HAITIAN MIGRANTS AT THE MEXICO-U.S. BORDER: HEGEMONY, THE INTEGRAL STATE, AND SUBALTERN CLASSES

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is an ethnographic and theoretical exploration to Haitian migrant experiences in the border city of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. Thousands of Haitians arrived in Tijuana from South America in mid-2016, hoping to enter the United States through a request for humanitarian asylum. I argue that Haitian migration across the continent and at the Mexico-U.S. border represents a problem of hegemony because it contains the Haitian subaltern aspiration to be part of an active international workforce. This aspiration takes shape through their geographical mobility and their humanitarian demand, and it is the product of specific historical conditions. Thus, my research asked: what can the Mexico-U.S. border teach us about Haitian migrations, and what can we learn about Mexico's northern border from the experiences of the Haitian migrants who arrived and resettled in Tijuana? This dissertation answers these questions utilizing a Gramscian framework focused on hegemonic struggles and negotiations. Additionally, by addressing Haitian migration in Tijuana, my dissertation contributes to questioning the Mexican state, its migrant inclusion policies, and its social integration dynamics.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The Baptist church "Fear of God"[1] in Tijuana is located on a long avenue that runs from the western part of the city, a suburb-like borough known as *Playas* ("Beaches"), to the city's downtown, or *Zona Norte*. In 2016 and 2017, this church sheltered dozens of Haitian asylum seekers for about eight months, and as a result, Haitians started to use it as a social hub for different interactions. For example, the church promoted regular Haitian Protestant services entirely conducted in Haitian Creole by Haitian nationals. Also, it serves as the office for one local NGO, *Tèt Chaje,* a migrant-advocacy group almost entirely composed of Haitians.[2] These social practices and institutions were solidified by Haitians who decided not to cross to the United States. For my fieldwork, conducted in the fall of 2018 and winter of 2019, I attended this church regularly, both for Haitian Sunday worship and weekly meetings with *Tèt Chaje's* committee. I also conducted weekly Spanish classes for Haitians in one of the church's classrooms.

As part of the church's philanthropic endeavours, a contingent of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from San Diego and Los Angeles came down to Tijuana to deliver donations to a Central American Caravan of asylum seekers on a Sunday in late December 2018. At that point, Mexican authorities received and directed the Central Americans to several locations across the city, in warehouses and makeshift shelters. On that Sunday morning, I was on my way to the church, and in a WhatsApp group for

[1] Unless otherwise stated, all proper names of organizations and informants are pseudonyms.
[2] The NGO only has one Mexican member, which is required to legalize and register the group under Mexican law. This Mexican member is part of the Baptist church. Even without formal participation with the civil organization, he provides his name and personal information, aiding the NGO in becoming an *Organización de la Sociedad Civil* (Civil Society Organization or OSC in Mexican legal jargon).

Haitians in Tijuana in which I was included, photos of donations piling up in the church parking lot began to circulate. The person who shared the images was a member of *Tèt Chaje* and part of the Haitian church. Even though I had seen these photos, when I arrived, I could not help but be amazed by the number of people assembled there. There were at least four passenger buses full of volunteers and donations.

Upon my arrival, the first familiar face I saw was of a member of *Tèt Chaje,* who was speaking with a young woman from the United States. She did not speak Spanish (nor French or Haitian Creole), and he did not speak English, so he asked me to talk to her and then left. She wanted to know how many Haitians were housed by the church at that time. To her surprise, I responded that none. I explained to her that the Haitian women waiting at the benches might have been sheltered in this church, but that that day they were gathered hoping to receive a donation.[3] The woman immediately asked if the Haitians had come to stay in Tijuana. I replied that it was a tricky question. On the one hand, Haitians I had spoken to expressed an attitude of resignation towards Mexico. Yet, on the other, it seemed like if there were a change in the U.S. policy at the border, they would try to cross, almost without hesitation. Not for nothing had they chosen to stay in Tijuana, on the threshold of the United States.

After that brief communication with whom I assumed was a reporter, I began to help get the donations from the bus trunks to the church parking lot. The volunteers were piling up contributions: camping houses, mats, rice sacks, cleaning supplies kits, diapers, blankets, and quilts. After several trips of unloading donations, I recognized the Haitian

[3] This was so, as the "Fear of God" church was not the only shelter hosting Haitians. In fact, during the final months of 2016 and until mid-2017, around 40 shelters (both religious and civil organizations) were working with Haitian groups..

pastor. He was ordained in his position by the Mexican church only a few months earlier to represent the Haitian church in Tijuana.[4] It appeared that the pastor wanted to start distributing donations among the Haitian women who had attended the church service early on and that had been waiting patiently since then. However, a Spanish speaker organizer from the foreign NGOs tried to clarify to the pastor that the donations were for the Central American Caravan. Perhaps the tensest moment of these exchanges between the pastor and the activist was when the pastor tried to store some quilts in an office. According to him, he was going to distribute them among Haitians. However, the NGO organizer insisted they return the things they had stored. She then made it clear that if there were going to be donations to Haitians, this would depend on what items would remain after distributing them at different points where the Central American Caravan members stayed, perhaps at the end of the day. The church was not used as a shelter at that moment, neither for Haitians nor Central Americans, so the NGOs only used it as their base of operations.

Immediately after the donations were stacked and classified in the parking lot, the volunteers entered the multipurpose room to eat. The Mexican church welcomed them with a Jalisco-style *birria* lunch, a goat-based stew typical in Tijuana street food. I counted about 100 volunteers in the dining room. With all of them together, I could also closely observe the type of people gathered: a mix of college cadres and young activists alongside senior Catholic religious figures (priests and nuns). After lunch, I lost track of most of the volunteers who streamed out to the buses while I stayed at the church with some Haitian

[4] As explained one Sunday by the church's Mexican pastor: in Tijuana, the Haitian pastor "heard" the Lord's call and left secular life to dedicate himself full-time to preaching among his fellow Haitian nationals. For this to happen, the Mexican Baptist Church, in cooperation with a San Diego Baptist church network, decided to support the Haitian pastor financially, granting him a monthly stipend for himself and his wife.

students I knew from my Spanish classes, who had come expecting to receive something but did not.

With the church suddenly empty, I could observe how the Haitian pastor, helped by Haitian church members, began to put casseroles with food in a white van. Several Haitians, including three female cooks, were going to visit a nearby warehouse where part of the Caravan was staying, aiming to distribute a plate of food to the Central Americans. After asking the pastor's permission, I got into the van with them. On the way to the place, just a few streets away, a representative of the Haitian church advised the women who were to oversee delivering the food to leave cell phones or valuables because he thought it could be dangerous.

When we arrived at the warehouse, I could appreciate the large concentration of people and the disorder that prevailed among the street garbage, police cordons, photojournalists, reporters, religious groups and NGOs (among them a delegation from those who ate Jalisco-style *birria*). The church's Haitian men set the table with the casseroles outside of the warehouse, and the women started serving the food to the Central Americans, who waited in line to receive their plates. While that happened, a Honduran man approached us, wishing to start a conversation with a Haitian friend and me. He told us many things, among them that a Haitian from the church had offered to take him to work on a construction site and that his teenage son needed new shoes. He also denounced how the police cordons surrounding the shelter's lateral roads also worked to establish an unofficial curfew. With this measure, no one could enter or leave the street after 6 p.m., under penalty

of being picked up (*levantado)*[5] or detained by the municipal police. Also, as the Honduran man showed us, all the people sheltered in the warehouse had orange wristbands with their information on them, issued by Mexico as a measure to control them and as a requisite to have access to the shelter.

When food distribution ended, the Haitian volunteers returned to the church in a different car. Meanwhile, the white van in which we arrived was returning to the church overflowing with Central Americans who struggled to get a place inside the packed vehicle. The logistics for the distribution of donations that the foreign NGOs brought consisted of taking the Central Americans to the Baptist church instead of moving the donations to the warehouses where the Central Americans were staying. This strategy aimed to maintain order and prevent an overflow of people. When the Haitian volunteers left the warehouse, I stayed behind because there was no space in any car. Thus, I could see how a group of Mexican youngsters arrived at the shelter with a box of commercial donuts, *champurrado* (a hot beverage made from ground maize), while singing religious songs. However, the Central Americans had just eaten Haitian food and paid little or no attention to them.

With no ride to get back to the church, a Haitian friend and I walked back to the Baptist church, leaving behind us the noise of a megaphone that an improvised preacher used to shout solitary odes and fears to the Lord. When we got back to the church, I saw

[5] A *levantón*, from the Spanish verb *levantar* (to lift, to pull), means arbitrary police or non-police detention, common in Tijuana against vagabonds, deportees, and Mexican and Central American migrants. The arrests, when the police conduct them, generally take place in a police van, referred to by the local population as *La Perrera* (The Dog Pound) or *La Panel*. If *levantones* are conducted by non-police forces, these are related to criminal organizations' executions or criminal activities such as extortions or kidnappings. The distinction between legal, extra-legal and criminal *levantones* is often unclear.

how the Central Americans who had left in the van were outside the parking lot, crowded but lined up on the sidewalk, waiting their turn to enter and receive a tent or a blanket. The NGOs kept the parking gate closed and only allowed groups of five to pass to pick one or two of the donated items.

With the Central Americans gone and the donations distributed, the day passed, and the night fell, and the church was again full of volunteers who returned after visiting various parts of the city. For this time of day, the church had prepared a meal of *enchiladas* for them. Meanwhile, outside on the parking lot floor, there were still many donations left. With their eyes on the remaining objects, a group of local vagrants from the *Zona Norte* gathered on the fence, looking for a way for someone to pass them a tent or a backpack. As I continually went in and out of the church, the ragged men shouted demands and claims at me: "Aren't you people so Christian?" (*¿No que muy cristianos?*), said one sardonically, angry at the indifference to their presence. To not grossly ignore them, I tried to get someone from the NGO delegation to consider sharing something with them. Still, I decided it was better to go to dinner with the volunteers, preventing a possible confrontation for not helping them in their quest.

After the meal was over, I left the church. There were no more Haitians anymore. Meanwhile, outside, the NGO's lead organizer, who had previously obstructed the pastor's attempts to distribute quilts, offered some backpacks to the ragged men who, separated by the church gates, persisted in demanding a taste of humanitarian charity.

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This dissertation is an ethnographic and theoretical approach to Haitian migration at the border city of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, where thousands of Haitians arrived from South America in mid-2016, hoping to enter the United States through a request for humanitarian asylum. Most of these Haitians crossed the border, but the United States summarily deported many others. As a result, some Haitians, considering the circumstances, decided not to cross the border and to remain in Mexico instead. Thus, after serving as a barrier and containment space for these asylum-seekers, Mexico opened a legal channel for the regularization of about 3,600 Haitians who decided to stay in Tijuana. My dissertation is about the experiences of these Haitians in their encounter with the Mexico-U.S. border and its dynamics.

In more than one way, the opening vignette, reconstructed from my field diary, glimpses some of the main themes of this dissertation, such as the international migration of working classes, the subaltern struggles to reproduce a livelihood at the border, the border integral state apparatus deployed to contain and control subaltern migrations, and the intervention in these processes of secular and religious groups as mediators between subaltern and hegemonic groupings. In combination, these themes represent a problem of hegemony. According to what Antonio Gramsci (1981-1937) wrote in the *Prison Notebooks*,[6] hegemony is the possibility to lead the direction of a political project, thereby naming the process by which domination and exploitation can be exercised by the ruling

[6] Antonio Gramsci wrote the *Prison Notebooks* inside a Fascist prison between 1927 and 1935. These notebooks are a variegated series of notes the Italian thinker wrote as his study guide to keep thinking and reflecting while incarcerated. To quote Gramsci, I use Gerratana's critical apparatus of references; thus, in the in-text citation, the Q stands for *Quaderno* (Notebook) next to the section number, indicated by §. I took the English translations of Joseph A. Buttigieg when available. Buttigieg edited three volumes of the Notebooks. Volume 1 (1992) contains Notebooks 1 and 2; Volume 2 (1996) Notebooks 3, 4 and 5; and Volume three (2007) contains Notebooks 6, 7, and 8. In addition, Buttigieg and Marcus E. Green edited the special Notebook 25 (2021) about *Subaltern Social Groups.* Besides Buttigieg's editions, I also used the integral edition in Spanish, *Cuadernos de la cárcel* (1991-2000, six volumes), translated by Ana María Palos.

classes and naturalized by the subaltern groups. To achieve a hegemonic position, Gramsci recognized two moments: the moment of consensus and the moment of coercion. Thus, to achieve a hegemonic position, dominant classes and nations must secure a balance between those two moments, although, as Gramsci explained, this balance is always unstable.

For Mexico, the visible problem of hegemony, in this case, consists in what to do with a particular subaltern population caught at its northern border, a migrant group which is unwilling to go back (to Haiti) but unable to go further (to the United States). On the one hand, this "problem of hegemony" includes the interactions between the two neighbouring states, with Mexico acting as a proxy *vigilante* state protecting the boundaries of the United States. In this scale, the United States appears as a hegemonic potency due to its power of attraction to international subaltern classes, such as Haitian asylum-seekers, and their power to exert political and economic influence over other subaltern states, such as Mexico. On the other hand, the "problem" expresses the *incorrigible* character of migration (and labour, [de Genova, 2017]), that is, the relative autonomy of human movements in their encounters with restrictive and punitive border apparatuses and foreign societies of reception. At this level, Haitian migration emerges as a subaltern projection, containing resources, aspirations, and contradictions, which emerge as a symptom of our fragmented capitalist globality (Trouillot, 2003). Between these two faces of the problem, subaltern projects and hegemonic directions, civil society groups such as NGOs, churches and employers fulfill the role of mediation, administering subaltern lives through humanitarian approaches and labour exploitation. In this process, the border appears as an unstable arena of forces between states, capital, and population flows (Heyman 1994, 2012) and as a field

of hegemonic dispute and negotiation (Roseberry, 1994), both between national states and between states and subaltern classes.

Between the second and third decade of the new millennium, as the number of asylum seekers on the Mexico-U.S. border has increased, the border and its control apparatuses have become a bargaining token in the interactions between Mexico and the United States. For example, during the administration of Presidents Enrique Peña-Nieto in Mexico (December 2012- November 2018) and Donald Trump in the United States (January 2017- January 2021), Trump kept latent the possibility of carrying out waves of mass deportations of Mexican nationals. This possibility of mass deportation threatened to destabilize border cities such as Tijuana and had as its counterpart the demand of the United States that Mexico should become a punitive force against Central American migrants passing through Mexican territory in transit to the United States. The administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (December 2018-) has accepted this subordinate position of doing the United States's dirty work, mainly by militarizing its northern and southern borders through his recently created National Guard (*Guardia Nacional*). This decision relates to Trump's threat to raise tariffs on the products that Mexico exports to the United States if Mexico fails to control the transit of migrants across its borders. With Joe Biden as president (January 2021-), the U.S. government has maintained Title 42 –through which the Trump government closed the border to asylum-seekers, interrupted the processing of asylum applications and return thousands of asylum applicants to Mexico on the grounds of healthy concerns due to the pandemic– and fentanyl trafficking has been the main issue surrounding border security negotiations.

Within these processes, Haitian migration to Tijuana marked a watershed. Within these processes, Haitian migration to Tijuana marked a watershed. First of all, because within Mexican public discourse, the crisis of the arrival of Haitians in mid-2016 replaced the discourse about a possible crisis of deportees that Donald Trump used as a threat to intimidate the Mexican government (while encouraging the spirits of his Republican voters). Secondly, the arrival of Haitians in Tijuana preceded the control measures and strategies that Mexico and the United States deployed at the border for the later arrival of the first Central American Migrant Caravan occurring in 2018. In this sense, it is with the unexpected arrival of Haitian migrants in Tijuana that dissuasive mechanisms of border control and contention were devised by the states, such as the Remain in Mexico program and the Migrant Protection Protocols—strategies that the states would later extend throughout other ports-of-entry along the border strip.

Within these complexities, I argue in this dissertation that Haitian migration across the continent and at the Mexico-U.S. border represents a problem of hegemony, because it contains the Haitian subaltern aspiration to be part of an active international workforce. This aspiration takes shape through their geographical mobility and their humanitarian demand, and it is the product of specific historical conditions. Haitian migrants thus build their projects on the learnings of past migrations (Kahn, 2018), the experiences of the present conditions in Haiti (Caple James, 2011; Beckett, 2017), and the possibilities of thinking of a more promising future outside the Caribbean.

To develop the argument that Haitian migration in Tijuana is a problem of hegemony, each chapter of this dissertation addresses one dimension of this phenomenon. In following chapter two, I address the formation of Haitian migratory projects across the

American continent. Chapter three focuses on the hegemonic organicity of the Mexican political and civil societies that contained the crisis of Haitian arrivals in mid-2016. Chapter four analyzes the integration of precarious Haitian labour in Tijuana. Lastly, in chapter five, I describe the roles and functions of Tijuana border NGOs in their quotidian relations with subaltern groups such as Haitian classes—especially Haitians.

In this sense, this dissertation apprehends on the one hand, a specific moment from which we can understand changes and continuities of the processes that occur on the northern border of Mexico, and on the other, the dynamics of international Haitian emigrations. In the case of the northern border of Mexico, Haitian migration represents a continuation of previous mobility patterns of other migrant groups, which have been part and parcel of the historical constitution of border cities like Tijuana. Likewise, although Tijuana is a new destination for Haitian emigrants, Haitians have emigrated since the first decades of the 20th century. For example, in terms of Haitian migration within the Caribbean, Samuel Martínez (1995) studied the migration of Haitian labourers in the Dominican Republic and Bertin Louis Jr. (2015) explored Haitian migration to the Bahamas. Furthermore, the United States became a destination country when Haitian citizens fled the dictatorships of Papa Doc (1964-1971) and Baby Doc (1971-1986).

Thus, my research asked: what can the Mexico-U.S. border teach us about Haitian migrations, and what can we learn about Mexico's northern border from the experiences of the Haitian migrants who arrived and resettled in Tijuana? This dissertation answers these questions utilizing a Gramscian framework focused on hegemonic struggles and negotiations. Additionally, by addressing Haitian migration in Tijuana, my dissertation

contributes to questioning the Mexican state, its migrant inclusion policies, and its social integration dynamics, particularly from the experiences of a non-White migrant population.

To explore these questions, I went to Tijuana in the fall of 2018 to document, analyze and observe Haitians' experiences in Mexico, including their insertion into the labour market, their demographic heterogeneity, their daily living conditions and interactions, their participation in religious and civil organizations, their livelihood resources, their spatial mobility projects, and trajectories, and, above all, their aspirations. Additionally, I met with and interviewed Mexican NGOs representatives who managed the unexpected arrival of Haitians in 2016 and have maintained an involvement with Haitian populations after that border crisis.

Haitian emigration through the American continent began in the years following the 2010 earthquake; that is, it has been a process unfolding for more than a decade. After all this time, there is no way that the country they left behind has not changed while they were away, just as it is not possible that, in the process, they have remained the same individuals. Life continues in Haiti, while international emigrants are far away from home. Meanwhile, new experiences and contexts in destination countries reshape the migrant's subjective constitutions and aspirations. Consequently, this dissertation deals with "the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes" (Williams, 1977, p. 110). From a Gramscian point of view, this assertion has two edges: the formation of the consensus that to project a better future, Haitians must leave their native country behind and, in the process, risk and invest their lives and resources; and the repressive and exploitative structures to which Haitian migrants subject voluntarily in destination and transit countries to try to bring those projects to fruition.

Before going further, I want to clarify the terms and concepts I use in this dissertation. In this thesis, I refer to Haitian migrants as subaltern classes to highlight their condition as a non-native Black working class at the Mexico-U.S. border. Furthermore, the use of the term subaltern highlights that Haitian international migration is a class project linked to capitalism as a symptom, resource, and response. Moreover, this characterization not only applies to Haitian migrants, but to each group that gathers at the border, there exists and persists histories of dispossession, colonialism and capitalist accumulation, which place them in a position of subalternity to national states, labour markets and receiving societies. These histories of subalternity are not only push factors, but constitutive and conditioning elements of capitalism, within and against which human labour mobilities emerge.

A second clarification is that I use "migrant" and "migration" to denote open and ongoing projects of subaltern geographical mobility. However, I also use emigrant and emigration to indicate the movement of Haitian nationals out of Haiti. This terminology is pertinent because the literature on transnational migration has raised criticism against the classical notions of migration, seeking to distance itself from the assimilationist and developmental canon, in which the terms emigrant and immigrant refer to a permanent uprooting of places of origin. As an alternative, the transnational literature proposes the term transmigrant to denote the formation of collective identities that extend beyond national states (Rouse, 1991; Basch et al., 1993). In my work, however, the term transmigrant remains absent, not because I do not recognize the importance of exchange networks between Haitians living in Haiti, Mexico, the United States and other countries, but because the formation of networks and identities are not the main problems of this

research. As I will explain in the dissertation, Haitian migrations cannot be understood outside of the formation of family projects that extend internationally, linking members of domestic units located in several nations, of which Haitian emigrants are carriers of aspirations, investments, obligations, and risks.

In the following sections, I provide a succinct review of some of the key discussions addressed in this dissertation. The key debates, contexts and concepts include the history of Tijuana, a historical overview of Haitian patterns of spatial mobility, a succinct overview of the post-earthquake 2010 Haitian emigration, and a framework to understand global labour migration processes. The discussions of particular Gramscian concepts are included in the individual chapters, where I connect Gramscian insights to the ethnographic data. The introduction ends with a section explaining the research data and methods and an overview of the chapters that make up this document.

Tijuana's Border

The Mexico-U.S. border is the historically delimited space where the edges of the two nation-states converge. Thus, the border is a dynamic and changing structure that has to do with the history of unequal relations and global positions of the two countries, and the heterogeneous populations attracted and concentrated in border towns, cities, and crossings points. The Mexico-U.S. borderlands have been recognized by scholars as an arena for multiple and varied encounters and exchanges, social interactions, and processes of negotiation, struggle, imposition, and consensus among the two nation-states and involving

the subjects caught between the lines of the two national constituencies (Heyman, 1994, 2012; Limon, 1998; Álvarez, 1995; Wilson & Donnan, 2012).

Within the 3,169-kilometer strip that makes up Mexico's northern border, Tijuana, Baja California, is the country's northernmost and westernmost urban settlement, located next to the Pacific Ocean and south of San Diego, California. The border's proximity to the United States has been a determining factor in Tijuana's history, dynamism, and growth. For example, in 1973, John A. Price wrote, "Tijuana's location at the border is central to its reason of being" (146). In his pioneering monograph, Price points to a relationship characterized by commercial dependence and constant flows of individuals and goods, which shape many different border interactions and experiences. This geographical, political, and historical link between Tijuana and the United States is reflected in common sayings that local people reproduce, such as the one that asks, "What is the most beautiful neighbourhood in Tijuana?" and answers that it is "San Diego." [7]

Geopolitically, Mexico and the United States defined the international border by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. With this accord, Mexico sold almost half of its territory (including Alta California) after the Mexico-U.S. war (1846-1848). As part of the bilateral negotiations, Mexico was able to delimit the borderline between the Californias at parallel 32 ° (31 '30") north latitude, thereby maintaining land access to the Baja California peninsula (comprising now the Mexican states of Baja California and Baja California Sur). However, this achievement came at the cost of granting the Alta California territory,

[7] The same joke can be reversed: "Where are the best nightlife areas of San Diego?" In "Tijuana!" The first joke depends on a class distinction understood in Tijuana between who can cross into the United States with official documents and who cannot. In contrast, the second version refers to Tijuana's history as a recreational center for U.S. nationals.

containing the strategic port of San Diego. With it, "the Treaty […] bisected the Valley of Tijuana, leaving Mexico the hilly lands south of the Tijuana River's flood plain while the United States gained the relatively flat lands" (Nevins, 2001, p. 34). In 1853, the current national limits were finally defined with the purchase of La Mesilla (known as the Gadsden Purchase). With this, the United States obtained a strategic territory necessary to connect the southeast to southwest of the country through the railroad. With these changes in the country's map, in 1890, the city of Tijuana was officially founded out of a ranching center, which according to folkloristic accounts was *Rancho de la Tía Juana* (Aunt Jane's Ranch).

The territory of Baja California has been characterized by its socio-geographical isolation and political and cultural distance from Mexico's political center since pre-colonial times. With an inhospitable climate and arid land, and without natural resources, Baja California was home to nomadic groups of hunter-gatherers, *Indios Mecos,*[8] missionaries, caudillos, gold rushers, and filibusters. However, since the Gadsden purchase, Mexico's northern border has been more connected to border cities of the United States. This link has gradually consolidated a dynamic space of exchanges and restrictions.

Following the prohibition period in the United States during the 1920s, Tijuana began to experience a financial boom, mainly from tourism. Gambling, prostitution, and alcohol proliferated in Tijuana as lucrative tourist attractions in response to northern puritanism (Vanderwood, 2010). During this period, Tijuana's economic interdependence with San Diego solidified, and the political and economic distance from central Mexico was exposed more starkly. Of particular importance are the U.S. capital investments in Mexico,

[8] *Indios Mecos* is a category of ethno-racial classification used in the Spanish caste system during colonial times. It denotes the untamed or "barbarian" Indian who violently refuses to be civilized by the Spaniards. Its opposite is the *Indio Manso:* tamed Indian.

promoted by the pre-revolutionary government, both in the tourism industry in Tijuana and agro-industrial production in the Mexicali valley. In 1948, Mexico tried to counteract the condition of northern isolation by constructing the Sonora-Baja California railroad to connect by land the Baja California peninsula to the rest of Mexico. During these same years, the presidential government of General Lázaro Cárdenas promoted colonization projects in northern states out of fear of the possibility of further territorial loss. Cárdenas also attempted to nationalize the economic enterprises at the border, establishing limit to foreign investments and quotas for hiring Mexican workers in foreign-owned businesses.

During the 1940s, as a consequence of the Second World War, Mexico and the United States began a bilateral agreement for the temporary hiring of Mexican agricultural workers in the United States. Thus, the Bracero Program (1942) emerged to counteract the labour shortage in the U.S. agroindustry, transportation, infrastructure works, and mining extraction. Over the years, this contractual relationship, which the United States first presented as a palliative measure, became a structural necessity within the national labour market, which began to demand a cheap labour force (Durand, 2016). In this way, the immigrant labour promoted by the Bracero Program began to be used not only in agro-industrial production but also in industrial niches and later in services. As a result, the seasonal hiring program generated a pattern of constant mobility to the border cities, mainly as crossing points. This trend was essential to the demographic growth of border cities like Tijuana. This program's influence was significant in that the patterns of internal and international mobility it created continued with almost a natural inertia even after the program was officially over in 1964.

In the 60s, the Border Industrialization Program (1964) was established in order to promote manufacturing plants, or *maquiladoras*, and to offer employment to ex-braceros and Mexicans migrating from rural areas. However, as Fernández-Kelly (1983) points out, this did not happen. Instead, the maquiladora industry began incorporating sectors not previously integrated into the labour markets, creating a novel workforce of female labour. In theory, the new industrialization program aimed to provide modern industry and labour discipline to traditionally undisciplined Mexicans. In practice, it was the chance for the United States to benefit from the wage differential and tariff and customs exception policies that Mexico had to offer. With this, the United States transferred multiple assembly plants from the country's interior to the border, where policies were more conducive to obtaining surplus value (profit). Thus, the incentives of better salaries and the opportunity to cross into the United States have been a constant in the city's demographic growth.

By the 1970s, cross-border tourism was still the city's main economic engine. However, the maquiladora industry was already beginning to be celebrated as promoting border development. The two pillars of this endeavour were foreign capital and Mexican labour. During those years, Tijuana started to be a point of unauthorized crossings into the United States for Mexican workers, smugglers and coyotes. This trafficking pattern and immigration remained constant until the early 1990s when a more restrictive and punitive policy began at the border, particularly Operation Gatekeeper, deployed by the U.S. government in the San Diego region (Nevins, 2001). Consequently, the number of entries—documented and clandestine—through Tijuana diminished, and the number of border deportations and internal removals increased, establishing a new pattern of (forced) mobility in the region.

In this context, Tijuana became a receiving city for those forced to return. The local population has stigmatized many forced returnees with the epithet of deportees, denoting the failure of a migratory project and the descent to life on the streets. The city is marked by this forced return pattern, particularly in its northern area (*Zona Norte*), where many returned, stranded, and floating migrants congregate. Among these individuals, a fair amount is in situations bordering indigence, with petty crime and drug addiction, particularly methamphetamine and heroin. This population is located near the San Ysidro entrance port, in the Tijuana River canalization, also known as *El Bordo*, among other spaces.

Besides the existence of forced return, internal migration, and stage immigration, the arrival of international asylum seekers and internally displaced persons represent a new composition of subjects arriving at the Mexico-U.S. border. Among these new human migrations, Central Americans were increasingly present; and in more recent years, groups came from beyond the region, from Caribbean, African and Asian countries. Of these phenomena, the following stand out: the crisis of unaccompanied Central American minors in 2014, the troubled transit of Cubans in 2015 (who were seeking to enter the United States through the "dry feet policy"),[9] the intercontinental voyage of Asian and Africans that was first noted by the press in 2016 and which has continued in bit by bit during the following years, the 2016 presence of Haitian asylum-seeker coming from South America, and the Migrant Caravans of Central Americans that began to organize in 2018. In response to these emerging phenomena, the U.S. government has implemented the so-called Migrant

[9] "Wet feet, dry feet" refers to the policy that allowed Cubans arriving by land at U.S.'s borders to enter and stay in the country. This policy complemented the restrictions on Cuban maritime migration through Florida, which were predominant in the 1990s. It was in force until 2017, when Barack Obama ended it.

Protection Protocols, also referred to as Remain in Mexico, and has promoted Asylum Cooperative Agreements with the countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America and Mexico. With the Mexican government's cooperation, the United States deploys these counteroffensive policies on Mexican soil to curb and discourage the flow of asylum seekers who arrive at the Mexico-U.S. border.

In the city's dynamics, the different mobility patterns and groups coexist and intermingle, making Tijuana a place with a notable mobile population. Locally, this population is identified by NGOs and religious organizations by their level of vulnerability, recognizing them as subjects of protection and humanitarian aid. In response to this reality, NGOs are concentrated in the *Zona Norte*, near the border crossing, serving and providing several assistance services to these groups. Interactions between NGOs and subaltern classes are essential to Tijuana's political landscape. Under a tacit agreement, assistance to vulnerable populations is undertaken by the civil and religious sectors, not the state.

In addition to internal and international flows coinciding in the Mexico-U.S. border, the proximity with San Diego generates a particular dynamism in Tijuana of local people crossing the international border on a quotidian basis. These flows consist of commuters and tourists, both Mexican and U.S. residents (including Mexicans from the United States), Mexicans with visas but unable to work but who still do work in the United States, and Mexicans with green cards that prefer to live on the southern side of the border. Added to sanctioned border crossings for people and goods produced by the maquiladora industry, Tijuana has also been a prominent space for drug and arms trafficking. Narcotics have a

consumer market in the United States, while the arms are for the war between criminal organizations in Mexico. [10]

Haitians' resettlement to Tijuana confirms the city's border character as a point of attraction to different populations due to its proximity to the United States. In the words of a Haitian informant that I interviewed in Tijuana, this is so because "in the United States there is more opportunity [for us], as you know, as everyone knows [...], to have a better salary, to achieve our dreams" (Haitian informant, 2019).[11] With this case, it is thus possible to verify Price's observations (1973) of Tijuana— as a city that "has a more lawless character, where the squatter, the gambler, and the opportunistic can flourish" (158)—as still holding some truth. In other words, for Haitians, Tijuana still represents a promising, albeit vague, opportunity to cross to the other side and bet on a "better life." This vagueness expressed in the aspiration of a more promising life has swelled the ranks of the border industrial proletariat and given workers by the millions to the U.S. southeast's agribusiness. In turn, this has created a social milieu in Tijuana composed of a heterogeneous variety of migratory projects, many of which are unsuccessful and crushed by the internal dynamics of power at the border. Thus, the borders appear as barriers, filters, or bridges but also as a space of concentration and entrapment of international migrants and asylum-seekers and, with them, of their labour power and potencies.

[10] At the beginning of 2016, three criminal organizations were fighting for Tijuana's territory: the Sinaloa criminal organization, the Arellano Felix group, and the group known as *Jalisco Nueva Generación*. The daily expression of this confrontation include *encobijados* (corpses rolled up in blankets left in the city as a warning to others), *narco-mantas* (threatening messages on banners hung in public places in the city) and gun violence and executions (generally the result of settling accounts between criminals).

[11] "[…] en Brasil es un país que paga los trabajos por mes. Y pagaban poquito, bien poquito. Y dijeron en Estados Unidos hay más oportunidad, como tú sabes, como todos saben, y por eso decimos, si hay más oportunidad allá, podemos ir."

Historical Overview: Haitian Patterns of Spatial Mobility

The territory currently occupied by Haiti, on the island of Hispaniola, was inhabited before 1492 by a heterogenous variety of human groups, discussed by scholars under the names of Tainos (Arawak speakers) and Carib Indians (Rouse, 1992). While the Tainos possessed settlements organized around complex political organization based on caciques, the Caribs were characterized by spatial dispersion, mobility, and nomadism and presented greater political decentralization. Different archaeological interpretations dispute the origin of these populations (Curet & Reid, 2014). Still, in all of them, it is suggested that the groups arrived in the Caribbean islands from the interior of South America, from where they moved to the Lesser and Greater Antilles. Both groups were almost annihilated during the decades following contact with the Spaniards due to intensive labour, diseases, and subjugation. Due to the accelerated demographic decline of these local inhabitants, the Europeans repopulated the island with waves of settlers (friars, merchants, sailors, and soldiers). With them, thousands of Africans were also captured, transported, sold, transplanted, and exhausted as slaves.

At first, the island of Hispaniola was the possession of the Spanish kingdom. However, after the war of conquest, the continental New Spain's territory concentrated the crown's colonial interest, relegating the island to the background and keeping it sparsely populated and underdeveloped. Thus, during the Spanish period, Hispaniola's function was limited to being a strategic transit port. Given Spain's reluctance to administer and populate the island, the western part of *La Española* began to be used by French settlers, mainly seamen or buccaneers. As a result of this absence of command, in 1697, France managed to

get Spain to cede the western part of Hispaniola through the Peace of Ryswick, with which the Nine Year's War ended. With the achievement of the Christian Pax, articulated in opposition to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire towards Europe, the alliance between the Dutch (Protestants, merchants, and championed by William III) and the French (Catholics, politically hegemonic, and represented by Louis XVI) paved the path for the development of merchant capitalism of the 18th century. Thus, after almost two centuries of Spanish control, the island is divided into Spanish Santo Domingo to the east and French Saint-Domingue to the west.

In Saint-Domingue, the French empire imposed a plantation system fueled by the institution of slavery and commerce, which over time, became the jewel of the French crown and the envy of other monarchies (James, 1938; Dubois, 2004). Within the plantation system, merchants imported thousands of enslaved individuals from various regions and nations of the interior of Africa (Rediker, 2007) to work on American plantations for export crops, mainly coffee and sugar (Mintz, 2010). Slavery and plantation complexes were the two pillars of what is known as the transatlantic triangular trade system, consisting of African enslaved people exported to the Americas to produce crop commodities for European metropoles. Thus, based on violent uprooting and transplantation, the slaves produced a new culture through creolization. According to Rediker, this culture was new as "the captives would now have no choice but to live in the struggle, a fierce, many-sided, never-ending fight to survive, to live, of necessity, in a new way" (207, p.107). This culture, expressing the lives of enslaved labour, arose both against and within the colonial structures of European expansion and domination.

For nearly a century, France profitably exploited slave labour in the Caribbean plantation industry of Saint-Domingue. Socially, life in Sant-Domingue was violently regimented by the racial division between slaves and proprietors. However, this did not prevent the concentration of multiple types of colonial subjects (Petit and Grand *Blancs*, absent owners, Black and Mulattoes freedmen and freedwomen, maroons, pirates and buccaneers, sailors, deserters, and merchants, among others), and inter-Caribbean interactions (Scott, 2018). Nevertheless, in 1791 a slave insurrection exploded north of Saint-Domingue in opposition to the plantation regime. The first manifestations of this uprising were the burning and destruction of the sugar mills and the use of *marronage* and guerrilla tactics. The revolt soon turned into a civil war. Thus, over a decade of military fighting in Saint-Domingue, enslaved African and Creole armies maneuvered and fought against the leading European powers: Spain, France, and England. Finally, in 1804, the slave's revolutionary army triumph over France brought the first Black republic in the world, the only successful modern slave revolution, the abolition of slavery, and the self-emancipation of revolutionary Saint-Domingue.

During the first decades of independent Haiti, in the early 19th century, the new rulers' main problem was the labour question regarding the plantation production economy. On the one hand, there was a need for the revolutionary leaders and new heads of state (Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion) to establish the plantation regime once again. On the other hand, the recently liberated former slaves and fighters of the abolition and independence war were unwilling to return to forced labour. Furthermore, they were not used to selling their labour power within a free labour regime. The question of property intensified the problem of production and the shortage of workers since, at the end of the

revolution, the generals distributed the land on a large scale, parcelling it to the extent that Gonzales affirmed that Haiti went from being a colony from enslaved people to a nation of smallholders (2019). For the young Black nation's subjects, land ownership represented the possibility of working freely and self-producing a livelihood (45). This relevance explains the importance and longevity of the small "private" gardens developed by the slaves in the colony, known as *conucos* or *lakous*. Moreover, it could not have been otherwise if, for almost a century, the only social infrastructure that France developed in the Caribbean was the plantation industry (Mintz, 2010).

Despite the difficulties of the young nation, exacerbated by international political ostracism and debts to France accepted by the Boyer government (1818-1843), in the early post-revolutionary decades, Haiti managed to protect its autonomy militarily and to sustain a national level of subsistence agricultural production (González, 2019). However, this victory suffered a backlash during the first decades of the 20th century, when the United States invaded Haiti (1915-1943) and the Dominican Republic (1916-1924), imposing a new constitution on Haiti that removed national protections against foreign interests and investments. Haiti was relevant to the United States for its strategic position within the commodities' routes through the Caribbean and for the possibility of extracting export crops produced with cheap labour. Thus, the island's invasion made it easier for the United States to orchestrate a labour regime consisting of Haitian cane cutters (*cultivateurs*) working in the sugar complexes or *bateyes*, which, activated with investment from the United States, began to be established in the Dominican Republic.

The eastern part of Hispaniola arrived late to the commercial sugar boom for over two centuries, preceded by Saint-Domingue, Jamaica, and Cuba. Nevertheless, in the late

19th century, the Dominican government invested in the modernization of the sugar industry, trying to boost export production by attracting foreign capital. The Dominican state, headed by Ulises Heureaux, sought the necessary labour force for this industry, first in native labour and second in seasonal immigrants from the British West Indies (*cocolos*). After complications with these two groups, it began to import workers from neighbouring Haiti. However, the project failed early, and both state and the first investors went bankrupt. With the infrastructure left behind, the United States advanced the second wave of investment, bolstered by the military invasion (Martínez, 1995).

With the arrival of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo to power in the Dominican Republic (1930-61), the president ("*El Jefe*") appropriated for himself the U.S. sugar companies while nationalizing their production. During the Trujillo dictatorship, the Dominican Republic received a constant flow of Haitian agricultural workers, mainly concentrated in the two nations' border areas. Simultaneously, the government also nurtured a quasi-official ideology of anti-Haitianism, in which racial prejudice against Haitian Blackness combined with the exploitation of immigrant labour. The bloodiest event of *Antihaitianismo* in the Dominica Republic is *El Corte* (Mowing Down), also known as The Parsley Massacre, which occurred in 1937. The 1937 Massacre of Haitians was directed against a Haitian population starting to occupy illegal settlements north of the border. According to Samuel Martínez, "no more chilling way could be imagined of conveying to Haitians immigrants the message that the sugar *bateyes* would be their only secure place on Dominican soil" (1999, p. 74).

With Trujillo's murder (1961), his successor in the presidency Joaquín Balaguer (*Trujillista*), promoted the nationalization of the sugar industry, centralizing its production

through the State Sugar Council (*Consejo Estatal del Azúcar*, CEA) in 1966. However, before that, in 1962, his government repressed a messianic peasant movement related to Blackness, Haiti and Vodou that emerged near the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, setting them on fire with Napalm! During this period, through bilateral agreements with Haiti (1952 and 1959), the Dominican Republic ensured the importation of temporary Haitian workers to cultivate and cut sugarcane in exchange for an established annual payment. Like during Trujillo's period, the Haitian labour force was considered necessary but seen as temporary and limited to agricultural production. However, this ambition did not prevent Haitian migrants from permanently establishing themselves, both in the *bateyes* and, gradually, in urban spaces. The hiring agreements formally lasted until 1986, consolidating a persistent rural labour mobility pattern. After the 1970s, however, tourism and industrial manufacturing began to replace export agriculture as the main productive activities in the Dominican Republic, and Haitian migrants started to migrate directly to Dominican cities.

Rarely mentioned in the literature, when compared to migrations to the United States, Canada, or France, the Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic has been a constant and numerically significant historical pattern in Hispaniola. While international mobility patterns outside the island have been of populations with sufficient economic resources to pay for long-distance projects, migratory flows from Haiti to the Dominican Republic have had a more peripheral character (Martínez 1995, 1999).

As of 2013, Haitian and Haitian-descendant populations have suffered official persecution by the Dominican government, which, through Sentence 168, has systematically denationalized thousands of them. One of the more burdensome aspects of

this policy is the latent risk of en-masse production of stateless individuals. The legal status of individuals related to Haiti but born and raised in the Dominican Republic has been controversial for many years. For example, Cedeño speaks of a negative conflict of nationality (1992), Orenstein of legal inexistence (1995), and Gregory refers to the policing of citizenship (2006). Thus, the Dominican offensives led to thousands of deportations and voluntary returns, in a process reminiscent of the massive deportations of Haitians occurring during the 90s under the seventh presidential mandate of Dr. Balaguer.[12] Sentence 168 is a relevant state policy because within the first flows of Haitians to Brazil (2011-12), at least a third of them came from the Dominican Republic, not Haiti (Véran et al., 2014).

Migrations of human groups compose dynamic phenomena integrated into global capitalist production systems on local, national, and international levels. In our case, Haiti's early demography relied on the forced displacement of thousands within the transatlantic slave trade. At the beginning of the 20th century, the U.S. invasion of Haiti stimulated wavers of out-migration waves, mainly as braceros with a rural-rural mobility pattern. Therefore, Haitian migration to South America and then to the Mexico-U.S. border is a new version of a historical phenomenon, where several processes intersect: the inability of Haiti to employ its active population, the influence of hegemonic powers over Haiti, the advance of subaltern

[12] Fletcher and Miller (2004) analyzed these forced migrations. They concluded that deportations were conducted summarily without documentary evidence of each case, producing family separations and the abandonment of material goods. Samuel Martínez reinforces the point: "The military and police authorities simply picked up men and women they thought were Haitian, sent them to improvised holding centers, and packed them off in buses to Haiti. Many deportees bore legal papers that identified them as Dominican citizens; these the authorities simply ignored, assuming that all those determined at the point of arrest to be "Haitian" were in fact Haitian nationals" (1999, p.51).

international mobility projects of labour integration, and the exploitation by other nations of the labour force that the Franco-Caribbean nation exports.

Haitian Post-2010 International Emigrations

In January 2010, a magnitude seven earthquake shook the Haitian cities of Léogâne, the country's capital Port-au-Prince, and its surrounding areas. The incident left a trail of destruction of more than 300,000 dead, more than 350,000 injured, and more than one and a half million victims who lost their homes overnight. Nonetheless, as destructive and violent as this event was, the earthquake did not trigger Haitians' emigration to Brazil. In the numerous reports and papers produced about the Haitian emigration to South America and its subsequent mobility to the Mexico-U.S. border, there is no evidence of a direct correlation between those two events. On the contrary, multiple reports have shown that those who left for South America were healthy working-age individuals from regions not greatly or directly affected by the earthquake. However, in many reports (Fernandes Oliveira Barros & Martins-Borges, 2018; Miura, 2014; dos Anjos & Polli, 2019), the authors refer to the "natural disaster" as a critical event, crucial to consider in the post-2010 Haitian emigration phenomenon, but without specifying how the earthquake pushed Haitian nationals out of Haiti.

The earthquake in Haiti was a shock to an impoverished and exploited nation. It weakened an already weak centralized state structure characterized historically by a dependent economy and a divided political environment (Trouillot, 1990). However, an immediate consequence of the earthquake was not international emigration but the return

migration of people from devastated areas to departments and towns in the country's interior. The capital attracts Haitians from other departments as a center for formal and informal jobs, urban services, and resources. After the natural disaster, thousands of people were in refugee camps, mainly where the earthquake had almost destroyed all the urban structures (for example, 90% of buildings collapsed in Léogâne). An epidemic of tuberculosis hit the internally displaced population and slum dwellers (Koening et al., 2015), and a cholera outbreak not seen for a hundred years spread throughout the country (Walton & Ivers, 2011). Haiti also witnessed increased sexual violence towards women and paralysis in medical and sanitation services (Behrman & Weitzman, 2016).

Within this context, the migration to Brazil began with small groups of "road openers," which were few in 2010, barely noticeable in 2011, but were fully visible by the beginning of 2012, when the Brazilian press described Haitian flows as an overflowing of its borders (Thomaz, 2013, p.31) The arrival of Haitians brought legal and administrative difficulties for Brazil, mainly because Haitians' requests for humanitarian asylum in border ports did not meet the parameters established with the 1951 Geneva convention. In other words, Haitians did not fit in the parameter of being "unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (Geneva Convention). Faced with this legal impossibility, coupled with the increase in Haitians at border crossings, in January 2012, Brazil decided to apply a double-policy approach of simultaneous opening and closing. On the one hand, it offered to regularize about 4,000 Haitians already within Brazilian territory, granting a *sui generis* document, considered a "flexible humanitarian visa." Additionally, for those still in Haiti, Brazil's humanitarian

visas were offered at 100 per month, but Haitians could only process the red tape required to obtain the humanitarian visa at the Brazilian embassy in Port-au-Prince, which caused an immediate overflow of its administrative capacities.

Simultaneously, on the other hand, the government of Dilma Rousseff proposed restrictive measures at the Brazilian borders, tightening controls and threatening to deport anyone who crossed its borders without the corresponding visa. This simultaneous reception and rejection policy applied in Brazil coincides with the analysis that de Genova and Roy (2019) make of the Cut-Off Dates: the spatial-temporal deadlines that the nation-states offer within processes of regularization of unauthorized immigrants. For the authors, these mechanisms reinscribe the state framework that divides legality and illegality (and producing them in the process), arbitrarily offering amnesties for some while at the same time refining more punitive measures for others. Thus, what the left-hand offers directly contradicts what the right-hand does. In this case, the quota of 100 visas per month was insufficient, with an average of 100 to 150 Haitian arriving per week in 2011, just in Tabatinga (Amazonas) alone. Moreover, the demand for visas rapidly augmented in the Haitian capital, and Brazil's humanitarian gesture only encouraged more groups of Haitians to engage in a trip to South America, even without visas. The flows were also encouraged by information that earlier Haitians emigrants circulated, reporting that Brazil was receiving them.

Interpretations about this migration rely on a set of causes to explain why Brazil was an attractive destination for Haitian migrants. Among them are the participation of

Brazilian soldiers in the U.N.'s peacekeeping mission to Haiti[13] and the presence of Brazilian companies in infrastructure and urban development work in Haiti. Other pull factors were Brazil's discourse as an emerging economy and regional power and the infrastructure projects underway for two world-class events: the 2014 Soccer World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio.

For Brazil to become the destination for thousands of Haitian migrants, in the first instance, the country had to position itself as a regional power. However, this characteristic alone cannot explain Haitian migration, not even with the hypothesis that the 2010 earthquake pushed Haitians out of their country. In other words, migration processes do not occur simply due to a push and pull game, and much less arise spontaneously or by natural forces. In this sense, the metaphor of "migration" and its subjects as "migrants" is problematic. In biology, particularly in the class Aves, migration refers to a movement of dispersal of a population or part of the community cyclically and regularly, moving away from population-density areas and then returning. These movements occur within a continuum between a facultative and calendrical migration. According to Rappole, the former occurs "only when environmental conditions force them to do so," and the latter comprises "regular seasonal movements regardless of the environmental conditions" (2013, 7). Thus, migration in biology refers to an "activity that is well inside the evolved behavioural range of a species or population" (5). In humans, movements outside the place of birth (from the limits of the state where one is born, in the case of international mobility) do not happen instinctively. On the contrary, it includes an act of volition, disposition,

[13] MINUSTAH was the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Haiti following the second election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, which Brazil primarily led.

planning and anticipation. Furthermore, those planning to migrate must obtain and allocate the resources required to fulfill their goal.

Consequently, researchers must explain Haitians' migration to Brazil and Mexico on multiple scales, not as an event caused and defined solely by the environmental disaster. First, it is critical to consider the structural, political and economic conditions in Haiti and incorporate the conditions of possibility that made the out-migration thinkable as a bet and plausible as a project (mainly, the amnesty offer of January 2012). Additionally, changes in existing Haitian emigration patterns must be considered, both at the intra-Caribbean level (the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas) and outside the region (France, Montreal, Florida), and the increase in the difficulties to emigrate to these "traditional" destinations.

Since 2016, Haitian migration through Mexico has not stopped, although it has been somewhat reduced. When I conducted fieldwork in 2018, Haitians continued to arrive, both in families and individuals, although with one variation, they were Haitians from Venezuela among them. These Haitians do not form part of the post-earthquake emigration, and their permanence in Venezuela dates to previous migration patterns in the 90s. This population addendum means that the Haitian flow has continued to change, incorporating new populations and moments, maintaining Mexico's route as a viable option and attracting new migrant contingents. In some cases, new arrivals come directly from Haiti to Mexico City and then to Tijuana.[14]

[14] By the end of 2020, some sources have estimated that about 6,000 Haitians live in Tijuana. Therefore, they have continued to arrive gradually, mainly through family and personal networks and contacts. Thus, as long as there is a considerable numerical contingent of Haitians in South America, both in Chile and Brazil, the potential for new waves to take the road to the Mexico-U.S. States border is always latent.

As of 2019, Mexico has tightened the transit route conditions and has turned its southern border into a buffer for Central Americans, extra-continental (African and Asian) and Caribbean (Cuban, but predominantly Haitian) migrants. With the 2020 pandemic, Tapachula (Chiapas), at Mexico's Southern border, formally closed its doors, and Mexico suspended the red tape and bureaucracy procedures for migrants in transit and asylum seekers. Therefore, Tapachula became a station for hundreds waiting to cross, just as it happened in Tijuana in mid-2016 when Haitian migrants started to arrive. By 2021, some estimates indicate that some 11,000 migrants in transit, both Haitian and African, were stranded in Tapachula.

The post-earthquake Haitian emigration project is complex due to its territorial and temporal extension throughout the continent. These trajectories encompass several South American and Central American countries as destinations and transit. Along with this complexity, there is ambivalence in the legal categories that countries such as Mexico and Brazil have used with Haitians. In both cases, Haitians' humanitarian visas excluded the refugee and the economic migration categories and stood somewhere in between. This tension makes us rethink and criticize the conceptual divide between economic migrants and asylum seekers. How can we explain these blurred spaces of citizenship and immigration? How do these humanitarian visas relate to labour interactions? Moreover, what level of practical knowledge must Haitian migrants have to maneuver these categories?

Mobile Labour Classes

Capitalism and migration are intrinsically related. For example, nation-states organize and arrange the mobility of international working classes through bi-national and regional agreements, such as the Bracero Program between Mexico and the United States or the agreements to provide Haitian cane cutters to Dominican plantations. However, it sometimes happens that the working classes arrive alone in new settlements, thus opening new market niches ready to be exploited by the capitalist classes (Wolf, 1982, p. 361). Although Haitian migrants presented themselves at the Mexico-U.S. border with a humanitarian demand for asylum and protection, in this dissertation, I understand them as international, subaltern working classes. As subaltern working classes, Haitian initiatives and projects, although disaggregated and episodic (Gramsci Q3, §48; Q25, §48), have to do with their capacities for labour (Denning, 2009).

According to Ken Kawashima (2005), the "encounter" between capital and working classes is always contingent due to a double absence of guarantees. First, there is no guarantee that capitalism would find a class "free" to be exploited. Second, there is no guarantee that a particular working class would find a productive niche to be included and absorbed. Furthermore, salaries earned in national labour markets may not be enough to cover the needs of social reproduction, adding an extra layer of uncertainty for the labouring classes.

To sort the first gap, capitalist classes resort to processes of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003), narrowing or destroying non-waged forms of livelihood reproduction, pushing individuals and classes towards salary relations. To bridge the second gap, subaltern classes diversify and strategize their resources (Fitting, 2016),

sometimes resorting to non-regulated international emigrations aiming to enter into more profitable labour markets (Lem, 2007). The money migrants send from abroad to their non-migrant family members, or remittances, reflect an apparent successful encounter of migrant classes with international wage-labour relations. However, this appearance hides the precarious conditions of migrant labour and life.

The anthropology of migration processes and migrant classes has established itself as a dominant research area, with a vast, heterogeneous and extended academic production. However, this literature is not a single body since it has no conceptual or theoretical unity. To Brettell and Hollifield (2015), for example, the anthropological approach to migration lies in the anthropologist's interest in how migrants construct new transnational identities and cultures of migration. By culture of migration, these authors understand the cultural production resulting from migrating and the influence of past migrations in establishing and reproducing enduring patterns of out-migration (for a similar approach, also Cohen and Sirkeci, 2011). Thus, for Caroline Brettell, what matters from the anthropological point of view, is to see migrants as "free actors shaping their own destinies, as opposed to pawns merely responding to constraints imposed upon them by their society" (2015, p.27). These approaches prioritize analyses of culture and agency, ignoring the class dimensions and minimizing the role of the structural forces.

The cultural approach to migration was a response to sociological theories of migrant assimilation in the United States, which explained that the goal of migration was immigrants' cultural assimilation into the reception society. Within this process, the assimilation theories posited that migrants would lose connections with sending nations and their ethnic markers of difference. Against assimilationist theories' reductionism,

transnationalism focused on the global exchanges between sending and receiving societies, highlighting how those enduring networks challenge the rigid structures of the nation-states. For example, Patricia Zavella's ethnography (2011) starts by recognizing how the experiences of Mexican migrants in the United States are multiple and heterogeneous. Then, she proposes to use the open term "migrant" to group different generations of migrants, including people with different citizenship statuses. According to her, despite tensions, differences and contradictions within these variegated groups, Mexican migrants create transnational communities, solidified on everyday struggles against poverty, discrimination and exploitation, and by shared memories, symbols and meanings. These transnational communities, according to Zavella, are tied to both the United States and Mexico and represent a challenge against the politics of national belonging.

However, there are different approaches within migration studies, with some linking transnationalism and political economy, balancing the tensions between agency and structure and not privileging the former over the latter. For example, García-Colón (2017) explains that in Mintz's early studies on Puerto Rico, we find a precursor of the anthropology of contemporary migration, understood as a phenomenon related to global fields of power and in which subjects maneuver between conscriptions and opportunities. Contemporary anthropologists have upheld that tradition.

Elizabeth Fitting (2016) describes how the expulsion of young Mexicans to migration streams to the United States relates to a new common sense among rural Mexican people that no longer sees dignified work in agriculture. As a result, younger generations migrate internationally to work in factories and the service sector. For Fitting, transnational migrations are subaltern social reproduction strategies, therefore, evidence of migrant

agency. However, just as remittances provide essential resources for the migrants' households in Mexico, Fitting recognizes that international migrations to the United States also generate tensions in the domestic nuclei. One of these consequences is the ongoing abandonment of rural-proletarian classes from Mexican agriculture.

For her part, Pauline G. Barber (2008) argues the relationship between the selectivity of the national policies of labour and migration in Canada and the submission performances that Filipino working women take to the possibilities such national policies open. Similar to Fitting, Barber's research analyzes the tensions within transnational networks. As explained by the author, Filipino women seek to enter Canada as temporary care workers, aiming to achieve an eventual legal path to obtain Canadian citizenship. To achieve that goal, Filipino workers must present themselves as desirable to Canadian labour markets, performing an image of docility and emphasizing their potential flexibility. While Filipino workers must leave behind their families, aiming to provide them with a more promising future, the Filipino government benefits from the international or transnational exportation of a gendered labour-force commodity. Meanwhile, Canada's capitalism absorbs the surplus value that migrant workers produce. Thus, Fitting and Barber show that the migrant agency always comprises blind spots, contradictions, conflict and uncertainties.

Building and adding to this literature, in this dissertation, I understand Haitian continental migration as a geographical movement of working classes, even though the demand with which Haitian migrants arrived at the Mexico-U.S. border was a humanitarian demand for asylum and protection. This position is justified because migrant labour occupies a subaltern position in receiving societies. On the one hand, destination societies discriminate against migrants, perceiving them as menaces to national values and security.

But, conversely, national labour markers exploit migrant labour, extracting surplus value from a non-expensive and precarious labour force (Heyman, 2001, 2012). This precarity has to do with migrants' legal statuses and with how their presence and labour in receiving nations are highly gendered and racialized (de Genova, 2005). Through the concept of the subaltern gamble, in this dissertation, I intend to focus on the contradictions and tensions of the agency of a subaltern migrant working class under capitalism.

Furthermore, the imperative to reproduce their everyday life in receiving nations and simultaneously send remittances back home pushed international migrants to overexploit their labour capabilities. According to Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz (2011), the pressure to earn wages and send remittances has produced cultural tropes about migrants' resilience and work ethics reproduced by migrants and receiving populations, highlighting migrants' disposition to perform hard and exhausting work. This common sense holds that the lower rungs of the occupational ladder that migrants occupy are suitable for migrants' aspirations and that even if migrants' wages are low, these are still better than what they would find in their sending nations. Within these tropes, migrants and receiving and sending populations, naturalized labour exploitation.

To summarize: under in capitalism, international migrations are subaltern strategies of social reproduction, resources for capitalist exploitation and symptoms of the global division of labour and suffering. When studying the contradictions, complexities, and subtleties of the Haitian migration process in Tijuana, I argue that it is possible to understand the contradictions that capitalism inherently generates in its path and development, among them the sociocultural complexities of human movements and displacements across international borders. On the one hand, this approach forces us to

rethink the categories of the economic migrant and asylum seeker beyond a moral conceptualization of asylum-seekers; and, on the other, to critically ponder the anthropological approaches to migrant culture and transnationalism that ignore class formations and relations.

For example, Sidney Mintz criticized the use of concepts such as creolization and the alluded novelty of transnationalism (1996, 1998), noting that both processes are eminently modern and rooted in Caribbean history. For Mintz, although European colonial economic enterprises enslaved Africans, dispossessing them from their forms of organizing life, their experience was an example of culture-building. In this process, colonial enslaved subjects linked their heterogeneous African origins to their enslaved conditions in the American colonies, where European empires transplanted them by force. For Mintz, then, the production of Creole cultures and transcontinental exchanges represents an adaptation to enslaved people's condition, or in other words, a subaltern response to modernity. In this way, for Mintz, anthropologists must pay attention to what the Caribbean, as a central historical unit (not a cultural area, though), has taught us about modernity, capitalism and subaltern struggles, avoiding the appropriation of regionally situated concepts and processes to turn them into generalized buzzwords. Thus, the debate between migrant agencies and global economic structures must be settled not by choosing one of the poles as a preferential framework of analysis but by paying attention to the dialectical relationship that exists between them: the structure delimits the agency, but the agency also affects to the structure, which adapts, modifies and changes.

Field Data and Methods

I conducted fieldwork in Tijuana for nine uninterrupted months, from August 2018 to April 2019. Before this period, I had visited Tijuana only on one occasion, in December 2017, to conduct a pre-field stay. There, I interviewed NGO representatives while informing myself about the local shelters and civil associations operating in the city. As I was born and raised in the political center of Mexico (Mexico City and Puebla),[15] the north of the country, and even more so the Mexico-U.S. border area, appeared to me as an unknown social geography, at the same time distant and different. Even so, after four years of graduate student living in the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, returning to live in Mexico resulted in an experience akin to a return home. By this, I mean that although my Mexican nationality facilitated my immersion in fieldwork, I cannot say that I conducted my research from the position of a "native anthropologist." On the contrary, for the border people of Tijuana, I was a *chilango*,[16] an epithet with which they establish a difference between them and the people from the rest of the country. What I want to express is that Tijuana was a strange city for me, and, as multiple interactions made clear, I was a stranger in Tijuana. From this position, I got used to seeing the social misery scattered in the street camps of deportees, homeless and vagrants, the constant presence of military checkpoints and police convoys, and reading the daily chronicle of murders, which the local newspapers recorded until the end of 2018. There were more than 2,400 murders in total, making 2018 the most violent year in the city since municipal authorities recorded the number of homicides.

[15] The state of Aguascalientes is the actual geographical center of Mexico.
[16] *Chilango* is the name for the inhabitants of Mexico's capital city, Ciudad de México, formerly known as Distrito Federal.

During my fieldwork, I relied on three methods to obtain data: interviews (open, structured, and deep), direct and participant observation, and analysis of news media and local academic production. Spatially, a good part of my fieldwork took place in the *Zona Norte* (downtown Tijuana). *Zona Norte* is an urban area closely connected to the international port of entry of El Chaparral-San Ysidro. Due to this, the *Zona Norte* has a significant concentration of NGOs and shelters that serve subaltern migrant populations. Likewise, since *Zona Norte* includes the buoyant red zone (*La Coahuila*) and the commercial and nightlife avenue called Revolution (*La Revu*), it represents a niche of formal and informal labour for many people (among them, Haitians resettled in Tijuana). However, the Zona Norte's informality niche appears with better intensity in what is known as *La Línea* (The Line), that is, the complex formed around the queue of cars waiting in El Chaparral-San Ysidro to cross into the United States.

Zona Norte is a heavily guarded and securitized area, both by a closed circuit of cameras and by the constant presence of police and military elements. Spatially, the site is limited to the north by the international border, east by the *Vía Internacional* freeway, and south and west by a series of canyons and mountains, where residential areas proliferate. The city has expanded historically from the north to the east, where the maquiladora industry has developed, and to the south, where new commercial consumer districts have flourished. Meanwhile, the area named *Playas* (Beaches) is located to the west, next to the Pacific Ocean.

During fieldwork, I volunteered with civil associations (NGOs and churches) and regularly attended two Haitian churches. Also, I visited Haitians' sites of leisure (hairdressers, restaurants, parties, and concerts), and regularly attended public events that

representatives of the state and civil society use to discuss immigration policies and humanitarian assistance. In addition, I led a series of Spanish classes for Haitians that generated rapport with Haitian students, who would later become informants, formal and informal. In total, I conducted 29 interviews: 18 with Haitians (17 male and one female) and 11 with Mexicans (four with members of the civil society, six with religious leaders and one with a government official). In the interviews with Haitians, the script I used broadly covered their migration history, their present working and living conditions at the time of the interview, and the plans that Haitians anticipated as possible. Meanwhile, with religious and civil servants, I based my script on their experiences in 2016, when churches and NGOs served as shelters for Haitian asylum-seekers stranded in the city, and their impressions about how Haitians have integrated into Tijuana's dynamics. In addition to the interviews, I recorded quotidian interactions with Haitians and NGOs in my field diary, of which I wrote 330 pages, distributed in three notebooks.

The review of newspapers, reports, and academic production had the primary objective of reconstructing Haitian migration from its public representations in Tijuana and during their previous migratory journeys. In particular, I read newspapers to help reconstruct the period when Haitians arrived in Tijuana, and how the media covered it; and to academic reports to understand the discourses and explanatory frameworks that intellectuals have used to describe and analyze this population of international migrants. I compiled around 500 media notes in a simple Excel sheet, codifying moments and keywords of Haitian's continental trajectories and their transit, presence, and regularization in Mexico's northern border. This compilation helped me clarify the numbers and statistics of Haitians and address tension and negotiation moments within the migratory process.

As I went deeper into civil organizations' particular universe, secular and religious, I became aware of tensions, conflicts, and differences between different organisms within civil society in the same way that I found agreements, understandings, and negotiations. For example, within the Haitian churches, I identified two that stood out for their congregation's size and the worship's regularity. The differences between these churches were similar to those Bertin Louis Jr. explains in his book (2015) between *Tet Mare* and *Touloutoutou* churches. Bertin's model differentiates between the two types of churches by the kind of worship they perform and by the congregation that adheres to the ceremonies, distinguishing between traditional and charismatic Protestantism forms.

The *Kreten pou Bondye* (Fear of God) church is located within the *Zona Norte*, while the *Mòn ki pi gwo* church (The Larger Mountain) is in one of the popular neighbourhoods that surround the *Zona Norte*. Regular congregants of the first church are from an upper-class section of conservative Mexicans, and the church's architecture is ample and modern. The second church, in contrast, attracts more working classes attendees, and as space, it occupies a smaller locale, more of a house that also serves as a church. Both churches have services every Sunday for Haitians, and a congregation fills the premises during those mornings. *Mòn ki pi gwo* is a charismatic church and the service unfolds with more corporal involvement, for example, I saw dozens of Haitians lying on the floor praying, crying, and frantically moving their bodies. While in *Kreten pou Bondye*, the traditional church, the service entails greater attention to etiquette as worshippers get up, pray, sing, sit down, and so on.

These differences, which are of class and culture, were significant during my fieldwork since I interspersed my Sunday visits to Haitian worship between one church and

another, but primarily as I taught at the two churches. One class was Spanish for Haitians, and the other was a workshop for Haitians who wanted to take the elementary school exam in Tijuana. In general, each church had its Haitian pastor and its infrastructure to carry out worship. For example, the entourage serving to accommodate and organize the congregants, the Sunday schools (one for men, one for women), the choir groups (male and female, also), the pool of speakers who preach on the platform, and the particular ways of expressing fervour and fear to God. In addition to these two sites, I visited temples where Haitians had been refugees in 2016 and interviewed the pastors of these churches to document their testimonies.

Similarly, within the NGOs that work with Haitians, I identified two groups that reaffirmed for themselves the banner of the Haitian cause and that somehow competed for the validity of carrying this cause on their shoulders. Neither was a shelter at that time nor when the Haitians arrived, but both regularly offered services aimed at this population. In both, I worked teaching Spanish classes, and in both, I saw how they articulated the Haitian cause as one of their primary humanitarian efforts. The first, *Oficina Escampadero* (a pseudonym), is an NGO run by an older woman who manages the organization, logistics, and civil association decisions as a matriarch. She lives in San Diego. Every day she goes down to Tijuana to open and attend the NGO. There, she provides information and immediate help (an instant noodle soup, a cup of soluble coffee, a change of clothes) to deportees, migrants in transit and asylum seekers. This matriarch recalled that when the Haitians arrived in Tijuana, she was the first to help them. She made this assertion relying on the fact that her NGO is only meters away from the international crossing line of El Chaparral, where Haitians arrived first.

Meanwhile, the second NGO, *Albergue Juventud* (also a fake name), is led by a young woman from Tijuana, who, when I was conducting fieldwork, was beginning a graduate degree in San Diego. This NGO has fostered a vision of cultural exchange between the dwellers of Tijuana and the different asylum seekers and migrants in transit that converge there, such as Haitians, Africans, Central Americans, and Mexicans from the interior provinces. Its activities include music, gastronomy, poetry, dance and painting events and workshops. Moreover, they have advanced the name of *Haitijuana*, and the *haitijuanense* noun, to speak and identify a cultural convergence process between the city and the Haitians who came to live in it. Although I never saw direct conflict between the two NGOs, I heard informally about differences of opinion regarding how each one ran their organization.

In addition to these two organizations, it is worth mentioning what came to be known by the press as Little Haiti (not a pseudonym), a Mexican pastor's project to establish a permanent Haitian colony in Tijuana. Little Haiti is located in a canyon next to the pastor's church, which shelters migrants in transit. The space provided for Little Haiti meets the requirements to be considered a *ranchería* (with dusty roads and horses, poultry, pigs, and stray dogs abound). Although I visited it often, I could not volunteer there regularly. The pastors in charge of this establishment have had legal conflicts with municipal government representatives, who more than once have prevented them from building houses in Little Haiti due to non-compliance with health and risk regulations. Although the pastors argued that this conflict's motives are political, the land where they constructed is a steep area, prone to landslides during the rainy season.

Although my functions as a volunteer mediated my interactions with Haitians, the regular classroom exchanges gradually generated the necessary trust and rapport with those who would be my informants and interviewees, almost in an organic way. In contrast, my presence and purpose needed to be justified with the NGOs. Students from national and international universities, foreigners and natives, episodic and constant, are not odd in Tijuana NGOs. Moreover, more often than not, I saw how *huero*[17] (Anglo, phenotypically White, and English speakers as their first language) students and scholars are better received than Mexicans. In my case, the university credential allowed me to legitimize myself as a doctoral student to such an extent that it was unnecessary to show any official letter that would endorse my research affiliation. Even so, there was suspicion. For example, in an introductory interview with an NGO, the president of the NGO noted that my credential had expired and pointed out that I should not want to deceive them. He was referring to the expiration date of my bus pass, affixed to my ID on a sticker. The misunderstanding did not go beyond the anecdote since I maintained regular cooperation with said NGO.

As I collaborated with the NGOs, it became clear that my work as a regular volunteer was the key to integrating into their structure. Volunteering, that is, the unpaid work that private individuals offer to civil organizations, is vital to the structure of NGOs, to the point that the size and organizational level of an NGO can be judged by the number of volunteers it manages. In my case, I spent most of my time working for *Tèt Chaje*, the Haitian civil organization I mentioned in this introduction's opening. I helped them draft

[17] *Huero(a)* means, according to the Royal Spanish Academy, something which is vain and insubstantial (*vano e insustancial*). In vernacular Mexican Spanish, it refers, in general, to somebody from the United States, but more extensively, to someone perceived as having privileges due to their skin colour, nationality, and social class. Some usual variations of the word are *güero*, *wero*, and *buero*.

documents, organize events, and create databases of Haitians requesting legal help to regularize their status. In the same way, I helped them advance migration regularization processes that the NGO carried out with the National Institute of Migration in Tijuana (*Instituto Nacional de Migración* or INM). Furthermore, my involvement *Oficina Escampadero* and *Albergue Juventud*, in addition to exercising functions as a Spanish teacher, consisted of attending the events that they organized or attended. Finally, I visited Little Haiti several times but not as a volunteer.

Concerning the interviews with representatives of shelters, churches, and NGOs, I always carried out those in the organization's facilities that I visited, generally in offices where we could maintain privacy. In the case of the interviews with Haitians, the interview sites were more varied. However, most were in the informants' homes or churches and rarely in other spaces, such as NGOs and shelters. On at least one occasion, church and house coincided, being that the informant lived in a room that the representatives of the church rented to him. When the interviews were in churches or other places, I sought as much privacy as possible, such as in private classrooms or remote pews. When the interviews were in the informants' domestic space, they provided a confidential space for our conversation, citing me at a moment when nobody else was present. I conducted interviews in Spanish, a language with which I also developed my interactions with Haitians during fieldwork. In that sense, my informants were Haitians with an acceptable Spanish level, fully functional when engaging in formal and informal conversations.

Throughout the dissertation, I reproduce fragments of these interviews with Haitian migrants that I translated from Spanish to English. Between how Haitian informants share with me their thoughts and experiences and how I translate their voices to English, I

modified the "text" to make it more legible to readers. However, I respected and maintained their meanings and senses, and in footnotes, I provide the original fragment as I recorded and transcribed it in Spanish. The literal transcription of the "original" Haitian voice in Spanish has value. For example, the Haitian voice in the transcriptions reflects the processes of international emigration through the American continent, mixing Spanish and Portuguese in their responses. Furthermore, the transcriptions might serve future researchers interested in Haitian migrations and linguistics. In this regard, it is worth noting that, in Haiti, Haitian nationals might be speakers of two more languages: French and Haitian Creole. The former is spoken in academic, media, government and elite circles, while Haitians speak Creole in the streets and inner circles as their first and more "natural" way to express themselves. In this sense, Haitian communication in Spanish is already, for them, an exercise of translation.[18]

As part of the Spanish lessons I taught, I began to study Haitian Creole in a self-taught way, with YouTube lessons and a Creole-English dictionary as primary tools. In an immediate practical sense, the motivation was to give them vocabulary in Spanish using Haitian Creole words as a reference. In a broader sense, I wanted to communicate minimally with them in Creole for introductions, greetings, and simple sentences. My eagerness to practice and converse in Creole was noticed among Haitians. Thus, those who

[18] According to James Siegel (1986), anthropological labour is a translation process because anthropologists are interested in the interest of the people with whom we conduct fieldwork. In that sense, our ethnographies are translations of what we saw, listened and learned in fieldwork and applied to social theory. Language is an active and relational reflection of extra-linguistic processes because it expresses ways of understanding and participating in the world. In the case of Siegel's research, he shows that to be Javanese is to translate (between a national language and a popular language) and that this translation involves hierarchies and histories. In the case of Haitians, French and Creole operate similarly to Low and High Javanese. That is, Creole and French are class markers. Furthermore, both languages witness more extensive processes, such as the colony and the slave creolization in the Caribbean.

already knew me from the classroom joked that I was a White Haitian (*blan Aysien*) because I could construct and convey simple sentences in Creole. Among Haitians who did not know me, hearing me say sentences in Creole was disconcerting, and they were inevitably surprised, though somewhat pleased that a Mexican tried to speak to them in their mother tongue. As part of my Spanish classes, I also produced Creole-Spanish exercise booklets (about 50 pages) distributed among the civil organizations I volunteered for during my fieldwork.

Dissertation Structure

Chapter two discusses post-2010 Haitian emigration before arriving at the Mexico-U.S. border in 2016. These are the immediate antecedents to the case study. In this chapter, I propose understanding Haitian migration as a subaltern gamble by analyzing the formation of migration projects in Haiti and its trajectories in Brazil. I address the experiences, causes, motivations, and sequences of Haitian emigration to Brazil, establishing Haitian migration as a labour movement and proposing the concept of the subaltern gamble to understand the Haitian process of continental emigration.

Chapter three chronicles the arrival of Haitians to Tijuana. Through a reconstruction of what was locally considered a critical event, I identify the sectors of civil and religious society organizations that faced the stranding of hundreds of Haitians. Thus, I am using this chapter to analyze the relationships of forces that the unexpected arrival of Haitians revealed between Mexico and the United States at an international level, between Mexican civil society and the state at a national level, and between asylum-seekers and shelters at the city level. I rely on the Gramscian "integral state" concept to analyze these processes.

In Chapter four, I examine the integration of Haitian labour to the state of Baja California, pointing out the niches that Haitian migrants occupy in legal and informal areas. This chapter shows the contradictions and tensions of migrant agency. Here I explain how the subaltern gamble and migrant aspirations confront the reality of working conditions at the border. I also analyze their objective conditions of life, work and social reproduction and the relationship of these conditions with both their precarious migratory status and their international mobility projects and transnational networks.

In Chapter five, I review civil society's mediation functions in Tijuana in the social, labour and cultural integration of Haitian workers at the border city. On the one hand, I describe the interactions between Haitian migrants and local civil associations; on the other, I address how a group of Haitians formed a migrant NGO in Tijuana. In other words, in this chapter, I focus on a particular aspect of the integral state that I described in chapter three. We should remember that for Gramsci, hegemony is successful if it can constitute a historical bloc. The historical bloc integrates political and civil society in synthesizing consensus and coercions, organic moments to direct the hegemonic projects. In this chapter, I propose the metaphor of *bajar fondos* to explain border NGOs' positions, interactions and roles.

Chapter 2 The Subaltern Gamble of Haitian Emigrants in South America

According to Brazilian and international newspapers that covered the story, Fetiere, a Haitian emigrant in Brazil, was murdered in Navegantes in October 2015 by seven young White middle-class men who stabbed, kicked, and hit him with sticks and stones. [19] I first heard of this event in Tijuana when I interviewed one member of *Tèt Chaje*, the Haitian NGO mentioned in the introduction. The story arose when I asked my interviewee if he could recall any bad experiences he had suffered while living in Brazil. Fetiere was his *compa* (friend), in his words. My interviewee told me he could have been there that night, outside the grocery store where they killed Fetiere. The notes of newspapers explain that the Brazilian youngsters were riding their motorcycles while a few Haitians were getting some fresh air on the sidewalk until they heard shouts against them: "*Masisi, masisi*!" "Masisi will be you," replied Fetiere in Portuguese. Masisi denotes a feminine gay man in Haitian Creole, which was an offence to both parties. As a result, the assailants got off the motorcycles and killed him. As part of their legal defence, the Brazilians argued the murder was motivated by a romantic dispute: that Fetiere was dating the girlfriend of one of his killers. With this defence, the lawyers tried to eliminate the accusation of a racist crime. However, in my interview, my informant denied this version. Everyone knew, according to him, that Fetiere had a wife, a Brazilian wife, also Black, and a good woman, according to his account, now a widow. Additionally, I learned that Fetiere and his wife had planned to

[19] "Haitiano morre após ser esfaqueado em Navegantes, Litoral de SC"/ "Haitian dies after being stabbed in Navegantes, Santa Catarina Coast" (O Globo, October 19, 2015); " Haitiano morto em SC. O corpo de Fetiere, negado três vezes" / "Haitian killed in Santa Catarina. Fetiere's body, denied three times" (El País, October 24, 2015).

travel to the southern border of the United States, as my interviewee and his wife did in 2016.

As I write this chapter, the member of *Tèt Chaje* I interviewed is in the United States, but the day he told me about Fetiere, we were at his home in Tijuana, a house still under construction near the Northern Zone. Throughout our talk, he was carrying his newborn son, who had been born in Tijuana. His plan was still to cross the border into the United States, but he and his wife were waiting for her other older son to arrive in Tijuana from Brazil. When his wife's son finally reached the Mexican-United-States border, they were able to carry out their plan: each spouse successfully crossed separately, taking a son with them as a companion.

This chapter examines the post-2010 Haitian international emigration to Brazil through the Gramscian-inspired concept of the subaltern gamble. By framing post-earthquake emigration as a gamble, I emphasize that these are subaltern projects carried on with volition, intention, aspirations, directionality, temporality, investments, planning and organization, or what gets summarized with the term "agency." In this sense, Haitian emigration to South America was not a forced displacement caused by a single external factor, namely, the 2010 earthquake. Of course, this assertion does not deny that the earthquake worsened the conditions in Haiti, nor that some emigrants might have suffered directly from it. Still, it does mean that when academics and activists take the earthquake as the point of departure to define and advocate for this migration, they produce a simplistic reduction. In contrast to this narrow perspective, I found during fieldwork that international emigrations are projects and resources for Haitian households, individuals, and working classes.

A second element that the concept of subaltern gamble opens is to consider how emigrations occurred under uncertain and contingent circumstances, from the expectations that animated Haitians to emigrate to the conditions of transit and their encounters with nation-state borders. In other words, Haitian emigrations are rational projects hinging on a high degree of uncertainty. This kind of contingency and risk typical of a bet —not knowing in advance the project's outcome—originates from the position of subalternity of the Haitian emigrant classes within global capitalism. As Gramsci put it, there is nothing certain when placing a bet except for a chance at success, and for this chance, the gambler takes a leap of faith (Q8, §§ 209, 228, 230; Q16, §1).

In the first part of the chapter, I delimit the concept of a subaltern gamble, explaining it from Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. The second section is an eagle-eye view of the process that shaped the Haitian route to Brazil, focusing on how Haitian emigration was pushed by Haitian emigration projects. Finally, in the third section, I anchor the concept of a subaltern gamble on the resources and subjective motivations behind Haitian projects. For this last section, I took empirical data from interviews with Haitian men conducted during fieldwork in Tijuana in 2018-2019. These interviews taught me about Haitian employment-related international mobility projects (Roseman et al., 2015) and the geographical trajectories across continental America resulting from those projects.

As the opening vignette about Fetiere suggests, the outcomes and resources of Haitian emigrations are multiple. This variation refers to the trajectories and histories of emigration, particular goals, choices and strategies, and differently situated households and support networks. Furthermore, Haitian migrants are diverse in gender, religion, education, age, and class. Thus, while Fetiere married a Brazilian woman and tragically died in a racist encounter, my interviewee and his wife went to the United States by strategically separating

their cross-border entrances and offspring. In other cases, I learned about during fieldwork, Haitian couples decided that only the wife would cross the Mexico-U.S. border accompanied by a minor or while pregnant, while the husband remained in Tijuana, waiting for an appropriate moment to attempt a crossing. This variation means that the connections, dislocations, gambles, and risks associated with emigration differ in each case. My intention in this chapter and with the concept of subaltern gamble is not to say the opposite and present Haitian migration as a homogeneous whole. On the contrary, I aim to define specific primary coordinates to understand post-earthquake Haitian international emigrations beyond the earthquake as an active and definite signifier. Otherwise, I argue, the earthquake serves as a narrative that subjects Haitians to a flattened logic of exceptionality and humanitarianism, omitting the active participation of Haitian migrants and the heterogeneity contained in their projects.

A Gramscian Concept

The concept of subaltern gamble rests on three themes addressed by Gramsci in the *Prison Notebooks*: the southern question, the concepts of subaltern classes and subalternity, and his notes about Pascal's Wager.[20] Gramsci organically articulates these themes in terms of how the southern question expresses a regional dynamic of subalternity (and hegemony), while his ideas about Pascal's Wager touch on the intellectual and philosophical translation of the subaltern's propensity to gamble on the lottery.

[20] According to the Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy, " 'Pascal's Wager' is the name given to an argument due to Blaise Pascal for believing, or for at least taking steps to believe, in God […] To put simply, we should wager that God exists because it is the *best bet.*" Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pascal-wager/.

The southern question was for Gramsci a constant interest, which accompanied him from his pre-prison writings to the study notes that would comprise the *Prison Notebooks* and refers to his historical and political analyses about the composition of the Italian state as one divided between a semi-feudal, rural South, and a modernized, industrial North. Gramsci's interest in analyzing Italian regions and their relationship is integral to his concern for understanding the historical process of Italian nation-state formation, particularly as a dynamic of hegemony, dominance, leadership, and subordination. Within this theme, other vital concerns emerged, such as the formation and function of intellectuals, the composition of different ways of thinking between the countryside and city, and the political possibility of coalescing the interests of the proletarians and peasants in a united bloc against fascism.

In Gramsci's analysis, the southern question expresses how the interactions between the two Italian regions were equivalent to an internal colonial relationship, where the development of the north depended on the impoverishment, underdevelopment, and crises of the south (Q1, §43). Within this relation, the north administered the south and its populations through coercive-police systems, massacres, and rural arbitrariness. As a result of this regional imbalance, the south provided Italian industry with labourers that emigrated from the countryside (Q1, §§ 44, 50, 62). As noted by Gramsci, Italian intellectuals and hegemonic classes justified these unequal dynamics through racist explanations.[21]

[21] For example, Italian intellectuals depicted the southerners as barbarian, less civilized, and underdeveloped. In this regard, in notebook 1, note 50, about the North-South relation, Gramsci reflects on the issue of Sicilian banditry and how the popular literature depicted them as monkeys. In the same note, Gramsci refers to a short story by Pirandello about southern bandits playing soccer using a human skull as a ball to illustrate this barbarous condition.

Gramsci's critique of the ideological constructions that explained the southern question through naturalist views was to recognize that the two regions' populations' differences were not natural nor biological but the product of historical and social relations. It was a dynamic and dialectic history concerning the Italian state construction and the relations between social classes and national regions within capitalism (Rosengarten, 2009). In this way, in notebook 6, Gramsci writes two notes about the racial question, identifying it as the rebirth of a historical atavism typical of romanticism (§35) and as a nationalist resource to be vindicated and celebrated as human nature (§77). In the case of the southern question, the alleged racial difference between regions operated according to the economic-corporate functioning of the Italian state, allowing it "to exploit the popular masses to the extreme limit of their strength (that is, reduce them to a mere vegetative biological state)" (Q6, §75).

As indicated by Loftus (2019), the southern question is both a political-economic question as well as a problem of territoriality and historicity and is an example of Gramsci's analyses of "a confluence of multiple, spatially mediated temporal rhythms" (Kipfer quoted in Loftus, 11). With this approach, Gramsci focuses on how the southern masses remained caught in a feudal mindset and worldview, intellectually dominated by the power of religion and superstition, while northern cities were enjoying modernization, science, and technology. This "non-contemporaneity" of the south does not mean that the two regional developments were isolated one from another; on the contrary, it signals "the contradictory, disparate and composite conceptions of the world through which individuals make sense of their relations to others and to the external world" (Loftus, 2019, p. 20). In other words, the world of the southern masses, its culture, resources, and livelihoods were disconnected and

connected to those of the modernized north: alienated through coercion and correlated through exploitation.[22]

Within the *Prison Notebooks*, an example of this temporal and spatial nexus between regions appears in notebook 11, in the long note 66, where Gramsci explained how a hypothetical African immigrant might work in a factory, learning the skills, dexterity, and rhythm proper of modern labour while still retaining a "pre-modern" and fetishistic worldview as a personal and intimate subjective composition. Aware of this structural imbalance, Gramsci was interested in studying the cultural and intellectual subaltern practices and expressions.

Peter Thomas (2009) suggests that the southern question was one of Gramsci's paths to arrive at his notions about hegemony, subalternity and subaltern groups. The crux here is that the relation between the two Italian regions was, for Gramsci, a problem of national leadership, that is, a problem of hegemony. On the one hand, the Italian state analyzed by Gramsci was exemplary of a not hegemonic but corporative organization because it did not include the demands of the subaltern classes of the south. On the other, the emigration of landless rural masses from the south to the north was one expression of this Italian national composition lacking direction. In other words, the Italian state under the Risorgimento (its

[22] A contemporary example of this approach is the contribution of Barber and Lem (2018), who proposed the concept of discrepant temporalities to point out the temporal and spatial dynamics of connection-disconnection that characterize migration within capitalism. With this concept, they seek to achieve a double approach. On the one hand, to establish that capitalism operates under a logic of time management, resulting in different phenomenological experiences of time according to the dynamics of accumulation and dispossession. On the other hand, they are framing the tension and confluence of multiple temporalities within processes of migrations in global capitalism. An example of this discrepancy is the temporality of agricultural work compared to the time of factory labour. The confluences of family dynamics, rhythms of remittance flows, and the bureaucratic times of visas and national borders are additional examples of discrepant temporalities.

legal unification through reformation) was dominant but not hegemonic, coercive but not persuasive.

In this regard, Gramsci considered Italian internal emigrations as "morbid" because he understood them as occurring between the interests of landowners and industrialists (Q1 §44). In a quote that illustrates very well what Gramsci means by "morbid" emigration on the southern question, he writes:

> [O]ne of the reasons for the complaints about the rural exodus is to be found in the interests of landowners who see wages go up because of the competition from urban industries and a way of life that is more "legal," less exposed to the despotism and abuse which characterize everyday rural life (Q2, §137).

Echoing his analysis of the southern question, Gramsci also reflected on the role and function of Italian international emigration, addressing it as an example of the international division of labour. Gramsci differentiates two moments. Before the Risorgimento, Italian emigrants were members of the upper classes, and their roles were more cosmopolitan than national (we should think here of the function and position of the Vatican). However, after the Risorgimento, Gramsci reflects, southern Italian peasants started emigrating, leaving Italy to work as rural producers in other nations. In that sense, and dialoguing with Enrico Corradini, Gramsci sees this development as an example of Italy's subaltern position vis-à-vis the Western hegemonic nations, where Italy positioned itself as a proletarian nation; that is, a nation whose role was to provide a labour force to other national capitalisms (Q1 §149, Q2 §52, Q6 §18). Thus, for Gramsci, southern landless peasants' internal and international emigrations were symptoms of a relationship between subaltern and hegemonic classes, regions, and nations.

By 1934, in notebook 25, Gramsci organized his previous notes about subaltern classes, completing one of his best-known special notebooks: *On the Margins of History*

(History of Subaltern Social Groups) (Buttigieg & Green, 2021). By subalternity, Gramsci understood a political and economic position dialectically related to the hegemonic position as antagonistic poles. Subaltern classes or groups are thus those who are not hegemonic nor dominant, and therefore their history is tied to the projects of the dominant classes unified in political states (Q3 §90, Q25 §2). For example, in the southern emigration, the peasant classes occupied a subaltern position vis-à-vis the ruling groups, both the industrialists of the north and the landowners of the south, sectors that competed to exploit them as labour forces.

Gramsci then became interested in the conditions of the subaltern groups as part of his political efforts to develop a collective consciousness capable of organizing itself toward a revolutionary struggle. For this goal, Gramsci explicitly avoids folkloric and romanticized interpretations of the subaltern classes or cultures, which approach subalternity as if it were a museum piece, that is, with the desire to preserve it. Instead, Gramsci is always ready to transform subalternity into a conscious direction, aiming to escape from that subaltern condition (Q3, §48). In Notebook 25, note 2, called *Methodological criteria*, Gramsci condenses his analysis of the subaltern condition, writing that:

> The history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic. In the historical activity of these groups there is, undoubtedly, a tendency toward unification, albeit in provisional stages; but this tendency is continually interrupted by the initiative of dominant groups and, therefore, can be demonstrated only if a historical cycle completes its course and culminates in success. Subaltern groups are always subject to the initiatives of the dominant groups even when they rebel and rise up; only "permanent" victory breaks their subordination, but not immediately. […] Every trace of autonomous initiative by subaltern groups, then, should be of inestimable value to the integral historian (Q25 § 2).

As Marcus Green pointed out in the Introduction to Notebook 25, Gramsci did not provide an exact definition of subaltern classes or groups throughout the *Prison Notebooks* (2021, xxxvii). However, this lack of definition cannot be considered a theoretical deficiency. Instead, the lack of a clear definition indicates subaltern formations' historical plural and heterogeneous nature. For example, Gramsci analyzed the roles and attitudes of the slaves from ancient Rome, ordinary medieval folks, peasants and proto-peasants, and proletarians of industrial cities (xxxviii). More than a definition of a type of subject, subalternity thus implies a position and a social relation. The heterogeneity of subaltern classes also informs Gramsci's characterization of subaltern groups as disaggregated and episodic and the importance of seriously analyzing their displays of autonomy and organizational initiative. Faced with the silencing of subaltern praxis in official history on the one hand and its domestication as a folkloric museum piece on the other, Gramsci insists on the "inestimable value [of] every trace of autonomous initiative."

The Gramscian certainty about the tendency of subaltern groups to unify has a political potential that the Marxist thinker is interested in studying. Hence, he explored the historical subaltern cultural formations, their ways of thinking and living, and their tastes and inclinations. In this sense, Gramsci elaborates on Pascal's Wager concerning the social context of southern Italian masses and the southern question. Pascal's Wager appears only a few times in the *Prison Notebooks*, along with Balzac's idea that the lottery is the opium of the people, the Neapolitan tendency to play the lottery, and the translatability of subaltern attitudes to philosophical sophistication.

In his analysis of Pascal's Wager in favour of Christianity, the Sardinian philosopher found certain resemblances between religious belief and games of chance, recognizing a subaltern inclination to gamble: a calculation within horizons of uncertainty. In other

words, in contexts characterized by arbitrariness, such as southern Italy, betting on the lottery represents one of the few chances for subaltern classes to tempt their luck out of poverty and subordination. The tendency to seek to tempt their luck in the lottery thus is not entirely an irrational praxis. Instead, it is a rational subaltern decision grounded in contexts of highly uncertain horizons and scenarios.

Both the southern propensity to play their luck in the lottery and subaltern emigrations contain an ideological content formed by the aspirations of the subaltern classes, rooted in their material conditions of exploitation and subalternity. On a particularly revealing note, Gramsci reproduces an excerpt from Croce about Matilde Serao on the lottery:

> [T]he lottery is highlighted as 'the great dream of happiness' that the people of Naples 'dream over and over again every week,' living 'for six days in a growing hope that invades their lives and grows to such a point that it spills over the boundaries of real life'; the dream 'in which all they were once deprived of is now theirs: a clean house, healthy and fresh air, warm sunlight shining on the ground, a high white bed, a gleaming chest of drawers, meat and pasta every day, the litre of wine, the cradle for the baby, linen for the wife, and a new hat for the husband (Q8, §209).

The concept of subaltern gamble serves to understand migration processes, such as post-earthquake Haitian migration, insofar as it helps to situate, on the one hand, the phenomenon in dynamics of subalternity and hegemony. Still, on the other hand, it opens the possibility of understanding migration as a set of collective organizational practices containing aspirations and projections of migrant subaltern classes.

At this point, it is instructive to compare Lévy-Bruhl's short 1926 essay on gamblers, and its update for the study of migrations by Ghassan Hage (2020), at least to gauge and ponder the contributions of Gramsci. Lévy-Bruhl's article proposes that the gambler's mentality is similar to the "primitive" mentality in that both trust and invest in a link with

supernatural divinities as the engine, impulse, meaning and guarantor for their "success" in life. The author explains that gamblers do not base their efforts and investments on reasoning, logical calculations, methodical actions, or previous experiences. The gambler bets as long as s/he believes and feels about the possibility of being the chosen one to win. In the same way, "the primitive," Lévy-Bruhl tells us, organizes their life through divination, fetishes, and rites, which fulfill the purpose of obtaining the favour of some divine entity and thus give meaning and guarantees to their existence. Thus, the gambler and the "primitive" depend on life's imponderables, trusting to influence the divinity to offer them their good luck, their "star." Life and luck, thus, depend on guaranteeing a good dialogue and intermediation with supernatural powers.

Gramsci's analysis is not evolutionist like Lévy-Bruhl's, so the figure of the gambler in Gramsci does not express an abstract "primitive mentality."[23] This clarification is necessary because of a stereotype that links gambling with the culture of poverty, blaming the lower classes for their lack of economic rationalism or propensity to risk their resources. On the contrary, what I want to describe in this chapter is how in Haitian migration projects, there is a tension between what Haitians can do and what is beyond their control, what they can know and what they do not know, and what they expect and what they get. What is relevant from the reading of Lévy-Bruhl, Hage, and Gramsci is understanding how migrating and betting cannot be reduced to a rational calculation nor a question of agency or autonomy. By the same token, we cannot reduce the migratory phenomenon to be a mere reflection of the dynamics of capitalism. Thus, when comparing

[23] Gramsci recognizes that in the mentality of the subaltern classes, many ways of thinking converge in a disorganized fashion. Moreover, these ways of thinking are the product of different historical stages; some are atavistic and residual, while others are part of the innovations of the moment. However, this observation does not preclude Gramsci from situating the Italian south in modern capitalist relations.

Haitian migration projects with Pascal's Wager, I want to highlight the tension between rationalism and uncertainties, not in an evolutionary tone, but as a characteristic of migrations under capitalism, which for many subaltern classes are projects of social reproduction without guarantees or with unseen consequences.

For his part, Hage (2020), revitalizing the contributions of Lévy-Bruhl's essay, proposes to understand Lebanese migrations as gambles. In doing so, Hage relies on Bourdieu's concept of *illusio*, understood as an inclination to give order and meaning to the nonsense and chaos of life. In this sense, Hage forwards the idea that migrations are investments with the self, offering a vague sense of potentiality about the chances to open a path that would allow for achieving migrant's aspirations. The gambling nature of migration is evident in how projecting oneself into the uncertain opens up more possibilities than the certainty of staying home. To tilt fate in their favour, Lebanese migrants, Hage tells us, rely on being able to conjure up the blessing of the supernatural, aiming to attract good luck for their projects.

Like gambling, migration cannot be reduced to a rational calculation nor a question of agency or autonomy. The uncertainty, aspirations and abjection of migrations form a fundamental triad to go beyond the reductionisms typical of the dichotomy between agency and structure. The abjection appears because migrants perceive home countries as places lacking a future or expectations, equivalent to low wages and relations of despotism and arbitrariness. The aspiration appears in the projection of longing for what one does not have. Finally, uncertainty mediates between abjection and projection, comprising risks (of staying or/and migrating) and hopes. To conclude this section, I consider it necessary to emphasize how, for Gramsci, internal and international emigrations are labour movements

informed by the condition of subalternity of the emigrant's classes and historical contexts of political and economic imbalances.

The processes of Haitian migrations in continental America are far more complex than what the metaphorical idea of betting might convey; however, the concept of a subaltern bet helps frame Haitian migrations as subaltern projects by providing some primary coordinates for analysis. These coordinates signal tensions and processes, for example, between subaltern perceptions about home and receiving nations, Haitian aspirations and conscriptions, and between moments of decision, planning and pooling resources, and moments of opportunity, risk, and contingency. Of course, the migration process is not a matter of behaviour as gambling, nor is it as simple and direct as when someone bets on sports or casinos; on the contrary, it is a far more complex social process involving not only individual subjects but also households, classes, and nations. Additionally, the subaltern groups who leave their countries require different sorts of brokers to carry on their projects. These mediating figures appear as coyotes, travel guides, carriers, NGOs, and churches. These figures are pivotal in the constitution of subaltern migrations, present along transit routes and places of destination, providing the necessary resources to complete these projects, for example, lodging, transportation, information, and connections. Still, I find the gambling metaphor useful as an interpretive framework that allows us to see how Haitians shaped a new continental migration pattern. Thus, in the rest of the chapter, I analyze the formation of the Haitian gamble on Brazil from the different angles that the concept of a subaltern wager opens.

Post-2010 Haitian Emigrations

In this section, I describe how a Haitian migration bound to Brazil took form, highlighting the gamble-like aspect of this continental movement. Mainly, I am addressing the process by which Haitian emigrants confronted state bureaucracies through a humanitarian claim strengthened by the numerical force of arrivals at border towns; the opening of moments of opportunity taken by Haitian emigrants in calculative decisions; and the subaltern cunning manifested in the navigation of the categories of citizenship and refuge that generated an aporia in the administrative apparatus of Brazil's immigration and humanitarian systems. With this, I hope to clarify that Haitian migration to South America is a phenomenon pushed by Haitian emigrants dynamically connected to several factors, among them the image of Brazil in Haiti as a great power, the existence of broker networks spanning from Haiti to South America, the positive local reception of pioneer currents in Brazilian border towns, and Brazil's efforts to present itself internationally as a regional leader. With this analysis, the process of Haitian migration in Brazil unveils an interplay of negotiations and setbacks between state regimes and Haitian projects.

Resting on a conception of Haiti as a place of permanent and constant disasters and catastrophes (earthquakes, hurricanes, dictatorial regimes, rampant political corruption, urban violence, and social insecurity), the narrative of the earthquake as the emigration trigger appears as unproblematic. By this framing, Haitian emigration seems like an almost mechanical or instinctive reaction to Haiti's challenging life conditions after the earthquake. As sociologist Milena Belloni explains in her ethnography of Eritrean refugees in Europe, this analytical frame, common in refugee studies, works through an over-emphasis on the push factors of expulsions and rests on the binary opposition between refugees and economic migrants (2019, p. 6-9).

For the Haitian migration case study, this approach appears as a crass simplification of their emigrations, not to mention that it contains racist and historical biases. However, the image of Haiti as a place of ongoing and continuous disasters is also appropriated by academics, activists, and emigrants as a pivotal argument to achieve regularization and to battle possible deportations, depicting Haiti as a bleak place without the necessary conditions to repatriate Haitian nationals humanly. In this regard, and as explained by David Murray (2017) regarding Barbadian asylum claimants in Canada, the subaltern classes seeking to obtain humanitarian entry must abide by the preconceptions and racism of Western state bureaucracies reproducing the idea of the Caribbean as an uncivilized space filled with chaos, disorder, intolerance, and violence.

Even though the earthquake was a narrative resource for Haitians who sought asylum in Brazil, in the interviews I conducted in Tijuana with individuals who emigrated to South America, the interviewees did not address the disaster as a cause of their leaving Haiti. Conversely, I found accounts of individual and household projects and aspirations related to perceived moments of opportunity abroad compared to structural constraints in Haiti.

In this sense, Haitians were encouraged to emigrate as a collective entity based on a perception that Brazil was providing a chance to regularize their status and hence to work and obtain wages to send remittances back home. As a result, Haitian emigrants deploy support networks and invest economic resources to carry through these projects and achieve these goals. Haitian emigrants deploy these resources in risky and uncertain scenarios at different scales: in the background, the precarity of Haitian labour markets and livelihoods; on the route, the insecurities and dangers of non-regulated migrations; and in front of them,

the vagueness of whether the destination countries will receive them, and about how that possible reception might look.

If, on the one hand, the planning and investments of Haitian projects provide an image of rational decisions, on the other, Haitians must launch these projects on uncertain and contingent terrains. In this regard, their emigrations resemble a gamble in which, like the gambler, emigrants enact a leap of faith, risking resources to find a path to achieve their intended life aspirations. To explain this argument, I first address the encounters of Haitian emigrants with Brazilian bureaucracies at border towns and the sequence of moments that followed this encounter.

Moments of Opportunity. Post-2010 Haitian emigrations in Brazil started with small groups of "road openers" in 2010 and 2011 (Gomes de Castro & Fernandes, 2014; de Moraes et al., 2013; dos Anjos & Polli, 2019), who were possibly motivated to emigrate by transnational connections with close family members living in that South American country. For example, Carlos Nieto (2014) explains that before 2010, Brazil had received Haitian undergraduate and graduate students as part of bi-national programs and cooperation. The small groups of pioneer migrants in Brazil were barely noticeable initially. However, they fulfilled a crucial role in establishing the project of Brazil as a viable option by conveying information to fellow Haitians about favourable reception conditions that they experimented with in Brazilian border towns (de Moraes et al., 2013). Importantly, these pioneers informed that Brazil was not deporting Haitians (Mentzner, 2013).

The first considerable and noticeable Haitian flow occurred almost two years after the earthquake at the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012, when the Brazilian press

described its borders as suffering from a Haitian invasion (Gomes de Castro & Fernandes, 2014). According to official reports, Brazil registered up to 4,000 unauthorized entries during that period, producing local crises in border towns where Haitians arrived, such as Tabatinga and Brasiléia.

In addition to the administrative problems proper to accelerated mass arrivals in border towns, the presence of Haitians brought legal difficulties for Brazil because Haitian requests for humanitarian asylum did not meet the parameters established by the 1951 Geneva convention. Faced with this legal impossibility, coupled with the increase in Haitians at border crossings, in January 2012, Brazil decided to apply a double-policy approach of simultaneously opening and closing its borders through Resolution 97. With this, Brazil offered to regularize those Haitians already within its territory, creating a *sui generis* document, considered a "flexible humanitarian visa." At the same time, Brazil alerted that deportations would follow if Haitian crossed the borders without the required documentation. In this way, Brazil recognized that the earthquake had worsened Haiti's conditions and that their permanence in the country, for those already on Brazilian soil, should be legislated from a humanitarian perspective, although not within the parameters of international refugee policies. Thus, the exceptional humanitarian visa stood as an ambiguous category between those of economic migrant and refugee status, excluding their claim for refuge but allowing them to regularize their stay and obtain permits to work and study in the country.

The Resolution allowed those in Haiti to process the humanitarian visas at the Brazilian embassy in Port-au-Prince, offering 100 per month to reach 1,200 at the end of the year. Resolution 97's goal was to achieve family reunification, stop the flow of unauthorized Haitians entering the Brazilian borders, regularize those already in Brazil and

combat smugglers networks that could be doing business with Haitian émigrés. However, the number of Haitian applicants far exceeded Brazil's expectations, causing an extraordinary flow of visa applications in Port-au-Prince, which overpassed the administrative capacities of the diplomatic office. Confronted with the complications of obtaining the visa due to long lines, incomplete applications, processing costs, and waiting times, Haitians continued to emigrate to Brazil without the required documentation circumventing the explicit purpose of Resolution 97.

Simultaneously, Brazil sought to increase restrictions on Haitian migrants in transit through South America, pressuring the governments of Peru and Ecuador to reinforce their border, transit, and crossing control measures. Ecuador was a critical gateway for international emigration to continental America due to their free transit policy or universal citizenship approach. Due to this policy, Ecuador is an attractive entry point to extra-continental migrants, from various countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, and East Asia, in their projects to request asylum from the United States. However, Ecuador did not implement a registration system for Haitian tourists until 2015, with which it tried to control the flow of irregular entries.

On the other hand, Peru is an obligatory transit place in this Haitian trajectory. Haitians interviewed during my fieldwork recalled covering the Peruvian route in about five days, aided by smugglers' networks and hidden aboard cargo trucks to avoid immigration controls. In 2012 Peru reacted to Brazil's pressure by increasing restrictions on Haitians, adding a visa application requirement and systematically detaining cohorts of unauthorized migrants transiting its territory. Despite these deterrent strategies, the flow of applicants reaching Brazilian borders not only did not decrease but increased exponentially.

Given the insufficiency of the quota system proposed by Resolution 97, Brazil renewed its position with Resolution 102 in April 2013. Brazil ratified the opportunity to obtain visas but eliminated the monthly quota system. Additionally, in October 2013, Brazil amended Resolution 102, opening new channels to carry out the migratory procedures. These were no longer limited to the consulate of Port-au-Prince but were also open to the Ecuadorian, Peruvian, and Dominican consulates. Nevertheless, even though Brazil provided a legal conduit for Haitian immigration through Resolutions 97 and 102, informality continued to be characteristic of the Haitian migration, even though this meant a considerable increase in the journey's monetary costs. This "incorrigible" character of international migrations, as de Genova (2017) would put it, captures two phenomena: first, the distance and alienation between Haitian masses from official state ordinances and second, the moment of opportunity opened up by the Resolutions that ignited the collective gamble of Haitians.

While the first aspect signals a certain sense of rebelliousness, autonomy, and initiative, the second one explains the rush with which Haitian emigrants launched their projects and the subaltern cunning to take advantage of a moment of opportunity to migrate, thus minimizing some of the risks common to unauthorized movements and border crossings. In this sense, most of the Haitian flow to Brazil entered the South American country in 2013 and 2014, precipitated by the fear of missing the opportunity the Brazilian opening temporarily offered them. Viewed in this way, it is clear that the earthquake was not the cause of Haitian emigration to South America; Brazilian policies were even more decisive in forming this emigration current out of Haiti. In other words, in a global context characterized by the restrictive nature of international borders towards subaltern classes and in a particular context in which the main historical destinations of Haitian migrations are

more restrictive than ever (for example, the Dominican Republic, Bahamas, France, the United States and Canada), the information about a positive reception in Brazil and the state response of no-deportation turned the Brazilian route as a plausible and desirable option for many Haitians' projects.

Thus, the emigration of Haitians to Brazil reveals what Gramsci called subaltern cunning, expressed in the conscious navigation of humanitarian refuge categories directed to circumvent the structural limitations of border controls and, therefore, aimed to achieve a state-sanctioned regulation. As Sydney da Silva explains (2015), "the Amazonic route and the refugee request became an entry strategy, since, from a legal standpoint, Brazil could not deny them such request" (142).[24] This assertion means that by universal statutes, Brazil could not deny them entry as asylum seekers, although once inside the country, Brazil could not grant them refugee status either. This circumstance generated an aporia that the Haitians incorporated and assumed within their migratory gambles. In other words, Haitian migrants played a leading role in this process by pushing the situation towards a scenario in which they could negotiate their regularization to Brazil.

As researchers explain, labour was the main goal behind Haitian migration in Brazil (Nieto, 2014). Thus, after the regularization of Haitian asylum-seekers through humanitarian visas, thousands of them integrated into productive activities in formal and informal niches within the Brazilian labour markets. Despite the class heterogeneity included within this migration (rural and urban, skilled and non-skilled, educated and non-educated), during the first phase of emigration to Brazil, Haitian asylum-seekers were

[24] My translation from the original in Portuguese: “Nesse caso, a rota amazônica e a solicitação da condição de refúgio passaram a ser uma estratégia de entrada, já que do ponto de vista legal o Brasil não pode negar-lhes tal solicitação, uma vez que o país é signatário da convenção de Genebra de 1951.”

mainly men of productive age and enjoying good health. As Haitian migrants established this flow, the profile diversified, including Haitian women migrating alone or for family reunification. During the first few years, offers of employment were widely available to Haitians, with private employers soliciting workers directly from refugee installments in border towns and taking them to labour spaces. Construction work was then one of the most recurrent niches for Haitian migrants. Other jobs available were in factories, services, domestic work, informal employment, and street sales markets.

This initial labour bonanza was related to the infrastructure works for the Men's Soccer World Cup in Brazil in 2014 and the Summer Olympic Games in Rio in 2016. However, according to dos Anjos and Polli (2019), after these first moments of massive incorporation, the labour integration began not to meet the expectations of many Haitian migrants, who hoped to earn more wages, pay for family trips, and send remittances on a more continuous basis. On the contrary, Haitians found that they had to share rent expenses to save money and be able to send remittances, that the salaries they earned came with deductions that they did not fully understand, and that their work was racialized and usually in the lowest rungs. Similarly, those Haitians with higher qualifications found it challenging to achieve their goals. For example, they found that the university entrance process was highly competitive and restrictive, that foreign study certificates were not valid in Brazil, and, for those who arrived with professional qualifications, finding work options in their professional areas was a more complicated task than settling for unskilled jobs.

Given this situation, dos Anjos and Polli (2019) concluded that Haitian migrants in Brazil had experienced their migration with dissatisfaction due to unfulfilled expectations, which the authors blamed on the misinformation with which Haitian migrants undertook their projects and built their aspirations. This dissatisfaction with working conditions in

Brazil was one of the causes that promoted an onward migration, particularly toward Chile in 2014 and later in 2016 toward the Mexico-U.S. border.[25] Belloni (2019) explains onward migration within what she calls destination cosmologies by analyzing the staged migration of Eritreans in Italy attempting to reach Scandinavian countries. This concept expresses a common-sense hierarchy among refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers in which certain countries seem more desirable than others. Thus, this "cosmology" explains, according to the author, why even with regularized status and certain state protections, such as those obtained by Haitians in Brazil, migrants are willing to take on new risks, re-investing their resources seeking to reach destinations perceived as more favourable or suitable to their future projections.

The Humanitarian Visas. As has been pointed out by Diana Thomaz (2018), the humanitarian visas provided by Brazil to Haitian nationals reflect the global pattern of hardening the obtention of refugee status to migrants considered undeserving of political asylum. The author argues that this relates to the modification of the meanings and practices of the refugee status from one Eurocentric category aimed to protect and celebrate Communist dissidents to a post-Cold War image of refugees as "deprived, racialized and faceless masses mostly from the South fleeing extreme poverty and/or endemic conflicts" (201). This change of meaning has resulted in new special categories of temporary status that subject asylum-seekers to precarious positions while allowing states to present themselves as generous but without taking direct responsibility for the wellbeing of that

[25] In 2016, Brazil granted 67,226 residence visas to Haitians, although the total number entering Brazil would have exceeded that number. In 2014 Chile reported 3,649 regularized Haitians, and in 2015 it recorded the provision of temporary visas to 8,888 Haitians.

populace. The premise behind these legal temporary statuses is that the "solution" for asylum-seekers is not their integration into destination countries but their eventual repatriation to their home states (204, 207). Therefore, through humanitarian visas, reception states can predicate migrants' presence as temporary, extraordinary, and unassimilable.

As indicated by Thomaz, temporary visas are now a recurring resource in the administration and regularization of asylum seekers. Mexico also used this legal path to regularize Haitian migrants in early 2017, offering them the *Tarjeta Visitante por Razones Humanitarias* (Visitor's Card for Humanitarian Reasons). Likewise, the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) given by the Obama administration to Haitians residing in the United States after the 2010 earthquake is also part of this type of legal device used by the states. Therefore, it is necessary to address some aspects and characteristics of the temporary humanitarian visas based on the process of migration and the extraordinary regulation of Haitian citizens in Brazil that I have just described. On the one hand, I want to identify some elements of international politics that affected Brazil's decision to offer humanitarian visas. On the other hand, I want to give weight to Haitian emigration projects as integral parts of an active and dynamic negotiation.

In the case of Haitian migration in Brazil, it is necessary to consider how the humanitarian visa decision was related to Brazil's need to present itself internationally as a regional economic and political power capable of deploying a humanitarian response to the Haitian contingency. This response concerned Brazil's aspiration to occupy a permanent United Nations Security Council seat. In this regard, a wave of deportations of Haitians would have conveyed a negative image of a punitive and insensitive state, detrimental to Brazil's international aspirations of recognition as a global power. The opposite alternative

was also problematic for Brazil. If Brazil had accepted Haitians as refugees, that would have implied accepting a generalized situation of non-governability in Haiti. That response would have contradicted Brazil's aspiration because the Amazonian state has invested resources and projects in that country for the last decade. Among them, the most important is the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which Brazil led after the ousting of President Aristide in 2004. In addition to this military-humanitarian intervention, Brazil has invested in development projects, NGOs, and different social programs, for example, concerning public health and education initiatives. Therefore, recognizing a critical situation in Haiti, to which a category of refuge should have corresponded, would have been the same as affirming that Brazil's participation in "improving and modernizing" Haiti had failed. Then, the choice of temporary migratory status was a tactical move to reinforce the image that Brazil wanted to present to the international community. In other words, within the process of Haitian migration in Brazil, the South American nation was also gambling its future in the geopolitical order.

The Brazilian attempt to join the powers of the North Atlantic through its leadership in the United Nations pacification and stabilization intervention in Haiti was then influential within this migratory process. In this regard, we must first consider that the Brazilian investments and projects in Haiti generated a positive image of the South American country, positioning it within the Haitian collective imagination as an attractive migratory destination. This arena of influence encompasses cultural, developmental, social, and economic spheres, ranging from the insertion of the Brazilian *Pastoral da Criança* in Haiti to the increasing local support of the Brazilian men's soccer team, *El Scratch du Oro*. However, along with this positive image of Brazil, a negative image of Haiti appeared simultaneously through the humanitarian practice of peacekeeping intervention. The two

images appear together within a process of othering typical of Western and modern subjectivity (Trouillot, 2003b; Greenburg, 2013). As Trouillot explained, Western subjectivity is grounded in the practical and narrative historical construction of otherness and elsewhere characterized by the other's distance from modernity: the savage. The savage slot thus functions as a definition of what is modern through its manifest negation in the other. As Trouillot put it:

> [T]hat evocation [of Western modernity] works best in negative form. We have a stronger sense of what modernity may connote when we point to the naysayers-the Taliban of Afghanistan, a native tribe in the Amazon, or whichever figure plays temporarily the good or evil face of the non-modern than when we investigate those who praise it. The seduction and the confusion are related. Dreams of a democratic future, practices and institutions of a democracy at work, or claims to join and to defend the international community vary in time and place. Even who actually belongs to the international community is a matter of contention, as any debate of the U.N. General Assembly demonstrates (2003c, 36).

Then, as Greenburg (2013) correctly points out, Brazil and the other foreign forces of the MINUSTAH in Haiti (for example, Korea) reaffirmed a position of civilizing agents, historically occupied by Western nations, through the construction of Haiti as a place without history and of Haitians as people without the initiative to change their situation. This symbolic construction means that the projection and aspiration of Brazil as a hegemonic power contributes to reproducing the savage slot occupied by Haiti and its populations as the image negatively mirroring Brazil's development and modernity. However, for Greenburg, this is only one side of the coin she discusses.

The other aspect that interests her is how the Haitian population has understood and interpreted the humanitarian intervention differently and in tension with the civilizing discourse. According to Greenburg, Haitians involved with the United Nations mission, such as translators and beneficiaries of aid programs, perceived the foreign humanitarian

intervention as a source of resources they could not simply reject. However, simultaneously, they understand that this help is insufficient. This perception was evident for Haitians by the economic spending invested in the military-humanitarian intervention (in military bases resembling fortifications, for example) in contrast to the meagre resources that reached the Haitian beneficiaries directly. Above all, Greenburg identified among Haitians the feeling that international aid is a temporary palliative that does little or nothing to generate a better future for the country. This Haitian pessimism hinges on a continuous history of military and humanitarian interventions in Haiti, especially since the 20th century.

Within this interplay of unequal exchanges between Brazil and Haiti, another characteristic of the humanitarian visa is that it was used as a selectivity mechanism by the Brazilian state, although not very successfully. Historically the immigration processes in Brazil have been subject to the scrutiny and selectivity of the state. This selectivity occurred mainly after the abolition of slavery when Brazil encouraged European and White migrations to influence the phenotypic composition of the country. In our case, the Resolutions opened a selection of migrants mainly regarding class and other associated categories, such as income and education levels. The logic behind it was that the immigration paperwork required to process the humanitarian visa would serve as a class filter discouraging undesired and unauthorized migration and seeking to attract skilled migrants over non-skilled individuals. Thus, some authors found that those who applied for the humanitarian visa at Port-au-Prince were from higher-income classes, while those who opted for clandestine travel were lower-class migrants. The travelling costs, however, had an opposite logic since it was more expensive to take the path through the unauthorized

route than to carry out the procedure, although the last option, as I have explained, was undoubtedly more restrictive.

Moreover, those who did the paperwork travelled with the security of having documents validated by the Brazilian state and therefore opted for direct flights from Haiti to Brazil, avoiding the dangers and risks of the trajectories through South American countries. This last observation echoes what other authors have pointed out about how those who arrived by plane were better qualified than those who arrived through the land route crossing several borders, who were primarily unskilled labourers. In general, this means that the opening of Brazil as a perceived safe destination broadened the profile of emigrated Haitians, including classes with more significant economic resources, but not deterring those of lower classes from attempting to place their bets.

Taking the cue from the tension that Greenburg identified between hegemonic projects and narratives and subaltern experiences and perceptions, it is interesting to note how the Brazilian aspiration to gain recognition as a regional power opened a possibility for Haitian migrants. In this sense, the Brazilian gamble turned into the Haitian bet. I call this opportunity contingency because it is an open moment of indeterminacy resulting from multiple factors, compelling those seeking to gain some advantage from it to act promptly when the opportunity is still open or otherwise lose the chance to make a move ahead. Another helpful definition is the one from Gramsci, who, in notebook 6, §130, defined *contingency* as a: "favorable or unfavorable [economic] opportunity … closely related to immediate politics, "tactics" [and agitation]." [26]

[26] The brackets are from Gramsci.

In other words, Brazil's pressure to present a humanitarian face, its investments in Haiti, and the necessity to reinforce its image as a regional leader, generated an opening for Haitian migrants, who saw Resolutions 97 and 102 as a ripe moment to take an advantageous tactical position to launch their projects. The perception among Haitians that an opening was available rushed massive waves of emigrants during 2013 and 2014. In this sense, the bureaucratic move proposed by Brazil to regularize Haitian migrants through humanitarian visas was one of the defining causes that precipitated the number of Haitian projects bound for Brazil.

Although Thomaz correctly addressed the Brazilian intervention as a re-inscription of the state's sovereign power through the categorization of mobile subjects, I argue that it is also relevant to consider how Haitian migrants pushed, negotiated, and navigated their demands within these processes. Thus, the first aspect to recognize is that Haitian migrants were the ones who forced the encounter with Brazilian state bureaucracies, projecting a demand for asylum. Moreover, it is as a response to this collective action strengthened by the number of migrants in border towns that Brazil reacted with Resolution 97 as an extraordinary measure to regularize and contain the number of Haitian migrants. However, as I explained, the temporary humanitarian category and the deterrence strategies deployed by Brazil not only did not discourage Haitian migrants from requesting asylum but it accelerated the pace of Haitian projects on the South American route.

For those Haitians planning to migrate, the Resolutions thus appear to ratify Brazil's willingness to receive and welcome them, even though the logic behind the Resolutions was highly restrictive, seeking to prevent further migrations. For example, when asked about the documentation he processed when arriving at the Brazilian borders, one Haitian interviewee in Tijuana explained that the regularization "is an opportunity that Brazil gives

us Haitians, as a gift consisting of permanent residence." [27] As some researchers have argued, the Resolutions also seemed to express the idea that Brazil was calling for and requesting Haitian migrants willing to work in Brazil. Gomes de Castro and Fernandes (2014) and Costa (2012) point out that among Haitians, there was a widely disseminated understanding that the government of Lula da Silva had expressly authorized and requested Haitian migrants when in February 2010, the Brazilian president visited the Republic of Haiti. Under this perception, the Resolutions only confirmed a pre-existent presidential mandate. These popular senses were strengthened, according to Tobias Metzner (2014), by the information conveyed by pioneer migrants, reinforcing Brazil's image as an opportunity for Haitians when "[g]eneralized assumptions exist that employment opportunities are available for unskilled workers in Brazil, that obtaining a visa is relatively easy and that Brazil does not deport irregular migrants" (16). As Metzner (27) indicates, the perception that Brazil was not deporting unauthorized migrants was crucial to the formation of waves of Haitians because this assumed fact somehow guaranteed the investment that Haitians put into play in their international emigration. The identification of the "opportunity that Brazil gives us Haitians" (Haitian interviewee quoted above) with President Lula's figure is similar to the later personification of the U.S. border blockade in 2016 with the electoral victory of Donald Trump. The president embodies the state and its praxis. The states, then, are presented to Haitian migrants as open or closed depending on who represents the public figure of control.

These understandings and perceptions mean that the humanitarian visas issued by Brazil were not only an exercise of sovereign power re-inscription, neither only a tactical

[27] "…es una oportunidad que Brasil da con nosotros haitianos. Cuando llegué [a Brasil], se [nos] regala y darnos residencia permanente".

move of international geopolitics nor a mere resource for immigrant selectivity, but also a strategy pursued by Haitian emigrants to enter Brazil, be regularized by the state and therefore obtain work and education possibilities. That is, even if Haitian emigrants knew that they were not going to be accepted by Brazil as refugees, the humanitarian exceptionalism of the temporary visas was a wager worth to be pursued since it allowed a legal recognition of the state to reside, work, and study, even if the permit was precarious and temporary. Furthermore, considering the waves of re-emigration that first began in 2014 and then continued during the second half of 2016, the project of Brazil was also attractive because it opened the possibility of taking routes to new destinations as it finally happened.

The Construction of the Haitian Gamble

The analytical description of the emigration of Haitian asylum seekers to South America shows that Haitian emigration was not a process driven by a single cause but that various factors converged in its formation. Among these elements, we can recall the 2010 earthquake, Brazil's influence in Haiti, the information conveyed by pioneer emigrants, Brazil's aspirations for international recognition, and Resolutions 97 and 102. However, the most critical factor in this process is the mobility projects that Haitian emigrants plan and carry out. In other words, the gamble for Brazil was a project pursued and built by Haitian emigrants. From this point, I would like to consider the subjective reasons outlined by Haitian emigrants to explain why and how they undertook these projects. Therefore, in this section, I consider individual cases of Haitian emigration projects based on interviews with asylum seekers who emigrated to Brazil and later to Tijuana. Through these cases, I aim to

illustrate why I argue that Haitian emigration can be considered gambles, especially by highlighting the level of investment, the risk involved, the networks deployed, and the conscious decision to emigrate.

As explained in the introduction, while I was in Tijuana, I volunteered for various NGOs, including *Tèt Chaje*, an organization almost entirely comprised of Haitian migrants. Each member had a defined role within the internal structure of the NGO. One of the essential roles in this sense was that of the treasurer since he was responsible for keeping the organization's monetary resources. In particular, the treasurer administered a small savings fund collected informally but regularly among the members of the NGO, who, after each Saturday meeting, individually contributed 20, 50 or 100 pesos to a collective saving fund. The treasurer was a tall man, slightly stooped due to his height, who worked in a maquiladora industry in Rosarito, a town nearby Tijuana, and was also an active member of two Haitian churches where he participated as a speaker, musician, and Sunday school instructor. In Tijuana, this man lived with his wife's brother while his wife was in California with the couple's newborn baby, whom the treasurer of *Tèt Chaje* did not yet know. This person was the first Haitian I interviewed in Tijuana during a weekend in a Baptist church's classroom. The interview lasted just over an hour, and we talked about his work and life in Tijuana, his stay in Brazil and Chile, and his memories of Haiti. When I asked about his life in Haiti, his response conveyed a sense of nostalgia, explaining that life in Haiti was good for him:

> For me, it is better because I lived very well when I was in Haiti. Because before I migrated, I lived well: I worked in a school [as a teacher], sometimes I went to work

> in construction, sometimes I went to the garden, I did gardening, a lot of it. So, it was OK for me; I was better.[28]

Continuing with the interview, I asked him why in 2014, he decided to leave his country, to which he summarily replied, "because I desired to visit many countries. Because I want to know about other nations." [29] After that somewhat elusive answer, he delved deeper. He explained how he decided to emigrate to Brazil with some friends: "I have a friend living in the same place as me in Haiti. He says, 'I want to go to Brazil,' that is why I want to go too, that is why I went too." [30] With this answer, I asked him if he knew of more friends or acquaintances who were going to Brazil, to which he affirmative answered: "my neighbour left [from Haiti to Brazil], and he did many things near me. For example, he built a big house and bought a car. That is why I think there is a better life there [in Brazil]. That also gives me the strength to leave my country." [31] The string of responses in this interview gives an idea of the subjective motivations of this Haitian migrant: the desire to know other countries, to leave with others who are also thinking of leaving, and to try and earn the level of other emigrants by leaving Haiti.

Regarding work, this Haitian migrant worked 14 of the 15 months he lived in Brazil, in the cities of Cuiabá (Mato Grosso state) and Caxias do Sul (Rio Grande do Sul state), mainly in gardening work. However, after that time, he decided to re-emigrate and travel to Chile, according to him, because Brazil suffered moments of economic crisis, like

[28] "Para mí es mejor, porque yo vivo muy bien allá. Cuando yo estaba porque antes del viaje, yo vivo bien porque yo trabaja en escuela, *as* veces yo fui a trabaja a la construcción. Depende, *as* veces yo fui en el jardín, yo hacer jardín. Yo tengo mucho *jardim* allá. Pero para mí yo vivo bien, está bien para mí, sí, estaba bien".
[29] "Porque mi voluntad es para visitar mucho país. Porque yo quiero saber mucho país. Sí, conocerme mucho país en mi vida".
[30] "Porque yo tengo un amigo que vive, que estaba viviendo en mismo lugar conmigo en Haití. Él dice que yo quiero ir en Brasil, por eso yo quiero ir también, yo fui también".
[31] "Porque cuando mi vecino se salió, él hace muchas cosas cerca de mí, porque él hacer la casa grande y ahí que tiene carro, por eso yo pienso que hay una vida mejor allá, ese me da también fuerza para dejar mi país".

the 2014 recession. In Chile, he reunited with his wife, who made the trip from Haiti to accompany him, leaving behind the first of their children, born after he left for Brazil. In Chile, the Haitian couple lived and worked in Quilicura (north of Santiago, the capital city) for about six months before starting a new journey, heading to the Mexico-U.S. border. As this emigrant recounts, the decision to go to the border between Mexico and the United States was like the one he made when he left Haiti for Brazil:

> When my wife was with me in Chile, many Haitian friends said: 'I am going to the United States because there is a path that you can walk on foot, by truck, by boat.' I listened to them, and I wanted to walk with them. That is why my wife and I took that route in 2016. [32]

As can be seen in his responses, there is a logic in the Haitian migration process of seizing opportunities when these arise. Recognizing these moments of opportunity occurs collectively and are related to external factors, such as Resolutions 97 and 102 or the economic crisis in Brazil. Belloni (2019) calls these moments collective effervescence in her abovementioned study on Somali emigrants. One way to understand this effervescence is that the would-be migrants perceived the moments of opportunity as temporary and precarious. Therefore, prospective migrants must decide to risk an emigration project, rushed at the possibility that the moments of chance will disappear. In my interviews, it was not uncommon to find this type of rationale where the emigration project of Haitian migrants takes shape at moments of collective effervescence. A Haitian migrant, who worked as a barber in Tijuana, for example, explained to me that:

> In Brazil, I saw how all my friends had begun to leave the country. Why? Because a crisis started in Brazil. We did not have a job, and there was no way to live, do you understand? I had my job, but I knew my cousins living in Brazil would travel

[32] "Cuando ella [su esposa] estaba conmigo allá en Chile, y hay mucho amigo haitiano que yo escucho cuando habla, dice voy por Estados Unidos porque hay un camino, puede caminar a píe, en camión, en barco y voy por allá. Yo también quiero caminar con ellos. Por eso yo y mi esposa empezar en el camino como 2016".

> again. So, my cousin told me, "let us cross because here in Brazil, there is almost no way to get ahead because there is no work, no movement; we better go." So, we took our money and decided to go [to the Mexico-U.S. border].[33]

To follow the route other migrants are transiting, Haitian migrants must have the necessary material and human resources to risk a migratory endeavour. The following case will illustrate the relationship between investments, migratory projects, and labour trajectories.

When I interviewed this migrant, he was unmarried and with no children. He was 33 years old and was born in Cape Haitian (in the North Department) to a family of producers or cultivators [34] (owners of plots of land where they work). Before emigrating internationally, he worked in Haiti doing construction work and as a factory worker. Thanks to the money he could save from those jobs, in 2008, he paid for his first international trip to the Dominican Republic, where he settled in Moca (Espaillat province, north of the island).

From 2008 to 2014, this migrant went to and from Haiti to the Dominican Republic, where he first entered irregularly. While undocumented, he worked again in the construction industry for two years until 2010. After that period, he saved money to invest in a clothing sales business and regularized his immigration status in the Dominican Republic. To get his business up, he started by putting up a small street stall in ambulant

[33] "Como que yo cuando estaba allá, veía que todos mis amigos pues se empiezan a salir del país, los que estaban en Brasil. Porque es un tipo de … un tipo de política … ¿qué tipo de política es eso? ¿Por qué están saliendo todos? Y empieza un crisis en Brasil, crisis, que no tenía trabajo, que viene mucho haitiano y no hay trabajo, dice que no hay trabajo, no hay forma de vivir, ¿entiendes? Yo siempre… tenía yo mi trabajo, sé que también se van a cruzar mis primos, todos. Y está mi primo, que vámonos a cruzar, porque aquí en Brasil casi ya no hay manera de salir adelante, porque no hay trabajo, no hay movimiento, nos vamos a salir del país. Y de ahí agarramos dinero y cruzamos".

[34] As Gonzalez explains, the Haitian ruling classes used *cultivateur* (and *cultivatrice*) after the revolution as a legal category to refer to rural workers (2019, 168). The term reflects the need of Haitian elites to impose a compulsory labour system within a post-slave regime on a population that had risen against the colonial plantation economy. For the rural masses, the term cultivator meant small ownership and subsistence production, and in many cases, the land acquisition was through squatting and illegal claims. As Mimi Sheller indicates (2001), the idea of freedom for the general population in Haiti was concrete and referred to the possibility of working autonomously for their subsistence production.

markets, and eventually, he set up a shop in his own home. However, according to his account, "something happened" in 2014, making him no longer want to be in the Dominican Republic. That is when this migrant considered the possibility of Brazil, as many others were already doing it. In his words:

> I started my business in the Dominican Republic. And then, something did not suit me, so I left there and travelled to Brazil. It is not because something is lacking [as work]. It is because something happened there in the Dominican Republic. I am always looking for a country that suits me well. I want a place where I can do my business without fear because I dream of starting a business.[35]

Without knowing what happened to him, it is understood from his story that he decided to seek new horizons to undertake his business project in the face of complications in the Dominican Republic. These complications might be related to the historical, structural, and systemic racism against Haitian people in the Dominican Republic (*antihaitianismo*). Thus, this migrant decided to take the journey to Brazil financed by his previous work and began working in Cuiabá (Mato Grosso state). In that place, he found work as a construction worker almost immediately and worked there for the first eight months. After that first job, he remained unemployed for five months before returning to the construction industry. Finally, he got a third job as a helper in a local family business, a bakery. During this time, he lived with another Haitian, whom he met in the Dominican Republic, as a member of a Protestant church (in a parallel situation, in Mexico, this migrant lived with a Haitian whom he met in Brazil, also within a church), sharing the household's expenses.

During his two years and five months in Brazil, he started a business in Haiti with the money he obtained in Brazil, collaborating with an associate who would remain in Haiti

[35] "En República Dominicana poner mi negocio. Y luego, *as* veces, que pasar algo que no me quedo bien, por eso que ya dejo allá y viaja por Brasil… Para mí es que no porque falta algo [por ejemplo, trabajo], porque no me gusta algo que pasar allá en República Dominicana. Yo siempre ando buscando un país que me quedo bien, donde que yo puedo hacer mi negocio, sin miedo, todo lo que yo quiero. Porque mi sueño es poner un negocio".

to supervise the enterprise. The business consisted of producing, distributing, and selling cleaning products. He learned to make detergents and other chemical products while working in the Dominican Republic. However, the business fell apart. They could not comply with the regularization procedures in Haiti. Thus, they lost the investment of almost 4,000 dollars they had spent on buying the required chemical products and a motorcycle aimed to be used to distribute the products. To add insult to injury, they suffered the theft of the motorcycle. With the loss in tow, he embarks on the trip to the Mexico-U.S. border, where he arrived in November 2016.

In general, this migrant remembers that it was not difficult to find work in Brazil through networks of compatriots or directly with employers. He remembers this abundance of jobs, especially in 2014 when he arrived in Brazil:

> The first time I arrived, there was much work. Because all the time on the street, people are looking for somebody to employ. However, after almost two years, it started to go down because crises arrived at this time. [36]

Additionally, he acknowledges that although he quickly obtained the documents to regularize his stay in Brazil and work, [37] he did not earn enough to think of a more secure future in Brazil or regularly send remittances. The latter is relevant because he sends money to his father in Haiti. This case illustrates a relationship between economic investments and migration projects, hand in hand with moments of opportunity and complication. This migrant invested in going to the Dominican Republic through his work in Haiti, but something bad happened to him, and he decided to leave Hispaniola. With the money

[36] "…primera vez que llegar, sí hay mucho trabajo, sí. Porque siempre anda en la calle, buscar gente para trabajar. Y después, como casi dos años, empezar a bajar, porque llegaron crisis en este momento, porque Estados Unidos, que le hace muchas cosas allá que no quiere y el gobierno empezar a cancelar algo, como así".

[37] When I interviewed him in Tijuana, he had regular residency status in Brazil and Mexico.

earned in Brazil, he invested in Haiti, but complications again undermined his attempts to establish a small business. Finally, with the misfortune of a business failure, he re-invests his resources in the journey to the United States, having spent about 2,000 dollars in various payments to coyotes and trafficking networks. Upon reaching the Mexican border with the United States, he realizes that the crossing is not advisable because the United States might deport him. Therefore, he decided to regularize his status in Mexico:

> I did not have papers, and I understand that Mexico can deport you if you do not have documents. So, I asked myself, what am I going to do? I am going to go back to where I was, to Brazil? Little by little, I understand that [Mexican] Immigration allows getting papers. And then I think differently. So, I went to start the process, and then I got a job [in Mexico]. [38]

Although this case is an example of a project devised and carried out individually but connected to his family as remittance recipients, there are cases in which the decision to migrate does not lie with the individuals who migrate but with the families supporting them. In this sense, among my interviewees, I found several examples where the family decided to send one of their members to the Brazilian route, sponsoring his journey and expecting to receive remittances. One example is the case of a Haitian from Gonaïves (Artibonite Department), who was 32 years old when I interviewed him in Tijuana. This migrant was the first-born son in his family. In his hometown, his father owns the land where he works, while his mother runs a family restaurant. His first international migration experience was in 2004, when, as a teenager, his family sent him to stay and study for six months in the Dominican Republic with his father, who lived and worked there. According

[38] "…yo no tengo papeles y ya entiendo que México se puede deportar a alguien si tú no tienes papeles. Yo me pregunté, "¿qué voy a hacer? ¿entonces voy a regresar a dónde estaba? ¿a Brasil?" Poco a poco, poco a poco, entender que la migración da oportunidad para sacar un papel. Y después yo pienso otra forma. Y después fui, fue a la migración para empezar el trámite, después conseguir un trabajo, empezamos, empezamos, empezamos. Y ya".

to this migrant, the purpose of this out-migration was to escape the violent context of protests and social discontent in Gonaïves. During this period, he remained in a town near the international border that divides Hispaniola.

As an adult, he left Haiti for the first time in July 2010, destined for Brazil, where his father expected him to begin a university education, among other goals. However, he does not enter university in Brazil but only works. As Fernandes and Gomes de Castro (2016) report, the possibility of studying for a university degree was one of the most recurrent motivations among international Haitian migrants, only behind the need to find employment. However, the project of studying remains only an aspiration, with no possibility of materializing immediately. This limitation is because Haitians who want to study in Brazil must compete for a position with the Brazilian national population, with the disadvantage of needing to be fluent in Portuguese. Furthermore, to compete for a university place, Haitians need to have official documents revalidated in Brazil, certifying the level of studies obtained in Haiti. Only affordable to a minority, the possibility of studying has remained a longing rather than a reality for most Haitians, confronted by the complications of costs, time and documentation.

This migrant was one of the first Haitians to embark on this journey to Brazil; thus, he was a pioneer migrant. When I asked him about how he decided to emigrate to Brazil, he unambiguously replied that he did not choose it, but instead that his family entrusted him with the project:

> It was not that difficult [to decide]. I was studying, and then there came a time when my dad said: "Hey, my son, I have to do something for you before I die." I told him, "Dad, what are you saying? You will not die so soon because you have not done anything for us yet." So, he says: "What I am going to do for you is send you to Brazil; I must sell everything I have for that." Then, I told him: "Dad, there is nothing in Brazil [for me]; they have nothing but *futebol*. There is nothing." So, he

> responded to me: "You have to go," then I said, "oh well." Thus I decided with my dad because neither my mom nor my brothers did want me to go. [39]

Later, when I asked how he paid for the trip, he explained that his father sold some land "because he had a lot and sold what he cultivated the least." [40] This case exemplifies how the most suitable member of the family (in terms of age, gender, earning capacity, health and productive potential) carried out the migration project on behalf of the family unit that invests in its success. This migrant resided in the following years in Porto Velho (Rondônia Department) until he embarked, at the end of 2016, to the Mexico-U.S. border.

Another similar case is a Haitian from Gonaïves, born in 1987. During our interview in 2018, he was unmarried, although he had a girlfriend in Haiti who was waiting for the chance to migrate abroad to reunite with him and get married. He, like the last case, had special responsibilities as the first-born male in his family:

> I am the first son of my family. In Haiti, when a child is the oldest, the first of the sons, he has to help all those behind [the younger siblings]. Help them with the school [expenses] and when there is no food. My parents work the land as *cultivateurs*, but they earn little; they do not earn well because it depends on whether there is rain. Well, imagine I had a difficult situation. [41]

Member of a family of rural producers, this migrant from Gonaïves accepts that his family's land does not guarantee a stable present or project a future other than the immediate since

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[39] "No es tanto difícil [la decisión]. Estaba estudiando pues, y después llega un tiempo, dice mi papá, "oye mi hijo yo tengo que hacer algo por ti antes yo muero". Le digo, qué papá qué está hablando, tú no va a morir tan temprano así, porque tú no haces nada por nosotros todavía, pues le dice, entonces lo que yo voy a hacer por ti mesmo, porque tengo que vender todo lo que yo tengo y para mandar tu vida a ir a Brasil. Le digo yo, papá, allá en Brasil no hay nada, nada más tienen *futebol* allá, no hay nada, me dice, tú tienes que ir, después tú va ver la puerta para que tú cruzar a otro país. Le digo, ay pues. Y tomé la decisión con mi papá, mi mamá no quería, no quería. Y mis hermanos también no querían."

[40] "…sí, porque él tenía mucho, y vende lo que menos cultivaba".

[41] "Y de hecho, yo veo como… soy primero hijo de mi familia, como de mi mamá y mi papá. Entonces allá cuando un hijo, más grande, el primer hijos, tienen que ayudar a todos los que están atrás. La escuela y cuando falta la comida tiene que ayudar a ellos, porque si sus papas depende si trabajan la tierra como cultivador, pero no gana mucho, no gana bien. Depende si no cayó la lluvia, pues imagínate. Entonces yo tuve la situación un poco difícil".

its profits are inconsistent and unstable. Before emigrating in 2014, he worked for two years as a glazier in Haiti, from 2012 to 2014. When asking him about the decision-making process behind the journey, he also accepted that the decision did not fall on him:

> They told me, "You have to go out because we need it; if not, we cannot do anything, then you can help us; you have to go out by any means." So, they contributed. My little brother has goats, so he sold them and gave me the money for my trip. [42]

The role of family households in the decision-making process of migrants has been an essential factor in the anthropological literature on the migratory phenomenon. For example, Cohen and Sirkeci (2011) proposed a model focused on the meso level of migration, contrasting it to the theoretical and empirical approaches that take either individual behaviour or macrostructures as their units of analysis. Within this meso level, the authors recognize the influence of the family unit in migration processes as a source of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and conscriptions. Like Cohen and Sirkeci, Brettell (2015) also refers to a culture of migration as a determining factor in forming expectations, aspirations, and projects, in which the household is the center of decision-making. Thus, for Brettell, migrations are not just individual project outcomes, nor are they merely the result of global pressures. Instead, migrations are part of the cultural identity of a social group.

Besides migrant family-related planning, it is also interesting to consider how the experiences and perceptions that Haitian migrants have about Haiti informed their

[42] "Me dijeron que "tienes que salir porque necesitamos algo, entonces nosotros no podemos hacer nada, entonces usted puede ayudar a nosotros, entonces no hay nada, tiene que salir como quiera, entonces cooperemos. Mi hermanito tiene cabras, entonces vamos a cooperarlos, entonces para que venden, entonces para tener dinero".

emigration projects. In this sense, Scott Lewis (2020), addressing the Jamaican case, refers to the concept of sufferation, denoting the perception of living in a chronic situation of deprivation, in which the place of residence appears devoid of possibilities. Milena Belloni (2019) carried out a similar analysis, highlighting that staying in Somalia implies a state of immobility and entrapment for prospective Somali emigrants. This feeling is not limited to material and geographical terms but also indicates an existential and ontological condition. Thus, according to Belloni, the perception of stuckness motivates Somali migrants to risk their lives and resources on dangerous and long journeys to reach attractive European destination countries. The following excerpts from interviews with Haitians express the perception of a lived reality of restrictions and structural limitations in Haiti, closely related to the notions of sufferation and stuckness that Lewis and Belloni proposed.

I want to start with an interview with a Haitian migrant, originally from Kwadèbouke (Ouest Department), who when asked about what life is like in Haiti, described with a pessimistic tone a general panorama of adversities on different scales:

> No country is safe, to be honest, but some countries are safer than others, and Haiti is not secure. There is much violence, and you must care for yourself; if not, you could die. It is a labour problem, a structure problem, and a political problem. All that together worsens the situation and gives you a big problem. [43]

Later, when I asked him specifically about what the work conditions were like in Haiti, this migrant delved into a system of cronyism and nepotism that makes it difficult to get good jobs:

[43] "La verdad ningún país no es seguro, pero hay un país que es más seguro que otros. Pero Haití es, ¿cómo decir? La verdad no es seguro. … mucha violencia, nada más que tú tienes que cuidarte. Si no, pasar muerte. Porque es un problema de trabajo, un problema de estructura, un problema de política. Todo eso se agrava y te da un problema."

> [In Haiti] We do not have good salaries because, for example, if you have to offer an excellent job that pays well, and I am your friend, but you have another person asking, "Oh, I need a job," Whom are you going to choose? To me! Because I am your friend. In Haiti, if I am not your friend or you are not my godfather, I will not get a good job. On the contrary, I will get a job that does not pay well, which does not work for our lives. [44]

Expressing similar resentment about educational opportunities, another interviewee, the one who invested in a cleaning chemicals business in Haiti, elaborated on how complicated the educational system is in Haiti and how absurd and unprofitable it is to study when there is no labour market available to be employed in the chosen area. According to him:

> It is tough to enter a public university, and in a private university, you must pay. So that is why it is challenging. Because you know there is a lack of employment in the country, studying in a private school costs a lot. Besides, it is not very easy because the government universities are full. [45]

Another Haitian informant that I interviewed in an NGO after a Spanish class in Tijuana confirms the difficulty of finding work in Haiti and highlights an arbitrary process concerning the employment opportunities of foreigners: "In my country, to find work, I think it is a little difficult for us [Haitians], but if you, foreigners, go to my country, you will work and earn in dollars." [46]

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[44] "A nosotros, pero no les pagamos bien, porque a mí siempre… Como… sí… ejemplo: estoy tu amigo, pero tú tienes un trabajo bien seguro, que paga bien, pero si tú tienes otra persona que te pedir "Ay, yo necesito un trabajo", a ¿quién tú vas a dar el trabajo? A mí, porque soy tu amigo. Es por eso, aquí en Haití si yo no soy tu amigo o si tú no eres mi padrino, yo no voy a conseguir un trabajo bueno. Yo voy a conseguir un trabajo que no paga bien, y que no sirve para nuestra vida."

[45] "Está un poquito peor en nivel universidad. Porque [se] paga mucho. Y los [colegios] públicos está muy difícil para meter en universidad. Como aquí tienen UABC [Universidad Autónoma de Baja California]. Privada, tienen que pagar. Por eso es que sale un poquito difícil, porque sabes que falta empleo en el país, y para estudiar privada sí pesa mucho. Ta muy difícil porque de gobierno, antes llegar el tiempo, ta bien lleno, ta bien lleno".

[46] "Porque en mi país, en mi país para trabajar, pues creo que es poquito difícil, por nosotros […] Poquito difícil. Pero si ustedes fueron en mi país, van a trabajar… Extranjeros. Y van a ganar como… más [que un haitiano], sí. Y en dólares también. Allá también hay muchos mexicanos en mi país".

Conclusion

Altogether, the opinions of Haitians presented in this chapter give a panorama of Haiti as an accumulation of arbitrariness. It is challenging to find employment with fair wages; it is not straightforward to achieve a college degree. Worse, it is almost impossible to find work within the specialization area, if there is any. The university thus presents itself as an overly restrictive institution. To aspire to a public school is to compete with many for scant places, and to enter private schools is to pay a considerable sum without guarantees about social mobility. Moreover, Haitian cronyism and the privileged treatment given to foreigners make it challenging to find well-paid jobs for Haiti's population. Haiti's experience as a country of arbitrariness compels or motivates Haitians to seek alternatives outside their nation, taking advantage of the moments when windows of opportunity open, as in Brazil's case. In this regard, post-earthquake Haitian migration is more a massive movement of working-class Haitians unsatisfied by Haiti's livelihood conditions and possibilities than an elemental reaction of fleeing and seeking refuge. In other words, Haitian migration is not a forced migration, nor is it a humanitarian one defined by its condition of vulnerability. The Haitian migrant class is a group of working people with diverse resources who decided to leave Haiti when they saw the possibility of international emigration. In them, there are people with professional studies and technicians, as well as a good part of urbanites. Some come from rural contexts, many from families of land-owning cultivators. Past migrations, such as to the Dominican Republic and transnational networks with countries like the United States, are also a resource for Haitians, who obtain information and experience through these networks.

When reports and academic articles give weight to the earthquake as a key factor in the expulsion of thousands of Haitians outside of Hispaniola, they highlight a forced migration. Within this characterization, intellectuals have framed Haitians in Brazil as vulnerable subjects and recipients of help and protection at the local, regional, national, and even international levels. Although Haitians who arrived at the Brazilian borders, in many cases, came with empty pockets and exhausted bodies, this does not necessarily mean that a general condition of dispossession defines them. On the contrary, those Haitians who came to Brazil and then to Mexico are members of a class within Haiti that can invest in one of its members to emigrate. This class distinction implies both the deployment of support networks of family and friends and the possibility of affording the expense involved in the long journeys.

In this regard, when I asked him about what Haitian migrants were like, one Haitian interviewee responded with a clear awareness of the gap between how Haitian migrants are perceived and how they perceive themselves. In his explanation, he compares Haitian and African migrants, populations who converge on the South American route bound for the United States:

> When we arrive in a country, they say that we are migrants, but when we arrive, for example, here [in Mexico], we do not behave like a migrant because we always have money in our pockets. We can rent a house, and do whatever we want, which is what many people find about us. However, Africans are different: they always need to be given something. We [Haitians] spend money in every country that we pass. Nobody helps us. For example, many people think, "ah, they are in need, let us bring them something, and when we bring something, it seems they do not want it, they do not need it," that is how I saw it, then they say "ah, they have no problem" because, well, we do not behave like people who need it. When Africans arrive, even with money in their pocket, they still act like people who need it, and Haitians do not. We arrive at a place, and we would say, "how much does that cost?" and pay

them money, "I want [to rent] a house; "I want some nice sneakers." How much does it cost?" [47]

Throughout this chapter, I have analyzed pivotal elements within the process of Haitian emigration to South America, aiming to demonstrate that we can use the concept of a subaltern gamble to frame and understand this phenomenon. With this concept, I intend to counter the often-stated explanations, simplifications indeed, about Haitian emigration to Latin America as an unexpected outcome resulting from the 2010 earthquake. On the contrary, the subaltern gamble expresses that Haitian emigration is an investment of economic and social resources that Haitians risk in moments of conjuncture and opportunity and contains aspirations and class projects, such as finding jobs and sending remittances or studying for a university degree. Moreover, in this gamble for the future, Haitians act as members of family units. The individual who departs thus leaves as the bearer of the family investment. In this sense, emigration is a dangerous gamble because if the project fails, the family investment is lost, while debts persist and losses are suffered, sometimes at the cost of human lives.

By way of conclusion, I would like to reproduce a final excerpt from an interview with a Haitian migrant, in which he tells me about the Temporary Protected Status that the Obama administration granted to Haitians residing in the United States, and which was one

[47] "Nosotros siempre que llegar a un país, llegar un manera, bueno, dice que migrante, pero cuando llegar nosotros, ejemplo aquí, nosotros no comportar como migrante, porque siempre tiene dinero en su bolsa, puede comprar, puede rentar casa, puede hacer todo lo que quiere, eso que descubre mucha gente de nosotros, pero los africanos no, siempre necesitar que dar algo. Nosotros cada país pasamos, gastamos dinero, pero nadie nos lo ayudar a nosotros. Y hasta llegar aquí mucha gente piensa que "ah, ellos necesitan, vamos a llevar algo, vamos a llevar algo y cuando llevar parece que no lo quiere, que no lo necesitar", así lo vi, "ah, ellos no tienen problema, ah ellos no tienen problema de eso", porque, bueno pues no comportan como gente que lo necesita. Y entonces luego nosotros quedamos así. Los africanos no, porque siempre llegar, aunque tienen dinero en su bolsa, que siempre se poner como en la gente que necesitan y los haitianos no, llegar a un lugar y "¿cuánto cuesta eso?", dar dinero, "quiero una casa, ¿cuánto cuesta?" "Quiero zapato bueno, tenni bueno".

of the reasons why a re-emigration from South America to the Mexico-U.S. border took form. This Haitian informant in Tijuana took the time to explain how he understood the TPS and the bureaucratic process of humanitarian visas in the United States based on what he had talked about and heard from acquaintances and friends who had crossed the border. According to him:

> Obama gave each [Haitian] person a chance to arrive and cross [the border] and gave them a three-year permit before judging whether or not they qualified to stay in the United States [as refugees]. The United States will send you back to Haiti if you do not qualify for refuge. Nevertheless, you can get a lawyer [to resolve your legal situation], marry [a U.S. citizen], or try to do something to obtain the paper, even though the government would legally reject you. Thus, Obama allowed many Haitians to arrive, stay for three years and find work. If after three years they deport us, we could still earn money after working there because the salary is different compared to other countries. [48]

This brief intervention is illustrative because it shows how Haitians understand their post-2010 emigration in a dynamic entangled between calculative reasonings and uncertain terrains. Clearly and concisely, this Haitian migrant explained how extraordinary regularizations (such as the TPS and the Brazilian humanitarian visas) could be a valuable resource for Haitians to anchor their projects, even if the chances of getting asylum are not optimal. This worthiness of the humanitarian visas is due to the exceptionalism opened by them in the form of moratoriums, within which Haitians can glimpse an attractive

[48] "Desde [el] tiempo Obama, [él] le dio una oportunidad de cada una persona y llegar y se cruza y le dio un permiso de tres años, antes de juzgarlo y luego se le califica para se quedar [en] Estados Unidos. Si no lo calificar, lo pide que se regresa, ok, o buscar un abogado, o puedes casar. Puede hacer algo para que tener su papel, pero legalmente del gobierno, se lo rechazar completamente. Pero le dio esta oportunidad, dice, a muchos, bueno, sí, llegar, sí hacer tres años y encontró trabajo, dice tres años que me deportan, que me regreso, ahí se puede tener dinero de tres años trabajar allá es diferente que de otro país. Y entonces cuando llegamos [a la frontera de México-Estados Unidos] y luego al final empezar a deportar gente y entonces nosotros que estamos aquí, quedamos."

possibility of emigration directed towards specific purposes, such as their labour integration.

Chapter 3 Integral State in the Northern Border of Mexico: The Arrival of Haitians in Tijuana

In October 2018, while I was conducting fieldwork in Tijuana, the news about the first Central American Migrant Caravan on its way to the Mexican border began circulating in local and national media. The reproduction of images of the southern Mexican border crossed by thousands of people entering through Guatemala fostered a general atmosphere of animosity against the Central Americans in Tijuana; a discourse of a "migrant invasion" was reproduced in public opinion, attaching several negative signifiers to these potential immigrants. In addition, the newspapers conveyed the information that external agitators were provoking the caravan; that in the amorphous mass were hidden members of the *Mara Salvatrucha* (the international Salvadoran gang initially formed in Los Angeles); that they were drug addicts and petty criminals; and that they did not respect Mexico or its laws. [49]

In contrast to this discursive construction of Central Americans in Tijuana, the media and the general public have portrayed Haitians as *good migrants.* [50]Moreover, after two years of living in Mexico, the Haitian migrants were celebrated as an example of harmonious integration and respectful individuals willing to work and contribute to border society. However, the arrival of thousands of Haitians in Tijuana comprised a series of collisions and improvised negotiations between local bureaucracies, civil society, and

[49] As an example, the following newspaper's headings: "Convocan en Tijuana a marcha contra migrantes"/"In Tijuana, a march against migrants is called" (Milenio, November 2018), "Alcalde de Tijuana dijo que hay 'marihuanos' entre centroamericanos de la Caravana Migrante" / "Mayor of Tijuana: there are potheads among Migrant Caravan's Central Americans" (Economía Hoy, November, 2018), "Autoridades ya no 'aguantan' a los migrantes"/"Authorities cannot 'stand' migrants anymore" (Zeta, January 2019).

[50] As an example, the following newspaper's headings: "Haitianos muestran el camino a seguir a caravana migrante para vivir en Tijuana." / “Haitians teach the path to follow to the Migrant Caravan on how to live in Tijuana.” (EFE, November 2018), “Haitiano/Tijuanense, ¡Qué honor de paisanaje!"/ “Haitian/Tijuanense, what honour of countrymen!” (El Universal, February 2022), "Los haitianos en Tijuana son vistos como migrantes ejemplares"/ “Haitians in Tijuana are seen as exemplary migrants”. (San Diego Union, December 2018).

subaltern classes, obscured by these celebratory narratives. In this chapter, I argue that these relationships provide insight into the "integral state" at work on the border, composed of moments of coercion and consensus and directed to practically resolve particular "migratory crises."

Gramsci employed the notion of the integral state to capture how the state, as the exercise of power, works with civil society to create consensus. Expanding on Gramsci's work, Peter Thomas (2009) explains:

> With this concept, Gramsci attempted to analyse the mutual interpenetration and reinforcement of 'political society' and 'civil society' (to be distinguished from each other methodologically, not organically) within a unified (and indivisible) state-form. According to this concept, the state (in its integral form) was not to be limited to the machinery of government and legal institutions (the 'state' understood in a limited sense). Rather, the concept of the integral state was intended as a dialectical unity of the moments of civil society and political society. Civil society is the terrain upon which social classes compete for social and political leadership or hegemony over other social classes. Such hegemony is guaranteed, however, 'in the last instance', by capture of the legal monopoly of violence embodied in the institutions of political society (137).

This expanded notion of the state is instructive and corrective because it allows us to see a constellation of power relations in interplay while avoiding falling into the reductionism, recurrent in the anthropology of migration, of separating the spheres of the state and civil society (for example, Vogt, 2018). In this way, instead of separating the state from civil society, considering the latter an autonomous sphere of action with its differentiated logic, the notion of the integral state includes both as two moments, organically co-constituted (Chandhoke, 1995; Buttigieg, 1995). The propensity to separate civil society from the logic of the state has allowed researchers to study the involvement of organized civil society, especially NGOs, as centers of virtuosity and defence of migrants and their human rights. On the ground of this theoretical narrowness, researchers reduced the state to act as a

merely coercive force. While I do not deny that the state occupies a role of force as it has the capacity and power to exercise coercion, that is, violence, I maintain that by not attending to the moment of consensus and negotiation, our understanding of specific political processes remains incomplete. As Gramsci understood it, the integral state is an attempt to capture how, in their apparent opposition, civil society and political society (the moments of persuasion and coercion) work to maintain an equilibrium or balance, albeit always unstable. However, the relationships between these two spheres or moments within the process of hegemonic struggle are never complete, static or homogeneous, just as it is never exempt from tensions or conflicts. That is, the integral state does not suppose a harmonious constitution. Based on field interviews and media analysis, this chapter chronicles the arrival, crisis, and regularization of Haitian asylum seekers at the Mexico-U.S. border, framing this process as a manifestation of an integral Mexican state.

Literature on border dynamics, transit migration, and administration of populations emphasize the combination of biopolitical and necropower technologies constitutive of these social processes. Rosas (2011), for example, speaks of a thickening of the border, where the national limits of the United States are reinscribed within the country, criminalizing people in conditions of deportability [51]; while Slack (2019) has studied how deportation to Mexico entails a punitive process that adds an extra layer of violence against deportees, especially by putting them in dangerous environments. For her part, Estévez (2018) develops the idea that there are necropolitical devices deliberately exercised by the dominant states and classes, operated with the explicit objective of generating a lucrative

[51] By deportability, I understand the condition of unauthorized migrants marked by the always latent possibility of being deported.

industry from the production of migration flows (see also Andersson 2014). For their part, Marchand (2021) and Merlín-Escorza et al. (2021) address how biopower and its counterpart, necropolitics, are exerted by powerful classes and by non-hegemonic social groups, such as shelters or NGOs. Moreover, the authors show how those groups reproduce disciplinary techniques, instrumentalizing the interests of migrant populations for political or economic purposes. Finally, Castro Neira (2018) analyzes the function of the fetishism of the law (its reification as a fact in itself, absent from the social relations that make it up) regarding violence against populations in movement, in a process within which the discursivity about a crisis can functionally serve as justification for coercive intervention.

The cited literature recognizes the dynamics of control and administration of life, death, and suffering, explaining the expansion of practices and technologies of biopower and necropolitics from the states to the civil sphere and from the border as a peripheral place to the nations' interior (both as places of transit, and deportation). However, there is a gap in the literature about how the hegemonic classes articulate the consensus that validates and gives meaning to the practices of population administration just described. In other words, there is a need to know more about the alliances through which civil society organizations such as NGOs and shelters can control stranded populations. Attending to this gap, in this chapter, I argue that shelters and NGOs operate within an integral state and that it is only through consensus building that they can exercise leadership and direction over subaltern classes on the border.

To contribute to our understanding of border processes, in this chapter, I focused on the unexpected arrival of Haitian asylum seekers at the Tijuana-San Diego border, addressing it as a moment of crisis. My use of the concept of crisis to name this specific

moment on the border derives from local narratives and negotiations between multiple people and organizations. In this sense, I agree with Heyman, Slack and Guerra, who explained that the political discourse of "crisis" serves as a language of contention, negotiations and struggles within the processes of border formation, reproduction and change taking place on different scales (2018, p. 755). In particular, I analyze the correlation of forces converging on the border by focusing on the formation and development of moments of crisis and the civil and bureaucratic responses. Through the present analysis of the relations of forces on the Tijuana border, I maintain that in the so-called border crises, it is possible to see the hegemonic apparatus that operates on the Mexico-U.S. border.

Thus, this chapter addresses the Mexico-U.S. border as a field of power to understand the relationships between what Gramsci called subaltern and hegemonic classes. In particular, by focusing on the "complex unity of consensus and coercion in situations of domination" (Roseberry, 1994, p. 358), I analyze how civil society emerges as an intermediate actor between both classes (subaltern and hegemonic), fulfilling the role of the intellectuals explained by Gramsci. The chapter contains four central sections. In the first part, I outline what Gramsci understands by integral state, which entails extending the notion of state. The following three sections compose a chronicle of the months Tijuana experienced the arrival of Haitian asylum seekers. In this way, I describe this border crisis's formation, development and resolution. Within this chronicle, I focused on describing the process of the arrival of Haitians in Tijuana, which led to coordination between civil society organizations and government bureaucratic organizations; the tensions between civil society, political society and subaltern classes that emerged during this process; and

the mediation functions of the shelters and NGOs that served as places of reception of Haitian migrants in Tijuana. Finally, within this chronicle, I also review the tensions between civil society and the Mexican government regarding funds and between Haitian classes and Mexican NGOs concerning life inside the shelters during the time the contingency lasted.

Integral State

For Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), what characterizes modernity is the incorporation of the popular masses into political action and, therefore, the distancing of the people from feudal and monarchical attachments (Q8, §21; Q13, §7; Q17, §3; Q19, §9). For the subaltern classes' incorporation into the political sphere, the leadership of the Jacobins was necessary (Q1, §44; Q13, §1), promoting the transformation of the regime and constituting a unitary state bloc between the countryside and the city (Q8, §§ 34, 61; Q19, §24). To force the political situation to the point of no return characterizes Jacobinism in contrast to reformation or passive revolution that strives to maintain the stability of a dominant structure (Q8, §§ 2, 21).

The project of a unitary block between the countryside and the city for Gramsci represents the overcoming of the "corporate-economic" state phase, in which the dominant classes govern without considering the needs and aspirations of the dominated classes (Q1, §149; Q6, §75; Q11, §53). For this reason, Gramsci sees the modern bourgeois state, with French Jacobinism as its vanguard, as something more than a corporate apparatus of administration and repression. Instead, Gramsci expands the concept of state, adding an

active and directive role as an educator of the masses (Q7, §33; Q8, §120; Q23, §8; Q24, §2). The modern state thus resembles Machiavelli's centaur (Q8, §86; Q13, §14), where the half-animal component represents the punitive, repressive, and coercive functions, and the human half is the expression of consensus and persuasion. The concept that Gramsci develops in the *Prison Notebooks* to name this dialectical unit is that of the integral state (Q6, §§137, 155, 170, 200; Q12, §1; Q13, §16; Q17, §51).

In the Gramscian approach, the state assumes an educational function on the subaltern classes to shape a consensus that actively legitimizes domination (Q1, §47; Q25, §4). However, in this process, Gramsci acknowledges that it is not the state's narrow version (administrative-repressive) that solidifies this pedagogical task. Instead, civil society, particularly the intellectuals, actively elaborate the ways of thinking and the feelings of the masses as collective wills. In this way, intellectuals occupy the position of mediators between the dominant and subaltern classes; meanwhile, civil society emerges as the arena where subalterns become aware of their class position, either naturalizing it or responding to it.

Thus, the concept of hegemony in Antonio Gramsci's work denotes the combination of relations of force necessary to maintain a balance, always unstable, between consensus and coercion within a specific integral state. Here, it is relevant to note the Gramscian angle of not considering the exercise of hegemony as something stable, fixed, or immutable as if it were a formula (see Anderson 1976) but instead as an articulation of elements within a process open and situated (Roseberry, 1994). In other words, the analysis of hegemony aims to reveal the forces, sometimes in conflict, sometimes in agreement, from which the direction of a political project or state is determined.

In this way, the prison notes "Analysis of Situations and Power Relations" (for example, Q8 §37 and Q13 §17) are a critical reading of the different planes from which the classes contend for hegemony and political leadership, as well as political guidelines to broaden the proletarian-political struggle and organization beyond the war of maneuver, that is, beyond the immediate takeover of power through a well-directed coup (Q1, §117; Q7, §§ 10, 16; Q8, §52). The relationship between a war of position and a war of maneuver is relevant to understanding how Gramsci analyzes the functions of civil society as "the formidable complex of trenches and fortifications of the ruling class" (Q3, §49), "very resistant to the catastrophic 'irruptions' of the immediate economic factors (crises, depressions, etc.)" (Q7, §10). In this sense, Gramsci delineates the notion of hegemony according to the tactical principle that "a class can (and must) 'lead' even before assuming power;" and so "when it is in power it becomes dominant, but it also continues to 'lead'" (Q1, §44).

The situations I address in this chapter compose relations of forces at one conjuncture locally framed as a humanitarian, migratory, and border crisis. In this analysis, the contribution of William Roseberry regarding the language of contention is enlightening. For Roseberry (1994), as hegemony does not denote a closed or monolithic process but an open and dynamic one, the concept demands attention to the relationships and tensions within the exercise and struggle for hegemony. Thus, for the author, "what hegemony constructs, then, is not a shared ideology but a common material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting upon social orders characterized by domination" (361). Under this framework, this chapter presents a narrative about the

relationship between civil society, political society, and subaltern classes at Mexico's northern border, based on the Gramscian concepts of hegemony and integral state.

The Border Apparatus

By 2016, more than 60,000 Haitians had emigrated to Brazil. Some Haitians left for Brazil (usually after 2014) and went to Chile or other South American countries such as Peru or Argentina. However, in 2016, Haitians began a new and long journey through South and Central America (Dubuisson, 2018; Valles, 2020), aiming to reach the Tijuana border with San Diego and request humanitarian asylum from the United States.

Two variables can be considered educated inferences without a conclusive interpretation about why Haitians came to Tijuana *en masse*. On the one hand, Haitians perceived Tijuana as a safe city to cross to request asylum, particularly compared to Ciudad Juárez (Chihuahua) or Matamoros (Tamaulipas), which are border cities mired with violence. On the other hand, Haitians knew that the bureaucratic machinery necessary to request asylum was available at the Tijuana international crossing, thus making it relatively easy to cross without being deported. In the words of one Haitian that I interviewed in Tijuana,

> Before we arrived [in Tijuana], they began to deport people on the other border that [Mexico] has. Nevertheless, not here in Tijuana. In Tijuana, they do not deport anyone. All the people who entered through Tijuana [in mid-2016] were released, but they were apprehended for a long time on the other border.[52]

[52] "Es que antes que llegar aquí, del otro frontera que tiene [México] empezar a deportar gente, pero aquí en Tijuana no, aquí en Tijuana no, no deporta a nadie, este momento toda la gente que entra por esta frontera de Tijuana se lo liberaron, y de la otra frontera se agarran por mucho tiempo."

Pioneer Haitians shared this knowledge with potential migrants when they began to cross Mexico in early 2016. Among the people I interviewed in Tijuana, for example, there were also mentions of Haitian acquaintances who arrived in San Luis Río Colorado (Sonora, 210 kilometres from Tijuana) and another who decided to come first to Mexicali (Baja California, 146 kilometres from Tijuana), exploring the best place to cross. In other words, Haitians chose Tijuana, among other border crossing options considered, as a collective migration strategy based on the previous experiences of pioneer migrants.

To cross through Mexico, Haitians successfully used different strategies of collective action. For example, some Haitians sought to pass as Africans on the Mexican border with Guatemala at the international border station *Siglo XXI* in Tapachula (Chiapas, Mexico). By voluntarily presenting themselves as Congolese without identification documents, these Haitians reduced their chance of deportation and facilitated their journey through Mexico. Immigration authorities at Mexico's southern border could not verify Congolese citizenship because there is no diplomatic representation of many African countries in Mexico. Additionally, even if authorities could verify Congolese citizenship, the deportation process to Africa is expensive and impractical due to the lack of international treaties between Mexico and African countries concerning repatriation processes.

To deal with the situation of border crossings, the Mexican *Instituto Nacional de Migración* (INM or National Institute of Migration) in Tapachula typified the status of Haitians as stateless persons and granted a 21-day safe-conduct (*oficio de salida)* to regularize their situation in Mexico, following international agreements to which Mexico is a signatory country. However, instead of using the oficio de salida to regularize their presence in Mexico, most Haitian asylum-seekers used the document to travel the almost

4,000 kilometres separating Tapachula from Tijuana at the northern border with the United States. According to one local academic report, Haitians who crossed Tapachula spent, on average, five days retained at the southern Mexican border (Paris Pombo, 2018, p.26). However, by law, Mexico's authorities could have retained them there for 60 days (82). By granting hundreds of oficios de salida, the INM in Chiapas avoided an agglomeration at its border port of entry but moved it to Tijuana, perhaps expecting that the U.S. immigration authorities would take care of the situation, knowing that that country was the intended destination for these people in transit.

With the oficios de salida allowing authorized transit in Mexico, Haitians avoided what in the literature is known as the vertical or arterial border (Kovic & Kelly, 2017; Vogt, 2018; Varela, 2019). The vertical border refers to the multiple obstacles and dangers Central American immigrants in transit through Mexico encounter on their way to the U.S. border, such as corrupt authorities, criminal organizations, and untrustworthy coyotes. Thus, instead of resorting to clandestine routes and hiding while on the road, Haitians took direct commercial buses from Tapachula to Tijuana, spending, on average, a few days on the road before reaching their destination. In all cases, the number of days in Tapachula spent by Haitians directly depended on how much money they had available at the moment of the crossing, with instances in which the asylum-seekers had to wait for money that would be sent to them by relatives, usually located in the United States.

In this way, at the end of May 2016, local and national press media in Tijuana reported on an unusual flow of asylum seekers concentrated in the pedestrian crossing of El Chaparral, the international port of entrance to San Ysidro, California, United States. Among the asylum-seekers were African and Asian immigrants, Mexicans from Guerrero

and Michoacán, Central Americans from the Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras), and Haitians from Brazil and Chile. According to media reports, during the last days of May, the number of people seeking asylum in Tijuana was around six to seven hundred individuals, representing a considerable increase in numbers at the northern border of Mexico, particularly in Tijuana. The simultaneous and unexpected arrival of hundreds of applicants overwhelmed the administrative capacities of the U.S. asylum apparatus,[53] which appeared insufficient in space and personnel (mainly translators), creating a constant concentration of individuals outside the international point of entry. According to the lead representative of the Camino de Salvación Baptist Church, an organization that would be incorporated as a shelter later in the process, the moment stood out from "the usual":

> Tijuana is a city of migrants where migration is an everyday thing. People worldwide arrive daily, but it is in small numbers. However, these were great waves of thousands and thousands that came. Two or three buses with 40 people arriving every day! (Interview with Altamirano, 2019). [54]

Despite the plurality of nationalities crowding the San Ysidro-El Chaparral port of entry, the United States soon recognized Haitians as the most common nationality among the group. On the one hand, the presence of Haitians at the border was related to the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) offered by the United States after the 2010 earthquake and different family reunification programs and humanitarian paroles to Haitian nationals

[53] Heyman (2012) makes a compelling and engaging argument about the structure and superstructure of the U.S. border, overfunded in inter-port spaces where punitive and interdiction measures are applied while underfunded in ports of entry, thus neglecting the processes of asylum carried out on land entries.

[54] "…nunca se declaró una crisis en ese tiempo, no. No se declaró una crisis humanitaria. Lo que sí se declaro fue que habían situaciones… una migración inusitada. Tijuana es una ciudad de migrantes, la migración es cosa de todos los días, diario llegan gentes de todo el mundo, pero es como a cuentagotas, ¿no? Pero estas así, grandes oleadas que llegaron, de miles y miles que llegaban. ¡Llegaban diario! Dos-tres camiones con 40 personas, así que estamos hablando de unas 120 a 180, diario fueron llegando a Tijuana y entonces el gobierno nunca declaró, ningún nivel de gobierno declaró emergencia, crisis, pero sí decía que había una situación, un flujo extraordinario y que pues ya, los pocos albergues que había en la ciudad para atender a migrantes, pus fueron rebasados".

already residents in the United States. However, on the other hand, Haitians were also fearful that Donald Trump could win the presidential election and would dismantle all those benefits that Haitians have had during the last decade, thus hardening a possible border crossing. After all, the Republican candidate based his presidential campaign on a nativist and xenophobic discourse, symbolically represented by the idea of the border wall protecting the nation from external menaces.

The number of people increased rapidly, with buses full of Haitian migrants arriving daily. During those weeks, Haitians who could cross passed a first inspection conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), in which United States immigration agents would determine their eligibility for asylum. They were then registered by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) if they were eligible. After CBP registration, Haitian migrants were put back in custody by ICE until their turn to go with the asylum judge due to an already saturation of the system of asylum applications. During this first stage, the United States did not deport Haitians, even though not all were eligible for asylum. On the contrary, most of the Haitian asylum seekers were paroled and allowed to wait for their cases inside the United States as a measure to decongest the international point of entry.

The situation was becoming critical due to the expected arrival of new contingents of Haitians, who were still on the route in Central and South America, as the municipal chief of *Dirección de Atención al Migrante* in Tijuana (the Municipal Migrant Assistance Department), Rosario Lozada, warned at that time. Thus, Lozada argued that the federal government had to act quickly to manage a worsening situation since the number of daily arrivals far exceeded the number of daily crossings, in a phenomenon resembling a funnel. However, contrary to Lozada's warning, the first official declarations from federal

authorities in both the United States and Mexico suggested the situation was under control. For example, Rodulfo Figueroa from INM declared that although the situation was exceptional, he was confident that the United States would resolve it.

Without a direct, centralized strategy, Mexico organized a joint intervention in which government agencies, NGOs, and religious centers participated as an immediate response to the agglomeration of people at the border post. This effort included the then-recently created *Dirección Municipal de Atención al Migrante*, *Grupo Beta* (INM's humanitarian arm in charge of protecting deported or in-transit migrants), the Social Development Secretariat of Baja California (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social del Estado de Baja California*), and the Mexican National Institute of Migration. The three levels of government (municipal, state, and federal) coordinated efforts around immediate attention, offering asylum-seekers medical assistance, food, blankets, and clothes. On the other hand, shelter assistance was made available to recently arrived asylum-seekers by the municipal DIF office (*Desarrollo Integral de la Familia*), the only official shelter, and by four well-established local civil society organizations, all religious in orientation (three Catholic and one Methodist).

Three of these four organizations had operated temporary shelters before the arrival of Haitians, attending to people deported from the United States.[55] They were part of a broader coalition of organizations, *Coalición Pro Defensa del Migrante*. Two of them work in tandem (one with men, the other with women), side by side at the hillside edges of the *Zona Norte*, near the international border. The fourth association did not function as a shelter before the Haitian arrival; on the contrary, it had been a soup kitchen serving daily

[55] These kinds of NGOs give attention to recent deportees for only a few days, and then the individuals must decide what to do and where to go.

breakfast to deportees and people in street situations living in *la Zona*. As explained in an interview by one of the coordinators:

> It all started in late May. The INM's authorities called us to a meeting, explaining that people from different countries were arriving and needed help sheltering them. So, we were like five shelters to the reunion, and the commitment would last two weeks, three at most. However, it was the beginning of almost eight months of engagement, not only with Haitians, because people also came from 34 other countries (Interview with Murphy, 2019). [56]

The main problem for these shelters was how to serve people arriving, leaving, and getting stranded. To cope with this situation, Grupo Beta and shelters' representatives moved people from the shelters to the international line and vice versa. Mexican authorities organized this movement of people around a waiting list controlled by immigration representatives and the shelters. The asylum seekers presented the *oficio de salida* issued in Tapachula by the National Institute of Migration to be allowed on the waiting list. Through the waiting list, the shelters mediated between the asylum-seekers and the Mexican and U.S. authorities, managing the flow of people crossing to request asylum. Proceeding in this way, the government of Tijuana tried to avoid conglomerations at the international port, maintaining a continuous flow of asylum seekers in and out of the system of shelters. Each day, INM agents directed only the number of asylum cases pre-authorized by the United States (ranging from 30 to 100), following the order of the list controlled by the shelters and Mexican authorities. According to one of the shelter coordinators interviewed for the local media:

[56] "Todo comenzó como en los fines de mayo, nos llamó el delegado de Migración a una junta para explicar que estaba llegando gente de diferentes países y ellos necesitan ayuda con hospedaje y todo eso. Y entonces fuimos como cinco albergues a esta junta y el propósito que iba a durar dos semanas, tres, máximo. Pero era el comienzo de un compromiso de casi ocho meses y no solamente haitianos, llegaron gente de 34 países durante estos seis meses".

> Migration authorities, ours [Mexican], have told them [the asylum-seekers] to get out of there [the international port] because there are still people waiting for the United States to attend them on the border. However, the United States asked INM to shelter and enlist them, and with the list, from this Tuesday, they would be attended [by the United States]. However, the United States would only take care of their request if they were in the shelters. (Uniradioinforma, May 2016). [57]

As can be seen, the structure deployed on the border involved coordination and hierarchies between the U.S. bureaucratic apparatus, Mexican immigration authorities, shelters and civil society organizations, and asylum seekers. Under these circumstances, Tijuana functioned as an immigrant waiting station (Silva Hernández & Padilla Orozco, 2020, p.12), with Mexico's civil and political societies directly responding to the United States' demands and necessities. From these first days until the end of the process, Mexican civil society organizations acted with state representatives, fulfilling directive and leadership functions within a process requiring organization and coordination between different levels. In this sense, the asylum-seekers had to accept Mexican civil society's leadership as a necessary intermediary actor between the governments of Mexico and the United States.

At first glance, the arrival of thousands of Haitian asylum seekers to the Mexico-U.S. border hints at the deployment of a joint intervention between Mexican political society and civil society in Tijuana, akin to the Gramscian notion of an integral state. However, a first analysis shows that this integral Mexican state did not act autonomously but was influenced by U.S. border policy designs and needs. In other words, as asylum

[57] "Las autoridades migratorias, las nuestras, les han dicho que se retiren de ahí, ya dado que Estados Unidos solicitó a Inami que hiciera una, de alguna forma albergue para ellos y que se fueran de alguna forma enlistando y conforme a la lista a partir del martes iban a ser atendidos, entonces si no están dentro de los albergues no podrán ser atendidos Porque hay gente que está en la línea esperando ser atendidos". Uniradioinforma (2016, May 29). "Alcalde supervisa albergues para migrantes varados en Tijuana".

seekers flocked to the border region, the United States exercised a hegemonic influence proper of what Gramsci called a Great Power (Q8, §79; Q13, §15).

The position proper of Great Power (*Grande Potenza*) has to do with "the ability of a state to set its activities on an autonomous course so influential that other powers are bound to be affected by it"[58] (Q13, §19; also, Q4, §67). These other powers, subalterns to the hegemonic nation, are conditioned by the need to follow and resent the foreign hegemony and the inability to influence the great powers. In this case, the practical purpose of the hegemonic power was to manage the stream of asylum seekers beginning to overwhelm the U.S. border bureaucratic apparatus. Thus, the responsibility of attending to the asylum seekers did not fall on the United States but on the Mexican side of the border, de facto externalizing the U.S. boundaries and using the Mexican border apparatus as proxy regulation of Haitian migration. In this way, the deployment of the border apparatus made up of bureaucratic-governmental bodies and organizations-shelters of civil society had the purpose of cushioning the arrival of the thousands of asylum seekers at the border.

In the process, the international border functioned both as a structure and a superstructure of the U.S. migration policy, material and ideological, imposing the pace at which the border was opened and determining the flow of daily crossings. In this sense, when I asked about the binational cooperation during those months, Cesar Palencia, the head of the *Dirección de Atención al Migrante* in 2018, replied that,

> Those issues concern the INM and the federal government, but I would say yes [there was cooperation between the two countries], but not in the complete sense of the word. For example, they [the United States] could easily have received 100-200 [asylum-seekers] a day. However, the policy was only to allow 30-40 [daily

[58] My translation from: “El modo como se manifiesta el ser gran potencia es dado por la posibilidad de imprimir a la actividad estatal una dirección autónoma, cuya influencia y repercusión deben sufrir los otros Estados: la gran potencia es potencia hegemónica, jefe y guía de un sistema de alianzas y de acuerdos de mayor o menor extensión” (Q13, §19).

> crossings] to force them [the asylum-seekers] to fight for one spot so that they no longer wanted to come (*para que la perreen y ya no vengan*). [59] (Interview with Palencia, 2019)

Life Within Shelters

Despite the integral deployment of border containment, it was evident from the beginning that the four shelters were not ready for the influx of asylum seekers. The shelters lacked the logistics and infrastructure required and suffered from overcrowding. In this context, the shelters expressed concern about overcrowding, urging the federation to declare a crisis at the border. According to Father Patrick Murphy, director of *Casa del Migrante*, the main difference was that if the Mexican state had announced an emergency, the money would have flowed conspicuously from the federation to the shelters. Additionally, the recognition of a crisis by the Mexican state would have implicated a frontal intervention, for example, establishing a state-operated camp with paid employees instead of using NGOs and religious centers. However, according to Murphy, Mexico did not want to accept that the situation was out of control. As a result, the money circulated slowly from the state to the NGOs, and the NGOs spent the state resources to improve their shelters with infrastructure works. Mexico's government also provided goods for the daily maintenance of the asylum-seekers and forgave the shelter the payments of some bills such as electricity or gas.

During the time Haitians continued to arrive, the situation was delicate, and the shelters worked against the clock in spaces crowded with asylum seekers. According to local informants, it was common to see multiple buses loaded with 120-180 Haitians arriving in Tijuana daily. The pace of arrivals overwhelmed the shelter system in Tijuana to

[59] "Todo ese tema lo ve el Instituto Nacional de Migración con el gobierno federal, yo te diría que sí pero no con toda la extensión de la palabra. Ellos bien podrían haber recibido 100-200 diario, haciendo un gran esfuerzo, pero también pues la idea, la política era, "no, pues 30-40 para que la *perreen* y ya no vengan".

the point that the asylum seekers set up a makeshift camp outside El Chaparral in July. At this time, the Mexican government had to expand the network of shelters, adding several organizations from the Pro-Migrant Coalition and other groups with history and structure within the city. In total, Mexico opened about a dozen shelters in the summer of 2016, each housing an average of 50 to 100 asylum seekers, depending on the shelter's capacity. This incorporation of new groups implied an extension of the negotiations between state representatives, civil society, and religious organizations. Still, the structure remained as was established initially around the waiting list.

By the end of August, the *Siglo XXI* port of entry in Tapachula, Chiapas (on the southern border of Mexico), was full of Haitians, accounting for approximately 500 crossings daily. At the other border, the shelters in Tijuana reported by that month, having attended 2,638 Haitians and extracontinental immigrants out of 5,735 asylum seekers (the rest were Mexicans and Central Americans). Throughout the contingency, the shelters attended only a fraction of asylum-seekers in Tijuana. The others were likely coordinating to share hotel expenses or rent rooms. Thus, when the shelters remained overcrowded, many stopped accepting new asylees and, in some cases, even reduced or stopped the attention to Mexican deportees (who, according to official numbers, continued to represent a continuous flow into the city).

Under this panorama, the Department of Homeland Security announced on September 22 that the deportations of Haitians would be resumed after the United States had suspended them due to humanitarian reasons following the 2010 earthquake. In September, INM reported that 15,000 non-Mexicans crossed Mexico through Tapachula, 7,500 had already crossed to the United States from Mexico, while 3,500 remained in Baja California (París Pombo, 2018, p.8). For their part, the United States closed the fiscal year

2016 (until September 30) with 6,424 Haitian crossings without documentation, a significant increase compared to the 339 during the fiscal year 2015.

From this moment on, the flow of asylum seekers would only augment until February 2017, when the numbers started to decrease. For example, at the end of September, images of *Desayunador Salesiano del Padre Chava* [Father Chava Soup-Kitchen] were widely disseminated on local and national media, showing Melchor Ocampo Street converted entirely into an informal camp of asylum seekers. Women and children often spent the night inside the shelter while fathers, brothers, husbands, and single migrants slept outside. In response to this situation, religious organizations of different denominations prepared hot meals and distributed blankets or personal hygiene items among the street camp Haitians. At the same time, in October, the Mexican Institute of Migration (INM) installed a mobile module outside the *Desayunador* where Haitians could do the paperwork to obtain a spot on the crossing waiting list.

Despite the coordination between the government and civil society and the numerous demonstrations of spontaneous solidarity, overcrowding in the shelters triggered some acts of disorder. For example, Rosario Lozada complained about fights among asylum seekers, pushing and beating each other up to gain a spot on the waiting list. Lozada also recounted how some Haitian women lined up for registration at the shelters with hidden jackets under their bellies to simulate pregnancy and obtain preferential treatment. Likewise, Mexican authorities identified an informal exchange, commerce, and falsification of waitlist spots.

During this time, many of the churches that had previously helped with the informal camps and city shelters began to open as shelters, often at the request of the National

Institute of Migration. Thus, by the beginning of October 2016, more than 30 new organizations, 22 of which were religious, were actively providing accommodations to the Haitian population in Tijuana. This number would grow to 40 shelters. These emerging groups were organizations without experience working as shelters (París Pombo, 2018). With this new addition, the waiting list system expanded for the last time. The daily number of crossings, which the United States indicated to Mexico, was distributed by the INM authorities among the total number of shelters. Within this distribution, each shelter called those would-be crossers, following an internal ordering of those sheltered at that spot. In the organization, Grupo Beta coordinated with the shelters the transportation of those asylum-seekers about to cross.

Over the next eight months, the churches and NGOs that opened in October 2016 would serve as humanitarian shelters for Haitian asylum-seekers in Tijuana. During that time, civil and religious organizations' representatives regulated asylum seekers' lives within shelters through internal coordination and organization. Inside everyday life in the shelters, the civil and religious associations' leaders represented the official authority.

In the concrete border apparatus deployed in Tijuana and given the religious orientation of most of the involved shelters, the relationships between the asylum seekers and the civil associations were paternalistic. This paternalism led to a quasi-direct identification of civil leaders with the official authority. As Father Patrick Murphy recalls: "I remember them insisting: 'you are going to talk with [the office of] Migration, right? They will open doors [for us] because you are a Father, right?'. OK, but this is your country's belief [he responded to them], as Father, I do not have authority with Migration"

(Interview with Murphy, 2019). [60] In this sense, it was not unusual that Haitians who were sheltered and then settled in Tijuana referred to pastors, priests, and civil leaders as dad or mom, and these, in turn to them as their children, as I more than once witnessed while volunteering in both churches and NGOs. However, this did not prevent that in daily life and with the passing of weeks and months, various frictions arose between the sheltered population and the religious-civil leaders.

The main problem for all the shelters was not sharing a lingua franca between Creole-speaking Haitians and Spanish-speaking Mexicans. For example, in general, shelter representatives would initially assume that Haitians were arguing or insulting each other based on the tone and intensity of their conversations, even though it was not the case. In the context of these language barriers, some individual Haitians stood out for their Spanish skills, obtained during past migratory journeys and served as intermediaries between the heads of the shelters and Haitian asylum seekers. These intermediaries were pivotal in communicating the necessary house ordinances, serving as interpreters of the collective announcements (such as daily departures) and the church's spiritual services. However, the principal problem with the interpreter's role was their transient presence. As part of the asylum seekers, interpreters eventually had to cross to the other side of the international line, forcing the shelters to find a new key informant to mediate. The same goes for the general order guidelines that prevailed within the shelters since it gave the impression that

[60] "Unas cosas que ellos tuvieron un sentido, que la iglesia tiene poder con el gobierno, me recuerdo que insistían conmigo 'tú vas a hablar con migración, verdad, van a abrir puertas, porque tú eres padre…', pero este es su creencia de su país, pero no, como padre no tengo una autoridad con la migración".

as soon as the shelters established a minimum regulation, the task had to be started again from scratch when new people cyclically arrived while others would leave.

Another recurring issue shared by all the shelters was the question of culturally appropriate food. According to several pastors and members of civil society, Haitians were reluctant to eat what the organizations offered. After initial misunderstandings and friction, the shelters decided that Haitians would cook food for other Haitians. The shelters then organized a group of Haitian women to give the food the seasoning and Caribbean taste. This labour time was, in all cases, unpaid.

This fussy or picky gesture regarding food contradicted a recurring trope in Tijuana's humanitarianism concerning immigrants as entirely dispossessed subjects. Some shelters' representatives noticed this alleged contradiction; in one case, according to a Haitian immigrant I interviewed, one religious leader scolded them for not being more dispossessed: "One day he said, 'agh... you all are not like immigrants. Look at your cell phone and look at mine: the one you all have is something good. You all have no need.'" [61] Other shelter representatives, who were less aggressive than the one just mentioned, noted Haitian men's taste for pomposity and dandyism, evident in the watches, cell phones, and sneakers they like to wear and show off. As other pastors indicated, this attitude was justified by arguing that many Haitians came with money saved after working a couple of years in Brazil.

[61] "Un día le dijo: ahhh… es que, es que ustedes no como migrantes porque mira celular que ustedes tienen, mira el mío, es el que regalaron a mí, el de ustedes tienen [es] algo bueno, es que ustedes no tienen necesidad".

However, in general, the Haitians I interviewed acknowledged that there was respectful treatment in the shelters and that they were grateful to Mexico for giving them food, shelter, and clothing when they arrived. Similarly, shelter staff said their experience with Haitians was gratifying and reflected how asylum seekers were generally calm and respectful. However, it is possible to document unpleasant experiences inside the shelters for the Haitian asylum-seekers, some related to the money the churches and civil society organizations had to cover as a monthly expense. Among the most severe cases that I could hear of abuse is that of a pastor who forced Haitians to pay for the costs of their accommodation, which had gone extremely high on that occasion:

> One day [the pastor] came to woke everyone up at ten, almost 11 pm. He said to us to pay for water or electricity. He woke up all the people to pay that money. I told him: "pastor, I think it is too late. You must let us sleep if you want to do that [collecting money] in the morning, that is fine, but right now, it is too late." He was very angry with me. He told me: "you have to pay!" I say yes, we must pay because we always pay. We know it, and we have no problem with that. He says: "if you do not pay, you all can go outside." I commented: "look, pastor, I am not a dog [...], and you are wrong, and you must never open your mouth to speak to me like that!" [62]

In another case of internal tensions, the leader of a non-religious shelter located in the North Zone narrated that when he tried to impose a preferential system for the asylum-seekers international crossings, prioritizing women and infants, Haitians reacted aggressively, almost creating a mutiny:

[62] "Un día [el pastor] viene a levantar a toda la gente a las 10, casi a las 11 de la noche, dice para pagar agua o luz. Yo creo que el último recibo de luz viene como 1,600, tanto dice, como 7 mil y tantos, porque trae un papel que no era normal [el recibo]. Y dice este último papel que viene para que se levantar toda gente para que pagáramos este dinero. Le digo, "pastor, yo creo que mañana casi todo vas a trabajar, es muy tarde, debe de dejar dormir, si tú quiere hacer eso antes, está bien, pero ahorita está muy tarde." Se quedó bien enojado conmigo. Me dice, "y bueno, ¡tiene que pagar!" Yo digo que sí, yo sé que tiene que pagar porque siempre pagamos y entonces tú sabes que cada uno aquí se puede pagar eso, no tiene problema con eso. Dice: "bueno, entonces, sí, si no paga todo se salga afuera". Yo comento, "mira pastor, no soy perro … tú está equivocado y equivocado de más y nunca tú abrir tu boca para que decirme eso."

> They were enraged, 50 *morenazos*, only lads and "shorties" like you and me: 1,90 metres tall! I remember that I even closed the gate at the end. I said to them: "well, I made my decision, *mijo*, and here I am the one who decides, so calm down, *cabrones*, or I will send for the police to calm you all down" (García Lara, 2019). [63]

In this case, the shelter leader on duty yielded to the complaints and did not carry on his preferential policy. However, as in other testimonies, I could document that it was not unusual for the civil and religious leaders to threaten to resort to the official authorities to impose order. Shelter leaders knew that the last guarantor to maintain order inside the shelters was the National Migration Institute and what the institute represented for Haitian asylum seekers: their possible deportation. For example, a Baptist pastor told me:

> During that time, there was an order [in the shelter]. On one occasion, Mr. Salinas [from INM] came. He told me in front of them, "pastor, if one day you have problems with any of them, if they do not listen to you, or if they want to disrespect you, or if they fight between themselves, you just have to call me, and I will come for them, and I take them all." They would listen to all that. Then they would say, "well, it is OK" (Interview with Serrano, 2018). [64]

Conversely, Haitian asylum seekers also had resources and strategies that appeared as the circumstances evolved. These resources, characteristic of subaltern cunning (Gramsci, Q1, §116), were deployed by Haitians for immediate practical purposes. For example, some religious-oriented shelters, mainly Protestant, identified that some Haitians pretended not only to be Protestant but also members of the church denomination where they stayed, for example, Baptists. In this case, Haitians intended to guarantee, as much as possible, their place within the shelter. Similarly, representatives of the shelter system identified that some

[63] "50 morenazos y puro *chavalón* y chaparrito como nosotros: de 1.90 de estatura […] estaban enfurecidos. Yo me acuerdo que hasta cerré el portón al último. Dije, ´bueno, mi decisión está tomada mijo y aquí el que decide soy yo, así que cálmense, cabrones, si no ahorita los mando a alivianar con la policía'.
[64] "Durante el tiempo había un orden. Porque incluso una ocasión que vino el licenciado Salinas [del INM], él me dijo "pastor", delante de ellos, "si un día usted tiene problemas con alguno de ellos, que no le haga caso, que le quiera faltar el respeto o que se peleen entre ellos, nomás me llama y yo vengo por ellos y yo me los llevo". Y ellos escuchaban todo eso, entonces decían "bueno OK"."

Haitians were passing as married couples, hoping to obtain preferential treatment in the order of the crossings administered with the waiting list. Reinforcing this point, Pascal Ustin Dubuisson, a Haitian migrant who wrote a book about the Haitian journey from South America to Tijuana, reflects: "One of the things that we [Haitians] unfortunately developed on this journey was knowing how to manipulate the situation and put things in our favour" (2018, p.136). [65]

The Language of Crisis and the Process of Regularization

As mentioned earlier, the emergence of the shelters for Haitian asylum seekers occurred on an ad hoc basis, and the shelters were in no way prepared regarding logistics or infrastructure. Therefore, in many cases, the churches' installations had to be adequate, adapting the worship area as sleeping quarters, organizing and installing infrastructures, such as bathrooms and showers, and even setting up tarpaulins on patios and outdoor areas. Added to the economic cost that the modifications to the facilities meant, there were ongoing expenses for civil society representatives, such as the payment of electricity, water, and gas. Although the religious leaders reported receiving waivers of a few months of payments, most agreed that it was their responsibility to cover a large part of the debts. Similarly, the churches and NGOs acknowledged that there were cash and in-kind contributions from the government, but they all agreed that the government aid was insufficient. In this sense, some Baptist churches recognize more the support they received

[65] My translation. In the original source: “Una de las cosas que desarrollamos desafortunadamente en esta travesía era el saber cómo manipular la situación y poner las cosas a nuestro favor”.

from a network of Baptist churches in San Diego and the donations that Tijuana society offered in solidarity.

Thus, friction between civil society members and state municipality representatives arose almost from the beginning. Overpopulation and fatigue of the coordinators and volunteers helped to make these frictions even tenser. For example, different reactions came after an unexpected sanitary visit to the shelters from the regional 2nd Health Jurisdiction (covering Tijuana, Tecate, and Playas de Rosarito) on Saturday, June 4. Reacting to the sanitary inspection, the director of *Casa del Migrante*, Patrick Murphy, publicly denounced the mayor Jorge Astiazarán Orci for obstructing the NGOs' work and recriminated that the obligation was, in fact, a governmental responsibility that civil associations agreed to do. This friction relates to the fact that Tijuana has no official shelter.

Patrick Murphy also criticized the federal government for not declaring a humanitarian or migratory crisis at the border, evidenced by the overcrowding of the shelters. He was supported in his criticism by *el Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria* (Strategic Humanitarian Help Committee). The Committee is an informal organization that started on Facebook during the Haitian arrival to Tijuana as an attempt to coordinate the humanitarian efforts among members, primarily donations and fundraising. The federal government never officially declared a crisis at the border. However, during the critical weeks and months, the crisis was part of a language of conflict between civil society and the state. For civil society representatives, if the state had acknowledged the crisis, not only would funds have been obtained for the NGOs and churches, but perhaps a humanitarian military force would have been deployed to assist them in administrating the asylum-seekers.

Other tensions took shape during this period of crisis. For example, among the emergent shelters that participated "once the rest of the important ones were saturated" (interview with García Lara 2019), one is in the Zona Norte, a few meters from Coahuila Street, Revolution Avenue, and the international port-of-entry. This shelter is part of a larger collective of civil organizations called the Migrant Alliance (*Alianza Migrante*). The group and the shelter work with Mexican deportees, and they are a well-established group in the city, having been the proponents of a special federal fund. The so-called *Fondo de Migralidad* aims to allocate special federal money to border cities, such as Tijuana and Mexicali, arguing that there is a more substantial burden of responsibilities and care services for migrants in border areas, especially considering the issue of forced returnees from the United States.

For the director of this shelter, the current federal fund distribution for migration issues, in which the Mexican federation allocates money according to the deportees each Mexican state has, makes no sense. For him, it is evident that many deportees, forced to return to Tijuana, relocate to that city, regardless of their state of origin. The Migrality Fund (called that way to differentiate it from the already existent Migration Fund) became relevant with the arrival of Haitians because their advocates argued that the fund should also exist to attend to border emergencies. Thus, the Haitian situation revived an older struggle within an ongoing negotiation and engagement between civil society groups and the federal government. The fund had become relevant in Tijuana because the temporary shelters awaited a wave of deportations, as Trump had been announcing in his presidential electoral campaign. As explained by García Lara,

> [With] The Migrality Fund [we are] talking about more than three billion pesos that we wanted to be approved in Mexico City, by the National Congress, by the federal deputies who are the ones who approve the resources for the entire country. [The Fund intends] to respond timely to immigration problems, either mass deportations or migrants in transit if there were many. It seems I was getting it right, *fíjate*. We were anticipating it because that was in 2014 (García Lara, 2019). [66]

Despite these tensions between civil society and the Mexican authorities, both sectors acted in tandem throughout the Haitian crisis at the border city.

Regardless of the resumption of deportations, many Haitians continued to try and cross into the United States. From October to January 2017, there were 7,588 crossings, of which the majority were deported from the United States back to Haiti. However, according to administrative staff at the shelters, what completely stopped the number of crossings and gradually decreased the number of arrivals to Tijuana was the electoral triumph of the republican candidate Donald Trump in January 2017. The flow of Haitians to the border, together with many other circumstances, was affected by the possibility that Trump could win the presidential election. For the asylum-seekers, the racist and nativist campaign of the Republican candidate against immigrants had caused fear that benefits and amnesties for Haitians in the United States could suddenly cease to exist. Simultaneously, the asylum-seekers were discouraged when they knew about people being deported. According to one Baptist pastor of one of the shelters:

> Knowing the United States president would change, there was much despair in those days of January. They were very anxious and desperate; they wanted to cross. Thus, when the change came, Haitians knew that the United States summarily deported many Haitians who crossed. The United States put them on a plane and deported about 300. Hence, they no longer wanted to cross. There was an opportunity for

[66] "El Fondo de Migralidad se habla de más de tres mil millones de pesos que se quería que se aprobara en el congreso, allá en la ciudad de México los diputados federales que son los que aprueban los recursos a todo el país, para que se atendiera en su momento, cuando hubiera un problema de migración, ya sea de deportaciones masivas, o ya sea de migrantes en tránsito, si fueran muchos. Parece que se le estaba atinando, fíjate. [Anticipando] ¡Anticipando! Fue en el 2014, fíjate".

> them to enter, but they said: "no because they want to deport us, and we do not want to go to Haiti; send us to another place but not to Haiti." Then they no longer wanted to cross (Marqués Tirado, 2019). [67]

This quote illustrates how Haitians began to change their plans and remain in Tijuana. Approximately 4,000 Haitians remained in Baja California (75% in Tijuana, the rest in Mexicali) out of the 20,000 who arrived. The situation for the Mexican government was what to do with them after they decided not to cross the border anymore. The shelters showed signs of fatigue after about eight months of continuous work (mainly for those who started in May and June). This weakening was physical and economical since the daily expenses (water, power, gas) were the shelters, churches and civil society organizations' responsibility. The problem was that Mexico was not contemplating the permanence of the Haitian asylum seekers at the border. Furthermore, given the exceptional nature of their cases, no regularization program was prepared for them. Mexico assumed, on the contrary, that this was a temporary population and that the United States would be in charge of deciding what to do with them once they crossed the border.

Until then, all measures applied by Mexico had been palliative. Haitian asylum seekers who entered Mexico by Tapachula were provided safe conduct or *oficios de salida*, with 21 days of validity and in all cases, the time had already expired for regularization in the country. By law, it was necessary to apply deportation measures; however, this did not happen. In their regard, for the shelter representatives, Haitians had to leave the shelters if

[67] "En enero, cuando hubo el cambio de presidente, Donald Trump. Ese mismo día, me parece que fue, ¿qué?, 28 de enero, ellos comienzan… se desesperan… hubo mucha desesperación esos días, sí, a saber que iba a haber un cambio de presidente de Estados Unidos, estaban muy ansiosos … estaban desesperados que querían cruzar, que querían cruzar, pero cuando llega el cambio, se escucharon o supieron de que muchos los que entraron los deportaron así directamente, los subieron a un avión y deportaron como 300, entonces ya no quisieron cruzar ellos. Y había oportunidad para que cruzaran para su entrevista, pero dijeron ya no, porque nos quieren deportar y no queremos ir a Haití. Que nos manden a otro lugar, pero no a Haití. Entonces ya no quisieron cruzar".

they were not going to cross to the United States. For their part, Haitians were in an intermediate limbo situation: they were a stranded population with no intention of either crossing into the United States or returning to Haiti; they were not hidden, as deportable immigrants often are, but were without legal possibilities to work. Therefore, they did not have the funds to leave the overcrowded shelters and rent a room in the city. Until early 2017, no Haitian asylum seekers had tried to leave the shelters to obtain work in the city, even though within the shelters, the asylum-seekers, directed by shelter administration staff, worked on the everyday tasks of cooking and cleaning. In general, however, they spent their days waiting.

Wilner Metelus, an activist for the rights of Afro-Mexicans and Naturalized people in Mexico, warned that without a legal framework to protect them from labour exploitation and provide regular status in Mexico, Haitians in Tijuana might be used by criminal groups, given their position of vulnerability and indeterminacy. For this reason, the transition from a passive and immobile position to an active and participatory one (outside the shelters and integrated into the city's labour dynamics) became a priority for Mexico. Simultaneously, the industrial and business classes in Tijuana, represented by the *Asociación de Recursos Humanos de la Industria en Tijuana A.C.* (ARHITAC), advertised the availability of many vacant positions in the *maquiladora* sector. These positions, they argued, were ready to be filled by foreign workers if needed. However, they clarified that they were unwilling to take that risk because Haitians had no legal status, much less the necessary work permits.

Despite not having regular status in Mexico, as Trump took office in January 2017, Haitians began to gradually leave the shelters and seek work in the city's informal work circuits. Irregular work then was openly tolerated to the point that in a press note of

February 20, 2017, Juana Pérez Floriano, representing the Secretary of Labour in Baja California (*Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión Social*), declared that she:

> […] acknowledged that these activities occur [informal labour] but assured that there is no persecution of employers or companies and that, on the contrary, they [the Secretary of Labour] are grateful that they [the maquiladoras and business classes] address a social problem [of unemployed Haitians] that until now was not resolved (El Financiero, 2017). [68]

Along with the regularization process, Haitians in Tijuana started to work in restaurants and hotels, construction, and street-level sales. According to the religious leaders who administered some of the shelters, during the beginning of 2017, maquilas, contractors, and private employers consistently came to the churches to request immigrant labour. Sometimes, they asked for Haitians precisely by referring to their skin colour. For example, Patrick Murphy recounted the ridiculousness of such requests when "one day a person came to the door and [asked for] three workers, but *negritos* [she requested]. No, ma'am [Patrick Murphy responded], we do not pick them by colour". [69]

In this context, on February 21, 2017, an initiative of legal regularization was publicly proposed in Tijuana, directed by a private law firm (*Barra de Abogadas "Lic. Ma. Sandoval de Zarco, A.C.*") in coordination with Mexican INM, Secretary of Labour and Social Prevision in Baja California (*Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social del Estado*, STPE), and the Baja California Human Rights Commission (*Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos*). The project also considered the participation of the Mexican Refugee Assistance Commission (*Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados*, COMAR) and the

[68] "Al respecto Juana Pérez Floriano, titular de la Secretaría de Trabajo Estatal reconoció que se dan estas actividades, pero aseguró que no hay persecución a patrones o empresas, y que por el contrario, se les agradece que atiendan un problema social que hasta el momento no estaba resuelto." El Financiero, "INM en Tijuana anuncia oferta laboral para los haitianos" (February 20, 2017).

[69] "Nunca miramos xenofobia entre la gente, más… tal vez porque eran tan raros, ayudar los negritos, decían ellos, que un día llegó una persona a la puerta y "yo quiero tres trabajadores, pero quiero negritos" [así dijo], no los quiere mexicanos. No, señora, no damos por colores [risas]."

Sub-Secretary for Population, Migration, and Religious Affairs (*Subsecretaría de Población, Migración y Asuntos Religiosos*, SPMAR), and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (*Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, SRE), to expedite procedures and verify the information Haitian migrants provided. The initiative was to regularize the status of the almost 4,000 Haitians in Baja California, through a humanitarian visa typified in the 2011 Migration Law as *Tarjeta Visitante por Razones Humanitarias* (Visitor's Card for Humanitarian Reasons, TVRH) for asylum seekers and humanitarian refugees in Mexico.

According to París Pombo (2018), the choice of the Visitor's Card for Humanitarian Reasons was controversial since, in a strict sense of law, the regularization should have gone to a position of permanent residence since the document that Mexico used for the administrative transition was the *oficio de salida* provided in Tapachula, where the status of statelessness of Haitians immigrants was stipulated (p.148). This state of statelessness, in theory, would have forced the regularization process towards humanitarian refuge (given by COMAR, not by the INM as the TVRH) and eventually to permanent residence. Instead, the TVRH implied a temporary status, annually renewable but without a direct path to permanent regularization or citizenship by naturalization. For its application, Mexico persuaded Haitians, arguing that with the Visitor's Card for Humanitarian Reasons, the waiting time was shorter than the COMAR process, which needed a more complex and time-consuming procedure.

Thus, most Haitians opted for the TVRH. Mexico fulfilled its commitment by expediting all the applications and exempting applicants from having to pay for the humanitarian visa. In addition, administrative staff from the shelters were instrumental in the process of regularization, serving at times as a legal consultancy, helping Haitians to fill out the regularization forms, and requesting official documents (passports, for example, that

many of them did not have) besides to accompanying them to the INM offices in Tijuana. Likewise, the shelters and churches were crucial pieces in persuading Haitians to opt for the TVRH instead of the process with COMAR, as a Haitian asylum seeker mentioned when asked about his decision: "A pastor here, the Haitian pastor, says that we cannot do to COMAR for refugee status because we have no persecution. He said so, and when he speaks, I listen." [70]

With the humanitarian visa (TVRH), Mexico avoided giving humanitarian refugee status to the hundreds of Haitians in Tijuana. Instead, it offered them a direct pathway to regularization without resorting to mass deportations. However, the humanitarian visa did not provide explicit authorization to work, although the Migration Law of 2011 includes this right as part of the conceded status of the humanitarian visitor. Cesar Palencia (director of the Municipal Migrant Assistance Department, who took charge after Rosario Lozada) sees the TVRH as a resource that the federal government pulled out of thin air and was flawed because it did not clarify work status (interview with Palencia, 2019). In particular, the TVRH lacked the CURP (*Clave Única de Registro de Población*, Unique Population Registry Code), with which employers can contract employees in Mexico. The visitor card then had to be complemented later with a CURP number to cover the needs of this population. Nevertheless, even controversial and somehow improvised, Haitian regularization in Tijuana amounted to 1,274 TVRH processed by April 2017 (of which 609

[70] "Pero yo tengo un pastor aquí, el haitiano, dice que no podemos hacer por COMAR por refugio porque nosotros somos… cómo dice, la gente de pasar, pero no tengo nada para explicar como una persona que va a ser, ¿cómo dice?.. [U - ¿De persecución?]. Sí, así. No tenemos persecución, decía así. Y cuando él habla, yo escucho. Y es una buena idea. Y yo fui para hacer una de visitante como por un año.

Haitians were already holding the card); by July 2017, there were already 2,300 TVRH and 368 with COMAR (out of 700 total applications).

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to analyze the arrival, stranding, and regularization process of thousands of Haitian asylum-seekers in Tijuana during the second half of 2016, based on a Gramscian approach centred on the concept of an integral state. The notion of an integral state parallels Gramsci's conception of hegemony, implying the extension of the state, not only including the coercive-governmental political apparatus but also encompassing the sphere of action of civil society. In this expansion of the concept of the state, understood by Gramsci as hegemony (Q8, §233), civil society is in charge of fulfilling the functions of educators of the masses, manufacturing consensus and organizing the conceptions of life. For this reason, Gramsci, taking up Croce, speaks of the ethical function of civil society within the dynamics of the integral state (Q10, §41-III; Q7, §9). This essential block between politics and ethics supposes, on the one hand, a process and an arena where divergent class interests struggle and negotiate; and, on the other hand, a directionality related to the social structure of a particular hegemonic apparatus. [71]

The arrival process of Haitians in Tijuana revealed a hegemonic apparatus on Mexico's northern border: an integral state integrated by Mexican civil society groups (especially NGOs, churches and shelters) and the political spheres of government,

[71] In notebook 9, note 43, where Gramsci analyzes the lack of national popularity of Italian literature, he explains that "'State' means especially conscious direction of the great national multitudes." My translation from the ERA/BUAP edition: "'Estado' significa especialmente dirección consciente de las grandes multitudes nacionales, o sea, necesario 'contacto' sentimental e ideológico con ellas y en cierta medida 'simpatía' y comprensión de sus necesidades y exigencias".

bureaucracy and coercion. In other words, the hegemonic border apparatus showed itself in administering Haitian asylum seekers in Tijuana in a moment locally recognized as a crisis. In this way, the border is a field of negotiations and struggles between subaltern classes in movement (migrants), states (hegemonic and subaltern; the United States and Mexico), and civil society groups (NGOs and churches). In this dynamic, civil society groupings fulfilled the mediation roles between subaltern classes and hegemonic groups by organizing Haitian asylum seekers through the waiting list and sheltering practices. In that regard, they occupied the role and functions of the intellectuals in the Gramscian sense.

Locally, the arrival of the Haitians in Tijuana was framed as a humanitarian crisis, especially by representatives of the shelters. The unexpected and accelerated rhythm of asylum-seekers' arrivals, the concentration of these migrants in the international port of entry to the United States and the insufficiency of official resources to manage them and provide an action plan to face an uncontrollable situation informed the perception of a border crisis. Thus, the "untimely" arrival caused complications for the bureaucratic apparatus of the United States, which punitively restricted the number of crossings, promoting the contention of the asylum seekers in the city of Tijuana, which in the process, resembled a migration station. In this scenario, the United States requested Mexico to shelter the asylum seekers, list them and administer the crossings through the international port. Meanwhile, Mexico operationalized selected civil society organizations to shelter Haitian asylum-seekers, and through the *Dirección de Atención al Migrante*, the municipal government coordinated that endeavour.

In this way, the Haitian crisis resulted in a small colony of Haitian asylum seekers settling in Tijuana, distributed geographically throughout the city. With this, Haitians began

to integrate into the city's formal and informal labour niches, especially the maquiladora industry, a sector characterized by the precariousness and disposableness of its labour force. Thus, Tijuana continues to reproduce its historical function as a place of reception and containment for groups on the move, who arrive at the border attracted by the idea of crossing into the United States, where they envision a life experience less determined by arbitrariness and violence that characterizes their places of origin, in this case, Haiti. Finally, it is essential to remember that even though Haitians have been considered virtuous migrants in Tijuana due to their work, effort and values, their arrival and regularization were not harmonious but instead involved the deployment of an integral border apparatus made up of tensions and negotiations from where the United States outlined the direction of the bi-national migratory policy. This direction supposed the externalization of the U.S. border and the instrumentalization of the Mexican integral apparatus as a subaltern proxy agent of border enforcement.

Through the concept of integral state, this chapter also expanded some of the themes I carried out in the preceding chapter, especially about the subaltern guile included in the Haitian wager for emigration. Even if the purpose of the hegemonic apparatus is to direct the subaltern classes, this does not prevent the subalterns from rebelling within the boundaries established by the hegemony. Thus, the subaltern cunning is part of the border dynamics, inasmuch floating or moving populations, such as Haitian asylum seekers, have to resort to different strategies to try to balance their chances of achieving their goals and projects. Throughout the chapter, I presented various examples of these subaltern strategies. For example: passing as Africans on the Mexico-Guatemala border, passing as married couples to get a spot on the waiting list to cross into the United States, passing as

individuals with certain religious beliefs to guarantee a place in shelters in Tijuana, and finally, passing as pregnant women to get preferential treatment in shelters and on the waiting list.

In this way, this chapter is a chronological continuation of the preceding chapter by focusing on how the Haitian subaltern gamble reached the Mexico-U.S. border and how the border containment practices forced many of them to reconsider their projects, with the outcome of them deciding to remain in Mexico, at least momentarily. In this new bet, Mexican civil society was an instrumental actor, mainly assisting in the regularization of Haitians in Mexico and mediating their subsequent labour integration. In this sense, the border was a scenario of coercive containment but also consensus, insofar as it was through this humanitarian intervention, that Haitians "agreed" to remain in Mexico. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the labour market niches occupied by Haitian migrants in Tijuana and their strategies to reproduce a livelihood on the border and send remittances to Haiti.

Chapter 4 *La Línea Nunca Se Acaba*: The Formation of Haitian Labour in Tijuana

During fieldwork in Tijuana, I was a Spanish instructor for Haitian immigrants in workshops organized with the support of religious and civil associations where I volunteered. The NGOs and churches strategically scheduled the classes to avoid conflicting with the participants' work and spiritual responsibilities. For this reason, my classes were held on weekday afternoons or weekends, trying to avoid overlapping with Sunday service or their job schedules. One course I initiated was at a Haitian church, and the class composition was made up entirely of Haitian participants, both women and men. Two other courses were run at NGOs and were already in the process while I joined in to collaborate with the lead instructors. In addition to Haitian participants (who were the majority), African, Middle Eastern and Eastern European immigrants regularly attended these classes.

Spanish proficiency is a necessary skill for Haitian residents living and working in Tijuana, required to navigate bureaucratic immigration procedures and essential to fully adapt to the city's formal and informal circuits of labour. Even with the ebb and flow that each class irremediably experienced regarding attendance, all courses were well received by the Haitian population. The lessons were free of cost; on average, a busy classroom could have around 15 to 20 participants, while on a "bad day," we used to work with only three or four individuals. The strength of the classes resided in the constant participation of Haitians who diligently tried to attend every week to the lessons, although there were also intermittent and occasional participants. Most participants were men in their twenties and thirties, although there were always a few women among the more consistent attendees.

Likewise, although few, there was a constant presence of adults in their forties and fifties and occasionally a baby accompanied by their parents.

Despite the participant's interest in each course and the instructors' efforts to enhance the learning process, complications inherent to the class structure invariably appeared, particularly the juxtaposition of participants with different ages and levels of Spanish. For example, in the same session, it was common to have participants with no Spanish literacy, intermediate levels of Spanish and Portuguese, and Spanish speakers trying to familiarize themselves with the Spanish spoken in northern Mexico. These differences correspond to distinct individual migration trajectories: recent arrivals directly from Haiti, Haitians with recent stays in South America, and Haitians with long-*durée* migrations to the Dominican Republic. Although the instructors, including myself, organized the courses with this imbalance in our minds, it was sometimes discouraging for the more advanced participants not to progress more quickly. Meanwhile, for the less experienced, the pace that the more advanced ones demanded could be confusing.

In this context, one Sunday afternoon in November, after class at one Haitian church near downtown Tijuana, Madam Pèsi (a pseudonym), a Haitian woman in her early forties, approached me to share her concerns about the course. She was worried that sometimes the lesson was too fast, and she was losing track of what I was teaching. During class, I observed that she was having difficulties writing the lesson and how another attendee, Jáquez (also not his real name), would help her take class notes. Jáquez was a Haitian man in his twenties with whom she used to arrive and leave the class. As I would find out later, Madame Pèsi had lived more than a decade in the Dominican Republic, from where she made annual returns to Haiti during vacations or celebrations to see her children and

parents. Madam Pèsi's parents and in-laws cared for her children during this time. In the Dominican Republic, she worked as a domestic worker and an informal street vendor while her husband, who accompanied her, worked in the construction industry. Like many of her fellow compatriots residing in Baja California, Madam Pèsi first went to Brazil, where she and her husband spent eight months working in the industrial sector. Then, in January 2017, she arrived in Tijuana, and when I met her, she was an employee in a local medical products manufacturing factory in the east of the city.

After that initial talk, where she shared her concerns, we agreed to start weekly private lessons in Madame Pèsi's home in the afternoons after she finished her shift at the factory. Madame Pèsi lived near downtown Tijuana, on one of the many urbanized hills surrounding *Zona Norte*, sharing the rent with Jáquez, who worked in another maquiladora factory but mainly on the night shift. The shabby old house they lived in had two small rooms with no doors but curtains and a small central space that served as a kitchen, dining room, and living room. It had no running water, and the wind blew through the wooden ceiling and walls. The unit was inside a property with two other independent houses inhabited by Haitian migrants. In one part back of the property, Madame Pèsi's had a small garden, where she worked growing maize for personal consumption.

Jáquez and Madam Pési had their spouses and immediate kin scattered in the Americas. While she had her husband, children and parents in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, he had his wife and one daughter in the United States and two other daughters in Haiti in the care of different relatives. Despite the age difference between Madame Pèsi and Jáquez, they got along well. They met in Tijuana and began attending Spanish classes together because Madame Pèsi had heard about the course from her Haitian contacts in the

church. So, for several months, I went to Madam Pési and Jáquez's house every week to review the lessons I gave on the weekends, trying to bring them new sheets of exercises to practice together. Before the lessons, Madame Pèsi usually cooked something quick on the stove while Jáquez video-called his wife and baby daughter in the United States on his cell phone.

Over the weeks, I learned that in addition to their jobs at maquiladora factories, Jáquez and Madam Pési regularly went to the border, *La Línea,* to sell products in the informal street market concurring there. Thus, I realized that the heavily loaded backpacks they often carried to my classes contained the products they would sell after the session ended, mainly kitchen aprons. In Tijuana, *La Línea* (literally The Line) refers to the space of the international border apparatus where border officials administer the crossings of pedestrians and automobiles. The Line corresponds to the old Chaparral entry port (which is the one that gives access to the San Ysidro international port inside the United States) and to the social dynamics that revolve around the port of entry on the Mexican side. The number of daily crossings inevitably generates traffic and endless lines of car drivers who wait patiently to be questioned about their motivations and credentials to cross into the United States. It is to this aggregate of motorists waiting to cross the Line that Jáquez and Madame Pèsi regularly sell their products. [72] The vertical queue of tourists, U.S.-Mexicans, and commutators represents a valuable source of income to Madame Pèsi and Jáquez, valuable to reproduce their livelihoods in Tijuana and send remittances back to Haiti.

[72] Among the labour force that gathers in the Line are vendors of newspapers, handicrafts, *aguas frescas* (fruit water) and potato chips with homemade sauce. On the lowest rung, vagabonds go from car to car with a black garbage bag serving as walking garbage collectors in exchange for some coins.

On one occasion, I accompanied them to *La Línea.* To my shame, the only sale I made in hours I made poorly by charging a lower price than what Madam Pési had established for the product. It was drizzling (*chipi-chipi*) that day, so the first thing we did upon arrival was to set up under one of the many bridges that cross the vertical row of cars. To my surprise, I immediately recognized several faces among us taking shelter under the bridge, Haitians whom I had met during my fieldwork but with whom I had not necessarily made a close relationship. The surprise was undoubtedly also for many Haitians gathering behind the bridge, who knew me only as a researcher and volunteer at several civil associations. For example, a woman I knew from the first Spanish class I conducted, who also worked at a maquiladora factory and used to come to *La Línea* to sell informally, could not hide her confusion when she saw me ready to sell. With nervous laughter, she insistently kept asking what I was doing there.

When we stayed under the bridge protected from the rain, Madame Pèsi explained that when the days were this bad, they had to remain under the bridges hoping to sell what they could at intervals when the automobiles were standing still in front of them. She explained that although sales decreased under these circumstances, they could still generate profit, so trying to sell the products was worth waiting for. Once the *chipi-chipi* stopped, all the vendors emerged from under the bridge, making their way between rows of moving cars, cars that sometimes went fast or slow, depending on the flow and level of traffic congestion. My first impulse was to remain with Madam Pèsi, so I did at the beginning until she told me to go elsewhere to sell, trying to optimize the product by offering the aprons at two different points on *La Línea*.

For Madame Pèsi and Jáquez, as for many Haitians in Tijuana, the informal vending of goods is a parallel activity to their participation in the formal labour market, especially for those employed at maquiladoras. In this way, at *La Línea* and on other streets throughout the city, some Haitians work up to eight hours daily in addition to their formal jobs. For the informal vendors, selling products is a continuous back and forth between motorists trying to place their products. It is particularly onerous in summer due to the blazing sun of arid Tijuana. At a certain point, while we were walking between the rows of cars, I asked Madame Pèsi if we were at the end of *La Línea* since it seemed that way to me, to which she replied laconically: "The Line never ends" ("*La Línea nunca se acaba*").

* * * * * * *

This chapter addresses the labour trajectories of Haitian migrants in Tijuana, tracing three pivotal moments in their labour formation as workers. The first moment was the time of waiting when Haitian migrants worked as a voluntary unpaid workforce inside shelters run by border NGOs and churches. In this section, I address the importance of understanding life and labour as two sides of the same process of class formation (Narotzky, 2018; Millar, 2018). The second was the moment of legal limbo when Haitian decided not to cross the border, but they were still waiting for regularization in Mexico. During that time, Haitians entered informal paid niches, chiefly the construction industry. This informal labour incorporation confirms the determinant role of legal status categories in the kind of labour migrant workers can aspire to in host countries (de Genova, 2005; Gomberg-Muñoz, 2011). Lastly, the third moment was when Haitian settled in Tijuana after their legal regularization in Mexico, starting to occupy all sorts of employment in formal and informal niches. This

labour incorporation has been heterogeneous. However, wages have been insufficient for most of them, so they complement their income with parallel activities and strategies. The diversification of productive activities relates to the international obligations of Haitian migrants who send remittances. However, it is also a chief characteristic of work in capitalism, where formal wages are not a guarantee of the satisfaction of the needs of the workers' classes (Gimenez 1990, González de la Rocha 1994).

A connection between reproductive and productive processes within capitalism lies throughout the three moments of labour formation described. This relation highlights the parasite position of capitalism, which also accumulates by exploiting non-productive areas of human interaction, such as household dynamics, family obligations, networks of support, and livelihood reproduction strategies. On the one hand, the Haitian study case shows this interrelation between productive and reproductive spheres, particularly in the strong bond between their labour integration and transnational exchanges and responsibilities existing behind each migratory project (Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001; Basch et al., 1993; Martínez, 1999). However, on the other hand, labour niches, such as the maquiladoras and construction sectors, rely on pliable, exploitable, inexpensive, and disposable workforces to obtain their profit. In that sense, the capitalist dynamics of the Mexican side of the Mexico-U.S. border (Fernández Kelly, 1983; Lugo, 2008; Wright, 2006) are like the characterization of the Italian capitalism addressed by Gramsci in the southern question, described by the Italian thinker as a predatory and scavenger capitalism because it depends on the dispossession and necessity of its labour force (Q28, §17).

Life and Labour

The Haitian working-class formation process in Tijuana began in the NGOs and churches that sheltered them during the 2016-17 border crisis when Haitian migrants were waiting for a possibility to cross into the United States. Their intention was never to stay in Mexico, and this waiting time was part of an administrative and dissuasive dispositive, consisting of extended times of uncertainty, expectation, and imposition. In other words, Tijuana functioned as a space of containment and catchment in which Haitians found themselves trapped. However, this experience of waiting also modelled the first moment of Haitian labour incorporation at the border, although this incorporation was in the form of non-paid and voluntary work.

Anthropologists have recently investigated waiting in labour migration contexts and refugee or asylum seeker camps, showing that waiting is not a homogeneous experience. For example, Catherine Bryan (2018) analyzes how waiting is a mechanism of labour exploitation, used in her case study by Canada, the province of Manitoba and private capitalist groups to subject Filipino migrants working in the service sector through temporary programs. In this example, the wait articulates the expectation and hope for a possible permanent residence in the country, although mediated by labour intensification and moral pressures at home and in the workplace. For their part, Bendixsen and Hylland (2018), based on the study of a Palestinian asylum seekers' camp in Norway, have highlighted waiting as a space of indeterminacy, uncertainty, imposition, and immobility. Still, they recognized that it could also be a politically active wait. For the authors, relying on Paul Corcoran, waiting can be purposeful and strategic "where the waiting person is ready to take action as soon as the opportunity arises" (Bendixsen and Hylland, 2018, p.93).

Whether waiting signifies powerlessness or potentiality depends on how the subjects engage with the liminal gap. In Javier Auyero's book about the bureaucratic structure of the state in Argentina (2012), for example, he argues that the relationship between political patronage and waiting is a mechanism of power, subjection, and co-optation. The beneficiaries of government programs wait passively, albeit with expectation, for what they understand as gifts, endowments, or care from the Argentinian government, presenting thus a voluntary submission to the state.

In the case of Haitians, the structure deployed in Tijuana made them wait for a turn to request asylum in the United States. For the majority, it represented having to remain in the shelters the integral Mexican state installed on the border. The deployment of several shelters during 2016 and 2017 allowed the Haitians to wait without having to incur expenses, but within the shelters, Haitian migrants had to perform unpaid work. The initial labour incorporation of Haitian asylum-seekers in Tijuana emerged organically out of the dynamics of life inside the shelters. This incorporation was not a smooth process, nor was it absent of conflict.

The first tension that the representatives of the shelters encountered was that Haitian migrants were a population that, given their condition of waiting and expectation, tended to remain idle. As Patrick Murphy of *Casa del Migrante* points out, this made them an atypical migration within Tijuana's common sense [73] because:

> They came here and never went to work because they were always waiting to cross; thus, they stood for days and weeks in front of this street, outside the shelter, and they were amiable people, no doubt of that. For example, they took out our tables and chairs to spend every day outside playing cards and dominoes, and then they

[73] By common sense, I mean one manifestation of the consensus explained by Gramsci, consisting of narratives widely disseminated and widely accepted as self-evident truth (Crehan, 2016, p.3).

> would come into the shelter to eat with us. So, it was very different for us because when a migrant arrives, the first thing s/he must do is work to stay at the shelter, right? (Murphy, 2019). [74]

As can be perceived by the last quote, a common-sense narrative in Tijuana states that migrants who arrive and remain in the city must work and prove their worthiness; otherwise, they quickly fall into the category of *malandros* (thugs) (Albicker & Velasco, 2016). The adjective malandro in Tijuana mainly applies to people whom the United States has deported. It refers to a life of vagrancy, drug addiction, and petty criminality. In this case, as Weeks (2011) points out, there is a naturalization of work within capitalism, valuing the worthiness of individuals according to their degree of exploitability.

Several factors explain this relatively passive initial position of Haitian migrants; most importantly, they were not interested in seeking work in Mexico. Moreover, even if that was their intention, they were not legally able to be incorporated into the border labour force. Secondly, Haitians brought savings earned from their previous jobs in South America, money they initially intended to pay for transportation expenses once in the United States. Many others also received money from family and support networks in the United States, who learned about their situation in Tijuana. For example, in many cases, Haitians who received money or came to Tijuana with cash in their pockets used this resource to pay for hotel rooms or barracks shared between several people in the zone near the international border. However, with time dragging on and expenses piling up, more and more Haitians chose to use the shelters in Tijuana. Furthermore, with the waitlist system,

[74] "Y eran más demandantes que los centroamericanos, porque llegaron aquí y nunca se fueron a trabajar, porque siempre estaban esperando a que iban cruzar y por días y días y semanas y semanas, se pusieron aquí enfrente de, de… de este calle, afuera de la casa y la gente muy amable, pero sacaron mesas y sillas para que pasaran todos los días jugando cartas y dominó y vinieron a comer y todo esto, entonces era muy diferente de lo que… porque llega un migrante y oyes, primer cosa tiene que trabajar para quedar en la casa ¿no?"

Haitians had to wait patiently, keeping an eye on when shelter authorities would call them to appear at the international port of entry for their appointment with the U.S. asylum authorities. In this way, if Haitian migrants were leaving the shelters in the early days, it was only to go to the international border to check the pace of the crossings.

The combination of suspended migratory projects, money in their pockets, and idleness caused tensions. Haitians did not initially fit the stereotypical descriptions of a vulnerable migrant in the city. Despite these tensions, the dynamics of life within the shelters between asylum-seekers and civil society representatives developed into a system of shared work coupled with moral guidelines and discipline directed by NGOs and churches. This interaction resulted from the attempts made by civil society representatives to maintain internal orderliness within the shelters, an endeavour reinforced by the Mexican National Migration Institute figure and authority and by the very intention of Haitians to enter the United States. This moment is relevant because it sheds light on the intimate processes of Haitian labour force formation in its early stages.

At this point, it is instructive to return to Gramsci, since in the *Prison Notebooks*, he dedicated several notes to Fordism, reflecting on how the formation of the new industrial worker depended on the regulation of the worker's life outside of work, extended to their habits and conceptions of life (Q1, §61; Q4, §49; Q21, §1). By regulating these aspects, capitalist classes aim to reproduce the labour force's capabilities to work by teaching them industrial skills and adapting their lives and bodies to the interests of capitalist production. For example, Gramsci mentions several non-work elements such as sexual regulation, puritanism, marriage, and school instruction as essential in the process of formation of the working classes (Q1, §62; Q4, §§49, 52; Q22, §§1, 11). Thus, Gramsci writes in Notebook 4 (§§ 52, 55) that the construction of the new industrial worker consists of achieving a

psychic-physical balance allowing the workers to reproduce their labour power, which is the core where capitalism extracts its profit in the form of surplus value. In this way, we must read Gramsci's statement that Fordism "tried to obtain certain social effects of spiritual hegemony" (Q2, §138). Hence, if hegemony is born in the rationalization of the factory (Q1 §61), it also extends to other non-working spheres, such as habits, household dynamics, and leisure-time activities.

Echoing these reflections, Millar (2017) underlines how work within capitalism presupposes the formation of a disciplined labour class and that normative forms of waged labour come with normative ways of life. Thus, waged life embodies the working classes' aspirations concerning a life worth living. Similarly, Weeks (2011) argues that labour is not only an economic activity but is also a socially accepted convention implying the acceptance of a disciplining apparatus. In that regard, wages also function as a persuasive element in forming working classes (Q9, §72). For her part, Gimenez (1990) points out that there is no opposition between labour force production and reproduction but rather an intimate connection related to the capitalist logic of accumulation. Adding to that literature, Narotzky (2018) affirms that the exploitable dimension of the working classes within capitalism depends on inalienable social spheres, such as family obligations, customs and habits, or notions of morality and ethics. Therefore, for Narotzky, the processes of working-class formations extend to the production of cultural formations, livelihoods, subjectivities, and experiences.

Even though Haitians did not engage in formal or informal salary relations while they remained sheltered in NGOs and churches in Tijuana, they did carry out social reproduction tasks within the shelters, thus expressing the inter-relationship between work and life. This integration arose within an internal system of regulations and consisted of a

division and assignment of tasks such as preparing meals and cleaning sleeping and common areas. Additionally, churches and NGOs imposed arrival and departure times, separation of bedrooms between men and women and between single and married, and the prohibition of alcoholic beverages and smoking inside the premises. These social reproduction responsibilities were invariably unpaid work that asylum seekers felt compelled to do if they intended to stay in one of the shelters. Nevertheless, Haitian asylum-seekers understood this work as voluntary work and a way to cooperate and reciprocate with the pastors and activists who had opened their doors.

The subject of food inside the shelters is interesting concerning the work carried out by Haitian asylum seekers because it indicates how the NGOs coordinated a division of labour based on sex-gender distinctions. As recounted by one pastor I interviewed, many Haitians got sick from the food received in the shelters after coming from a long trip of months through South and Central America. Gastrointestinal illnesses and skin and foot diseases were the most common health problems with which Haitians arrived in Tijuana. At the same time, NGOs soon learned that some Haitians were not accepting the food offered in the shelters, regardless of whether they had or not had upset stomachs. According to another pastor, for example, one day, the shelter received a donation of pizzas, but almost all Haitians refused to eat the donated food. Haitian migrants, according to the pastor, claimed pizza had much flour, jokingly advising him not to eat so much because it could make him fat or ill. Along similar lines, Haitians with whom I was able to talk expressed a cultural shock to Mexican-style spicy foods and the heavy reliance on tortillas in the typical Tijuana diet. Eventually, the NGOs delegated responsibility for the kitchen to the Haitian

asylum-seekers themselves. One pastor interviewed who was involved in the attention for Haitians remembers it this way:

> Now, how we organized the kitchen? In this case, it was my wife who was in charge. When we opened the church as a shelter, we asked for the support of the church sisters. We told them: 'We will need three sisters daily to cook.' Because when the Haitians arrived, we thought most would be men, but women and children also came. We had families here, men and women, married couples too. So, when my wife realizes there are women, she says, 'Well, they can cook! If we cook, since it is a different food with different customs and tastes, we will probably make them sick, or they will not like the food.' So, instead, we decided to provide them with everything they would need, and we let them cook. When the first group arrived, four women came with that group; after that, more and more women arrived. We had a total of up to 30 women. So out of that total of 30 women, my wife divided them into teams. Thus, when women arrived, she would tell them, 'Here, all those who arrive must work, cooperate in one way or another; the women will always take care of the food, and the men will care for the cleaning.' My wife had to be tough. She made a list: 'it is their turn this day, of them that day,' she made teams for each day. And if they do not want to cook or work, the doors are open, and they can go somewhere else (Interview with Serrano, 2018). [75]

As the quote illustrates, the organization of labour maintained a division by gender. With this, the NGOs sought to minimize tensions due to food and imposed a work discipline within the shelters. However, as the quote also indicates, there was a latent possibility that Haitian asylum seekers would not accept the shelter's regulations. Moreover, the quote reveals the consequences that Haitian asylum-seekers faced if they did not comply with the

[75] In the original: “Ahora, cómo se organizó la cuestión de la cocina, en este caso ahí fue mi esposa la que ella se entendió con eso ¿no? Cuando abrimos el albergue como iglesia, pedimos el apoyo a las hermanas de la iglesia y les dijimos “vamos a necesitar de tres hermanas por día para que vengan y estén cocinando”. Cuando llegan los haitianos, nos dimos cuenta, pensamos que la mayoría iban a ser hombres. Llegaron mujeres y niños. Nosotros teníamos familias aquí, hombres y mujeres, matrimonios también […] Entonces el asunto está en que cuando mi esposa se da cuenta que hay mujeres, dice, pues ellas que cocinen, porque si nosotros les cocinamos, es una costumbre diferente, son sazones diferentes, comidas diferentes y probablemente o los vamos a enfermar o no les va a gustar o algo vaya a pasar. Entonces mejor nosotros les proveemos todo y ellas que cocinen. Entonces cuando llegan los primeros, llegan cuatro mujeres y luego fueron llegando más mujeres y más mujeres. Teníamos un total de hasta 30 mujeres. Entonces ese total de 30 mujeres, mi esposa hace equipos. Cada que llegaban las mujeres les decía “aquí todos los que lleguen tienen que trabajar. Cooperar de una u otra manera, las mujeres se van a encargar siempre de la cocina y de la limpieza se van a encargar los hombres”. Entonces mi esposa pues tuvo que ser dura con la lista, hacía la lista: a ellas les toca este día, a ellas este día, por día hacía los equipos. Si alguna mujer no quiere cocinar. Si alguna mujer no quiere trabajar, las puertas están abiertas y puede ir a otro lugar”.

internal rules. In other words, if, on the one hand, Haitian work was a matter of cooperation and internal social reproduction, on the other, it also had a dimension of punitive control and imposition of order. For example, pastor Serrano, quoted above, told me about two Haitians he had to ask to leave the shelter because they did not comply with the co-habitation rules inside the church. In the following quote, he explains some of the internal regulations and how those two asylum-seekers broke these rules:

> [The asylum seekers] were not locked up; they could go out whenever they wanted. Nevertheless, I advised them that if they were outside, they should remember that the church doors would be closed after 10 pm and until 8 am. Furthermore, I recommended they not go to the *Zona Norte*, not be out late at night and stay together if they are outside on the streets. So, I told them they could go out but that we did not want people drinking, smoking, or cursing inside the church and that I would ask them to leave if they broke those rules. Unfortunately, one couple had the nerve to place a beer in the fridge. Then they came to the dining room and put the beer on the table. I saw the bottle and asked my wife, "Is it the beer of that girl sitting there?". We asked her, and she said it was not hers. "And then, who placed the beer there?" we asked. But she kept quiet because she knew there could be consequences, and nobody else in the shelter was saying anything. OK, if they will not tell us anything, I told them we would punish them all. Then they told us: "The beer belongs to that other girl." We went to look for her and asked her, and she told us that the beer belonged to her husband. In the end, we were able to talk to them, and we said to them that they could not do that, that they could have drunk the beer outside the church or that they had to have thrown it away before entering. However, they had the nerve to enter the church with the beer and put it in the dining room as if challenging us. So, I told them that if I let them pass with that, I would cause a problem and disorder in the shelter because everyone might want to do as they pleased. And they left; they both left. They went to look for another place, and later, we learned that they went to rent an apartment. They understood that it was a matter of discipline; likewise, everyone in the shelter realized there were consequences if they broke our rules. So that kept Haitians in order. Thus, during that time, there was an order (Interview with Serrano, 2019). [76]

[76] "Tenían libertad de salir, no estaban encerrados nomás, podían salir, y yo les decía cuando llegaban: si van a salir, el horario de cerrar la reja allá afuera es a las 10 de la noche, cierra a las 10, si alguien se queda afuera ese va a ser su problema. Y en la mañana pueden salir a partir de las 8 de la mañana, ya pueden salir. Pero yo les hacía recomendaciones, "no ir hacia esta zona, no andar muy noche, de preferencia andar juntos porque si no pueden exponerse a que los asalten o cosas así". Ajá, entonces yo les dije "tengan cuidado con eso". Y para que no vayan a… o sea, son libres de poder salir y esto, pero no queremos que aquí se haga, se tome, se fume, malas palabras, no discutir, no pelear entre ustedes, porque si esto pasa yo les pido que se retiren y nos evitamos problemas. Solamente en el caso de una muchacha y un… es una pareja que metieron una cerveza y tuvieron el descaro de meterla al refrigerador. Luego llegaron al salón social, al comedor y ahí la pusieron,

While NGOs and churches coordinated the work and life inside the shelters, many pastors also used the time they spent with the Haitian asylum-seekers to try to cultivate a sense of religious morality in them through informal talks and collective encounters. For example, in the following interview excerpt, a Baptist pastor explains how in his involvement with the asylum seekers, he tried to cultivate in them a sense of morality and spiritual fulfillment:

> They [the Haitian asylum-seekers], at least the group we housed here, understood some things we have been trying to teach them. Number one, your life is in the hands of God. He is the one who will control your life and knows what will come for you. So, I told them that if they returned to Haiti [due to deportation], it would be a blessing because they would see their families. I remember the first meeting I had with them. The first intervention was to explain to them that the United States is not heaven and that the God who rules is not money. We also wanted to instill in them the importance of family. Because our priority as Christians is God first and your family second, right? In the third place is the church because it is your spiritual family, and in the fourth place is your work. So, I told them: "you guys are a little off track [laughs]; how long has it been since you saw your family the last time?" They answered two or three years. That is wrong, I told them, because how will you have a family and not see them if your family is your support, right? So, if you have a family, you must respect them, take care of them, and protect them. I know you are here with the idea of going to the United States to earn money and support your family, but money is not everything; your family needs your presence. So, we

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entonces yo la veo y le hablo a mi esposa y le digo “oyes, esa muchacha que está sentada frente a esa cerveza, ¿será de ella?”, y ya fuimos y le preguntamos, y dice… “no, no es mía”, ¿y de quién es?, y se queda callada, entonces…, porque ya sabían lo que eso iba a implicar. Entonces “¿de quién es?”, no pues nadie decía nada. Ok, si no va a decir, entonces los vamos a castigar a todos, “no, pues es que es de fulana de tal” “¿y dónde está?” “se fue para allá”, y ahí va, y la fuimos a buscar y oyes esa cerveza, no, es que no es mía, es de mi esposo, de mi pareja, no me acuerda qué era. Pues ya al último se habló con ellos, se les dijo que ya sabían ellos que no podía hacerse, que no sé qué, y él contando una historia, “no es que me la dio mi patrón porque ya estaba trabajando él, me la dio mi patrón y esto…”, pero le digo, “pues está bien, te la dio tu patrón, pero la podías haber tirado allá afuera o te la podías haber tomado allá afuera y no llegar aquí con ella, pero tienes el descaro de venir, traerla y ponerla todavía ahí en frente, así como retando”, le digo, entonces no es correcto y no debes de hacerlo”. Y si yo dejo que lo sigas haciendo va a ocasionar un problema aquí y al rato va a haber un desorden y cada quien va a querer hacer lo que se le antoje. Y sí, sí se fueron, sí se fueron los dos, se fueron a buscar otro lugar, después supimos que se fueron a rentar un departamento. Ósea que ellos entendieron que era cuestión de la disciplina, pero todos los demás se dieron cuenta de que sí cumplíamos si les decíamos eso, o sea, entonces eso hizo que se mantuviera un orden. Durante el tiempo había un orden”.

> worked a lot on these issues. Every night we got together, we talked to them about God and family (Interview with López, 2019). [77]

To end this section, a vignette from my fieldwork can help visualize the dynamic of voluntary work between migrants and asylum seekers and the civil society sectors that sheltered them. One weekday while visiting the church known as Little Haiti, it started pouring rain outside, which made the tin roof resound loudly with every drop that fell on it. The church quickly flooded due to water seepage through the leaks and the edges between the tin roof sheets. That day I arrived in Little Haiti looking for the pastors (a married couple who ran the place), but I did not find them. So instead, I stayed a few hours with the Haitian migrants sheltered there, who were beginning to arrive in Tijuana from Venezuela. As it was early in the day, more women and children were in the shelter, while most adult men had gone to find out how the crossing of asylum-seekers was progressing. When I arrived at Little Haiti, in addition to Haitians, there were Central American and African asylum seekers and a Black Catholic priest from the United States paying a visit to the Haitian migrants. Before the torrential rain began, I observed how the priest sat in the

[77] "Ellos, al menos el grupo que estuvo aquí entendieron un concepto, dos cosas bien prácticas que estuve o que estuvimos enseñando bastante. Número uno, tú vida está en manos de dios, dios es el que va a controlar tu vida, dios sabe tu… lo que venga en tu vida. Y si regresas para allá va a ser bendición, ver a tu familia y échale ganas y ánimo, dios está contigo. Yo recuerdo el primer, así, cuando nos reunimos el, un lunes, ellos llegaron, ya la gran cantidad que teníamos, el primer culto que tuve con ellos, la primera intervención con ellos fue, número uno, EE.UU. no es el cielo y el Dios que te manda no es el dinero, grábate eso… y eso fue en cada sesión que teníamos, EE.UU. no es el cielo y el dinero no es dios. Entonces, grábense eso. La otra cosa, la familia, quisimos inculcarle mucho la cuestión de la familia, entonces le digo, nuestra prioridad, como entendemos la vida nosotros, estoy hablando de los cristianos, primer lugar dios, segundo lugar tu familia ¿no? Y ya tercer lugar, en nuestro concepto es la iglesia porque es tu familia espiritual, cuarto tu trabajo y ya lo que vas a hacer. Les digo, ustedes andan como un poco desviados [risas], primero es dios, tu familia, "¿hace cuánto que no ves a tu familia?", no pues unos tres años, otros dos años, otros… digo, eso está mal, porque cómo vas a tener una familia y no la vas a ver, es tu sostén. Entonces si no tienes… si tienes una familia tienes que respetarla, cuidarla y protegerla; yo sé que están aquí y tienen la idea de EE.UU. para ganar dinero y mantener a tu familia, pero no lo es todo, ellos requieren tu presencia. Nosotros trabajamos mucho eso, cada noche que nos juntábamos era de estarles hablando de dios y la familia, dios y la familia, dios y la familia".

kitchen while female Haitian cooks served him rice with chicken, and little Haitian children curiously and jokingly approached him.

Even with no apparent command figure (besides minor commands made by the Black priest who maintained himself in a dry space), the people started to remove the rugs and stack the folding chairs that dominated the worship area in front of the main stage as water entered the shelter. Immediately afterwards, the women and men who were there, regardless of whether they were Haitians, Central Americans, or Africans, began to bring tools to help prevent the flooding of the church. Then, armed with rags, brooms, squeegees, and mops, several of us began to pull the water out the front door or soak it in buckets and then out onto the street. During the downpour, the work seemed frantic and fruitless, while the children, wanting to participate by helping and playing, ran from one place to another until a girl slipped and hit her head on the floor. The sound of the impact, the girl's shout of pain and the crying that followed served so that the rest of the children were calmed more firmly by their respective tutors, demanding more seriousness in the matter. Finally, when the rain stopped, we continued mopping the church; however, outside, the rain had caused a river of mud to form, preventing exiting or entering the church.

When the rain ceased, the foreign priest intended to leave the shelter, but his car was stuck in the muddy river, making it almost impossible. Faced with this situation, and as a continuation of the previous collective effort, a group of four Haitians and I tried to help the priest dislodge his car. Meanwhile, he and his assistant remained dry inside the vehicle, trying to start its engine. Unfortunately, the task was futile, as the muddy water covered more than half of the car. Even so, we tried, although, after several long minutes, I desisted from helping them and decided to leave (not before having already placed half of my body

in the river of mud). While trying to leave the place, hoping that the public transport would let me get on despite being covered in mud from the waist down, I saw the shepherdess returning from her workday as an elementary school teacher. Seeing her in the distance, one Haitian migrant rushed to carry her with his arms helping her to get into the shelter.

This brief vignette show the relation between voluntary unpaid work and quotidian dynamics of life and waiting in shelters. In this case, even without a direct command, the asylum-seekers submitted their voluntary work in an effort to maintain in order the space were they were staying. In the case of the shelters participating in the 2016 contingency, most NGO representatives got involved full-time in helping asylum-seekers. However, this did not mean that NGOs stopped depending on the work of migrants and asylum seekers to keep the shelters running. On the contrary, given the circumstances in which Mexican authorities delegated shelter responsibilities to NGOs and churches, the unpaid labour of Haitian migrants represented a necessary and valuable resource. For their part, the Haitians I interviewed expressed that their work within the shelters was a form of cooperating with the pastors who opened the doors of their churches to shelter them, that is, as a form of paying back. However, it is also crucial to recognize that there was a punitive dimension behind volunteer work insofar as Haitians' permanence in NGOs and churches depended on their abidance with the rules established by the shelters.

In this way, life within shelters served as a mechanism of discipline and regulation, analogous to Gramsci's analyses of the formation of the industrial proletariat. While Haitian migrants remained inside the shelters waiting to cross into the United States, they depended on the shelters for their immediate reproduction, and therefore, they had to follow their regulations and dispositions. Likewise, religious shelters included Haitians in their faith

ceremonies, organizing moral orientation sessions as part of their spiritual mission. [78] In other words, the internal discipline was coupled with moral orientation, resulting in a duality akin to the physical-psychic preparation indicated by Gramsci in the *Prison Notebooks*.

Irregular Status - Informal Labour

If the first work experience of Haitians at the border was in the shelters, their first approach to paid work occurred while they began to leave the shelters and were waiting to be regularized by Mexico. Consequently, their relationship with the labour markets in Tijuana took on a new form. In this context, seeking and finding paid employment was a pressing need for Haitian asylum seekers because they had to find a place to live and a way to obtain some income to reproduce their lives on the border and send remittances to Haiti. The main problem at that moment was that the immigration regularization plan was not yet ready, and their immigration status was undefined. That is, they were not authorized to work in Mexico. In this transition, the shelters were again crucial, serving as informal hiring centers and orienting Haitians about how and where to get a house or room to rent.

Concerning housing, many moved to live near the churches where they have been housed, and a recurrent strategy was co-habitation, in which at least two non-kin individuals shared the cost of renting an apartment. Meanwhile, others started renting in

[78] Eventually, these internal meetings between asylum-seekers and religious authorities ended up forming Haitian churches in Tijuana, using the premises of the churches as meeting points for Sunday services and weekly activities.

tenements or quarters in the city's downtown and outskirts, turning those shared spaces into Haitian and African enclaves in Tijuana where migrants established their dynamics of life and coexistence. For example, in downtown Tijuana, there is a building that Haitian and African migrants have entirely occupied. The tenants of this space are both recently arrived and already established migrants. The building's ground floor is a space for leisure and recreation, especially at night, and the two upper floors are living spaces. Thus, in this building, a married couple runs a Haitian restaurant, a young Haitian administers a barbershop, and there is a small room administered by African migrants where music is heard and danced while alcohol is sold and consumed.

Labour integration, for its part, had to be informal, although it was tolerated and even celebrated by Mexican authorities. At this time, the construction industry was the most recurrent niche for Haitian men, so much so that employers and private contractors came to the shelters looking for day workers. Construction employment is exhausting, low paid and dangerous. However, without a work permit and regular immigration status, it was a real option for wage acquisition for Haitian migrants in Tijuana. In addition to the construction industry, other informal hiring markets used Haitian labour during this moment, especially in the service sector, such as restaurants, bars, car washes, and different kinds of shops and local businesses.

Thus, the incorporation of Haitian migrants as a labour force in the construction industry had to do with their legal migratory status, which at that time, was undetermined. That determinant was evident because as soon as Mexico regularized them with the Visitor Card for Humanitarian Reasons, the main niche of employment ceased to be construction and began to be the maquiladora industry. In this sense, working in construction is a niche

that male migrant Haitians have used as a wage incorporation strategy when there are no options for formal incorporation. By the sake of comparison, it is possible to find similarities between this moment and other cases, where there is also an intimate relationship between a precarious migratory status and an equally precarious labour inclusion. For example, the cases of Mexican migration to the United States and the case of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic present similar characteristics. Taking it as a precedent to the Haitian migration that arrived at Mexico's northern border, the case of the Dominican Republic is particularly instructive.

In the Dominican Republic, employment in construction is the second hiring niche for Haitian migrants behind agriculture for export, which has historically been the engine of Haitian international migration within the island of *La Española* (OMBICA 2012). Haitian labour is recurrent in the Dominican construction industry due to its precariousness, flexibility, pliability, and super-exploitation, which go hand in hand with their racialization, illegalization, and deportability. Haitians employed in construction do not have a work permit or state-sanctioned immigration status, so their hiring is informal through agreements with contractors and employers. The informal hiring of Haitian day labourers exempts contractors and private companies from guaranteeing rights to workers and promotes the normalization of abuses and excesses in the employer-worker relationship, such as wage theft, overtime, verbal and physical abuse, coercion, and threats. Consequently, Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic carry out the most dangerous, exhausting and low-paid tasks in the construction industry. Moreover, the geographical proximity between the two countries, the border's relative porosity, and the pace and rhythms of construction employment allowed a constant flow of temporary workers coming

and going between places of origin and destination. Once they finish their labour engagements in one construction site, they can choose to work with another employer or return to Haiti, thus reproducing a dynamic of circular migration.

In the Dominican Republic, the incorporation of Haitians into the construction industry is related to what Sillié et al. (2002) called New Haitian Migration. With this term, these authors indicate the transition from a predominantly rural-rural migration to new dynamics of rural-urban and urban-urban mobilities. As these authors explained, agricultural labour, particularly cutting sugar cane, was the predominant form of Haitian labour migration in the Dominican Republic for several decades of the 20th century, fostered by the binational hiring program between the Dominican Republic's and Haiti's governments. However, in contrast to those classical migrations, the new migratory patterns come with a labour diversification for Haitian migrants, who incorporate themselves into urban employment niches, including construction, domestic work, street sales, and the service industry related to tourism. [79]

The construction industry, especially in countries like the Dominican Republic, with little technology development and high rates of informality, is a labour niche that generates profits thanks to the super-exploitation and flexibility of its workers. The condition of migrant deportability thus produces a disciplined workforce, unwilling to reclaim labour rights and, above all, disposable due to their migratory circularity and legal vulnerability. Even so, the possibility of being employed and obtaining a salary (higher than in

[79] The boom in tourism in the Dominican Republic has also been a boom in infrastructure projects, which has allowed for a high demand for labour within the construction industry.

agricultural niches) without the necessary documentation that the construction industry provides represents an attractive option for Haitian migrants.

Analogous to what happens at the Mexico-U.S. border, the Haitian-Dominican border serves as a regulatory valve for migrants' entry and exit. This border filter determines the working conditions of migrants, whether they enter in a regulated or unregulated way, and depends on the legal production of migrant illegality (de Genova, 2004). However, as Heyman (2022) points out, this valve is not a coherent or functionally regulated mechanism. On the contrary, borders are mechanisms where different systemic biases converge, not always in a harmonious way. That is, it is not a valve that opens when the capitalist classes need exploitable and precarious employment and closes when the demand for an exploitable labour force ceases to be necessary. Border dynamics are thus always contradictory and contingent on market demands, racial discrimination structures and political factions' interests to mobilize widespread anxieties and fears regarding "security" on the border.

Haitians also worked in the construction industry while they were in Brazil. The first moment of this incorporation was when Haitian migrants were sheltered in Brazilian border towns waiting for their regularization. In that regard, there are similarities with the Haitian migration in Tijuana. However, Haitian labour integration was different in Brazil compared to the Dominican Republic because, in the Amazonian country, Haitians eventually did have work permits. However, Haitians continued to be employed in construction while they were on Brazilian soil, even though Brazil regularized them. This labour involvement was because Brazil required arms to build the infrastructure for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics Games. In addition to stadiums and

sports venues, the Brazilian government also promoted construction projects and engineering and urban infrastructure improvements, which contributed to the availability of construction jobs in the country's main cities. [80]

Thus far, it is clear that Haitians' migratory and labour experience in the construction industry makes them well-positioned to compare the labour conditions characterizing this niche in different national contexts. For example, I can mention the case of a Haitian migrant I met in Tijuana who had extensive experience working in construction. As a young man, this Haitian migrant learned to work in construction while still in Haiti, where local employers informally hired him. Later in his life, this migrant worked again in construction in the Dominican Republic without residence papers or work permits. When he obtained his permits, he established a small street vending business, leaving behind construction employment in the Dominican Republic. In Brazil, construction was once again the first job this migrant landed, and he came to that job thanks to information and recruitment networks between Haitian migrants and private contractors. With this background and experience, this migrant could affirm that construction work is more demanding in the Dominican Republic and Haiti than in Brazil, mainly due to the lack of access to equipment and technological innovations. In other words, in the Caribbean, construction tasks are physically more demanding for the worker's body than in Brazil. In Tijuana, he was also employed in construction for a couple of weeks while waiting to obtain his humanitarian visa. However, after he got his permits, he obtained a less

[80] In 2014, however, it was revealed that the Brazilian construction giant, Odebrecht, had participated in a global network of corruption and bribery during negotiations and bids for public work contracts in Brazil. This scandal would contribute to the impeachment of President Dilma Roussef. Consequently, many Haitians experienced the following Brazilian political crisis and economic recession as a sudden shortage of jobs and the end of an employment bonanza.

demanding job, handing out flyers for a local food business. As he explained, he changed jobs because there was wage theft at the construction where he worked, where the bosses did not pay the Haitians employed there.

Another case that exemplifies the role of construction work in Haitian migration paths is the case of a Haitian immigrant who worked in construction in Tijuana while sheltered in the settlement known as Little Haiti. As he explains, working in construction is "very tiring," but he acknowledges that he remained in that job "because he had no other choice at that moment" (interview, 2019). During his stay at the shelter, this migrant got a scholarship to study at a private university in Tijuana. Still, unfortunately for him, he could not continue an academic path because, besides tuition, he needed other resources to study, such as those necessary for daily life (rent, food, utilities). Furthermore, worse for him was that he minimized the possibility of sending remittances back to Haiti while studying. After working in construction and unsuccessfully trying to study in Tijuana, he joined the maquiladora industry on the border. By then, he had already processed his humanitarian visa in Tijuana. In the maquiladora job, he accepts that the pay is low, but he prefers it because it is less onerous than construction employment. In other words, a regularized migratory status allows Haitian migrants to avoid working in the construction industry, opening up other relatively better labour markets.

The insertion of Haitian labour in construction is interesting because it is a resource on which Haitians can fall on when they cannot enter formal employment due to having a precarious legal status. [81] However, construction is a sector that depends on the most

[81] Like Haitian migrants, other migrants around the world have been employed in the construction industry, for example, the unauthorized Mexican in the United States.

unprotected and flexible workforce to generate profits at the expense of reducing the costs invested in the worker. Conversely, construction is a relatively secure niche for Haitians interested in finding work. This dynamic has been the case in the Dominican Republic and has happened in Brazil and Mexico. In these last two cases, employment in construction was recurrent for Haitian migrants while they were in a legal limbo situation when churches and NGOs sheltered them. However, it is also true that construction continued to be a labour niche widely occupied by Haitian migrants after being regularized in Mexico. The difference is that once legally regularized, the construction industry remained an alternative only for the lower and less educated migrants; meanwhile, those migrants with professional studies opted for jobs with higher qualifications. However, before regularization and with an unstable legal status, construction was a job option for all male Haitian migrants, regardless of their educational level or qualifications. Thus, the need to work to reproduce their lives locally and reproduce the lives of relatives in Haiti transnationally, in combination with the lack of official documents, results in the integration of Haitian migrants into the construction industry, where they perform the jobs and tasks that native workforces are not willing to do.

In this section, I argued that a relationship exists between citizenship status and migrant labour integration, in which legal instability corresponds to labour precarity. [82]

[82] Like Haitian migrants, other migrants around the world have been employed in the construction industry, for example, the unauthorized Mexican in the United States. Social anthropologists and historians investigating the insertion of Mexican labour in the United States have emphasized how the legal migratory categories, delimited by the state and its apparatuses and in daily interaction practices, are instrumental in the construction and discipline of an exploitable, disposable, and replaceable "illegal" workforce (de Genova, 2005; Barrera, 1979; Gomberg-Muñoz, 2011; Webb & Carrigan, 2013; Balderrama & Rodríguez 1995).

Thus, in the absence of regulated status, migrants tend to obtain employment in the informal markets, characterized by low wages and higher rates of labour abuse and exploitation, such as in the construction industry. However, the case of Haitians in Tijuana differs from this type of labour interaction since the time they worked without regular status in Tijuana was brief, that is, only while they were waiting for their regularization. In other words, it was not until the end of 2016 and early 2017, when Haitian migrants were intimidated by the election of Donald Trump and aware of expedited deportations, that the issue of Haitian labour began to be relevant, both for the city of Tijuana as for asylum seekers themselves.

In that sense, in this section, instead of denouncing the precarious conditions that undoubtedly exist in the construction industry in Tijuana and, in general, in the migrant informal hiring markets, my interest was to highlight how Haitian migrants adapt their labour integration to different contexts, moments and situations. In other words, if the Haitian bet is a project to achieve formal labour integration through humanitarian categories, it is also true that their informal integration is a recurring Haitian strategy and alternative when formal integration is not feasible. In this sense, informality is a potential labour relation in destination countries.

Maquila Factories and Informal Street Selling

Even before Mexico launched a program to regularize the thousands of asylum seekers stranded on the country's northern border, the maquiladora industry had already confirmed

that they could absorb the workforce of Haitians in the assembly factories—however, the main problem in employing Haitian labour the lack of legal documentation. Thus, the maquiladora industry had to wait for the direct intervention of the state to legalize the labour status of Haitians before being able to hire them officially. In this sense, employment in the assembly line follows a logic opposed to jobs in construction; that is to say, while in the latter, the lack of documents is pivotal in the labour incorporation of migrants, in the maquilas, documentation is an essential element to employ foreign labour.

The maquiladora industry is one of the main referents of unequal capitalism at the border area and one of the leading employers of the labour force in precarious conditions that constantly is arriving at the border. The predominant position of the maquiladora industry on the border from the 60s and 70s reflects the historical influence of the United States on Mexico and the hegemonic dynamics of a productive enterprise supported by low-cost localized labour and foreign capital investments.

Susana Narotzky (2022) indicates that border capitalism accumulates through what the author calls negative value; that is, it is a scavenger of the dispossession and material and moral devaluation of its workforce. Authors such as Melissa Wright (2006) and Lourdes Flores Morales (2009) have written about how the maquiladora industry depends on the disposability of its workforce, mainly young single women. The disposableness of the maquila labourer manifests in the transience of their work time in the maquila. That is, women workers regularly go through cycles of entry and exit, employment and unemployment. This dynamic occurs because the labourers see the work in the maquila as an additional income that complements their families' livelihoods (fathers, children, or husbands) rather than as a desirable long-term job with professional growth. For Flores

Morales, writing about the maquila industry in Puebla, it is crucial to understand how the value maquila workers offer when employed is gradually devaluing and how it is precisely this devaluation of the value of their labour that makes it attractive to the maquiladora industry. In other words, maquila workers generate a particular value as they are potentially always a disposable and replaceable labour force. Behind this process lies a symbolic construction of women as "naturally" fit to carry out the maquila work, ascribing values such as meticulousness and nimbleness to their work. Additionally, work in the maquila industry forces its labour force to maintain a labour discipline with long work hours and repetitive tasks segmented by lines and paces of factory production.

For Haitian migrants, employment in the maquiladora industry meant leaving the shelters. However, as many of my Haitian interviewees considered when I interviewed them, the pay in the maquiladora industry is meagre and generally only enough to get by with their daily reproduction. Thus, without having a particular maquiladora or sector hiring the majority of Haitians, the workers started working in the variety of maquiladora options in Tijuana. For example, among the Haitians I interviewed, I could document labour insertions in maquilas producing dialyzers, maquilas involved in packaging various commodities and maquilas of the mining industry. Fernández-Kelly (1983) analytically divided the Ciudad Juárez (Coahuila) maquiladoras into electrical and garments industries, currently, the variety of maquilas in Tijuana escapes a simple division of that sort. In its place, there are all kinds of maquiladoras. Some are the factories of toys, furniture, chemical products, medical supplies, aerospace materials, glass and aluminum, and sports products, among many others, installed on the Mexico-United-States border.

Even though maquila employment is regulated and sanctioned by the state, it is not enough to satisfy the needs and goals of Haitian migrants, nor does it help them get out of a precarious condition in Tijuana. In other words, working within the formal market on Mexico's northern border does not give them any guarantees or safety net. Above all, the maquiladora is a low-paid job for individuals who have exhausted other work and life options. In other words, it is a job that maintains an economically unstable way of life, does not solve conditions of poverty and barely provides the minimum for daily subsistence on the border. For example, compared to what a female sex worker earns in the northern zone of Tijuana, the salary offered by the maquiladoras is not only meagre but risible since, in the former, they can make in an hour what the latter would earn in a week. Fernández Kelly (1984) documented this characteristic of the commodification of female labour in the maquilas of Ciudad Juárez. For the Fernández-Kelly, women in the maquilas are integrated into the labour market in contexts of unemployment and underemployment as temporary integration to the labour markets, necessary to keep their households afloat.

Confirming that last point, the Haitians I interviewed acknowledge that wages are inadequate in the maquilas. For example, one Haitian migrant explained to me that what he earns in the factory where he works is not enough, and he details the problems that this causes in his daily life:

> [The salary] is minimal. Because look, [in the maquiladora they pay me like 1,500 pesos per week. I pay for taxis [public transport] too. With a $1,500 salary, how much is left to pay for the taxi? They are like 45 pesos per day for transportation. Because from here Tijuana to Rosarito I pay $22.50 pesos. $22.50 plus $22.50 equals 45 pesos daily, and I earn about 1,500 pesos monthly. Moreover, I must eat, wash my clothes, and pay rent. I do not save anything. I suffer a lot because it is not enough; it is not enough at all. There is not enough money to send, but I must pay rent, electricity, and water. I do not eat well. We Haitians do not like it when the house owner says, "Pay me my rent; if not, you cannot live here, and you have to

> leave my house," we do not like it. For this reason, it is better for us not to eat for one or two days and always pay the rent because we cannot sleep on the street. I have much respect for this. [83]

Even so, the general attitude of Haitians towards work on the border is not negative. Haitians rationalize their labour condition, even if this rationalization remains somewhat ambiguous or contradictory, as exemplified by the following comment by another Haitian immigrant in Tijuana, where he reflects on the employment status of immigrants:

> For me, work is freedom, and there is no such thing as a bad job. So what happens is that each of us is doing a job because we see that that job is what we can do. However, many people are working in jobs lower for this person's worth because this person may have studied but is doing another [unskilled] job. So that is how life is. [84]

Another Haitian, not as fatalistic as the previous one, reflected on the condition of wages in Mexico, concluding that for him, they were insufficient:

[83] "[El sueldo es] muy poquito, porque, mira, se pagan como 1,500 pesos por semana. Y [yo] paga taxi también aparte; ¿en 1500 cuánto para pagar taxi?, como 45 pesos por día. Porque de aquí en Tijuana a Rosarito se paga 22.50. 22.50 más 22.50 da como 45. 45 pesos por día y gana como 1,500 pesos, para comer, para lavar tu ropa, para pagar renta . . . No, no guarda nada. Yo sufre mucho en este momento. Porque no alcanza, no alcanza nada. Y antes sí enviaba dinero a Haití, pero desde cuando yo fui a la fábrica, yo no puedo. Ya no puedo. No alcanza para mandar con nadie, pero para pagar renta, la luz, agua. Pero yo no come bien, pero… a nosotros haitianos no te gustan como cuando viene un dueño de la casa, dice "Págame mi renta; si tú no puedes: ¡salir de mi casa!", a nosotros no, no te gusta. Por eso, es mejor para no comer un día, dos días y para pagar siempre la renta, porque no podemos dormir en la calle. Tengo mucho respeto por esto".

[84] "Bueno, puedo decir para mí personalmente, el trabajo es libertad. Para mí no hay trabajo bonito, no hay trabajo feo. Lo que pasa es que cada persona que está haciendo un trabajo, es porque ésta persona veía que ese trabajo es lo que se puede hacer. Y hay muchas personas que están haciendo un trabajo, pero ese trabajo no vale ésta persona, ésta persona puede ser que tiene su estudio y está haciendo otro trabajo. Es la vida".

> I like the job where I am [in the maquila], but it does not pay well; it pays a little. However, I will not say it does not pay well because the pay is OK for the Mexican people, but for me, it is low. [85]

These attitudes are contrasting. On the one hand, they recognize a degree of labour exploitation and suffer from poor wages in the formal job market. On the other hand, they accept that having available employment is good, thus reaffirming the need to obtain salaries to comply with the migration project of sending remittances back to Haiti. One way to bridge the gap between aspiration and living experience lies in crafting a moral response that addresses exploitation and bad employment options. In this sense, Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz (2011), referring to a group of Mexican busboys in the United States, speaks of a feeling of migrant pride in the face of hard work and as a strategy to confront deportability and overexploitation. The author tells us that this attitude endows migrants with a sense of self-respect and dignity while reinforcing ties between migrants and defining a position regarding the work opportunities of native workers. However, this moral response also appears as a cultural trope reinforcing and naturalizing migrant exploitation (Fitting, 2016).

Haitians in Tijuana also express a feeling of self-recognition for the work and effort they carry out daily despite poor employment and salary conditions. In that sense, they reaffirm a feeling of willingness to do outstanding work, which aims to leave a good impression on bosses and employers and thus be able to continue to be considered for future employment opportunities. For example, a Haitian immigrant shared the following

[85] "Yo, a mí me gusta más el trabajo en donde estoy todavía [en la maquila], pero no paga bien, paga un poco, pero no voy a decir no paga bien, porque mi problema como… más que mi sueldo, pero por ellos, por el pueblo mexicano, paga, pero para mí es muy poco, poquito".

thoughts with me during my interview with him when he talked first about the construction industry and then about maquiladora:

> One day I went alone [to the construction site], and when I worked for about a week with a boss, he said that I worked well when he saw how I worked. That is why he grabs my number. Whenever he has work to do, he calls me. Thank God I would do it well and fast if I were in a job. Sometimes Mexicans come, work for one day or a week, and do not finish the job. However, I worked faster than they [Mexicans] did when I went. That is why [employers] like to work with me. They have my number, and they always call me to work. [86]

After conveying with me his thoughts about his integration as a construction worker, he delved into his work in the maquila industry:

> There [in the maquiladora factory], I do not work as a manager but am capable of doing everything. Thank God I am a very intelligent person. If I see that you are doing something right now, I take a good look, and then I can do it alone. Thus, when I went to where I was working, there was a machine where the stone passed, and I was checking if the stone was good or bad. They let me do it alone when they saw I could. On another occasion, they sent me to pack rocks in a box to send to the United States, and I did it with no problem. [87]

Again, I noticed that Haitians often articulated comparisons between the countries where they have worked. For example, in terms of salaries, Haitians preferred receiving their wages every week, as in the Tijuana maquilas, rather than every month, as with their experience in Brazil. The possibility of having their wages without waiting more than a week is critical in case they urgently need to send money to Haiti. However, another

[86] "As veces yo fui solo y cuando trabaja como una semana con un jefe, cuando él viste cómo yo trabajo, dice que yo trabajo bien. Por eso que agarra mi número. Siempre él tiene trabaja, me llamo. Gracias a dios si yo he hecho un trabajo, yo lo hice bien y un poquito rápido también. As veces los mexicanos vienen, trabajan un día, una semana, no termine. Pero cuando yo fui, yo trabajo un poquito más rápido que ellos. Por eso se gusta trabajar conmigo. Tengo mi número, siempre me llamo para trabajar".

[87] "Allá no hago función de directo, puedes hacer todas las cosas. Pero Gracias a Dios cuando yo fui, soy una persona muy inteligente. Si yo miré que tu haces algo ahorita, yo mire bien y después yo puedo hacer solo. Y cuando yo fui donde yo estaba trabajando, hay un máquina donde pasa la piedra, a ver si la piedra es buena o es mala. Y cuando yo fui yo puedo hacer solo, cuando ellos miran que yo puedo hacer, me dexair solo. Y otra vez me mandan para empacar piedra, empacar piedra en una caja para mandar a Estados Unidos. Y yo lo hace todo, sin problema".

essential comparison between Mexico and Brazil was the degree of overexploitation Haitians noted. For example, Madam Pèsi, whom I introduced in the chapter's opening vignette, explains:

> There [in Brazil], the people work eight hours. If you want to work more, and if the president knows, if the police know, they take that person to jail. A person can work up to eight hours, no more; it is only eight hours. Here [in Mexico], people work 12, 14, or 16 hours. Here [in Tijuana], you work a lot for little money. [88]

As maquila employment is mechanized, work accidents are not uncommon, which can be fatal. For example, another migrant I interviewed in Tijuana suffered a heavy machine fall on his right thumb; he was incapacitated and had to change jobs. Thus, he went from being a factory worker to being employed as a watchman, guarding the entrance to a private hospital near the North Zone at night. This migrant acknowledges that the work is monotonous and the pay is still low, but at least he is working in something less dangerous and exhausting than factory work.

Faced with the possibility of a work-related accident, the formal employment offered by the maquiladoras has the advantage of covering medical services for their employees. However, some Haitians expressed distrust of the medical services in Tijuana. Two instances stand out from my fieldwork. In the first, a researcher from an NGO in San Diego and one Haitian pastor discussed how some pregnant Haitians receive medical care offered in Tijuana. According to the pastor, Haitian women feared seeking medical attention because they had heard rumours that Mexican doctors performed abortions on

[88] "Allá [en Brasil], toda la gente trabaja ocho horas. Si algún trabajo quiere usted trabajar más, si presidente sabe, si policía sabe, se va a llevarlo la persona preso. Una gente no puede trabajar más que ocho horas, son ocho horas. Aquí la gente trabaja 12, 14, 16 horas, no."

Haitian women without explicit consent. Without corroborating or denying these rumours, the pastor was articulating a concern to the NGO researcher shared with him by Haitian women. By sharing these concerns with the researcher from the United States, the pastor hoped she would help these women to cross into the United States for prenatal care.

In the second case, Madame Pèsi, with whom I went to sell aprons, shared her distrust of the Mexican medical system with me. She had pain in one of her legs. However, she hesitated to go to the doctor for several weeks, even though she had health insurance coverage as part of her benefits as a worker in a medical equipment maquila factory. Her mistrust was so great that when I accompanied her to a doctor's appointment at a state hospital, she considered returning to Haiti if she needed a surgical intervention on her leg. In other words, Madame Pèsi trusted the doctors of her country and not the doctors in Tijuana.

However, the most significant advantage of formal employment at maquilas for Haitians is the possibility that the employment somehow guarantees the renewal of immigration documents in Mexico. This possible outcome is vital due to the temporary nature of the humanitarian visa, which Haitians need to renew annually. For visa renewal or to process a migratory status change, documents proving that Haitian migrants have been formally employed complete a good application. The idea is to demonstrate to the state the productive capabilities of migrants settled at the border. Therefore, their worthiness lies in their exploitability.

Haitians send remittances to their family members to subsidize daily life and undertake projects, such as siblings' education, the family business, or parents' retirement.

However, their salaries in the Tijuana maquiladoras are not enough to consolidate this goal and fulfill this aspiration. For this reason, although Haitians form part of formal employment, such as in the maquila sector, they also seek informal labour markets, usually working as street vendors. In this sense, they sought out informal work not because they lacked immigration permits but in order to supplement their maquila wages. Thus, to pay for their living expenses in Tijuana and to help out relatives in Haiti, Haitians at the Mexico northern border sought out both formal and informal work simultaneously.

In this chapter's opening vignette, I described how several Haitians meet at *La Línea* daily to sell their products, especially aprons. However, *La Línea* is not the only place where it is possible to see Haitians working on the street. Haitians sell products on the city's main avenues, especially where large roads intersect. For Madam Pèsi and Jáquez, for example, *La Línea* was less an additional income and more a second job, where they worked another full eight-hour day-work besides their formal work day. However, for others who could not or did not want to enter the maquiladora industry, street vending represents perhaps their only income. Along with aprons, which I saw Haitians sell on *La Línea*, Haitians also work selling fried plantains in downtown Tijuana, serving street stalls selling fruits, vegetables, and vending sweets and cigars on red lights.

When I interviewed Madam Pési and Jáquez at different times, they had two contrasting reactions regarding work on *La Línea*. Thus, Madam Pési interrupted the interview recording with a loud laugh, possibly hiding some shame of working on the street. Since there was trust between us, I did not press anymore and turned off the recorder, and the interview did not continue. On the contrary, Jáquez showed great facility and willingness to discuss how he began integrating into everyday work on *La Línea*.

Jáquez is a young Haitian who works the night shift in a recycling factory, entering every day at 7 pm and leaving at 6:20 am. When he needs more money, one option is to work double shifts or overtime. After several months of working in the factory, Jáquez regularly went to *La Línea* to sell products after a friend told him there was a way to sell and earn money. According to the interview I conducted with Jáquez, he states that there are good days and bad days concerning the number of sales they can make. On a bad day, Jáquez comments that he can spend the whole day and only get 300 pesos of profit or even return without profit at all; but on a good day, with much flow of cars, the earnings can amount to 2,000 pesos in just a couple of hours.

Jáquez acknowledges that the first reaction to street work by Haitians is rejection. For example, he says that he heard negative comments about *La Línea* since Haitians considered that there was no work there but only begging people, that is, people who only knew how to ask for and demand support. Even so, Jáquez listened to his friend, who told him that *La Línea* is a good site for selling and that there is not a day without profit:

> I think and say, OK, I will see and decide. When I went there, I thought about what the other Haitians say: it is not selling but begging for support. It is not true; it is selling. Yes, I went. If I had documents [of permanent residence or citizenship by naturalization], I would not work in the factory; I would always work on *La Línea* because it is good. [89]

[89] "Ah, ¡la línea!, yo tengo un amigo, lo conoce en el trabajo, dice, todo el día, dice, ah, yo voy, yo viene en la línea, antes tiene haitianos que están hablando de: agh, allá no gusta línea, allá fui a la… para buscar dinero dice, quiero, quiero apoyo, quiero apoyo, no hay trabajo. Yo dice… como se está portando como pobre. Dice allá es "dámelo, dámelo, apoyo, apoyo", dice ay, así no gusta. Yo hablo con amigo y dice "no, yo fui allá a vender, yo fui allá ta vender, ta vender ta bien". Si dame como 20 pesos, 10 pesos, yo lleva, yo vende, yo siempre vende, si tú quieres ve para allá, dice, ay, ay, yo pensar, yo pensar, y digo ok, yo voy a ir para ver. Cuando yo fuero para allá, dice, ay, ese yo piensa, no ese. Yo piensa, cuando otro haitiano dice allá, no fui a vender, para apoyo… no es cierto, es vender. Sí, yo fui. Allá, si yo tiene papelo, yo no trabajo en la fábrica, yo siempre trabajo en la línea. Si tienes papeles, como residencia permanente, yo no trabajo en la fábrica, yo siempre trabajo en la línea, [porque] está bien".

This last comment is illuminating in the employment relationship of Haitians at the border city. Informality, represented by *La Línea*, given the precariousness of formal work, is a more economically attractive option for Haitians who have taken advantage of this niche of commerce. However, the temporary legal status, the humanitarian visa, forces Haitians to work within the legal frameworks of the Mexican state. Haitian labour integration combines the formal and informal markets, not as exclusive forms of work, but as necessarily simultaneous. Thus, it is overexploitation, inadequate payments, international kin obligations and the temporary condition of migration that forces Haitian migrants to develop hybrid systems of labour insertion to obtain extra income. In the case of Jáquez, if he did not have to prove his stay in Mexico with an immigration document, he would stop working in the maquila and only concentrate on working on the *La Línea* since it is more productive for him.

Conclusion

Through the review of three key moments in the labour trajectory of Haitians in Tijuana, I have wanted to review the formation of a migrant working class at the border in this chapter. The general perception of the inhabitants of Tijuana concerning Haitian migrants is positive, especially considering them as a working population, not conflictive and with strong family ties and values. However, behind this characterization are labour exploitation processes reinforcing migrant precarity, which have to do with the dynamics of capitalism on the border on the one hand, and with the Haitian migration projects, on the other.

Thus, while in the shelters, Haitians integrated as a voluntary and, therefore, unpaid labour force; when they were waiting for regularization, they were hired informally, especially in the construction industry; and when Mexico regularized them, they began to integrate as a labour force in the maquilas. This trajectory informs about the formation of a migrant working class, its discipline at the border and its subaltern condition of exploitability. In this sense, it stands out that border capitalism and the transnational obligations of Haitians push them to combine incursions into the formal and informal labour markets to obtain income and salaries to reproduce their lives and the lives of their relatives in Haiti.

Chapter 5 *Bajando Fondos*: The Mediating Role of NGOs in Tijuana

In February 2019, the newly elected president of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, announced that the Mexican government would stop supporting the work of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with federal resources. According to the president, this decision would ensure that government resources reach those groups most in need by eliminating unnecessary intermediaries. On the one hand, this policy had to do with reinforcing the electoral and clientelist bases of the president and the party he represents, MORENA, through direct cash payments to crucial population sectors. On the other, the president was criticizing the work of NGOs, raising suspicions about their effectiveness and ethical integrity and accusing them of corruption, conservatism, and lack of transparency. In response to the federal decision to cut funding, representatives of civil society organizations from Baja California held an extraordinary meeting with the then-mayor of Tijuana, Juan Manuel Gastelum, also known locally as "*El Patas*." [90] Among the NGO representatives were migrant assistance groups, especially those that functioned as shelters. I attended this meeting in the assembly hall of El Trompo, a large and modern building located southeast of the city, where dozens of NGO representatives expressed anger and

[90] The word "pata(s)" in Spanish refers to the limbs of animals, while "pierna(s)" would be the human equivalent to refer to legs. According to several interviews that El Patas has given, he explains that his nickname dates back to his childhood, imposed on him as banter. In the interviews, he explains that initially, the full nickname was "Huero Patas Saladas" because he was blonde when he was a child. Gastelum explains in those interviews that the nickname is related to the expressions used in Mexico, such as "Indio Pata Rajada," which refers to the cracks in the feet formed from walking without shoes for a long time. In the case of Juan Manuel Gastélum, another newspaper article explains that in 2019 El Patas stopped wanting to be El Patas, when he was seeking his re-election as mayor of Tijuana. The intention of leaving the nickname derives from its implications, suggesting an inability to do things correctly. "Doing things with your feet/Hacer cosas con las patas" means doing things poorly; therefore, "un gobierno con las patas" means an incompetent or corrupt government. The nickname of El Patas has also been part of Mexican popular culture, as a character from the comic "Simón Simonazo" (1978-1988) bears that name. The comic narrates the adventures of three boys from the hood (*chavos banda*) in Mexico (*La Trinca Infernal*), where El Patas is the character who achieves his objectives through tricks and cunning: "con las patas."

resentment against the federal decision. In addition to the mayor and the NGOs, the head of the Secretary of Social Development of Baja California was also present and spoke on behalf of the state governor, Francisco "Kiko" Vega. Both officials, the mayor, and the state secretary, took the floor at the end of the assembly and expressed their empathy and support for the NGOs of Tijuana and Baja California, for whom the federal decision was unfair, insulting, and insensitive. All the attendees of the meeting agreed on this position.

During the meeting, which lasted just over an hour, not including the subsequent photo session, three representatives of NGOs from Baja California took the floor to share their opinions. The first speaker stressed that the people who lead NGOs are not regular persons but rather personages and leaders who carry out empathic work to help others ("*No somos normales, somos personajes, somos líderes*"). In addition to emphasizing the care work NGOs perform, the second speaker urged the assembly to form a united bloc of NGOs at the national level to counterattack the federal decision. Finally, the third speaker, who came from Mexicali, mentioned that NGO leaders represent the people they help and serve; therefore, the speaker concluded that the presidential attack against NGOs was also an attack against the hundreds of people represented by the NGOs. Furthermore, the last speaker emphasized that non-governmental organizations are the ones that provide life opportunities to people who need them and that those "above" (that is, in the presidency) did not know what was happening at the border. For him, the NGOs representing those "below" (namely, the society) were better suited to understand and address the challenges of Baja California. While the perspectives and positions of the NGO's representatives present that day were diverse, the master signifier uniting them was their collective demand for their right to receive funds and resources from the federation.

The fourth speaker was the Secretary of Social Development representative, who mentioned that at that moment, Baja California had 1,655 NGOs registered, representing the state with the highest number of NGOs in the country. After that initial remark, the secretary praised the efforts of the NGOs, pointing out that what they were doing was a miraculous work of love since they had achieved a lot with the few resources available to them. Then, echoing previous speakers, the secretary criticized the actions of the "center" (the presidency) that, according to him, clearly does not understand what happens on the border. Likewise, the bureaucrat stressed that the time of politicians in the public function is fleeting but that the work and effort of society is what remains and, therefore, what matters the most.

The extraordinary session culminated with the intervention of El Patas, the mayor of Tijuana, who began stating that President López Obrador had no heart (*es un descorazonado*). Additionally, the mayor assured that the government of Tijuana would continue with the economic support to the childcare centers (one of the most controversial cuts of the federal decision). Equally, he assured the NGOs that they could still apply for funds through projects submitted to the municipality during the annual call of proposals. El Patas also explained that he was a citizen before being a government official and recognized that civil society is the hand that rocks the cradle of Tijuana (*la mano que menea la cuna de Tijuana*). After this remark, he pointed out that the government is only a facilitator of society and that federal money is a resource politicians must use to generate happiness. Finally, the mayor closed his speech by offering his telephone number to the representatives of the NGOs, explaining that in this way, society could communicate directly to him if there were issues in his administration that needed to be corrected.

The concerted and heated reaction following Lopez Obrador's decision expresses the organic and intimate relationship between the Mexican state and border NGOs and the importance of funds as a binding element between the two. This chapter aims to understand the functioning, structure, and roles of pro-migrant NGOs in Tijuana, proposing the notion of *bajar fondos* (roughly translated as "to obtain resources") based on ethnographic data and theoretical discussions about the meanings and practices of NGOs. By *bajar fondos*, I refer to the dynamics, relationships, and strategies NGOs establish with other groups to obtain economic and non-economic resources. To articulate what I mean by *bajar fondos*, in this chapter, I present ethnographic data from my volunteer work as a Spanish instructor for Haitian and African migrants at three border NGOs in Tijuana, whose names I have changed. My volunteer work allowed me to regularly interact with Haitian migrants, NGO members, and NGO volunteers and observe how those sectors relate. It also allowed me to follow some of the NGOs' internal dynamics and identify similarities and differences between groups, especially around the mechanics of managing migrant populations and the discourses and narratives about activism, networking, and resource acquisition. I also observed and followed the networks and connections that NGOs establish with other groups, for example, with other migrant-supporting NGOs and religious organizations (locally, regionally, nationally and internationally), with the state at its different levels, and with the academic apparatus represented by university students and professors researching the border. My goal in this chapter is to shed light on how border NGOs acquire diverse resources and to propose an analytical frame to understand their position and roles in Tijuana.

The first organization is *Oficina Escampadero,* an NGO localized in a commercial plaza near the international port of entry of San Ysidro. This NGO's primary purpose is to

help deported war veterans on the border, providing them with information and support. However, besides ex-military deportees, this organization provides general assistance for deported Mexicans, national and international migrants in transit or stuck at the border, and unhoused people who regularly experience police harassment and drug addiction. The second NGO is *Tèt Chaje,* an organization of Haitians living and labouring on Mexico's northern border.[91] This group began when most members were sheltered in the same Baptist church for several months during the Haitian arrival crisis of 2016 in Tijuana. After the 2017 regularization process of Haitian migrants, these individuals realized their idea of creating an NGO in Tijuana. Although the NGO was operated solely by Haitians, on paper, one of its members was a Mexican citizen, the Baptist pastor of the church where *Tèt Chaje* held their weekly Saturday meetings. [92] Finally, the third organization is *Albergue Juventud,* a bi-national NGO whose goal is to promote Tijuana's cultural diversity and advocate for the rights of migrant persons at the Mexico-U.S. border. This NGO is in Zona Norte, just a few meters from the international port of entry. Although their initial goal was to engage in activism defending gender and sexual orientation rights, since the Haitian arrival in Tijuana in 2016, the NGO has worked primarily with Haitian, African, and Central American asylum seekers.

Border intellectuals and researchers usually acknowledge the engagement of NGOs as of vital importance in the administration and assistance of subaltern classes in Tijuana,

[91] All the members of this NGO were also participants of different Protestant churches in Tijuana, and at the end of each weekly session, they used to hold hands to pray. For example, once, one member prayed in Spanish, asking to find the wisdom to make good decisions on behalf of the Haitian community in Tijuana.
[92] This arrangement responded to the requirement of the Mexican law, which stipulates that an NGO in Mexico must have at least one Mexican citizen among its ranks to be legally recognized as an *Organización de la Sociedad Civil* (Civil Society Organization, or OSC). The recognition of the NGOs by the state is necessary, first and foremost, for the NGOs to obtain governmental funds, either at municipal, state, or federal levels.

especially asylum-seekers, transit migrants, and deported Mexicans. Particularly, within anthropology, there is an exaltation of the roles of NGOs, seen as virtuous, moral, or counter-hegemonic. Thus, a recurring element in the literature on border NGOs is the conceptual separation between civil society and states as if they were two spheres with different and even antagonistic practices. Consequently, civil society organizations are explicitly celebrated as material and ethical counterweights to the policies and offensives of powerful groups against vulnerable populations.

One representative recent example of this approach is Wendy Vogt's 2018 ethnography, *Lives in Transit*, about the perils of the migratory route of Central Americans through Mexico. In this book, the author describes the system of migrant shelters and religious sanctuaries as a solidary, hopeful, and compassionate response to the regimes of mobility and citizenship that operate in Mexico that harm and commodify Central American migrants. In this way, she celebrates non-governmental praxis as a mirror reaction to the abuses of nation-states and criminal mafias along what she refers to as the arterial border and analyses how activism can transform religious beliefs into the language of human rights. Within the sociological field, Hondagneu-Sotelo and colleagues (2004) also address and celebrate the relationship between religious associations and activism, focusing on new forms of cross-border cooperation. According to the authors, ethnicity, protest, and religious morality intersect at the border in a politicized inter-faith spirituality. This manifestation of political religiosity reproduces the idea of the border as a post-national third place, not reducible to the two nation-states, and where forms of resistance and hybrid subjectivities are assumed to increase.

Celebrating civil society as an academic or political concept is not new or specific to the Mexico-U.S. border. Rather, it is a widely accepted position; that is, it represents a

consensus (Chandhoke, 1995).[93] Moreover, this stance portrays NGOs as virtuous institutions, separate from government, politics, and economics. In that regard, influential Western interpretations have reaffirmed civil society as a space for participation and communication (Habermas, 1981), justice (Rawls, 1971), cosmopolitanism (Delanty, 2001), good life (Walzer, 1983), a channel for the recognition of cultural diversity (Kymlica, 1995), and as a strategic partner of the state to promote social welfare and development (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016).

In contradistinction to the literature on NGOs, my analysis proposes that rather than rely on tropes, we must understand the power relations that compose civil society. In this way, the chapter critiques the ideological assumptions that support the practice of NGOs and veil their co-participation in state projects, particularly in the administration of subaltern classes. In the next section, I will review some interpretations of the last 20 years concerning the work of NGOs in Mexico and on the border to illustrate the consensus behind the concept and praxis of civil society, particularly NGOs. After this bibliographic review, I present three ethnographic descriptions of NGOs in Tijuana, from which I explain the idea of *bajar fondos* and conclude my analysis of migrant-supporting border civil society organizations.

NGOs on the Northern Border of Mexico

In Tijuana, the work of NGOs is instrumental and organic to the dynamics and processes of human mobility, fulfilling functions of mediation, containment, care, and administration. In

[93] Against this dominant position, there are researchers critical of civil society and NGOs (for example, Mamdani, 2009; Macip, 2012, 2015; Macip & Zamora, 2012; Shah, 2010).

that regard, one of the most critical roles of NGOs on the border is the immediate assistance (*asistencialismo*) of migrant populations, deportees and asylum seekers. The term *asistencialismo*, within the Mexican border context, implies immediate attention to the urgent needs of the deported and migrant population, for example, through providing food, shelter, clothing, or personal hygiene products. In that sense, NGOs' assistance roles form part of contingencies and emergencies. In that regard, the *asistencialista* character of the NGOs of Tijuana relates to the constant migratory crises on the border. Even so, border NGOs' participation in migratory processes has been the focus of scholars and academics who see the civil sector as a virtuous agent whose role is to protect and defend the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers against restrictive national policies and punitive state laws. For example, academics studying the arrival of Haitian asylum-seekers in 2016 have presented the case as an example of how civil society organizations, especially shelters, NGOs, and Protestant and Catholic centers, took the responsibility of addressing the border crisis resulting from the saturation of port-of-entries (Agudo Sanchíz, 2020; París Pombo, 2018; Hernández Silva & Padilla Orozco, 2020).

Academics who study the history of activism and NGOs in Mexico tend to punctuate their development alongside specific events and conjunctures in Mexican national history, such as the 1985 earthquake, the 1988 electoral fraud, the 1994 Zapatista conflict, and the process of democratic transition in the year 2000, to mention the most reiterated moments in the literature. In the case of NGOs in Baja California, scholars have explained their emergence and development as a response to the U.S. anti-immigration policies and the Mexican state's indifference to the conditions of unauthorized and deported migrants. In that sense, the oldest NGOs in Baja California, date back to the 1970s and 80s. Some of the critical moments for the emergence of NGOs in Baja California that the

literature highlights are the Simpson-Rodino Law of 1986, the Immigration Control and Reform Act (IRCA) of 1986, Proposition 187 of 1994, Operation Gatekeeper of 1994, the Prevention Through Deterrence policy of 1994, and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996.

This framing of the actions and history of NGOs expressed the limitations and weaknesses of the scope of civil society organizations. On the one hand, the narration of civil society engagement as a response to emergencies or crises points to this type of movement's temporary and episodic nature as it lasts as long as the situation to which they respond remains the focus of public interest or debate. On the other hand, by particularizing their commitment and interest in specific demands, the actions of civil society obviate structural issues. Even so, the narratives of civil society reify the celebrated and supposed exteriority of civil society vis-à-vis the state since its organization, although momentary, has been understood by intellectuals as a response and moral counterweight to state initiatives. Finally, in as much as their mobilization is defensive and of immediate reaction, the participation and presence of NGOs form part of what Gramsci called the sphere of minor politics (Q8, §48; Q15 §72). Minor politics describes the political struggles and negotiations within a constituted state and therefore does not intend to replace or destroy the state structure but merely to reform it.

However, within the specialized literature, there is consistent optimism about the work and relevance of NGOs. For example, writing about the binational and transnational mobilizations that the U.S. migratory offensives provoked, Avedaño, Moreno and Priego (2000) indicate that Mexican civil organizations on the border have managed to go from being assistance organizations to being politically motivated groups. For these authors, the

work that border NGOs carry out within networks and coalitions with U.S. NGOs, religious groups and international institutions represents a kind of nascent citizen diplomacy. With this concept, the authors emphasize how NGO networks, lobbying, and international pressure can influence public management policies relevant to the border, especially those concerning migratory controls and human rights. For their part, Calvillo, Martínez and León (2004) argue that Mexican NGOs have developed hand in hand with worldwide processes, such as globalization and postmodernity, and express a non-traditional associative and organizational exercise (outside of the political parties and labour unions), which gives a voice to marginalized groups, placing the precarious situation of these subjects in the public sphere. For these authors, NGOs are flexible organisms, coordinated in networks, guided by a common cause, and based on new demands such as environmentalism, identity rights and feminism. Importantly, for Calvillo and colleagues, NGOs are entities with self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-determination.

Particularly in the case of Baja California, Sheila Delhumeau (2008) indicates how the political alternation has promoted the development and consolidation of local NGOs.[94] As the author noted, this development is relevant because the political history of Mexico rests on a strong political centralization, characterized by its authoritarianism, interventionism and corporatism, where the presidency has been the leading promoter of

[94] By political alternation, I mean the electoral process in Mexico through which the ruling party, PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), gradually lost its hegemony. Mexico's modern formation as a democratic state hinges on decades of undisputed dominance by PRI candidates in municipalities, states, and the presidency. However, in 1989, Baja California became the first Mexican state with political alternation when the National Action Party (PAN or *Partido de Acción Nacional*) candidates won the state and municipal elections (in Tijuana, Mexicali and Tecate). A decade later, in 2000, Vicente Fox (also *panista*) was the first non-PRI president of Mexico, thus wrapping up what in national politics is referred to as democratic transition (*transición democrática*).

development policies to which the states and municipalities must abide. Thus, in Delhumeau's analysis, the PAN governments in Baja California have promoted a new citizen participation model, mainly delegating functions previously monopolized by the state to NGOs, unlike previous PRI governments. Within this context, the Financial Support Program for Civil Society Organizations (*Programa de Apoyo Financiero a Organismos de la Sociedad Civil* or PAFOSC) developed by the PAN governments in the 1990s has been the leading promoter of NGOs in Baja California, institutionalizing the relationship between the state and NGOs through the provision of monetary resources. As a result, the NGOs can access those resources by proposing projects and initiatives. In addition to the PAFOSC, the state government promoted the Law for the Promotion of Welfare Activities and Social Development of the State of Baja California (*Ley de Fomento a las Actividades de Bienestar y Desarrollo Social del Estado de Baja California*) in 1995, and the formation of the State Council of Civil Society Organizations (*Consejo Estatal de Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil*) resulting from the latter legislation.

Writing ten years after Delhumeau, Elvira Rincón (2018) analyzes the relationship between state programs supporting NGOs and these organizations' assistance roles (asistencialismo) in Tijuana. Rincón argues that the support programs for border NGOs (such as the Social Co-Investment Program/*Programa de Coinversión Social* and the Migrant Support Fund/*Fondo de Apoyo a Migantes*) have a role in the kind of participation NGOs perform on the border, limiting their actions to essential assistance. To reach such a conclusion, the author reviewed the projects submitted by NGOs that state support programs approve or reject, finding that projects focused on the operability and functioning of NGOs (especially those that propose improvements in the infrastructure of shelters) are mostly accepted and therefore, are supported by government resources. The author

acknowledges that NGOs depend on the support they can get from government programs, given their generalized financial instability, scarcity of resources and lack of personnel. These conditions guide most of the projects and activities of NGOs towards direct assistance. In contrast, projects aimed at the professionalization of NGOs, for example, seeking to pay the salaries of lawyers or specialized personnel (from physicians to drivers), are generally rejected (Rincón, 2018, p.202).

Additionally, the author highlights that many migrant support NGOs on the border are religious organizations with an active confessional base. This characteristic explains why their participation is limited to immediate help, aligned with the religious maxims of compassion to the helpless, hospitality to the foreigner, and love for the neighbour. Even so, Rincón mentions that networks and coalitions on the border begin to leave this limitation to be and act only as assistance groups and develop critical political positions, focused above all on denouncing human rights violations.

Collin and Molina (2009) identify NGOs in the global context as organizations based on the individual modern person with the ability to associate voluntarily with other individuals, which, according to them, provides NGOs with a sense of equality, horizontality and autonomy from the state and governments. In particular, the authors mention the individual's autonomy as a citizen in NGOs regarding economic independence, freedom of criteria and organizational self-determinacy. As the authors recognize, NGOs also have procedural systems and a vocation of solidarity. The work of NGOs is vital for Collin and Molina in the Mexican context because it establishes governmentality, which they understood as the participation of non-governmental entities in governmental spheres. The authors point out that the main problem of NGOs is that they depend on government funds, undermining their potential and turning them into clientelist organizations. For their

part, León and Calvillo (2013) argue that NGOs must work in parallel with the state in a relationship that the authors qualify as complementary. The authors based this conclusion on their diagnosis of the work of NGOs in Mexico as institutionally and financially weak, with limited resources and little experience in obtaining funds. The authors conclude that the Mexican state should support national NGOs while recognizing that between 2007 and 2011, government financial support and training of NGOs increased significantly.

Moreno and Niño (2013), who focus on Baja California and Sonora, have similar conclusions to the studies conducted at the national level. They recognize that NGOs work where are gaps in state services, for example, in cases of human rights violations, offering a solidarity work of assistance and advocacy as a response. Their diagnosis is that *asistencialista* NGOs, dependent on government funds and the work of volunteers and paid staff, are still predominant in Mexico. Optimistically, however, they recognize that new NGOs are beginning to develop joint projects in networks and coalitions, carrying out monitoring and reporting tasks beyond immediate assistance. Notably, for these authors, the work of NGOs in Baja California is carried out at the same level as the work of the state, but with the difference that the civil sector does not have the economic resources that the state apparatus does.

The recent crises at the border with asylum-seeker have materially and discursively replaced earlier deportee emergencies. In this new context, the literature on NGOs at the border has maintained an ambivalent position. On the one hand, the literature points out the limitations of NGOs and their participation within the border control regime. Still, on the other, they primarily celebrated the achievements and virtues of the actions of border civil society as new forms of decentralized participation. For example, Stoesslé, Patiño and Rosales (2020) have written about how NGOs in Tijuana adapted and responded to the

tightening of the border during the Donald Trump administration, mainly generating transnational networks of activism with NGOs located in San Diego. According to the authors, this transnational activism has generated international pressure strategies to counterbalance Trump's restrictive policies (for example, the Migrant Protection Protocols), such as naming and shaming, diffusion of information, lobbying, and accountability and leverage politics. With these collective actions, NGOs have placed border enforcement practices debates in more significant scenarios, framing asylum-seekers demands at national and international levels, particularly those related to human rights violations at the border and their right to request asylum.

Transnational advocacy and other forms of collective action, according to Padilla and Orozco (2020), are nurtured by Tijuana's history of migration and by a sense of identity grounded on values and emotions, such as horizontality, solidarity, and multiculturalism, shared by civil society activists. According to these authors, during the 2016 Haitian crisis, Tijuana's civil society devised new forms of flexible organization, different from the traditional *asistencialismo*, forming citizen support networks that managed donations and generated and disseminated information about the asylum-seekers' situation at the border. According to Peter Müller (2020), this participation allowed the formation of emerging forms of collective action, a form of bottom-up humanitarian response originating from civil society. Using Didier Fassin's idea of humanitarian government, Müller states that NGOs can adapt and respond to the challenges originated by U.S.-state offensives and Mexican-state incapacity to address its consequences. Thus, the author argues that NGOs can operate beyond *asistencialismo*, influencing border policies from below. In the same vein, Alejandro Agudo (2021) proposes the figure of the ethnographer as a humanitarian activist, warning that academic criticism against NGOs has pernicious political

consequences that are ethically questionable. Instead, this author argues that anthropologists must recognize the work of NGOs as an assemblage of collective actions moving between the ethical, the organizational and the informal in association with the municipal and state bureaucracies and religious institutions.

The gist of these descriptions of the NGOs in Tijuana is that they are oppositional in structure and motivations to the Mexican government, operating where the state does not want to or cannot act. Border scholars suggest that the NGOs' work counteracts the Mexican state's inefficiency and indifference in the face of the critical and pressing situations involving subaltern classes on the border. Thus, a recurring element in the literature on border NGOs is the conceptual separation between civil society and states as if they were two spheres with different and even antagonistic logics. Consequently, there is an explicit celebration of the role of civil society organizations as material and moral counterweights to the policies and offensives of powerful groups against subaltern classes. The consensus that Chandhoke (1995) points out in using civil society as a concept is similarly found in the descriptions and analyses of Mexican border NGOs, mainly in the reiteration of interpretive frameworks. For example, in the articles reviewed above, there is a persistence in framing and celebrating the work of NGOs as acts of governability (the delegation of responsibilities and functions from the state to the civil society), transnationalism (the creation of exchanges in networks that cross national borders) and human rights advocacy (rather than, for example, a framework focused on class, race, or gender).

These frameworks indicate a conscious decision and must be questioned through ethnographically informed positions. Therefore, in the following section, I present three

ethnographic illustrations of border NGOs to broaden the analytical framework generally given to NGOs. Through the following descriptions, I intend to delve into the internal dynamics of NGOs, seen from quotidian dynamics and not from border emergencies or crises. Thus, I want to describe the relationship of NGOs with the state apparatus of government, with the constellation of NGOs that work on the border, with the subaltern classes that they attend, with the volunteers that work in them, and with non-state powerful groups.

Oficina Escampadero

Oficina Escampadero is an NGO headed by a Mexican woman in her late 60s who holds a U.S. passport. The plaza where the NGO has its office gives the contradictory sensation of being a ghost square (empty most of the time, and with most of the locales abandoned) and, at the same time, heavily transited, especially by people coming and going from San Ysidro and Zona Norte. The plaza's proximity to both El Bordo [95] and San Ysidro is strategic to attract the heterogeneity of individuals who, on a quotidian basis, use the premises and services of *Oficina Escampadero*, including Haitian migrants.

I collaborated with *Oficina Escampadero* as a Spanish instructor for weekly evening classes offered to Haitian migrants at no cost. The class schedule responded to the work timetable of Haitians, who primarily worked either informally selling products on the street or within the maquiladora industry. The primary instructor of the classes was a Colombian teacher from San Diego who crossed the border every time he conducted the course.[96]

[95] The Tijuana River Canalization or *El Bordo* is where sewage flows, and residual populations converge, especially deportees and vagrants.
[96] Like the Spanish instructor, the lead head of the NGO also lived in San Diego and had to cross the border regularly (from Monday to Thursday) to open and close the premises.

Although the NGO tailored the lessons especially for Haitians to learn Spanish, the service attracted people of other nationalities. For example, one Russian and one Yemeni citizen were recurrent attendees.[97]

On a practical level, the NGO's functionality relies on volunteers who are spontaneously attracted to collaborate with the organization. [98] The volunteers are primarily national and international young students who offer their work in exchange for the opportunity to learn and help with the NGO. For example, at *Oficina Escampadero*, not only were the lead instructor and myself, a volunteer, but the person who was routinely at the desk answering the phone was also volunteering. Besides the three of us, a young San Diego undergraduate and a Berkley graduate student were regularly volunteering in the office during my fieldwork. Occasionally, there were more volunteers than Haitians present during the Spanish classes. In addition to its practical function, providing services and

[97] This variety of nationalities in the NGO compelled the Colombian instructor to affirm one day that Tijuana was like New York, namely, a cosmopolitan and multicultural city. Without knowing the kind of cosmopolitanism he was referring to, undoubtedly, the instructor was celebrating the presence of Haitians as a promising cultural addition to the city's diversity. Diversity, however, also brings conflict. For instance, within the microstructure of the NGO, a Guatemalan woman who frequented *Oficina Escampadero* used to verbally fight with the Yemeni migrant who attended the Spanish classes, accusing him of polygamy and not believing in Jesus.

[98] Within the dynamics and structure of NGOs in Tijuana, the work of volunteers occupies an essential place. This importance became clear to me when I accompanied the president of *Tèt Chaje*, a Haitian NGO, to a workshop sponsored by the Baja California government about volunteer management and administration. The workshop took place in Colonia Obrera, a popular neighbourhood in the hills of Tijuana. The person in charge of conducting the seminar was the president of an NGO in Tijuana, and she presented herself as a woman with extensive experience advising non-governmental organizations. The central theme was how to optimize the functioning of the volunteers while professionalizing its administration. The attendees were 10 to 12 persons, in all cases, heads of different NGOs on the border. During the workshop, the instructor provided tools and knowledge to control the involvement between activists and volunteers. This control, the instructor explained, goes from profiling the volunteers ("whom we want to attract to our NGO, who is going to be in charge of recruiting our volunteers") to disassociating them (with an emphasis on contracts to protect the interests of the NGO against potential lawsuits). In addition to this sense of professionalization of the volunteers, the workshop facilitator stressed that the volunteers should be protected materially, emotionally and psychologically. According to the workshop, this is achieved by investing in volunteers with gifts and making them feel part of the NGO, for example, recognizing their work and assuring them that their work in the NGO will make both the organization and the volunteer worker grow. Thus, the central point of the workshop was that volunteers are of value to NGOs, and therefore NGOs must invest in them to extract the most significant possible profit from them.

maintaining the premises, the work of volunteers provides a public moral legitimacy to the NGO, reinforcing the image of being a philanthropic organization while building a link between the civil organization and society in general, especially within the sphere of academic institutions.

The head of this NGO proudly explained that she and her association had been the first to provide support when the Caribbean migrants were stranded in Tijuana in 2016. While I can not confirm, deny, or deepen this assertion, the persistence of the Spanish classes for Haitians signals a good relationship between the association and these migrants. For example, the leading representative mentioned, during casual conversation, that Haitians referred to her as their mother as an expression of esteem and gratitude. [99] Furthermore, on a practical level, the closeness of *Oficina Escampadero* to the international border facilitates the continuous visits of Haitian migrants to the NGO, especially women who sell aprons between the car lanes of the port-of-entry. These women come to the association primarily seeking donated items (mostly diapers and baby clothes for pregnant Haitian women or newborn children) or a safe space that protects them from the scorching sun of Baja California. For example, the NGO provides sunscreen when the sun is at its highest intensity during summer.

The Spanish classes were not the only service provided by this NGO. [100] For example, regularly, *Oficina Escampadero* donated second-hand clothing, hygiene items, or cans of food. The NGO president was the only person distributing such items, who would

[99] I found similar signs of paternalism in other NGOs, but especially in shelters run by religious groups.
[100] Other services provided by this NGO were in the shape of general guidance on legal, labour, asylum, or migration procedures, especially redirecting specific cases to other specialized organizations with more resources to resolve particular issues. For example, the NGO collaborated with a nearby call center, where they constantly referred deported Mexicans with English proficiency in pursuit of being hired.

decide who could receive a donated item and when they would carry out the donations. However, the organization's primary function was more directly practical, serving as a place of rest and respite for people living and working in Zona Norte, particularly deportees. For example, it was routine to find individuals eating an instant hot soup or drinking instant coffee on the premises. Then, they would momentarily sit around the office and chat about the difficulties of life in Tijuana, their problems with the municipal police, or their experiences before deportation. Eventually, one of them would invariably ask the owner of the NGO if she had any extra clothing that she would donate to them: *¿habrá cambio de muda, doña?*

There were also occasions when the NGO made trips to donate clothing and other products to other non-governmental organizations. On one of those occasions, I accompanied a delegation of local activists, led by the representative of *Oficina Escampadero*, to the shelter known as Little Haiti to donate clothing and toys. At that time, Little Haiti was sheltering Haitian asylum seekers who had come through Venezuela along with African and Central American migrants. Even though the NGO representative attempted to organize a system of tokens and coordinate a single queue to receive a donated item, it was only a short time before the process was chaotic. The women and children started to pile up close to the donations, taking out whatever they could and hiding it between their belongings before returning to grab another item. Children were sent in multiple times to collect as many donations as possible.

Although the distribution of donated items was somewhat chaotic, one of the interests of the *Oficina Escampadero* representative was to produce audiovisual evidence of the meeting. Thus, the activists began photographing of the place, children, people, and donations as soon as we arrived. In this context, one of the Haitian children, responding to

the question of one of the activists, said in Spanish that he was Haitian and Venezuelan, but now that he was in Tijuana, he was also Mexican. After listening to him, the director of the NGO immediately asked her companion, a well-known border activist in Tijuana, if he could please record the boy repeating the exact phrase. However, the preteen refused to be recorded on camera or repeat his words. Faced with the refusal, the activists sought for another child to record.

As I mentioned before, the plaza where the NGO has its office appears as an unusual space. On the one hand, the plaza seemed uninhabited or empty, but on the other, it conveyed the sensation that someone was continuously watching or surveilling. One day, when I arrived at the association to find it closed, I decided to wait in front of the closed steel curtain covering the large front window and door, and while I was waiting, a Haitian student arrived, who was also surprised to find it closed. Even though the NGO was not open, we decided to stay and chat outside the premises, improvising a Spanish lesson while informally chatting. While we were talking, a young man from the Zona Norte approached us with a Mexican passport and showed it to me, asking if I thought he could cross to the United States with that passport. After noticing that the passport photo did not coincide with the person showing me the document, I explained that he could not pass with that passport, and he left.

Arriving home at night and while writing my field diary, I thought that the question might not have been as naive as it seemed to me at first. On the contrary, I thought it may have been an individual running an errand for a power group controlling the plaza, probably trying to figure out what I was doing in that space. I mention this interaction because it was plausible that criminal and non-visible power groups managed the plaza where the NGO had its office. If true, the association must have operated with the explicit

permission of those controlling the plaza. Related to this shadowy reality, in September 2021, the municipal police arrested several people in the plaza after an operation where they searched multiple locales and found weapons, tactical equipment, cartridges and various drugs, such as methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, morphine, fentanyl, tramadol and alprazolam. Following that event, local politicians referred to the plaza as a *nido de ratas* (a nest of bandits), urging the municipal government to promote private developmental projects to rescue an area where entrepreneurs could invest in tourist enterprises. In the same vein, there was one occasion while we were inside the NGO when we heard noises coming from the outside, and when we peeked out the window, we saw how three men were kicking another person lying on the ground. Without knowing what had happened to initiate the incident or where those men came from, the NGO's director recommended we not look at what was happening just a few meters from where we were conducting the class.

During fieldwork, other instances suggested a possible co-existence between this NGO and criminal power groups. Chiefly, one night after the organization hosted a meeting with San Diego State University students. The students were on a guided tour from their migration course led by an activist anthropologist researching the border processes. These meetings are critical for the association, and the NGO maintains regular ties with U.S. educational centers, encouraging students to volunteer with them. According to the NGO, it is an integral moral exercise of help, awareness, and learning.

For the student visit, the NGO organized to bring together several speakers, whom the director presented as representatives of Tijuana's life and social dynamics. Among the speakers were two Haitian migrants (both members of the NGO *Tèt Chaje*), a deported Mexican woman, a deported ex-military man, and a Central American woman who came to

Tijuana asking for asylum. Organized in a circle, each speaker could speak about their situation, experiences, and thoughts. The students, guided by the anthropology professor, had their chance to ask questions. The deported woman spoke in English about her linguistic discrimination in Tijuana. The anthropologist recommended that his students pay attention to how she felt like a foreigner in her own country because she does not speak Spanish fluently. The ex-soldier recounted in English how despite having served the United States, the latter country had discarded him at the border without having any chance of returning to what he considers his home country. The Haitian activists and the Central American woman spoke in Spanish, and one of the students simultaneously translated what the speakers explained to the rest of his classmates. The Central American cried as she recalled that she fled her country due to gang violence and that her attempt to obtain asylum in the United States had been unsuccessful. The Haitians, for their part, spoke of how comfortable they felt in Tijuana, excited to learn about Mexican culture and wishing that in Tijuana, the locals would also learn about their Caribbean culture. After the Haitians spoke, the anthropologist asked about the 2010 earthquake and their experiences in Brazil. However, the Haitians were more interested in discussing their civil organization instead of responding to the concerns of this anthropologist. For the anthropologist, the meeting was enlightening for his students. In his words, it made them aware of what was happening in Mexico, so close and far from the realities these U.S. students lived every day.

At the end of the meeting, the *Oficina Escampadero* representative asked students for financial contributions and distributed the collected money among the speakers. Each speaker was given seven dollars (and the two Haitian speakers shared the money). After the event ended, only the representative of the non-governmental organization, the two Haitian representatives of *Tèt Chaje*, and two volunteers, myself and another student who also

worked with *Oficina Escampadero*, remained in the locale. We were given a guided stroll of the plaza and its premises that the representative from *Oficina Escampadero* showed to the *Tèt Chaje* members. At that moment, *Tèt Chaje* was in the quest to have its own office, and the head of *Oficina Escampadero* was trying to help them obtain a lower price for renting one of the office spaces in the same plaza where she had her NGO. While walking, she said she could negotiate a monthly rent of 250 dollars, a special price considering the location and the locale's size. To check out the place, the activist took us through the abandoned aisles and areas of the plaza while we guided our paths with our cell phone lanterns. The plaza was, literally, a shadowy place by night due to the lack of functional lamps. The visit was instructive, allowing me to observe the ease with which the director of *Oficina Escampadero* moved between the aisles of empty locales in a darkened plaza. An example of this ease was when inside one of the abandoned premises, a dog locked up there began to bark at the noise we made when walking. The animal was reacting as trained, watching over and intimidating unwanted visitors. Faced with the barking, the director of the NGO began to speak to the dog by its proper name, asking it to be calm and urging it to recognize her, although the dog never paid attention or stopped barking violently. At the end of the guided tour of the plaza, she showed them the space for potential leasing, and the meeting ended cordially.

As can be understood, civil organizations in Tijuana often work in spaces, contexts, and situations that can be dangerous. To begin with, the location where most of the NGOs work, near the North Zone and the international border, means that their operation often occurs near actors who are not civil but violent.[101] Thus, through some paragraphs of the

[101] For example, I helped deliver bags of donated clothes to a shelter near the border on one occasion. While talking with the person in charge of the shelter, a funeral procession began through the streets. The procession

description of *Oficina Escampadero*, I suggest that the work of civil society organizations in Tijuana is not exempt from maintaining other types of dynamics and relationships not directly related to humanitarian aid. This assertion contradicts one of the central presuppositions about civil society, that it is an autonomous and independent sphere, operating through an autonomous logic distinct from other social spheres (Chandhoke, 1995). On the contrary, what is clear from this brief narrative of *Oficina Escampadero* is that civil society organizations can only function if they are situated in a system of networks and mediations larger and more complex than the humanitarian dynamic itself.

To conclude this section about *Oficina Escampadero*, it is instructive to highlight that volunteering, donations and publicity have appeared as essential pillars for this NGO's functionality. Likewise, it is possible to identify that non-governmental organizations do not function isolated or in an abstract space. Instead, NGOs' work happens amid various relationships with other spheres and social actors. From my description of *Oficina Escampadero*, it is possible to glimpse the relationship of this NGO with the academic-university circles, with the network of civil organizations that work in coordination or collaboration, and with the realm of criminal power groups. Each of these spheres is important in its involvement with organized civil society groups. The academy-university apparatus validates the work of NGOs, either through research and thesis work that defends civil humanitarianism, as well as through volunteer work and publicity towards the endeavours of NGOs, depicting them as actors doing good things. Networks between NGOs, in turn, support a system of exchange and circulation of donations and gifts (from

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was the farewell that the family of a local capo (that is, a leader of a criminal organization) gave to their deceased and consisted of at least a dozen luxury cars going around the block, with the relatives greeting the people who came out to say goodbye to the local leader. Police and military cars were in the distance observing and patrolling the streets where the funeral procession was taking place.

the civil sector, both private and business, to NGOs, and from NGOs to other civil organizations or directly to the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid), and gives solidity to the public figure of the social justice activist. Finally, at a basic level, non-state power actors might co-exist with local NGOs by establishing relationships of permission and tolerance in places and spaces controlled by mafias or criminal organizations.

Tèt Chaje

Tèt Chaje is a migrant NGO directed and operated by Haitian migrants in Tijuana. The purpose of this NGO is to help the Haitian population on the border. In that regard, the main problems that this NGO helps solve are migratory-related and focused on legal regularization procedures. However, *Tèt Chaje* also helps with other issues that Haitians encounter in Mexico, such as employment or health-related. For example, one Sunday of each month, the Haitian NGO arranged for dentists from San Diego to come down to Tijuana to give free consultations to Haitians who showed up at the Baptist church where they held their meetings. Likewise, this Haitian NGO helped when unforeseen events or misfortunes occurred within the Haitian population. For example, in August 2018, the house of a Haitian couple burned down in the Salvatierra neighbourhood (*colonia*), and *Tèt Chaje* was one of the first organizations who approached the couple to see what they might need. The NGO reported the case through its Facebook page, explaining that the Haitian couple lost all their belongings, such as documents, furniture, and clothing, due to the fire and requested public help to collect money and goods. In response to the public call for help and solidarity, the Lions Club, an international charitable organization with one club in Tijuana, donated 6,000 Mexican pesos. *Tèt Chaje* passed the money on to the victims. In

other cases, *Tèt Chaje* has also helped collect money to pay for the funeral expenses of Haitians who passed away while residing in Tijuana. As can be seen, their role in these cases is to mediate the circulation of resources.

Of course, *Tèt Chaje* is not the only NGO helping Haitian migrants in Tijuana, but it is the most successful. Besides *Tèt Chaje*, there is another Haitian NGO, *Peyi San Chapo*; however, they did not have official recognition from the Mexican state during my fieldwork that *Tèt Chaje* did have. In addition to the Haitian NGOs, an Internet radio station in Tijuana covers all kinds of events in the city where Haitian migrants are involved. For example, this Haitian radio covered music events, Sunday worship services, and calls made by *Tèt Chaje* to organize regularization programs with the Mexican National Migration Institute (INM, *Instituto Nacional de Migración*). In addition to covering live events and broadcasting them on its Facebook page, the Haitian radio station also broadcasts music, television series, movies, and soap operas to an audience made up of Haitians in the city. Furthermore, several radio hosts worked on the radio, creating original content in Creole.

The role of *Tèt Chaje* as an NGO made up of Haitians, who are fluent in French and Haitian Creole, gave them a unique position within the constellation of Tijuana's NGOs specialized in the care of migrants. This difference is because Mexican or Mexican-U.S. citizens regularly lead the migrant-supporting civil organizations in Tijuana. In that regard, *Tèt Chaje* is what the literature calls a migrant civil society organization formed by migrants and asylum seekers. This "special" position made them particularly attractive as spokespersons for the Haitian population in Tijuana, helping them develop connections with the Mexican state in Baja California, other NGOs in Tijuana, international NGOs, and the local and international press. In this sense, *Tèt Chaje* posited itself as an essential bridge or channel to interact with the Haitians residing at the border city. For example, when I met

with them for the first time, the association's president emphatically affirmed, stressing their role as mediators, "we are here to represent the Haitian community in Tijuana."

In 2018 and 2019, when I volunteered with *Tèt Chaje*, the NGO comprised a committee of six men and three women, all Haitians regularized in Mexico with the Visitor Card for Humanitarian Reasons. All the members worked in Tijuana within the formal market, mainly in the maquiladora industry. However, one member worked in a restaurant as a waiter, another as a security guard in a private hospital, and the association's president owned his small business. Additionally, one of the members working in maquilas tried to enter the university in Tijuana, specifically the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California* (UABC). However, he failed to pass the entrance exam. The Baptist church pastor, who was nominally part of *Tèt Chaje*, allowed the NGO to work in a room inside the Baptist temple and occasionally visited them to say hello and see how everything was going with the association. However, he was not an active part of the NGO.

My primary responsibility as a volunteer at *Tèt Chaje* was leading a Spanish class on Sunday afternoons in the Baptist Church after the Haitian morning service. I also regularly participated in the weekly committee meetings, helped write official letters in Spanish, attended different workshops, and got involved with the daily activities and projects of the NGO, such as status-regularization campaigns. Besides me, the civil association had another volunteer working with them, a U.S. citizen living in Tijuana who also led an English class for Haitians on Sundays. Likewise, through one *Tèt Chaje* member, I conducted a class for Haitians in another Protestant church. That class focused on them having the necessary knowledge and skills to pass the elementary-school exam, approved by the Mexican Secretariat of Public Education (*Secretaría de Educacion Pública* or SEP). For the Haitians who attended this class, regularizing their educational

level in Mexico was parallel to their desire to obtain better jobs and, consequently, better salaries.

The *Tèt Chaje* committee met every Saturday afternoon to discuss issues relevant to the association, such as event organizations or network formation. Committee meetings were entirely in Creole, and since I was not fluent in Creole, one of the NGO members simultaneously translated most of what they discussed during the sessions. Participants would often switch back and forth from Creole to Spanish to include me in the loop of their conversations. In 2018, when I started attending the weekly meetings, one of the issues they were most interested in solving was having their own space for the association. Their main problem was obtaining the necessary money to pay monthly rent. Until then, the office where *Tèt Chaje* met was the church library. That room, surrounded by theological books and stacked boxes, was small and had a slight disadvantage in that the lights turned off and on regularly, leaving us in dim light at intermittent intervals.

As previously mentioned, each member of this NGO had a formal job in Tijuana, so for everyone, the work of the civil association implied an additional responsibility in a dynamic not absent of tensions. For example, one Saturday, the committee meeting did not occur because the association's president did not show up with the key to the church library. The members who attended expecting to meet with the committee expressed their disappointment and annoyance with what happened. To express their indignation, when we were waiting, they said that going to the weekly meetings was an extra burden, referring to an additional investment of money, time, and energy. In this sense, it is relevant to consider that the members of this NGO attended the weekly meetings on their days off from work, and for those who lived far from the Baptist church, attending the meetings meant spending on public transportation. Another example of this kind of tension arose while *Tèt Chaje* was

preparing a list of Haitian migrants for the *Instituto Nacional de Migración*. In this case, the president of *Tèt Chaje* scolded the other members in the meeting room, accusing them of not working enough and overloading him with the responsibility of finishing the listing. On that occasion, I worked with the president of *Tèt Chaje* for two days in a row until late at night to have the document ready. In both examples, there is tension for the *Tèt Chaje* members between having formal employment and working within the sphere of the NGO.

This NGO mediated between Haitian migrants and Mexican authorities in multiple ways. This mediation role was explicit when *Tèt Chaje* actively participated in programs for legalizing Haitian migrants in Tijuana. In these regularization programs, the Mexican INM delegated to *Tèt Chaje* the collection and organization of cases of Haitians who needed to resolve any immigration procedure. Within this dynamic, I created for *Tèt Chaje* simple Excel sheets with the personal data of Haitian migrants: telephone number, name, passport number, immigration status and problem to be solved. Among the cases gathered were people with deportation letters, people who had just arrived in Tijuana from Mexico's southern border and wanted Mexico to regularize them for the first time, cases opened by COMAR (the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid or *Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados*), and cases of Haitians with an expired temporary resident status expecting to renew it. By obtaining and organizing this information, *Tèt Chaje* worked as a proxy of the Mexican state.

To obtain this data, the NGO gathered Haitians interested in solving status-related migratory problems, filed their data, and submitted it to the Baja California INM offices. For this task, *Tèt Chaje* relied on its network with the Haitian population, primarily through electronic channels, such as the What's App, and through communication mediated by their membership in Protestant churches (for example, *Tèt Chaje* once obtained information for

the INM during a Haitian wedding). In a second moment, after gathering personal information, *Tèt Chaje* also helped carry out the procedures, acting as translators and mediators to streamline and facilitate the interactions between national bureaucrats and Haitian migrants who were not fluent in Spanish. To fulfill this function, *Tèt Chaje* accompanied contingents of Haitians to begin their immigration procedures at the INM offices.

Besides the direct linkage with Mexican authorities, *Tèt Chaje* also worked and maintained relationships with other border civil organizations, both within the universe of pro-migrant advocacy and outside of it. On one occasion, two members of the Haitian NGO met with two lawyers, representatives of a consulting firm, at the Baptist church. The lawyers explained that their law firm could solve problems that the government could not solve and that they were interested in working with *Tèt Chaje*. With this, the lawyers meant that they were interested in *Tèt Chaje* contracting their services, which, during the meeting, they took the time to explain and promote. The lawyers' offered service was a project to professionalize the NGO, especially enticing them with the idea of knowing how to obtain funds (*bajar fondos*). The idea of "*bajar fondos*" was presented as a sine qua non for civil society organizations, as funds are essential to resolve the problems of the population served by the NGO. In this sense, the lawyers left no room for ambiguity and directly told the two Haitian representatives that obtaining funds was what they knew how to do better. With the money the lawyers would help them get, *Tèt Chaje* would have the resources to pay the lawyers for their services. The lawyers proposed various possible projects or action plans after establishing the objective of *bajar fondos*.

To begin with, they noted that *Tèt Chaje* needed an office of their own since, in their words, they needed to show themselves publicly in a more professional way. Then, in

a second moment, the lawyers emphasized that to work with *Tèt Chaje*, the consulting firm had to have access to the official documents of the NGO, especially the Constitutive Act (*Acta Constitutiva).* [102] The Constitutive Act is the document that accredits the NGO as a Civil Society Organization (OSC by the Spanish initials) in Mexico. It is also where the NGO's objective, mission and vision are stipulated. Therefore, as the lawyers explained, the possibility to lobby for funds depends on the purposes of the civil organization, as they explicitly appear in the *Acta Constitutiv*a.

Later in the meeting, the lawyers explained that their consulting firm consisted of five members, including the two who attended the Baptist church that Sunday. Each member dealt with different areas and services, thus, the lawyer present at the meeting was the immigration and legal matters specialist. She explained that she had experience working in the government, and contacts within the state apparatus, thus implying that she could speed up some procedures. The other lawyer present at the meeting specialized in commercial affairs. He recommended to the Haitians of *Tèt Chaje* that they consider opening a business with products imported from Haiti, targeting both Haitian migrants and local Mexicans as clients. According to the lawyer, if *Tèt Chaje* decided to work with the consultancy, he could make them entrepreneurs and businesspeople. The third member oversaw the human resources field, primarily working with unions and the maquiladora industry on the border. At this point, the lawyers implied that they could get the *Tèt Chaje* committee members good jobs in the maquilas and construction industry. Additionally, the lawyers suggested the possibility of preparing a list of Haitian professionals to place

[102] *Acta Constitutiva* is an official document where government agencies (municipal, state and federal) recognize the constitution of the non-governmental organization. Therefore, having a civil association registered through the Constitutive Act implies having the possibility of competing with a project to obtain resources and state funds.

Haitian immigrants in the local labour markets. The fourth member of the consultancy was in charge of foreign trade matters, especially imports. Finally, the fifth member specialized in *bajar fondos* (obtaining funds) as the official group's fundraiser (*recaudador de fondos*). In that sense, the lawyers recommended to *Tèt Chaje* to legally declare themselves as a binational organization to open the possibility of receiving resources from the United States.

During the meeting, comments and observations emerged about the perception of Haitians in Tijuana, especially when comparing them with other groups. For example, the lawyers mentioned that Haitians were well-seen in Tijuana because they brought money, were hard-working and did not cause problems. After that remark, she compared Haitians to "those other migrants" (referring to Central Americans) who were about to arrive in Tijuana and were not viewed favourably by the border residents and officials, according to the lawyers' perception. To the lawyers, this public "acceptance" of Haitians in Tijuana generates curiosity in residents, which the Haitian NGO could exploit economically with the help of the consultancy. In another illuminating remark, the lawyers pointed out that the Haitians were educated, unlike other groups at the border city. She particularly mentioned the Mixtec ethnic group, referring to them as uneducated and uncivilized.[103] During the meeting, the two Haitian representatives listened attentively to the offers of the lawyers and accepted the basic premises of their arguments. At one point, the president of *Tèt Chaje* recognized that they were learning from what the lawyers were saying, to which the lawyers replied that they only intended to offer them a "world of opportunities." Thus, the

[103] On the border, many Mexican internal migrants who remained in Tijuana after failing attempts to cross to the United States do not speak Spanish as their first language or at all. The Mixtecs come from the state of Oaxaca, although they also come from Puebla and Guerrero.

two Haitians accepted the assertion that the NGO needs funds to carry out social projects to cover the needs of Haitian migrants. In other words, to meet the needs of the NGO and the Haitian population, *Tèt Chaje* had to have the knowledge to access funding channels.

The practice indicated by the phrase *bajar fondos* is characteristic of the structure and functioning of NGOs in Tijuana. Semantically analyzed from the vernacular Spanish spoken in Mexico, it is possible to interpret the phrase *bajar fondos* in at least three ways: in a literal first reading, *bajar fondos* means obtaining funds from above and bringing them down, for example, from the government and wealthy spheres to grassroots organizations and their constituents. In this way, the dynamics of NGOs and monetary resources are like that of academics applying for scholarships through research projects. At a second level, closer to the criminal, the idea of *bajar fondos* shares semantic meaning with the action of a mugger. This second meaning is evident in a noun used to name thieves, bandits, or street robbers in Tijuana, who are referred to as *bajadores*. In that sense, the verb *bajar* is equivalent to *robar* (mug). This name also applies to bandits who strip recently arrived migrants of their belongings at the border. Finally, in a more vulgar sense, *bajar fondos* shares semantics with the sexual practice of "going down," which refers to oral sex. In that sense, the phrases "*bajar por…"* or *"bajar al..."* are common in Mexico to refer to sexual practices performed with the mouth. The three semantic meanings share one characteristic in which all three must be performed secretly.

By grouping the three meanings, it is possible to interpret the practice of *bajar fondos* on a deeper level, for example, *bajar fondos* might be read as the action to obtain resources from above while simultaneously implying an unscrupulous practice similar to bandits and a position of submission akin to the sexual third sense. In the language and practice of NGOs, *bajar fondos* is an integrated and assimilated common sense denoting

the alignment and submission with the spheres from which the funds might come and the cleverness and cunning to obtain money from powerful classes. The primary funding sources are state agencies, businesses, and international NGOs. To obtain resources NGOs from those sectors, NGOs depend on a certain level of specialization, embodied in the figure of the fundraiser (el *bajador de fondos* or *el que baja por los fondos*) who is in charge of procuring a constant flow of money for the NGO, either by "cultivating" sponsors or "dominating" bureaucratic paths and buzzwords needed to obtain the resources.[104]

From the approach to the work and structure of *Tèt Chaje*, three characteristics of NGOs are recognizable: the mediating position of migrant civil society organizations, their link with the state and religious groups, and the relevance of funds in the functioning and reason for being of NGOs. NGOs operate as mediators within a process of circulation of resources, both donations and services. In the case of *Tèt Chaje*, this mediation has as its pillars the direct link with the Mexican state (with the INM) and the connection with the Haitian population (especially as members of Protestant churches). Furthermore, it gives the members of *Tèt Chaje* an aura of respectability among the Haitian people in Tijuana. Likewise, the analysis of *Tèt Chaje* allows us to understand how funds bind civil society organizations and the hegemonic classes, especially those represented in the state apparatus. In this sense, the concept of *bajar fondos* provides a framework for understanding the structural position of NGOs. In the case of *Tèt Chaje*, a relatively new NGO, fundraising is a challenge they can overcome by understanding the legal terrain of the bureaucratic procedures and fostering strategic links. Finally, the description of *Tèt Chaje* allows us to analyze how difficult it is for an NGO to democratize its internal

[104] Interestingly in English, "raise funds" denotes an upward, not a downward, motion. As if the funds came up from the ground.

processes, clearly in the tensions that arose within the committee and that had to do with the problem of how to balance work-life with civil activism.

Albergue Juventud

Albergue Juventud is a border NGO led by a young Mexican graduate student at the University of California. It operates as a temporary shelter for migrant families in transit and as a migrant cultural centre, hoisting public activities that foster cultural exchange and dialogue between migrants, asylum-seekers, and the local population. The organization's multicultural approach is expressed in how they have attached positive meanings to the epithet of *Haitijuanenses* to refer to Haitians residing in Tijuana, to the babies born in Tijuana from Haitian migrants, and to the process of cultural syncretism between Haitians and the population of the border city.

As a volunteer helper for Spanish classes offered at the *Albergue* on weekend mornings, my role was to accompany the instructor during his lessons and substitute teach when he was unavailable. The instructor was a volunteer and a university professor from *El Colegio de la Frontera Norte* (COLEF). Although *Albergue Juventud* designed the course for Haitian migrants, citizens from other countries often attended it, especially Cameroonians. While the class focused on speaking and listening skills, the lead instructor of *Albergue Juventud* added a practical knowledge level to the lessons, for example, by teaching them how to read and fill out official forms, such as those required for asylum applications or to renew the humanitarian visa.

Although the leader and public figure of *Albergue Juventud* has an extended public presence in Tijuana and strong leadership inside the NGO, there is a whole team of paid

and unpaid collaborators working with her, including many migrants and asylum-seekers. These migrant collaborators are referred to as "community coordinators" by the NGO. To include individuals from subaltern migrant classes as part of the NGO's team responds to the organization's policy of giving voice and participation to migrants, understanding them as social actors and not only victims or passive recipients of aid.[105] Therefore, a community coordinator is a paid member who is also a migrant or asylum-seeker and serves as a bridge between the NGO and other asylum-seekers or migrants. Thus, the community coordinator's task is to organize the interaction and involvement of the NGO with the sector that the coordinator represents. For example, one particular function of the coordinators is conveying information about the NGO's activities and events, such as the Spanish classes, workshops, and seminars. When I volunteered with *Albergue Juventud*, the NGO had community coordinators who were Haitian, African, and Central American among its ranks. [106]

As part of the NGO's efforts to encourage migrant agency, in 2018-19, *Albergue Juventud* promoted the dissemination and publication of a book written by a Haitian migrant in Tijuana. With the help of a local pastor, the book recounted, in Spanish, the author's trajectory through the American continent before he arrived in Tijuana in 2016. The NGO publicized the book through multiple public presentations in cafeterias, government spaces and cultural festivals. At the book presentations, the president of the NGO invariably took to the floor to explain how they began working with the author, how

[105] I heard this position articulated by the leader of the NGO several times, both in public presentations and in encounters with the local and international press.
[106] Comparing this organization with *Oficina Escampadero*, it stands out that *Albergue Juventud* does not attend to deported individuals living on the canal or the street; this, despite routinely homeless people sleeping outside its facilities in beds made of cardboard. Therefore, the idea of a deported community coordinator does not exist in *Albergue Juventud*.

they were helping him translate his book into five languages, and how the author himself was an example of the integration of two cultures, Haitian and Mexican. The author always presented his son, a baby boy born in Tijuana, to the public during these events. However, he never introduced the mother of his child and partner, a Mexican woman from Tijuana, to the audience. In those presentations, the director of *Albergue Juventud* explained how important it was for her organization to give migrants a voice to tell their story in a statement accompanied by a criticism of the work of journalists, who, according to the activist, "only come to take the photo and then leave." The presentations of the book thus served, in addition to selling copies of the book, as public events from which the NGO celebrated its relationship with Haitian migrants, presenting itself as a progressive organization. The Haitian author worked with *Albergue Juventud* as a community coordinator before he and his son (born in Mexico) crossed the border to the United States.

Like other NGOs, *Albergue Juventud* relies on developing relationships with other spheres and organizations. Notably, the NGO works closely with local academics and researchers from *El Colegio de la Frontera Norte* (COLEF), a graduate-level institution with several campuses in the Mexico-U.S. border strip. As part of their political and research agendas, several professors and researchers from COLEF carry out volunteer work for *Albergue Juventud*. If the involvement of academics with the NGO allows them access to migrants as research subjects, their presence as volunteers and collaborators legitimizes the NGO with an aura of professionalism and public recognition. When I volunteered in *Albergue Juventud*, I met at least two researchers who voluntarily offered workshops for the NGO. One was the Spanish class, and the other was an embroidery workshop that a Mexican sociology professor offered to migrant women staying at the NGO. At the municipal level, *Albergue Juventud* also has a close relationship with other institutions,

such as the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California* (UABC), specifically with departments such as visual arts. For example, undergraduate art students have collaborated with the NGO to make documentary videos and prepare a mural covering an entire wall in the NGO space. In addition, the NGO attracts undergraduate and postgraduate students, national and international, who come to work as volunteers and spend time with asylum seekers and refugee migrants in the shelter. These volunteers are actively integrated into the dynamics of NGOs, primarily to conduct interviews for their thesis and research work and are attracted to the experiences of help in humanitarian circumstances. At this point, I must recognize my positionality since I also attended and volunteered with the border NGOs as part of my research dissertation project. However, in my case, this involvement was not solely motivated to interact and meet informants but also to understand how the NGOs work in Tijuana.

The participation of researchers with the NGO is not limited to the local level. On the contrary, it includes national and international academics who come to *Albergue Juventud* as a point of access to the population sheltered and waiting in Tijuana. For example, during my fieldwork, an anthropologist from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM or *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*) participated with the NGO, conducting a workshop with migrants on "cartography from below." This academic who researches asylum-seeker encouraged Haitian and African asylum seekers to map their journey across the continent, marking "solidarity" sites and sites of danger and persecution (see the concepts of Vertical Border of Varela, 2019, and Arterial Border of Vogt, 2018). Similarly, a scholar from a U.S. university met regularly with *Albergue Juventud*'s leaders (and other Tijuana NGOs, including *Tèt Chaje* and *Oficina Escampadero*), accompanied by a Haitian-U.S. activist. During her meetings with NGOs,

which were part of a study on the Haitian diaspora, the academic donated electronic items, such as laptops and printers. As mentioned in my description of the *Oficina Escampadero*, donations are a binding element for NGOs to build cooperative bridges and strategic partnerships.

Besides the relationship of this NGO with the local, national, binational and international academic institutions, its involvement with other non-governmental organizations, especially international ones, is also crucial for its dynamics and legitimacy. When I was conducting fieldwork, *Albergue Juventud* had just opened their new facilities in an ample two-story space. It designated the upper floor of the premises as a shelter for migrant families. The lower floor was the cultural center, used for various activities, such as workshops or public events. According to informal communication with one of the volunteers I met there, *Albergue Juventud* obtained the financial resources to rent and adapt their space through funds granted by Save The Children, the international civil organization. The Mexican NGO thus served as a channel for philanthropic investments from other non-governmental organizations, not necessarily based in Tijuana but which saw the border city as a space for humanitarian intervention. I can mention at least two more examples of this linkage and activism involving international civil organizations, although the NGOs are less recognized than Save The Children. The first was when an organization of women skatersboarders from San Diego crossed the border to conduct a workshop on skating for the children housed in *Albergue Juventud*. The second was a group of artistic activists (artivists, as they referred to themselves) who visited the shelter to present a circus and clown show, again aimed at the infants staying with their families at *Albergue Juventud*. The two events were, at the time, publicized on the NGO's Facebook page, primarily through photographic and video material. International organizations and groups

of this nature make tours regularly, visiting different shelters and sometimes other border cities as part of their humanitarian and philanthropic practice. As these two examples show, *Albergue Juventud* constantly attracts and channels the efforts of other international NGOs.

As in the other NGOs where I worked, in addition to the constituents of the civil association, the NGO was a recurring place for journalists, university professors conducting research, and students seeking to gather information for their thesis projects. However, compared to *Tèt Chaje* and *Oficina Escampadero*, *Albergue Juventud* had much more human and financial resources. For example, one Saturday, when I arrived at the NGO prepared to conduct my Spanish class, I found that the facilities unusually crowded with people and a human fence at the door guarding the entrance. When I tried to enter the NGO, at least to find out what was happening, English-speaking private security employees dressed in black suits blocked my way. When I asked what was happening inside, the private security guards responded elusive and aggressively. A few days after this event, I learned through the local news that the actors Eva Longoria and Wilmer Valderrama had visited *Albergue Juventud* that day. Photos shared by the international and local press showed the celebrities carrying Central American babies and listening to testimonies from asylum seekers. The visits of international personalities to Tijuana to show their humanitarian side is not news,[107] but that they visit some NGOs and not others indicate the scope and networks of specific civil organizations. In other words, some NGOs are better networked and connected than others.

[107] For example, while I was in the field, Julia Roberts visited the shelter known as Little Haiti as a representative of UNICEF. In the same way, in an interview with the pastor of a Baptist Church in Tijuana, he told me that the Mexican actor Diego Luna had visited the church when they were sheltering Haitians in 2016 and that he donated chickens to the shelter.

Politically, *Albergue Juventud* is particularly active around the plight of migrants at the border, the defence of their rights in Mexico and organizing resources for migrants' immediate needs. Regarding legal help, *Albergue Juventud* has a volunteer lawyer who assists asylum-seekers in processing their cases in the United States. The lawyer also attends to migrants intending to stay in Tijuana, assisting them with regularizing their status in Mexico. Additionally, the NGO produced and distributed informational posters and flyers about the U.S. asylum system in Spanish, English, French, and Haitian Creole. The organization also provides simultaneous translations from other academic, civil, and governmental groups to carry out legal advice seminars and workshops on applying for asylum. Likewise, they have made efforts to denounce and protest against the U.S. government program known as Remain in Mexico or Migrant Protection Protocols. The protocols force asylum seekers at the border to remain in Mexico while they await their turn to proceed to an asylum trial with a judge in the United States. For Albergue Juventud, this government program places an already vulnerable population in danger, considering the rates of violence in a city like Tijuana. In this way, and as part of the political agenda of Albergue Juventud, the NGO continuously disseminates critical positions against the bi-national border asylum regime. [108]

[108] Among its more political interventions, the civil association is strongly involved in social movements that emerged in the United States, for example, the Black Lives Matter movement. Thus, in Tijuana, *Albergue Juventud* organized several marches at the border wall of *Playas de Tijuana* and Downtown's *Avenida Revolución* called "*Las Vidas Negras Importan*." They documented and publicized these events with photos of the NGO's members raising their fists and displaying banners along the international fence that divides Mexico from the United States. This demonstration occurred even though there are few documented cases of police violence against African or Haitian migrants, which does not mean that there is no historically structured racism in Tijuana and Mexico. The protest for Black Lives in Tijuana has thus taken on a sense of criticism of the U.S. migration and asylum system that rejects and deports Black people on the Mexico-U.S. border.

As part of the cultural agenda promoted by *Albergue Juventud* within its vision of giving a voice to the subaltern classes, the NGO produces audiovisual material on border migration issues that incorporate the views and perspectives of migrant subjects. A typical example of this type of production is the virtual workshops recorded on video and broadcast on Facebook, in which migrants and asylum seekers teach how to cook dishes typical of their countries. The NGO has thus produced video tutorials on Haitian, Salvadoran, and Cameroonian. In addition to these international food workshops, the NGO has produced and supported music and poetry written or performed by migrants and asylum seekers participating with *Albergue Juventud*. For example, *Albergue Juventud* recorded its community coordinators singing Juan Gabriel's 1980 song "En la Frontera," thus performatively celebrating border life as a multicultural experience. In this same sense, in the lyrics of the song, the following phrase stands out: "I like a lot being on the border... [because people] live better, there is much love, and the people get ahead" ("*a mí me gusta mucho estar en la frontera… se vive mejor, hay mucho amor y se supera*"), conveying the sense of the border as a place of success and solidarity. Finally, as the last illustration of this type of activity, in 2021, the NGO promoted the creation of a migrant audiovisual fiction inspired by the narrative structure of Mexican soap operas (*novelas*). The story of this *novela* narrates the difficulties of the migrants and their desire to overcome them, and migrants collaborated both in acting and developing the script.

Comparing the descriptions of *Tèt Chaje* and *Oficina Escampadero* with those of *Albergue Juventud*, it is possible to establish similarities in the structure of the NGOs. However, there are also marked differences, especially in the political and multiculturalist approach that *Albergue Juventud* promotes. Like *Oficina Escampadero*, *Albergue Juventud* serves as a center to assist populations recognized as vulnerable on the border. However, its

scope also encompasses a political position, markedly influenced by universities in the United States. Moreover, like *Tèt Chaje*, *Albergue Juventud* presents itself in part as a migrant civil organization by including migrants as community coordinators. These mediating figures directly link migrants, the Mexican state and its bureaucracies, society at large, NGOs and networks of national, international migrant-supporting associations, and U.S.-based universities. *Albergue Juventud*'s mediating role occurs at different levels, whether we consider the circulation of donations, the participation of volunteers and researchers, or the politicization of activism directed against nation-states and their government regimes.

Conclusion

NGOs in Tijuana are a socially and politically recognized force with a notable presence and involvement in migration-related humanitarian issues. Although all NGOs are part of civil society, they represent a plurality of positions, making it difficult to speak of a unified or homogeneous sphere. Even so, the work of NGOs has been grouped and celebrated by academics and politicians, especially for their efforts to help during border crises, such as the 2016 arrival of Haitian asylum seekers. For example, numerous analyzes and studies of the recent Haitian continental migration underline the labour of activists and religious groups as part of a humanitarian civil society (de Moraes et al., 2013; Veran et al., 2014; da Silva, 2015; Hernández Silva & Padilla Orozco, 2020; París Pombo, 2018; Coello Cerino, 2019; Miura, 2014; Valles, 2020; Nieto, 2014). Each source reiterated that the Haitians' presence triggered critical scenarios to which the nation-states were incapable or unwilling to respond promptly. Thus, the authors explain that the NGOs' labour faced challenging

circumstances in providing care, attention, and services. These analyses extoll civil and religious society praxis and criticize nation-states and government authorities while representing Haitian migrants as a vulnerable population.

Contrary to the typical approach to understanding migrant-focused NGOs, this chapter analyzes and describes their work from quotidian spaces and moments rather than from the exceptionality of critical junctures or overflowing borders. In this way, it is possible to understand their internal dynamics and logic, especially by tracing the relationships that NGOs forge with other sectors and on which, in many ways, they depend. Thus, to address the meaning and practice of NGOs, in this chapter, I proposed the notion of *bajar fondos* as a critical framework for organically understanding NGOs within the social dynamics of the border city of Tijuana.

In characterizations of border NGOs, researchers repeatedly mention the dynamics of obtaining funds as intrinsically relevant to NGOs' activities. However, they generally noted the dynamics of fund acquisition to reinforce the virtuosity of the civil sphere. An example of the latter approach is the case of the secretary of social development of Baja California quoted at the beginning of the chapter, who mentioned that, given their limitations, NGOs make a miraculous effort. In other words, the studies on NGOs have emphasized the lack of resources as an obstacle that civil organizations must overcome, celebrating that NGOs have the virtue of getting ahead despite suffering from many external limitations. However, I found that rather than an external obstacle, resource acquisition strategies are a constitutive and integral element of NGOs. In this sense, *bajar fondos* refers to the dynamics of obtaining monetary and non-monetary resources, the expertise required to obtain those resources, and the relationships NGOs establish to acquire them, either through the state or other groups and spheres of power.

Thus, border NGOs mediate the procurement and distribution of resources between hegemonic classes, represented mainly by states, and subaltern classes, represented by deportees, migrants, and asylum-seeking classes. In other words, these organizations provide services, resources, and information that the subaltern classes use as part of their livelihood and migration strategies. Within this pragmatic dynamic, subaltern classes willfully engage in constant interactions and exchanges with border NGOs. However, the interactions between the two groups are unequal and cemented in the border apparatus and integral state that reproduces the function of Tijuana as a container and administrative space for surplus populations. Thus, the relationship between migrant-supporting NGOs and subaltern classes has a heavy *asistencialista* character, which can, in turn, take the form of paternalism. In this relationship, the NGOs are the ones that provide the funds that the subaltern classes obtain from them. These diverse resources range from providing a safe resting space to Spanish and English classes and the legal advice some NGOs offer.

For NGOs to have funds and resources that migrants and subaltern classes take advantage of, they must first position themselves as recipients of external donations and incentives. So, the NGOs first have to obtain funds from other sectors. At one first level, obtaining funds is mediated by the recognition of NGOs within the state, both at the municipal and state levels and with the federation's government. NGOs achieved this recognition through their groups' formal and legal registration, which opens the channel to compete for state resources, which the states offered in annual calls. To access state funds, NGOs have to develop written projects explaining how they will use the money they request from the state. The need to develop projects has generated a professionalization within the NGOs, embodied in the figure of the fundraiser (*recaudador de fondos*), a position specialized in elaborate projects to request funds. Thus, following the dynamics

and meanings that the notion of *bajar fondos* expresses can ethnographically shed light on the dialectical and dynamic relationship between civil society organizations (NGOs) and the state, avoiding separating the two without conflating them.

If, on the one hand, border intellectuals emphasize the work of NGOs as protecting and defending the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers, on the other, they systematically ignore the organic relation between NGOs and the state and other holding-power groups. The latter is a questionable omission since the mechanism through which the NGOs obtained funds reveals much about the position and relations of those sectors within the border regimes operating in Tijuana. In this sense, Neera Chandoke (1995) has raised instructive criticisms about how the academy has understood civil society, primarily pointing out the inadequacy of the interpretations that place civil society as an autonomous sphere outside the limits and scopes of the states. On the contrary, Chandhoke explains that the state provides the field of action within which NGOs work and negotiate. Therefore, the existence of civil societies reaffirms the position of nation-states.

One risk of the approaches that differentiate civil society and the state as antagonistic and discrete spheres is how this obfuscates the involvement of academics and scholars with NGOs and churches. On the one hand, in contexts of violence such as Mexico's northern border, churches and NGOs are an entry point for researchers as spaces to conduct fieldwork and learn about the experiences of migrants, asylum-seekers, and deportees, among other groups. My fieldwork and research are examples of this kind of arrangement between academia and the sphere of organized civil society. On the other hand, for border NGOs, the influx and participation of students and academics from national and international institutions give them public and moral legitimacy and material and human resources, such as donations, networking, volunteer work, or media circulation.

Thus, an additional risk is that border intellectuals and intellectuals researching the border might take an acritical position towards the labour of the NGOs.

Although the state provides the terrain from which NGOs participate in public life and is also a source of resources for NGOs, it is also true that migrant-supporting organizations may rely on donations and funds from larger civil organizations or international activist institutions. For a civil organization to attract donations from international organizations, it must have a public presence and a recognized record that allows them to legitimize the demand for funds and have the official register to receive resources from international sources. The type and origin of the funds depend on each NGO and its strategies and networks to obtain them, and consequently, the practices for obtaining resources are vast, encompass various types of strategies at multiple scales of negotiation.

For example, the work of volunteers is a resource the NGOs obtain from the citizenry, and the most prominent NGOs have a professional recruitment system to channel volunteers. The volunteer workforce is a resource on which the NGOs depend not only in a practical sense but also symbolically, as it gives legitimacy and publicity to their work. Obtaining funds also refers to the spaces where NGOs operate since, to fulfill an instrumental function, the NGOs must strategically locate their premises where their target populations agglomerate, such as near the international ports of entry. Therefore, in dangerous places like Tijuana, NGOs have to negotiate with powerful agents, who are not the state or civil society. In the three ethnographic descriptions discussed here, the most straightforward case of this relationship is *Oficina Escampadero*. Still, in the other two cases, it is possible to see a connection with other spheres concerning their workspace: in the case of *T*è*t Chaje*, the migrant NGO depends on a Baptist church to have a place of work, while *Albergue Juventud* relied on an international organization to be able to cover

the rent of a spacious area in Tijuana's downtown. Civil organizations also form ties with academic institutions, researchers from national and foreign universities, undergraduate and graduate students, journalists from local, national, and foreign media, and documentary makers, photographers, and *artivists*. In this way, the framework based on the notion of *bajar fondos* opens the possibility of analyzing these intimate relationships and interactions between NGOs, the Mexican state, and other crucial sectors.

Although the framework opened by the notion of *bajar fondos* is still a field negligibly explored by researchers interested in border processes, it is a valuable approach because it opens new lines of analysis ignored in the literature. In this sense, it is instructive to attend to the observation made by Chandhoke (1995), for whom civil society is a valuable concept because it opens a space for critique of the dialectical relationship between society-state. Still, for this potential to be attainable, the author argues, civil society must be analyzed, not through celebration but by highlighting its problems.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

It is the first Saturday of August 2018. I am on my way to the Old City Hall (*Antiguo Palacio Municipal*) in downtown Tijuana for a meeting between a group of Haitians and a delegation of official representatives of the Mexican state. *Tét Chaje,* the first Haitian NGO in Tijuana, led the call for the event. For this, they counted on the support of the Municipal Migration Affairs Office (*Dirección Municipal de Atención al Migrante*), which organized the use of the locale. The goal of the reunion was to open a communicative channel between Haitians residing in Tijuana and the Mexican state as the first step for Mexico to attend to the problems that this population could be facing in Baja California after two years of their arrival in mid-2016. Besides the public display of humanitarian engagement, a list with the names, phone numbers, and immigration status or problems to be solved would be produced by the end of the day. According to a representative of the National Institute of Migration (*Instituto Nacional de Migración,* INM) that spoke that day, the list was to give Mexico an idea of the situation of Haitians in Tijuana from a reliable source of information. Therefore, she insisted that Haitians write down a valid local phone number where the INM could reach them if necessary. Then she remarked that nothing concrete would be solved on this day −referring to specific immigration problems that individual Haitians might have. At the end of the meeting, the Haitian NGO was responsible for elaborating the final list of attendees with their respective data.

I arrived early that day, looking forward to seeing *Tét Chaje* in action for the first time after I had started working with them as a volunteer just a few weeks ago. Thus, I saw how, gradually, Haitian attendees began to fill the inner courtyard of the Old Municipal

Hall (currently the Municipal Institute of Art and Culture or *Instituto Municipal de Arte y Cultura*, IMAC), congregating while waiting for the meeting to start. Some Haitian women took shade under an old tree on the edge of the quadrant while men, the majority, chatted in several groups, occupying the entire space in the middle of the courtyard. Soon, the members of *Tét Chaje* also began to arrive. At that moment, one Haitian woman and five Haitian men composed the group. Of the members of this NGO, only one could not attend the event due to having to attend a wedding of two co-nationals in a Baptist church near downtown. With the event start time approaching, the security guard and some IMAC employees began to organize rows of folding chairs where the Haitians would be sitting, thus delimiting the space from where Mexican authorities would address the audience. Meanwhile, *Tét Chaje* placed the table where they would sit down, next to the esplanade and under the shadow provided by the pillars of the inner colonial courtyard, laterally gazing at the Haitian public and Mexican authorities in attendance.

In the interim between the set up and the start of the meeting, I recognized a Haitian acquaintance of mine and went to greet him. He was older than the rest of the attendees, perhaps more than fifty years old, short of stature, gray-haired and with a parsimonious and *aplatanado* (Dominican style) spoken Spanish. I met him in the Spanish classes I conducted on Sunday afternoons in the Baptist church. I sat beside him, within the crowd, and we began talking. Unfortunately, he told me he would no longer be able to attend my classes because he had started working as a night watchman in a store near his house, southeast of the city, so he no longer had his weekend time free. In total, he went only to a couple of my classes, and he had no significant problems speaking Spanish. For example, one time, he told me that *they* (referring to his fellow Haitian classmates) *need more*

practice because they must learn to speak Spanish. After my encounter with this individual, I intended to stay with him, observing and listening head-on to what the speakers had to say. Some 60, perhaps 70 Haitians, would have attended the rendezvous point that day. While waiting for the event's start, a cardboard box of donuts and carton juices circulated through the rows of attendees. However, the event had not yet started, and a member of *Tét Chaje* approached us. Squatting and taking my arm, he redirected me to the table they had set up for the NGO. *You are now part of us; you must be there along with us*, he said, so I had to say goodbye to my Haitian acquaintance, and I joined the table of *Tét Chaje*.

Among the public servants addressing the Haitian audience, federal and local INM authorities were present, as one representative of the Municipal Migration Affairs Office and one individual representing the Haitian embassy in Mexico, located in Mexico City. Besides *Tét Chaje*, two other NGOs also attended the meeting. The first group was a coalition of Mexican NGOs with more than ten years of work in the city, with strong ties to the business classes. That day they occupied a seat next to the state representatives. The second group was a delegation of an international NGO that provides healthcare, prevention, and information about AIDS. They set up a small information booth; however, they were presented and allowed to speak after all the other representatives had already had the floor to address the public.

Thus, the meeting unfolded as a catwalk, where each authority or representative had a moment to communicate their thoughts with the Haitian audience. The message of each of the speakers was given in Spanish (except that of the Haitian embassy's representative), and it was simultaneously translated into Haitian Creole by the president of *Tét Chaje*, who stood next to them, serving as interpreter. The tone of the presentations was exaltation. For

example, at the end of his speech, the Haitian ambassador's representative told them in Spanish that he hoped God would continue to bless them. Meanwhile, the federal migration representative told them they could count on the Mexican state because Mexico was there for them in whatever they needed. For his part, the leader of the first NGO urged the attendees to acknowledge the efforts of the Mexican authorities, who were willing to reunite with them on a rest day, knowing that the Haitian population residing in the city has barely any time during weekdays due to labour responsibilities. Finally, the crew of *Tét Chaje* joined the group of speakers to present each of its members in Haitian Creole. After that, they reiterated that no one should leave the place yet, because they would pass with a white sheet to write down names, immigration problems, and telephone numbers, just as INM had requested.

With the meeting officially ended, but still without *Tét Chaje* starting to draw up the list of attendees, an impromptu photo session began between the speakers and the Haitian NGO. Behind them, the dozens of Haitians still sitting could only see the celebration exhibition with which the event ended. After *Tét Chaje* finished preparing the attendees list, I walked with them back to the Baptist church they used as their office. On our way back and immersed in a lively conversation, we passed in front of the Federal Electoral Institute (*Instituto Federal Electoral*) offices, guarded by a young soldier who politely greeted us after seeing the group of Haitians passing by. *Buenos días*, he said, only to immediately ask us afterwards how to say that in their language, to which I responded, *bonjou*, after no one else felt directly addressed by the soldier's curiosity. However, he paid little attention to my intervention and limited himself to smiling at the Haitians who passed by, ignoring him.

Arriving at the church, we worked organizing the sheets with the information collected and coordinating how we would work on their digitization in a simple excel document. As we all worked at a small table in their office, the *Tét Chaje* member who did not attend the meeting arrived with pieces of wedding cake on foam plates to share with everyone. As I later learned, during the wedding, which was ongoing within the church when we were working on the sheets, *Tét Chaje* members added new names to the final list of Haitians we prepared for the INM. The file was then personally delivered two days later by *Tét Chaje* to the central INM offices in Baja California, on the outskirts of Tijuana.

* * *

The previous vignette contains pivotal elements addressed in this dissertation—primarily the encounter between migrant subaltern classes and state apparatuses in Tijuana. Civil society actors, which appear as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), mediated this interaction, which, as I explained in the Introduction, represents a problem of hegemony and subalternity. What is at stake in this problem is the relation between two nation-states, the United States and Mexico, but also the border regime of securitization, contention, catchment, exploitation and disposal of working classes, and the labour-related mobility projects and aspirations of subaltern migrants. To learn from these processes, I elaborate on the formation of Haitian migration projects across continental America, their experiences as a working class, and their encounter with the integral state of Mexico.

Haitian continental emigration in the last decade is a challenge for social researchers due to its geographical extension, transnational networks, and heterogeneous and changing composition, among other characteristics. In this sense, the questions we social researchers ask depend on specific national contexts. Thus, the problem of hegemony that Haitian migration represents is not a single problem but many. In chapters three, four and five, I elaborate on this problem of hegemony regarding the Mexico-U.S. border; however, in chapter two, I delve into this problem of hegemony in Brazil, where the Haitian migrants I met in Tijuana began their journeys. In these processes, Haitian migrants submit to nation-states through a demand for asylum, to which they bet and invest, hoping to advance their projects and achieve their aspirations.

Brazil incorporated thousands of Haitian asylum-seekers with humanitarian visas, but only before failing to dissuade their projects and contain their arrivals. At stake for Brazil were its reputation as a regional power and its role of leadership as the country with the largest Black population in both South America and the Caribbean. However, the histories of Afro-Brazilians differ from that of Haitian migrants. As Mintz (1996) explains, the concept of an African diaspora as a shared experience (Gilroy, 1995) is problematic. For Mintz, the Caribbean is a historical unit that occupies a preponderant place in the history of modernity and capitalism, characterized by being the subject and engine of changing global processes. However, as Mintz explains, this subjection did not produce shared experiences to refer to the Caribbean as a cultural area. On the contrary, Caribbean histories are fragmented in divergent histories, determined by the different empires that conquered and ruled the region, the different populations that inhabited its islands, and the different political and social processes they underwent. Brazil's reluctance to accept Haitian

migrants, Haitian's subsequent inclusion as an inexpensive workforce in precarious niches such as in the construction industry in Brazil, and the patterns of re-emigration from Brazil to other nations, are reflections of this divergence.

Thus, I am referring to more than one dimension in this process by proposing the concept of a subaltern gamble to understand Haitian migration. On the one hand, there is a combination between calculations and indeterminacy, which appears due to the interplay between the conditions of expulsion in Haiti and the migrant aspirations projected onto destination countries. On the other hand, the concept of a subaltern gamble also refers to the encounter between migrant Haitian classes and nation-states. During border or migratory crises, sectors of national civil societies mediated this encounter, particularly NGOs and churches; however, during "normal" times, this task also falls on the dynamics of precarious labour markets and restrictive citizenship regimes.

The case study of Haitian migrants on the Mexico-U.S. border sheds light on two processes: the constitution of the integral Mexican state in Tijuana during border crises and the integration into a Mexican border society of a Non-White international working class. First, and taking into account what Gramsci wrote about organic crises and conjuncture crises (Q12, §1; Q13, §17; Q15, §5; Q22, §10), I consider that the arrival of Haitian asylum seekers at the border was an example of a crisis of conjuncture. For Gramsci, the organic crises are hegemonic in that they represent a historical moment in which the apparatus and hegemony constituted by the integral state fall. These are moments when the old structure resists dying while the new struggles to be born. For their part, the conjuncture crises respond to moments proper of minor politics, that is, crises within the established structure that do not threaten the integral constitution of a state. Those crises represent immediate

and specific events that might appear explosive or disruptive but remain within the hegemonic apparatus's limits and logic. However, Gramsci adds that the accumulation and progression of conjuncture crises can transform minor crises into organic ones, translating the frictions that arise within minor political struggles into a field where they might express more general contradictions of the structure. Thus, from the Haitian case study, it is possible to see how the appearance of continuous and recurring migration and humanitarian crises on the northern border of Mexico provides the ground for struggles and collusions at different scales. These confrontations and consensus help establish the image that Tijuana intends to convey, either as a city that receives and cares for migrants or rejects and neglects them.

Although Haitian migration in Mexico is a novel process, it is also true that it is a story that has been repeated several times, with different subjects, in different historical periods and with diverse outcomes. In Mexico, there have been migrations of Chinese (Rénique, 2003; Gómez Izquierdo, 1991), just as there have been Cuban migrations. During the colony, enslaved people arrived in New Spain along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, particularly Veracruz, and their descendants spread all over the territory, with a particular significant Black population presence in Mexico City as in other parts of the country (Aguirre Beltrán, 1964 & 1958; Bennett 2003; Carroll, 2001). Similarly, the pre-revolutionary government encouraged European settlements (for example, Italians and French) through land grants, and, in the 20th century, Spanish and South American political exiles enjoyed refuge in Mexico. In other words, Haitians are integrating into Mexico—just like many other migrant cohorts did before— and they have the resources and the

disposition to do so. What we must question is what kind of integration Mexico has to offer to Haitian migrants.

In that regard, NGOs are among the most resonant voices defending the rights of subaltern migrants on the border. However, they have little or nothing to say about the working and living conditions that these populations experience. The constellation of NGOs on the border is vast and covers all kinds of issues and approaches, and the same happens for NGOs that work in favour of migrants. Even so, it is possible to recognize some recurring general themes, such as the defence of diversity and the fight against discrimination, the defence of the right to migrate and request asylum, and the celebration of migrant resilience in the face of adversity. Behind these approaches is a discourse of civil virtuosity, enunciated from a supposed separation between civil society and state and powerful actors. However, an organic link exists between NGOs and hegemonic classes, such as Big NGOs, business classes, and the state. This organic relation finds better expression in the NGOs' dynamics regarding fundraising, that is, knowing how to *bajar fondos*. Analyzing these interactions is relevant because NGOs act as intermediaries between immigrants and state authorities, and, as such civil society is an "integral part of the state; [that] far from being inimical to the state, is, in fact, its most resilient constitutive element, even though the most immediately visible aspect of the state is political society, with which it is all too often mistakenly identified" (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 4). Thus, "far from being a threat to political society in a liberal democracy, [civil society] reinforces it" (Buttigieg, 2005, p. 41).

In that sense, instead of separating the praxis of civil society from the structures of the state, social researchers would do well to see how the interaction between the two

spheres is structured. For example, non-governmental or civil society organizations in Mexico have been changing in recent decades in response to and as a consequence of changes in the formation of the Mexican state. In particular, there has been a change in the multicultural orientation with which NGOs present their work, promoting the defence of human rights and guarantees of socially recognized vulnerable subjects based on the latter's recognition as multicultural subjects, either due to ethnic, racial or gender differences. This change of orientation arose as a result of the Zapatista uprising of 1994 and the subsequent constitutional reforms, which now recognizes that Mexico is a multicultural nation and that Indigenous groups have the right of defend their cultural identities. The presence of Haitians in Tijuana and their articulation with border NGOs confirm this multicultural framework that is now normative since NGOs have made from Haitian migrants a benchmark of cultural diversity and syncretism, through which they negotiate the acquisition of resources, and their relations with powerful others, such as nation-states.

To conclude, I want to mention that this research project began with my interest in studying what was happening on the island of Hispaniola. The Dominican Republic subjected thousands of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans to a nationalist purge, composed of deportation waves and the stripping of their citizenship to the children and grandchildren of Haitians born in the Dominican Republic. After a brief pre-fieldwork visit in Santo Domingo, an anthropologist colleague informed me that Haitians were beginning to arrive in Tijuana. The chance to research Haitian migrants in Mexican territory persuade me to change my original idea for my dissertation. In this way, I decided that it was better to speak from a context that for me was more familiar than the Caribbean, allowing me to contribute with a critique of the Mexican state, where I am a citizen and born national. My

original research idea and the research I eventually undertook have a connection: the Dominican Republic's policies to strip Haitians of citizenship are one of the factors that ended up pushing thousands of Haitians towards new and unexplored paths, opening up new routes and furrowing new migratory experiences different from the traditional ones. Tijuana is only one example of these new paths and experiences.

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