Dias, Gustavo; Silva, João Carlos Jarochinski; Silva, Sidney Antonio da
Travellers of the Caribbean: Positioning Brasília in Haitian migration routes through Latin America

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Abstract

This paper examines how Haitian migration connecting Haiti to Brasília is enacted through Latin America. The empirical data come from an *ethnographic study* of Haitians in Brasilia. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted with 34 migrants to reconstruct their mobilities. We explore how the Haitians' historical practice of living on the move has enabled them to deal with border controls and develop tactics to circulate through several Latin America countries, including Brazil. We argue that their migration to the Brazilian capital can neither be understood as a linear movement characterized by an established Haiti-Brasilia connection nor defined as movement to a place where these migrants attempt to settle down. Rather, we show that the recent presence of Brasilia in the mobility of these Haitians has to be understood in the context of a vast dynamic meshwork of places, people and information.
Key words: Haitians; mobile people; Brasília; Latin America.

Viajantes do Caribe:
Situando Brasília nas rotas migratórias haitianas pela América Latina

Resumo

Este artigo examina como a mobilidade haitiana para Brasília é produzida através da América Latina. Os dados provêm de um estudo etnográfico realizado com haitianos em Brasília. No total, foram entrevistados 34 haitianos através de entrevistas semi-estruturadas conduzidas individualmente e em grupo focal, com o intuito de reconstruir as trajetórias migratórias. Exploramos como a prática histórica dos haitianos de viver em movimento tem lhes permitido lidar com controles de fronteiras, bem como desenvolver táticas para circular por distintos países da América Latina, incluindo o Brasil. Argumentamos que a migração haitiana para Brasília não pode ser entendida como um movimento linear, caracterizada por uma conexão estabelecida entre o Haiti e o Brasil e nem definida como uma migração assinalada por fixação definitiva. Em vez disso, mostramos que a recente presença de Brasília nas rotas migratórias produzidas pelo grupo investigado deve ser entendida no contexto de uma intensa mobilidade conectando lugares, pessoas e informações.
Palavras-chave: Haitianos; mobilidade humana; Brasília; América Latina.

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The line is an object to
play with - Gego

Introduction

This article examines how Haitian mobility that connects Haiti to Brazil is produced. It responds to recent calls among scholars for migration studies to go beyond perspectives that focus solely on the alleged beginning and end points of a given migration movement (Papadopolous et al., 2008; Khosravi, 2010; Dias, 2019), and to consider the continuous shifts in places that may occur during the process (Schrooten et al., 2015; Dias, 2016, 2019). By tracking individual itineraries of Haitians who migrated to Brasilia but not directly from Haiti, we draw attention to the migration journeys of a group of people whose biographies are marked by the various places, peoples and types of information that link their movements through the American continent. To accurately examine these migration routes and reveal their complexity, this article considers three empirical questions: What people and places are involved with Haitian migration to Brasilia? Did this movement through Latin America establish any predominant migration routes connecting Haiti to Brasilia? Can Brasilia be understood as an end point?

To answer these questions and reveal how Haitian mobility is performed, this paper is organized into four main sections. First, we explore the features behind the migration of Haitians. Our focus here is to show how these migrants have historically travelled from Haiti to different places across the globe, to what extent these itineraries have enabled a constant circulation of people, goods and information within this Caribbean country, and the role played recently by Brazil in Haitian migration. The second section examines the empirical data to present Brasilia's position in Haitian mobility. Our respondents reveal the production of two main Haitian migration routes – *the Pacific Corridor* and *the Air Corridor* – through which Haitians access the Brazilian capital. The third section explores our findings supported by a critical review of the literature on mobility that focuses on places and migration. We argue that the mobility performed by Haitians must be understood through a dynamic meshwork of places, people and information that stretches throughout South America. Rather than a simple journey from Haiti to Brasília, the mobility involves a multiplicity of potential trajectories, which are often unstable and may be accompanied by changes in position. Thus, it forms a complex concatenation of destinations and status. Our final considerations affirm that Brasília cannot be considered as the end point of these two routes, but as a temporary place, like many others in Latin America, for these Haitians who see themselves to be engaged in ongoing mobility.

The empirical analysis for this article is based on two ethnographic studies; the first was conducted in 2014 and 2015 in Brasília[1], and the second between 2013 and 2016 along Brazil's Amazonian borders[2]. Both locations play an important role in Haitian migration to Brazil. Brasília is one of the Brazilian cities where Haitians have a large and growing presence, while Brazilian cities on the Amazonian border serve as ports-of-entry for Haitian migrants, including our respondents (Silva, 2013, 2016; Gomes de Castro and Fernandes, 2014; Contiguiba, 2013, 2019; Magalhães, 2016, Handerson, 2015b)[3]. In addition to reconstructing the journeys produced by the Haitians and the places involved in them, the research conducted in-depth interviews with 34 adults (20 males and 14 females) who had been living in Brasilia for more than five years, and two focus group discussions to discuss sensitive topics such as border crossing (Madriz, 2000; Fontana and Frey, 1994)[4]. Most of our respondents were young adults in their twenties or thirties who had left families and children in Haiti to find a better life in Brazil or elsewhere. Some of them are high school graduates, while others hold *bachelor's degrees*. By the time of our research, they were living in affordable places in the outskirts of Brasília; some were looking for jobs, while others worked in menial jobs such as cleaning, construction or catering.

Brazil's position in Haitian international mobility

Since the 1990s, Haitian migration has become the theme of numerous studies of modern transnational migration (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 1997; Handerson, 2015a). The literature has strongly argued that this massive ongoing international mobility has been fed mainly by coups d'etat, economic crises and recent earthquakes in Haiti. The United States, Canada, France, Guyana, the Bahamas and Dominican Republic were some of the main countries that Haitians migrated to (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 1997; see also Audebert, 2012). The new Ministry of Haitians living abroad (MHAVE) revealed that

> about 4 to 5 million Haitians are spread around the world, in most of the mentioned countries. This represents half the population of Haiti, estimated at 10,413,211 in 2013 by the Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique (IHSI). Among those abroad, 300,000 annually visit Haiti, particularly in the festive seasons and holidays (Handerson, 2015b: 52).

Since 2010, Brazil has featured strongly in Haitian international mobility (Silva, 2013; Oliveira, 2015; Gomes de Castro and Fernandes, 2014). Antônio Tadeu de Oliveira (2015) stresses that three main factors, among others, have decisively contributed to the prominence of Brazil in this mobility:1) beginning in 2004, Brazil had a presence in Haitian territory, as leader of a UN peacekeeping force known as the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti - MINUSTAH (French acronym), whose general aim was to help restore the rule of law and public safety in the country; 2) the Brazilian government has promoted international campaigns that present Brazil as a hospitable country with solid economic growth; and 3) a resurgence in the closing of borders in countries such as France and the US, in addition to hostilities Haitians suffered in the Dominican Republic.

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1   This study is part of the project "A inserção dos imigrantes haitianos na estrutura produtiva do Distrito Federal" conducted at the Universidade de Brasilia (UnB), and supported by the Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa (CNPq).

2   We use the findings from the project "Entre o Haiti e o Brasil: trajetórias da imigração Haitiana na Amazônia" realized at the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM), and supported by the INCT, Instituto Brasil Plural.

3   Brazil is a federal republic, consisting of 26 states, each with its own capital, and the Federal District where the capital Brasília is located.

4   We use the notion of journey and routes to explore how migration is a negotiation, in which actions and skills are important links between the migrants and the social spaces through which they move. This manuscript contributes to migration and border studies by going beyond a perspective focused exclusively on migration policies. It questions to what degree the fact that borders have proliferated and discriminately filtered migrants can be understood without empirical data focused on the daily actions of these mobile people. "Indeed migrants deal with and struggle against border regimes, but they are not powerless social actors. […] migrants are important social actors and a key to understanding how migration takes place through border regimes. Migrants employ cunning tactics to reinvent their journey in negotiation with institutions and structures of power, which manage and delimit their movement with targets and threats" (Dias, 2016: 12). In this context, this paper explores migration as a process of skilled maneuvers developed through practical knowledge and exchanges of life experiences by Haitians as they journeyed towards Brasília.

These three main factors have boosted the interesting in seeking job opportunities, documentation and, therefore, a better life in this South American country. As a result, it is estimated that around 95,500 Haitians with different types of visas – humanitarian, temporary or for long-term work – were living in Brazil in 2015 (Obmigra, 2018).[5] Among them, 142 were residing in Brasília (Sismigra, 2020).

However, an important body of literature on Haitian migration draws attention to the fact that Haitian migration cannot be understood as just an automatic response to economic, political or environmental turmoil. Hypermobility (Iorio and Peixoto, 2011) is observed in Haitian migration even before the economic perspective, which strongly guides considerable part of the literature. Haiti has historically been a country that has established strong connections to different destinations in America and other continents (Plummer, 1984; Davies, 2010; Casey, 2012). According to Kassoum Dieme (2017) and Matthew Casey (2012), Haitian society has been marked by constant circulation of people, especially since the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century. Dieme (2017), for instance, highlights that in that period migrants from the Middle East appeared in search of political refuge, and there was a constant movement of Haitians abroad. Haitian elites were often educated in France for instance. "Individuals also moved between Haiti and the early communities of Haitian-Americans in United States cities like Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, and others" (Casey, 2012:39). Haiti was also a migration destination from Europe and the Americas. Casey argues that this participation by Haiti in the circulation of goods, people, and ideas across the Atlantic created especially strong linkages with other places.

> In the early decades of Haitian independence, Haitian leaders Henry Christophe and Jean-Pierre Boyer supported attempts to bring African-Americans from the United States to Haiti. Despite many failed colonization projects, approximately "13,000 African Americans made the journey to Haiti between 1824 and 1827" though most eventually returned. Movements also occurred independently of these well-known colonization projects. Before slavery was abolished in Puerto Rico, runaway slaves sought to reach Haiti by "stealing small boats or fishing vessels or hiring themselves out as sailors." Individuals from Europe, the Middle East, and other parts of the Americas arrived in Haiti as well (Casey, 2012:40).

Even when borders were enforced in the twentieth century and migration became strictly controlled, Haitians still acted on their own aspirations and exerted some degree of control over their migration. Studies of current Haitian migration to Brazil argue that this intense practice of international circulation is very present among research respondents (Silva 2013, 2015; Handerson, 2015b). Therefore, in addition to being driven by economic and environmental turmoil, the migration of Haitians to Brazil can also be understood as part of a historical process of international migration, which began in this Caribbean country in the nineteenth century.

Empirical studies have shown that Haitians do not necessarily migrate directly from Haiti to Brazil. They tend to pass first through other countries, where they live temporarily. Silva (2013), for example, who studied Haitians in Amazon state, found that many Haitians had previously migrated to the Dominican Republic, where they lived briefly, or for a few years, which "indicates that some had used this country as a stop on the way to Brazil. Since 2013, Haitians coming from Venezuela have also increased, perhaps due to the encouragement of family members or compatriots already in Brazil" (2013: 8). Nonetheless, we emphasize that the ongoing political crisis in Venezuela has also driven the movement of many Haitians living there. For many Haitians, the practice of leaving their homes for Brazil or any other country is

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5   The numbers presented represent the midpoint of estimates of the size of the Haitian population in Brazil. Accurate numbers are difficult to come by, particularly because many of these migrants cross the border without Federal Police knowledge or having their data registered by the National Immigration Council (CNIg). According to Fernandes and Faria (2017), Haitians are, in general, a group composed by young adults (in their early 30s) and males (71%). Nonetheless, they call attention to the fact that female presence has been increasing in recent years.

not an abandonment of their country but a tactic to improve their social and economic position there. This yearnings for improvement drives migrants to establish a logic of "constant alertness" in search of new opportunities.

In his ethnographic work on Haitian migrants in Brazil, Suriname and French Guiana, Handerson (2015a) draws attention to the term *diaspora* utilized among his respondents. According to Handerson, in these countries and in the United States, France, Canada and other Caribbean countries, the term is used by Haitians to describe compatriots who reside abroad, but will go back temporarily to Haiti and then abroad again.

> There is no *diaspora* without a temporary return. From the point of view of the ethnographer, it is not a return but a new arrival. This observation has to be examined through the categories and words used by the natives themselves. My respondents did not use the creole word *tounen*, which means the *new arrival* of the *diaspora* subject, but the words *diaspora rive*: *diaspora arrived*, or *diaspora vini*: *diaspora* came, from the perspective of those who stayed. The travelers use the expression "Diaspora pral vizite Ayiti", "Diaspora is going to visit Haiti" or "Diaspora ap desann Ayiti", literally: "Diaspora is going down to Haiti" (Handerson, 2015a: 354).

Although temporary, the literature emphasizes that these returns are a fundamental part of Haitian circularity in countries of both the Global North and Global South. And that is also present in our findings.

This article supports the literature that suggests that mobility is a historical and a social practice among Haitians, which allows newcomers to build 'transnational social fields' (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 1997). We recognize the dramatic political, social and environmental crises that drive Haitians from their country. However, shedding light on the mobility produced by our respondents has allowed us to understand migration as an unpredictable movement.

## Positioning Brasília in the Haitian routes

"Everyone who comes to Brazil must contact coyotes" (Wesley, a respondent)

The itineraries presented by the 34 respondents in this study reveal the cities or countries in Latin America accessed by Haitians before arriving in Brasilia. We identify two main routes Haitians used to reach Brasilia (see Map 1)[6]. The lines on the map indicate the movement of each respondent. We call the first migration route *the Air Corridor*, and the other *the Pacific Corridor*.[7]

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6   We would like to thank the geographer Dr. Luiz Andrei Gonçalves Pereira, who designed the map.

7   We are aware that these two routes are not the only ones produced by Haitians in Brazil. Nonetheless, these are the routes presented by our 34 respondents in Brasilia. Thus, in this paper we focus on them.

Map 1

MOBILITY PRODUCED BY HAITIAN MIGRANTS
JOURNEYING TO BRASILIA
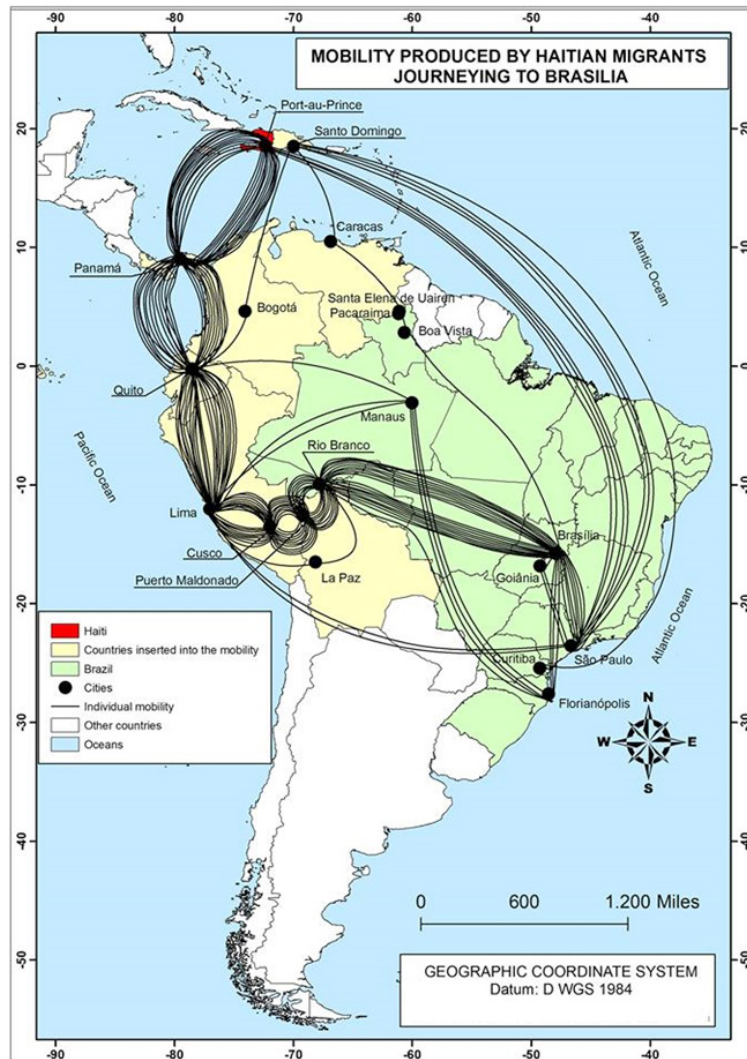
The first route is shorter in distance and is mainly an air route connecting Port-au-Prince or Santo Domingo[8] to the city of São Paulo, where the Haitians who use it first land in Brazilian territory. The second initially uses air connections between Panama City and the Andes, mainly through Quito, Ecuador and then passes through Peru before crossing the Brazilian border. This seemed to be the route most utilized by the Haitians in Brasilia. The study found that both routes are forged with the service of *coyotes*[9], a term defined by the respondents[10], which starts in Haiti[11]. Daniel, one of the respondents, recalls that although relatives and friends living abroad strongly advise a person wanting to migrate not to contact border crossers who smuggle people across borders, travel agents still force them to pay for the services of coyotes. He says "the travel agency warns that the trip will not work. I must travel with coyotes. What are you going do? You have to contact and be bonded to a coyote."

8   In these two Caribbean capitals, the Brazilian embassy issued umanitarian visas that allow air travel to Brazil.

9   These forms of entry suggest that the more border controls increase, the more border crossers become the main options used to cross them, especially when there are urgent issues in an immigrant's life, such as a family reunion. Migrants cannot wait for the dynamics imposed by the bureaucracy of the receiving countries.

10   According to Handerson (2015a), Haitians distinguish in Haitian Creole between two types of border people who plan clandestine migration routes, and the distinction seems to be based on trust. Ajans (agents) are those who work in a travel agency, and are even recognized by the Haitian state. Therefore, they are seen as reliable professionals among those who want to migrate. Raketés (dealers), on the other hand, are unreliable. They may sell their services and then disappear or leave migrants at any time during a journey.

11   During the interviews, we managed to obtain information about the economic resources our respondents used to begin their journeys. Some said that the money came from selling properties - land, houses or even cattle. Others said that relatives and friends living abroad had lent them money.

The Air Corridor

The first migration route identified in this paper is the one from Port-au-Prince or Santo Domingo to the city of São Paulo, which is essentially an air connection between Haiti or the Dominican Republic to Brazil. The findings revealed that this route was considered by our respondents as the "official way to depart" as those who used it needed a humanitarian visa issued by the Brazilian government in Port-au-Prince to board a plane. Our respondents considered this the best way to reach Brazilian territory and then continue on to Brasilia. After all, as Bertha explained, they "arrive holding the right visa requested by the Brazilian authorities." Therefore, leaving Haiti for São Paulo with a humanitarian visa allows them to obtain a *Registro Nacional de Estrangeiro* (RNE)[12] issued by the Federal Police and then a *Carteira de Identidade Estrangeira* (CIE)[13]. These documents allow Haitians to apply for a work permit[14].

However, the respondents mentioned that the bureaucracy and the low number of visas issued daily by the Brazilian Consulate made this air route hard to access. It is time-consuming to apply for this visa from the Brazilian consulate in Port-au-Prince. Moreover, the interviews suggest that due to the high cost, most Haitians who leave the country this way have good financial resources. According to Roger, the "Haitian government charges a high price to copy our documents needed for a visa application. There is also a strong market for this document. It's not easy. Sometimes the price can vary between two hundred dollars and two thousand dollars...." Eltius and Wesley, two young Haitians who migrated via this route, explain that those who take the air route also become dependent on coyotes[15] who are able to speed up the issue of visas for their clients. Wesley explains:

> Coyotes have contacts with people inside the [Brazilian] embassy. Let me tell you what they do. If you are alone, they [embassy officials] will not talk to you because the coyote has already given them money. This means that the coyote has to intermediate the negotiation.

Jocelyne adds that some coyotes also have contacts with people working at airports to make it easier for travellers to board a plane. As a result, she explains, this makes the connection more expensive and less used by most Haitians to get into Brazil. They prefer to go through less controlled border crossings, which are located in places along the migration route known as the Pacific Corridor. According to Eltius, flights from Hispaniola Island to Panama are the best strategy for Haitians to save money and time. He recalls that

> people tended to be stopped by immigration at Port-au-Prince before leaving for Brazil. We could not easily leave the country. We had to find an alternative route. It meant that people started exploring Panama. It was safer. [...] I know many Haitians who came straight from Haiti, not passing through these countries [located in South America], but as soon as they set foot in Immigration [border control] at Port-au-Prince airport they started wasting money.

In this mobility performed by Haitians, some places played key roles. The most frequently mentioned countries in this route are the Dominican Republic, Panama, Ecuador and Peru.

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12   The National Foreign Registry.

13   This is an ID card for foreign citizens living in Brazil.

14   We highlight that arriving in São Paulo by airport is not the only way found by Haitians to obtain this type of visa, the RNE and the CIE. In fact, the literature clearly emphasizes that crossing the Brazilian border by terrestrial routes – as we explore bellow – also enables access to the RNE and the CIE (Gomes de Castro and Fernandes, 2014; Silva, 2015; Magalhães, 2016). However, in this manuscript, we only focus on the option found in our case study.

15   We presume that Eltius and Wesley mean an *Ajan*.

The Pacific Corridor

As with the previous migration route, Eltius notes how the entire journey was organized by coyotes, in Haiti. From there they were able to contact others who facilitate border crossings across Ecuador and Peru to enable mobility through these Pacific countries. According to Eltius, the Haitian coyotes work jointly with travel agencies. "When the coyote says R$ 1,500 it means that he will buy a ticket for $1,000 from the agency. Do you understand?" In the same vein, Daniel explains that "it is the coyote who has to take the person to the travel agency. Otherwise, the travel agent will say that there are no flight tickets."

So, from Port-au-Prince or Santo Domingo, a flight gets them to the American Continent. In fact, this Pacific route (*Panama City – Quito – Peru*) was accessed by 25 of the 34 Haitians we interviewed in Brasilia. These Latin American countries serve as a corridor that leads the migrants through South America. This particular route "goes through Central and South American countries that do not require a visa to cross a Brazilian border in the states of Amazonas or Acre, where it would be easier to enter" (Silva, 2013:5). A common factor they share is that the porosities at their border controls facilitate the mobility of Haitians. Panama offers visitors visas so that Haitians can use the document to leave the island of Hispaniola on their way to South America. It also has direct flights to Ecuador, where a new regional migration system connecting Ecuador, Peru and Brazil eases the journey. "This emerging South-South migration route is part of a larger Haitian migration system that connects Latin America to North America and the Caribbean" (Audebert, 2017:56). Ecuadorian immigration policy allows effective entry into South America, while in Peru our respondents use skilled loca coyotes contacted by Haitian coyotes[16] to make the final connection to Brazil.[17]

Panama City – Quito – Peru

The findings suggested that the availability of connecting flights from Panama City's Tocumen International Airport to different South American countries was the main reason Haitians passed through it on their long migration. It serves as a port-of-entry linking Hispaniola Island to many South American cities, including Quito. None of the respondents remained in Panama City but took flights to the Ecuadorian capital. According to the respondents, the Panamanian airport was the best option for getting into the continent without drawing attention to themselves since they could travel to South America with simply a visitor visa.

Ecuador, on the other hand, was not considered as just a place of passage; a few respondents said that they actually lived in the country for a while before continuing their migration18. Denolds, for instance, lived and worked in the Ecuadorian capital for four months. However, after realizing that many compatriots were continuing their journey to Brazil, he also decided to do that.

> there were a lot of Haitians living there. Most of them are just moving through, but others stay, I also stayed for a while. Then I said to myself, I am also going to Brazil....everybody is going. There must be something good over there [Brazil]. Then I worked and saved some money and came.

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16   We understand that in the case of this terrestrial route, Eltius is referring to *Raketès*.

17   The introduction of a visa waiver for Caribbean and Latin American nationals by the Ecuadorian government, in 2008, sparked a boom in Haitian migration. Since then, "[t]he regularization of Haitian immigrants and their spouses and children following the earthquake, via Executive Decree No. 248 of February 2010 (non-immigrant visa 12-XI), led to a second, more substantial, migration wave after 2010" (Audebert, 2017: 65). Peru, in a similar vein, allowed the entry of nearly 3,000 Haitians holding visitor visas between 2010 and 2012. As a result, both Andean countries have become a transit territory on route to other destinations farther south, including Brazil.

18   In July 2008 Ecuador opened its doors to foreign migrants and asylum seekers, dropping all visa requirements and opening the floodgates to thousands of Haitians who swept into Ecuador and over the border into Colombia.

According to the respondents, economic opportunities and friendships encourage Haitians to continue their journey to Brazil. The solution they found was to make contact in Peru with border crossers who arrange a connection between Ecuador and Brazil. These subjects use their practical knowledge of the Peruvian and Brazilian border controls and explore taxi services between the countries to send migrants across the borders.[19] Wesley says that the price of the border crossing can vary between R$ 1,000 and R$ 2,500, and that includes a bogus visa to facilitate mobility through Peru. "There was a coyote who charged me R$1,000 for a five-year visa. He actually attached it to my passport. When I saw that I immediately removed it. The page almost ripped…"

As noted by Gilbert and other respondents, the journey from Ecuador to Peru and from there to Brazil is made by bus, and it can take between 9 and 22 days. Gilbert recalls that after landing in Quito he got a bus to the Peruvian border, "then another bus to Lima, then Puerto Maldonado…each region that I arrived in, I had to take another bus, and finally a taxi to get into Acre. I did not have documents, and without a visa I could not get a flight…I did not have money either. Travelling by bus is not cheap though." He also recalls that Puerto Maldonado was "a poor place where we had to negotiate the last stage with taxi drivers to get into Brazil". His journey from Ecuador to Peru and Brazil took 13 days.

The main ports-of-entry into Brazilian territory on this migration route are the cities of Brasileia then Rio Branco in the state of Acre, and Tabatinga and Manaus in Amazonas state. Among the respondents in this study, three Haitians came via the capital of Amazonia state, Manaus, while the routes through Rio Branco and Brasileia were taken by 17. Acre state, in particular is the place Haitians must pass through to apply for refugee status. Once it is granted, they are eligible for a work permit and a taxpayer ID number (CPF) that allows them to conduct formal economic transactions. Without these documents, their chances of becoming part of Brazilian society are very much reduced[20].

From Acre, the local government provided buses that enable Haitians to leave this state and continue their journey into Brazilian territory. Respondents explained that they took buses to cities in Goiás, São Paulo and Santa Catarina states before arriving in Brasilia, while others' took more straightforward trips.

Is Brasília the end of the journey?

There are Brazilians who always ask 'Why do you come to Brazil? (in the sense of 'why did you choose Brazil?')'. Haitians come to Brazil because it is difficult to travel from Haiti to another country, and you realize that there are Haitians coming here [Brasilia] because it is easy to enter. I cannot neglect my country, you know, I came here to spend some time and apply for a visa for a better country than Brazil.

The response above was given during an interview with Gilbert who had been living in Brasilia since 2014. In fact, it was not very different from others heard among the group interviewed. Although we cannot affirm that Brasília serves as a temporary destination for most Haitian migrants there, we understand that most of our respondents see it that way. They expressed a common feeling and hope that they would be in Brasilia temporarily. Most of the respondents arrived in the Brazilian capital between 2012 and 2014 through the two migration routes described above. However, they did not consider Brasilia their final destination.

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19   According to Kassoum Dieme (2017), land routes tend to cost more than air travel. In other words, they are more profitable for coyotes. Based on data from the Brazilian Intelligence Agency - ABIN, published by the Brazilian newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo in 2015, Dieme reveals that coyotes profited US$ 60 million from Haitian migration.

20   In Acre, Haitians can be issued a document certifying their request for refugee status and their registration at the Ministry of Labour, and can be vaccinated against tropical diseases. Moreover, Silva (2013) reveals that Brasiléia is a compulsory stop, "because the Federal Police has its office in the neighboring city of Epitaciolândia. The Haitians must go to that office and request the refugee protocol" (Silva, 2013: 5).

They indicated that Brazilian cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, or countries such as the United States, France and Holland could be the next destination in their ongoing movement.

Raoul, for example, did not plan to settle down in Brasilia. The United States was his main goal. He compared the average salary in Brazil with what he could make in dollars and emphasized that the difference was considerable. He says, in Brazil "I make around 250 dollars. Then I have the rent, bills, and send some money to my family. Do you think that is enough?" So, after living in the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Roraima, Brasilia was not the last stop for this young Haitian whose son lived in Port-au-Prince. "I do have plans to move to the United States…and in the future I want to gather my family anywhere. It could be in Brazil, the United States, Venezuela, Haiti…anywhere". In the same vein, Raymond explains that after living in Manaus and Santa Catarina he decided to follow a friend who was living in Brasilia. That was three years ago. But Raymond does not see himself staying in Brasilia. For him, the chance to live in a French-speaking country could be a great opportunity. "I am thinking about living in another country… […] but I am still evaluating the challenges of applying for a visa. […] I am considering France." Raymond is a Haitian whose family is spread out in the Dominican Republic, the United States, Canada, and France.

Other respondents also have relatives and friends living outside of Haiti. According to them, this creates an opportunity to keep moving to other places in search of better living conditions. Vanel comments that after living in the Bahamas he returned to Haiti and from there travelled to São Paulo and then to Brasilia. He has lived in Brasilia for almost three years, but the difficulty in finding a well-paying job has forced him to consider leaving the city. "My wife and daughter are living in the United States. There it is better, but I did not manage to get a visa […] I would move from Brasilia to Santa Catarina where I have a friend or then to Parana.[…] My son is moving here, to Brazil." The accounts of Vanel, Raoul and Raymond reveal how their relatives and friends are widely spread through different countries and Brazilian cities. However, they also show the strength and depth of contact and exchange of information among them, and how this supports their mobility beyond Brasilia.

By imagining and then drawing lines to trace the mobility produced by these actors, and entangling them in migratory routes, we can glimpse the momentary cartography produced by these actors. This exercise expresses a meshwork that spreads through the South American continent. It composes a social fabric that involves people - knowledge, mobility tactics, negotiations - across nodes - cities and borders. However, the lines do not necessarily begin in Haiti or end in Brasília. It is a living, moving and changing map. It adjusts according to the needs of its actors and the reinforcement of border controls. As Handerson (2015) interprets, in his study about the Diaspora, a departure is not always the first step out; other trips may have already taken place. Furthermore, as our empirical study reveals, Brasília should also not be considered the end point. New places can suddenly take part in this meshwork and, thus, unexpected connections emerge. Brasilia is one point in this vast web.

Considering our findings within the literature on routes and journeys

Traditional migration-related research has strongly focused on the beginning and so-called end points of migrant journeys, paying specific attention to the decision-making process before departure, integration in the destination countries and maintenance of transnational contacts (Fitzgerald, 2009; Piore, 1980). With the exception of some early contributions to circular migration (Hugo, 1982; Prothero and Chapman, 1985), stepwise migration (Conway, 1980; Riddell and Harvey, 1972), and more recently a transnational approach to migration (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013; Faist, 2000), most migration researchers have followed a rather

"rooted" and static notion of migration, seeing it as a unidirectional movement whereby migrants "uproot themselves, leave behind home and country, and face the painful process of incorporation into a different society and culture"(Glick Schiller et al.,1992:48).

In the 1990s, discourses on globalization and cosmopolitanism began to question the previous neglect of border-crossing movements. 'Mobility' became a keyword of the social sciences, delineating a new domain of debates, approaches and methodologies that sought to understand contemporary processes of movement (Adey, 2014; Cresswell, 2006; Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013; Urry, 2007). Embedded in David Harvey's theoretical concept of 'Time-Space compression' (1990), which suggests that spatial and temporal distances have been condensed by the technologies of communication, travel, and economics, studies on mobility accepted the idea that structural changes to the global economy have produced a new dynamic mobility in the world. New communication systems, including systems of mobility, have intensified social relations on a global scale so that "distances between places and peoples again seem to be dramatically reducing" (Urry, 2003:2) overcoming spatial barriers. Within this scholarship, globalization was promoted as normality, even to the extent that the hydraulic metaphors of 'flows', 'fluidity' and references to 'scapes' almost monopolized discussions of new forms of global mobility (Rockefeller, 2011; Salazar, 2013). These discourses led to a celebration of mobility as a characteristic of the modern globalized world (Appadurai, 1990 Ong, 1999).

However, over the last decade, a number of scholars have questioned the dominance of the concept of 'flow' by foregrounding cases that seem better described by other concept-metaphors. They argue that, in the globalization perspective, mobility is mistakenly summarized as a generic movement and that individual experiences and attached meanings of travellers through this movement are discarded (Cresswell, 2006; Knowles, 2011; Lindquist, 2008). These scholars affirm that the abstract concept of 'flows' does not address the particularities of different mobilities. The "content of the line between them would remain unexplored. The cumulative effects of these movements are also what remain taken for granted in more recent social theory where movement is coded as *travel*, *nomadism*, *routes* or *lines of flight*" (Cresswell, 2006:2).

In an attempt to overcome the use of hydraulic metaphors to define contemporary mobility, a range of scholars have paid more attention to practices of mobility as experienced and described by travellers themselves (Ingold, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Cresswell, 2006; Knowles, 2011; Dias, 2016, 2019). Within this scholarship, movement is rarely just movement; it carries with it the burden of meaning and experience lived and produced in spaces. "Here, movement becomes mobility" (Cresswell, 2006:6). They thus argue that mobility is a subjective practice that involves space and negotiation. "To move is to do something. Moving involves making a choice within, or despite, the constraints of society and geography" (Cresswell and Merriman, 2011:5). As a result, terms such as *travel-and-dwell* (Knowles, 2011), *traveller* (Ingold, 2011b) and *border choreography* (Dias, 2016) have appeared in recent studies on mobility. They share the idea that mobility is an embodied practice of how we experience the world.

The conceptual framework developed within mobility studies can enrich our understanding of the non-linear dynamics that constitute Haitian mobility through Latin America and of the experiences of these travellers and their hypermobility. In the following sections, we discuss two aspects that are at the core of our empirical analysis. First, is the understanding that there is no difference between place and space. There are only spaces where inhabitants cross along paths that lead from place to place. "Places, then, are delineated by movement, not by the outer limits to movement" (Ingold, 2011a: 34). In that sense, lives are led *through*, *from*, *to* and *around* and not *across* space, and place is not just about location but also histories. Tim Ingold suggests conceptualizing spaces through the mobility of people in tangled and complex itineraries that compose their lives at many different levels of social connection.

Ingold's idea of *meshwork* (2007, 2011a, 2011b) thus becomes an effective tool for analysing this relationship between people and space through migration mobility. Ingold (2007) argues that a traveller is his or her own existential movement; s/he is connected to the *social meshwork* registering his/her biography along the paths that link spaces. His approach affirms that this mobility of inhabitants connects places by bringing them into a network of lines through which people carry on their everyday lives. He says, to be "a place, every somewhere must lie on one or several paths of movements to and from places elsewhere. Life is lived, I reasoned, along paths, not just in places, and paths are lines of a sort" (2007:2). Bound together by the paths of travellers, places exist as nodes in a matrix of movement. Borrowing Lefebvre's definition of meshwork, Ingold (2011a) defines mobility

[not as] a network of point-to-point connections but a tangled mesh of interwoven and complex knotted strands. Every strand is a way of life, and every knot a place. Indeed the mesh is something like a net in its original sense of an openwork fabric of interlaced or knotted cords (2011a:37).

This study, therefore, explores how Haitians execute their migration by negotiating their movement through places – including borders in Latin America– with different purposes and logic. Rather than seeing the mobility of Haitians to Brasilia as a rectilinear flow of people, we argue that these migrants "bump awkwardly along, creating pathways as they go; they grate against each other; they dodge, stop and go, negotiate obstacles, back-track and move off in new directions propelled by different intersecting logics" (Knowles, 2011: 174).

Recognizing this, the second important aspect of our analysis, drawn from the literature on mobility, is the fact that migrants design routes to find the weaknesses of border security. The work of Dimitris Papadopoulos et al. (2008) presents insight into how migrant routes are produced to literally escape from regimes of control imposed by states. Even before 11 September 2001, a broad security discourse explicitly linked migration control issues to the military to improve control over foreign borders. However, migrants have still designed alternative paths and porosities through the border controls (Papadopoulos et al., 2008; Dias, 2016, 2019; Riosmena and Massey, 2012). As a result, migration does not always follow a direct route from the home society to the host society. In many cases on the Aegean Sea analysed by Papadopoulos et al. (2008), migrants had to use routes that connect several places to circumvent border controls and reach their final destination. Therefore, it is essential to examine the *in-between*, and the negotiations involving border controls, people, knowledge, skills and struggle present within the routes. In this context, borders as places play a major role in the migration mobility performed by our respondents. A border "is a dimensional part of mobility which reveals journeys as well as human actions. As a result, it gives sense to the itineraries that connect mobility to the body, a meaning derived from a particular spatial perspective of living in that space" (Dias, 2016:36)

These migration routes produce what Suvendrini Perera define as "geographies of actions" (2009). So, unlike the modern map which "slowly disengaged itself from the itineraries that were the conditions of its possibility", understanding the itineraries of migrants is an exercise, which gives forms of "a memorandum prescribing actions". Our respondents along with border crossers and other Haitians, who compose their migration meshwork, are capable of establishing routes that connect places in a vast migration system through South America. These routes are produced by successful itineraries that manage to evade border controls by not taking the official paths that connect countries (Khosravi, 2010; Dias, 2016). Travellers, therefore, have the power to decide how to align the particularities of the course. Thus it can be created and rapidly erased, confounding the rationality behind the map and its official monitored paths. These non-linear motions, therefore, shape routes that challenge new borders practices, contest sovereignties and cause "new geographies" to appear (Perera, 2009:73). In line with this body of literature, we argue that the mobility produced by Haitians on

their way to Brasília is characterized by complex itineraries that involve a considerable number of people and various places. It results from constant journeying that successfully finds a way to penetrate the porosities in the external and internal border controls.

By analysing each individual migration journey of the research respondents, we draw attention to the fact that the Haitians' mobility includes several places before they arrive in Brasilia. While in some interviews we could identify in more detail the names of cities and the role of the migrant networks in these places, in others, the respondents did not provide much information about the places where they were living and why they were there. Instead they only mentioned the names of the countries they passed through. Thus we had to work with different layers – cities and countries – to compose the mobility produced by these migrants, even though the interviews provided good findings. Most of our respondents did not migrate directly from Haiti to the Brazilian capital. They first passed through different countries in Latin America. We can assume, therefore, that

> [m]igration as a whole is a tactical mobility through a set of social relationships in an environment where distinct layers interplay in different levels of connections. Migrants, therefore, are connected to a social fabric, recording their biography through the routes involved in their mobility (Dias, 2019:75).

Jocelyne, a 52-year-old female migrant, stresses that the considerable number of places she accessed in South America alone is related to the fact that "Haitians are used to travelling". She said they are used to moving from country to country or from city to city in search of good living conditions. "We leave Haiti in search of better conditions that can be found in other places. If not, we move to other places. But we always return to Haiti", Jocelyne concludes. And that search includes not only jobs, but also the weather and even a better environment for raising children.

Moreover, the respondents also revealed that a considerable number of family members and acquaintances, in general, are actually already living abroad. The Dominican Republic was cited as the most explored country among our respondents. Of the 34 interviewed, 23 had lived in the capital of the Dominican Republic before arriving in Brasilia. Frantz, for instance, says that he lived there "for six years, but always in comings and goings. I stayed [in Santo Domingo] between six months and one year, then I returned to Haiti. After a while, I went back to the Dominican Republic." As he reported, this neighbouring country was chosen because it could provide "better living conditions" for his family back in Haiti. So the temporary mobility between these places gave Frantz the chance to keep in touch with his homeland. In the same vein, Roger says that the distance between his town in Haiti and Santo Domingo could be easily covered by bus. "I was used to doing that…entering and leaving Haiti…I arrived in the Dominican Republic, then went back to Haiti. […] By bus, [from] the capital of the Dominican Republic to Haiti takes only four or five hours." After six years of living this temporary mobility across Hispaniola Island, Frantz decided to move from the Dominican Republic to South America in search of better living conditions. Living under "constant alertness", he recalls that, not having much money, travelling by bus was the best option to cover most of his journey. "I flew to Panamá, Ecuador, then Peru. Then another country…I lived for a short period in each state that I arrived in. After a while, I got on a bus and moved to the next one. At the moment I am here [in Brasilia]"

Frantz was not the only Haitian whose migration journey included temporary stays in different Latin America countries. Other respondents had also lived briefly in other cities before Brasilia; in Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, the Bahamas, Panama and Ecuador. Once in Brazil. Some mentioned that they stayed in São Paulo, Manaus and Rio Branco before coming to Brasilia. So the findings indicate that none of the respondents' mobility was characterized by a linear movement with clear departure or arrival places. Moreover, the cities where these travellers lived temporarily encouraged their mobility to another place. Working temporarily, saving money, and establishing or reinforcing migration networks allowed these travellers to continue their journeys

through Latin America. This was the case with Raoul, 34, who explained how he reached Brazil through the Venezuelan border. Raul said that Haitians who live in Venezuela take advantage of crossing the border to obtain a Refugee Visa in Brazilian territory.

Silva (2013:5) notes that Haitians "believe that the request for refugee status would be an indisputable justification for remaining in the country. Since Brazil is signatory to conventions about refugees and is known for its tradition of giving them shelter, this request could not be denied[21]". However, in Raoul's case, he opted for a tourist visa. Otherwise the "federal police would not allow me to circulate between both countries." So he explains how he went to "the Brazilian Embassy in Venezuela and applied for a [visitor's] visa to enter Brazilian territory. That was in April 2014. After getting it, I [Raoul] went to Boa Vista, Roraima, and stayed for twenty days." Raoul explained that he moved between Venezuela and Roraima for a few months due to his 'transnational business', which was not revealed in the interview. After this period, he decided to continue his journey into Brazilian territory. So, instead of settling down, Haitians are encouraged by opportunities found in the place of arrival to keep moving to other destinations. If the movement does not work as planned, they return and evaluate new alternatives.

In this sense, this manuscript and its map revealed how Haitian migration to Brasilia represents movement within a complex meshwork that connects Haiti and the Brazilian capital to different places in Latin America. Rather than following a linear trajectory from their country of origin to a desired destination, the majority of Haitians passed through certain places before arriving in Brasilia. Their stay in other Latin American countries ranged from a few weeks or months to years. There were various reasons for this ongoing mobility. Although some respondents suggests that Haitians are genuine travellers, the narratives collected in the fieldwork showed that this ongoing mobility is often unintended and a phase, which might end, depending on the circumstances, which could be related to work, but also financial or matrimonial matters.

Final considerations

The historical practice of living on the move has enabled Haitians to deal with border controls and circulate through various countries around the globe, including those in Latin America. In this context, since the 2010s, Brazil has become a major destination. São Paulo, Florianopolis, Curitiba and more recently Brasilia have been among the cities most sought by Haitians. To explore how Haitian mobility connecting Haiti to Brasilia occurs, this paper looked at 34 different itineraries traveled by Haitians living in the Brazilian capital. Three empirical questions assisted the examiniation. In answering the first empirical question, this paper has argued that Haitian mobility to Brasilia is not a direct, straight-forward journey. It is rather an open movement improvised by choices, financial sources, border barriers and constant negotiation with coyotes, government border agents and other migrants. Various places are therefore involved in the migration not as arenas of fixed rootedness, but as flexible spaces that have also been transformed and shaped through the intricate, repeated, and habitual movements of migrants. We define this performance as a tactical interaction between migrants and places – an interaction that reveals a set of social relationships in people's lives through places which, rather than being inert and passive, are constantly transformed by social actions and are thus able to connect and disconnect in self-selected rhythms with distinct localities in a non-linear spatial logic.

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21   We believe that there is a misunderstanding here. It is apparently caused by the fact that when Haitians began to arrive in Brazil (after the earthquake in 2010), entry under terms of the Foreigners' Statute (Law 6815/1980) were limited and not applicable to their case. It, thus forced them to request refugee visas, based on Law 9474/1997. That became the best possibility to regularize their stay in Brazil. In 2012, this changed with CNIg´s Resolutions no. 97 and 102, which created a specific regularization for Haitians. However, due to the casuistic character of the resolution, there was no documentary structure related to this rule. Thus, the Brazilian authorities granted Haitians the documents that were used in case of refuge. Therefore, we assume this practice probably led Haitians to define themselves as refugees. It is worthy to mention that the content of this resolution has been constantly renewed, and today the Ministerial Ordinance covers it (Jarochinski Silva, 2016).

Mobilities that enable safe connections along a journey tend to be utilized sequences of migrants, producing effective routes. Two particular migration routes were highlighted that lead Haitians to Brasilia: *the Pacific Corridor* and *the Air Corridor*. Along these routes migrants jump from city to city in Latin America before taking the final movement: passing through Brazilian border controls at either São Paulo or Rio Branco before continuing the journey to Brasilia. *The Pacific Corridor*, the most common route, is a tactical movement that exploits the connections between particular localities and takes advantage of different transportation systems that can enter Brazil through more accessible routes at Acre and Amazonas. It is a route that costs these Haitian migrants more money and time, but it also guarantees a better connection between Haiti and Brazil, than Guarulhos International Airport in São Paulo.

This article has also revealed that Brasilia is not seen as the last stop by most of our respondents. It rather acts as a node in a constantly changing migration meshwork of Latin American cities and countries, border crossers and acquaintances that enables these travellers to be constantly moving and opening new frontiers. These findings are supported by evidence that in 2016 Haitians were turning to Chile as a better migration option (Sant'anna and Prado 2016). Because Brazil is undergoing a strong economic recession and political instability, we are now witnessing another changing geography in Haitian migration. New places are being inserted into Haitian migratory mobility, revealing how dynamic and open to engaging different places it is.

Finally, it can be asserted that Haiti is the core around which all these movements circulate. Despite the fact that there are factors that make Haiti a difficult country to live in and these migrants have ambitions to stay on the move, they still recognize their affective connections to the country. Rose, a female respondent, stressed "Haiti is my home" and she makes sporadic visits there. Living with temporary mobility, for Haitians means that the travellers cannot cut their bonds with Haiti. Although they acknowledged in the interviews that they might not return for good, at some point they would visit their homeland. "I lost my interest in the Dominican Republic, but not in Haiti. I want to go there. Not to live, to spend my life there; I want to go to visit my family and then return here", says David, a Haitian who had lived in the Dominican Republic almost his entire life, and had been in Brasilia since 2012. There is no such ongoing movement without a temporary return.

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