst point.

Lee Turits (2021) identifies the massacre of Haitians, committed during the Trujillo dictatorship in 1937, at the point of no return in terms of the identity-nationalist division between Dominicans and Haitians. Lee Turits’ argument is that, with Trujillo in 1937, “in order to quickly tighten the political border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, it became necessary to establish a social separation between the two ethnic groups”, thus annulling the Dominican-Haitian “multi-ethnic national community” (p. 92). From 37, Trujillo began to build an existential narrative about the relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. State thought as visualized by Sayad finds effective representation in the period following the massacre. In fact, Trujillo promotes an “official history” whereby the killing of Haitians has been necessary to preserve the very existence of the Dominican state (Farid, 2016, p. 45). Trujillo’s discourse then set the Dominican popular narrative about Haitians during the dictatorship, reinforcing it in the 1940s. In his historical compilation, Childers (2021) describes that the economic instability of DR led Trujillo to implement a policy of blaming Haitians until the 1960s,

through even school projects for racial indoctrination against Haitians, thus considered “a problem” (pp. 11-12). Figure 1 provides a material testimony of the effect of the Haitian massacre of 1937.

The apparent recovery of democracy in the Dominican Republic, under Joaquín Balaguer, did not represent an improvement in the conditions of Haitians in Dominican territory, but a variation of this racism. In other words, since 1968 there has been an instrumentalization of Haitian migration, because it is understood the labor need, especially in the sugar industry, of the Haitian workforce that is exploited and maintained in DR only when it is economically needed (Hintzen, 2014). In this way, Haitian migrants began to live a kind of functional and marginalized confinement, being employed in the sugar towns called bateyes (Wilson, 2022), where the precarious coexistence with the Dominicans was restricted to a relationship between employer and employee. Turning now to the present day, it is possible to suggest that the identity divide described between Haitians and Dominicans was prolonged in time, and can be supported today by two factors. The first concerns the destruction of the Haitian state system, which, together with the border pressure on the Dominican government, fuels an antagonistic discourse by *us* against *them*. The second, is anchored with Dominican identity nationalism that uses this *socio-political racism* to strengthen itself. As early as 2013, the Dominican state’s political-legal positions began to show a discriminatory connotation. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights considered that Dominican Constitutional Court ruling 168/13 appealed to statelessness; the rule attributed Dominican nationality only to individuals born in Dominican territory and to Dominican parents, with retroactive validity (IACHR, 2015). Under these conditions, the government of Luis Abinader, inaugurated in 2020, has had to confront the Haitian question with particular frequency, it must be recognized, for the total degeneration (political, economic and social) in which Haiti has fallen. However, Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic and Dominicans of Haitian origin are also affected.

Figure 1

Account of the Haitian Massacre of 1937, including the international and bilateral consequences between DR. and Haiti

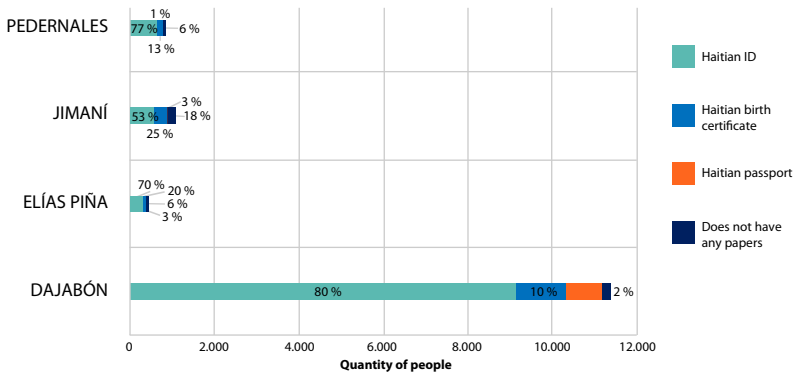


Note. Photo taken by the author at the Dominican Resistance Memorial Museum, Santo Domingo.

This research conforms with the considerations of Duany (2006), where it is accepted that there is “prejudice and discrimination towards Haitians and descendants of Haitians in the Dominican Republic” (p. 236), not wanting to get lost in establishing a historical debate on the causes, but to attend to the reasons for their current political assertion. Under Abinader’s administration there has been a political-normative action that has fully turned the Haitian

migrant into Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*. In 2022, Abinader ratified Decree 668-22, which strengthens the search for undocumented migrants, most of whom are Haitian, but also admits the expulsion of Dominicans of Haitian origin, if they are undocumented (Childers, 2023). In the same study, Childers also reports the cancelation of the public medical service for undocumented midwives. Among all the measures taken by the Abinader government, the latter seems to be the main expression of current *socio-political racism*, where mere domestic political interest undermines humanitarian values. If this research refers to *socio-political racism* towards Haitian migrants, according to Agamben’s concept of *Homo Sacer*, it is precisely because the current administration seems to approve measures that do not seek to regularize Haitian immigration, but to make it legally invisible. It is a legal, social and political marginalization, which in fact provokes criticism in the Dominican Republic. For example, it should be noted that there are no state efforts to update the actual number of Haitian immigrants in the country. In cities like Santo Domingo, the presence of Haitian immigrants, as well as in border places (the areas of Dajabón, Jimaní and Pedernales), can be marginalized, but not completely invisible. Figure 2 shows one of the few available compilations of updated data on Haitian immigration in the Dominican Republic, in fact, by the International Organization for Migration (2021), and not by the Dominican government.

Figure 2
Documents held by subjects interviewed in border areas



Note. International Organization for Migration (IOM) Survey (2021).

*Only data available to approximate, in a quantitative and objective way, the dimension and condition of Haiti-DR migration.

The absence of a continuous accounting of Haitian immigrants by the State generates the feeling, in society, of foreign invasion, as perceived by certain sectors in the United States (Angulo-Pasel, 2023) and Europe (Miccoli and Ambrosetti, 2023). In particular, the replication of certain anti-immigrant sentiments typical of the United States in the Dominican Republic has been used during the COVID-19 pandemic by the Abinader administration, allowing and nurturing a Trump-style rhetoric (for example with the construction of a border wall and the closure of the border) of blaming the Haitian migrant for all the problems of the country (García-Peña, 2022). There is a practice of “social reproduction” (Molinero-Gerbeau 2020, p. 6), i.e., the reproduction of certain values or acts lived by one subject or community, towards a different being, the *other*.

To clarify, Dominicans direct towards Haitians the *socio-political racism* they suffer in their destination countries, not coincidentally, the United States (Aparicio, 2007). *Socio-political racism* in the Dominican Republic can also be explained by a form of search for social, racial and political superiority of Dominicans. The trend just shown transforms the act of removing the *other* from the national territory into a strategy of political approval by the authorities. The deportation of the migrant, the great fear of Dominicans in the United States (Alex, 2020), is contrary to the approval of Abinader’s followers, when those involved are Haitian or even Dominican migrants of Haitian origin (Bonifacio, 2022). The *socio-political racism* perceived in the Dominican Republic is aided by an exclusionary marginalization, which is also legal, or better of non-legality, which is also manifested at the urban level. In Santo Domingo, Reynoso Estrella (2021) has approached the precariousness and urban informality of Little Haiti, among the humblest and most forgotten neighborhoods of the Dominican capital, where Haitians suffer a condition of “urban vulnerability” (p. 120). Of course, this research does not want to ignore that socioeconomic precariousness, from the labor to housing, is a stark reality also for Dominican citizens. To conclude, although this investigation does not want to delve into the merit of the political success of the Abinader administration, whose evaluation remains in the hands of the sovereign Dominican people, it is worth highlighting one last point. The nationalist discourse and immigration policy of the Abinader government has received criticism even from the Dominican ruling class itself. The current Ambassador of the Dominican Republic in Spain, Juan Bolívar Díaz, has been among the most notorious in criticizing the racist and extremely natio-

nalist drift of Dominican politics (2021), also pointing out the lack of a responsive tool to effectively measure how big the perceived Haitian migration emergency is in DR.

Conclusions

The investigation does not want to look for institutional culprits or demonize certain actors of Dominican politics. Rather, it has tried to offer theoretical and empirical views to approach epistemologically the current situation of the Haitian migrant in the Dominican Republic. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there seems to be, in the Dominican context, some support for restrictive and discriminatory policies towards Haitian immigration. As described above, there are social and identity reasons, rooted in Dominican history, that can explain where this nationalist and exclusionary sentiment that needs the *other*, Haitian, comes from in order to be reinforced. Maintaining the hypothesis of a latent *socio-political racism* in the Dominican Republic, which today turns the Haitian migrant into *Homo Sacer*, it is possible to reach the following conclusions:

- In order for an individual to suffer the condition of *Homo Sacer*, the subject, or his or her community, must be legally, socially, and politically excluded from the national system in which he or she finds himself or herself. The recent measures adopted by the Abinader government in the Dominican Republic confirm a vigorous application of rules aimed at the expulsion, deportation and outlawing of Haitian immigration.
- If there were no racism both political and social in the Dominican Republic, then there would be no consensus, tacit or explicit, on the part of the population towards this exclusionary and nationalist discourse. The Dominican state, historically and with particular emphasis since the Abinader government in 2020, seems to have elevated its view of Haitian immigration to the main way of thinking about migration in the Dominican Republic. It would be inappropriate to get a full causality between state thought and social mentality in the face of the Haitian diaspora, but one can conclude that there is a kind of political correlation.
- We must not forget the magnitude of the Haitian crisis, which represents one of the main motivations for the difficulties in bilateral relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. This situation

entails significant antagonism shared by both the government and the Dominicans, making border pressure the main reason for any problems on the island.

- The lack of an up-to-date, objective and continuous measurement of Haitian immigration by the Dominican state implies two consequences. The first covers the feeling of invasion that the Dominican perceives, when the number of Haitian immigrants in Dominican cities is not really known. The second is institutional neglect and the social, urban and political marginalization to which Haitian immigrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent are exposed, with the lack of formal registration by the State being one of the causes for their relegation in the set of national protections.

This research has been limited to a brief review of the relevant literature and empirical contributions of the author, who do not want or cannot demand a general and global portrait of the migratory situation for Haitians in Dominican Republic. The lack of objective, substantive and updated data by the Dominican government forms an essential limit for the objectives of this research. The present work could be continued with a quantitative analysis towards the accounting of Haitian immigration in Dominican urban centers, where a similar project would be more viable than at the border, due to closures and volatility of the context that do not allow the necessary conditions to the investigation. Finally, the research has not sought to analyze Haitian immigration through interviews, despite the author's direct experience in the Dominican Republic. Due to the precariousness and insecurity experienced by Haitian migrants in DR, it is not recommended to continue similar studies with surveys that, in addition to being ethically questionable, could negatively affect the position of Haitian immigrants in front of the Dominican authorities.

References

- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (D. Heller-Roazen, Trad.). Stanford University Press.
- Alex, S. (2020). Undocumented Latinx life-writing: Refusing worth and meritocracy. *Prose Studies*, 41(2), 108-128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01440357.2020.1816876>
- Alfonso, H. D. (2011). La migración transfronteriza urbana en la República Dominicana. *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Caribe*. <https://bit.ly/3HgJ2s6>

- Angulo-Pasel, C. (2023). Border vigilante/Militia activity, the National Security State, and the Migrant “Threat”. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 16(1), 192-214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2023.2170513>
- Aparicio, A. (2007). Contesting Race and Power: Second-Generation Dominican Youth in the New Gotham. *City & Society*, 19(2), 179-201. <https://doi.org/10.1525/city.2007.19.2.179>
- Avallone, G. and Molinero-Gerbeau, Y. (2021). Liberar las migraciones: la contribución de Abdelmalek Sayad a una epistemología migrante-céntrica [Freeing migration: the contribution of Abdelmalek Sayad to a migrant-Centric epistemology]. *Migraciones Internacionales*, 12, 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.33679/rmi.v1i1.1949>
- Avraamidou, M. and Ioannou, M. (2023). Migrants as ‘pawns’: Antimigrant debates on Twitter and their affinity to European border politics and discourses. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 26(5), 722-743. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494221120838>
- Billiet, J. and de Witte, H. (2008). Everyday racism as predictor of political racism in Flemish Belgium. *Journal of Social Issues*, 64(2), 253-267. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2008.00560.x>
- Bolívar Díaz, J. (2022). Dimensión de la inmigración haitiana en la RD. *Acento*. <https://bit.ly/3O4pr2d>
- Bonifacio, A. (2022). The Institutionalization of Anti-Haitianism in Dominican History and Education. *North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA)*. <https://bit.ly/3SIsTby>
- Boudou, B. (2023). Migration and the critique of ‘state thought’: Abdelmalek Sayad as a political theorist. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 22(3), 399-424. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14748851211041906>
- Ceja, I. and Ramírez G., J. (2022). Haitian migration in the Andean region and Ecuador: Policies, careers, and profiles. *Estudios Fronterizos*, 23, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2215099>
- Childers, T. B. (2021). *In Someone Else’s Country: Anti-Haitian Racism and Citizenship in the Dominican Republic*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Childers, T. B. (2023). The Role of Anti-Haitian Racism in Dominican Mass Deportation Policy. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 24(1), 107-113. <https://doi.org/10.1353/gia.2023.a897708>
- Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). (2015). *Desnacionalización y apatridia en República Dominicana*. <https://bit.ly/42gmYaW>

- Duany, J. (2006). Racializing Ethnicity in the Spanish-Speaking Caribbean. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 1(2), 231-248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17442220600859478>
- Dzhurova, A. (2023). The politics of language: Exploring the DREAMers as the “alien other” in the narratives of immigration. *Politics & Policy*, 51(6), 1117-1135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12562>
- Farid, S. (2016). Rewriting the Trujillato: Collective trauma, alternative history, and the nature of dictatorship. *International Journal of Civic, Political, & Community Studies*, 14(3), 39-51. <https://bit.ly/3vQC3Uq>
- García-Peña, L. (2022). Making the Dominican Republic Great Again? *North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA)*. <https://bit.ly/48Wk3q5>
- González-Gorman, S. (2023). Disrupting Agamben: Beyond undocumented children as “Homo Sacer”. *Human Geography*, 16(1), 17-30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19427786221109265>
- Hintzen, A. (2014). Extranjeros en tránsito: La evolución histórica de las políticas migratorias en la República Dominicana [Foreigners in transit: the historical evolution of migration policies of the Dominican State]. *Ediciones Fundación Juan Bosch*, 217-235. <https://bit.ly/48O34GO>
- Joos, V. (2023). Settling in the US deep south: race, ethnicity, and belonging among haitian migrants in a small North Carolina town. *Transforming Anthropology*, 31(1), 42-56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/traa.12245>
- Lee Turits, R. (2021). Un mundo destruido, una nación impuesta: La masacre haitiana de 1937 en la República Dominicana [A world destroyed, a nation imposed: the 1937 haitian massacre in the Dominican Republic]. *Revista Estudios Sociales*, 36(133), 77-110. bit.ly/48RNmd9
- Mantz, F. (2021). The global mobile labour force in the modern/colonial world-system: Analysing migrant integration in Germany. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 24(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-019-00181-9>
- Maphosa, F. and Ntau, C. (2021). Undocumented migrants as homo sacer: Cases from Botswana and South Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 56(4), 872-888. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909620946349>
- Maresca, A. (2023a). “Quédate en México”: Transformaciones en el contexto migratorio americano [“Remain in Mexico”: Changes in the American Migratory Context]. *Relaciones Internacionales*, 54, 75-94. <https://doi.org/10.15366/relacionesinternacionales2023.54.004>

- Maresca, A. (2023b). La politización de la diáspora venezolana en España y su influencia en las relaciones UE-Venezuela [The politicization of the venezuelan diaspora in Spain and its influence on EU-Venezuela Relations]. *Política. Revista de Ciencia Política*, 61(2), 120-145. <https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-5338.2023.72048>
- Miccoli, S. and Ambrosetti, E. (2023). The perceptions of migration during the pandemic: what Twitter data tell us? *Migration Letters*, 20(2), 189-198. <https://doi.org/10.59670/ml.v20i2.2879>
- Molinero-Gerbeau, Y. (2020). La creciente dependencia de mano de obra migrante para tareas agrícolas en el centro global. Una perspectiva comparada [The growing dependence on migrant labor for agricultural tasks in the global core. A Comparative Perspective]. *Estudios Geográficos*, 81(288), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.3989/estgeogr.202046.026>
- Morán, V. P. and Figueroa, D. I. (2005). La porosa frontera y la mano de obra haitiana en la República Dominicana [The Porous Border and Haitian Labor Force in the Dominican Republic]. *Caribbean Studies*, 33(1), 251-280. <https://bit.ly/3U0xKzZ>
- Newns, L. (2023). Necropolitical Ecologies: Creative Articulations of Nature's Death-Work in the Borderzone. *Interventions*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2023.2190919>
- OECD/CIES-UNIBE (2017), *Interacciones entre Políticas Públicas, Migración y Desarrollo en República Dominicana, Caminos de desarrollo*. Éditions OCDE, París. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276918-es>
- Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM). (2021). *DTM República Dominicana-Encuesta de Monitoreo de Flujos Migratorios de Habitantes Transfronterizos, Agosto 2021*. OIM, República Dominicana. <https://bit.ly/47I8TUY>
- Rappaport, J. (1992). Fictive Foundations: National Romances and Subaltern Ethnicity in Latin America. *History Workshop Journal*, 34(1), 119-131. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/34.1.119>
- Rappaport, J. (2011). “Así Lo Paresce Por Su Aspetto”: Physiognomy and the Construction of Difference in Colonial Bogotá. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 91(4), 601-631. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-1416648>
- Rappaport, J. and Dover, R. V. H. (1996). The Construction of Difference by Native Legislators: Assessing the Impact of the Colombian Constitution of 1991. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 1(2), 22-45. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jlca.1996.1.2.22>

- Reynoso Estrella, S. B. (2021). *El Pequeño Haití: El Mercado Modelo como promotor del desarrollo de un barrio marginado* [Little Haiti: The Modelo Market as a Driver for Development in a Marginalized Neighborhood] [Tesis Doctoral, Universidad de Alcalá]. Biblioteca Digital Universidad de Alcalá. <https://bit.ly/41ZIm46>
- Rodríguez, L. C. (2024). Haitianos, el nuevo rostro de la Ciudad de México. *El Universal*. <https://bit.ly/41W2aFk>
- Rodríguez-Torrent, J. C. and Gissi-Barbieri, E. N. (2022). Crisis sociopolítica, pandemia y vivienda precaria: ¿Arraigo haitiano en Santiago de Chile? (2019-2021). *Urbano*, 20-29. <https://doi.org/10.22320/07183607.2022.25.45.02>
- Sayad, A. (2004). *The Suffering of the Immigrant* (D. Macey, Trad.). Polity.
- Sleat, M. (2016). The value of global justice: Realism and moralism. *Journal of International Political Theory*, 12(2), 169-184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1755088216628323>
- Tavernier, L. A. (2008). The Stigma of Blackness: Anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic. *Socialism and Democracy*, 22(3), 96-104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08854300802361554>
- Taylor, E. B. (2014). Why the cocks trade: What a transnational art market can reveal about cross-border relations. *Visual Studies*, 29(2), 181-190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2014.887271>
- Thomas, P. J. (1995). Racial discrimination in the Netherlands; the de iure and de facto positions. *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, 28(1), 36-82. <https://bit.ly/3ShEEzy>
- Verlin, J. (2014). Haïti: État failli, État à (re)construire. *Cahiers des Amériques latines*, 75, 25-40. <https://doi.org/10.4000/cal.3093>
- William-White, L. and White, J. (2011). Color Marks the Site/Sight of Social Difference: Dysconscious Racism in the “Age of Obama”. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(9), 837-853. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800411423201>
- Wilson, B. K. (2022). When numbers eclipse narratives: A cultural-political critique of the ‘ethical’ impacts of short-term experiences in global health in Dominican Republic bateyes. *Medical Humanities*, 48(2), 190-199. <https://doi.org/10.1136/medhum-2021-012252>