ACCULTURATIVE ORIENTATIONS AND ETHNIC-RACIAL PREJUDICE TOWARD HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

ORIENTACIONES ACULTURATIVAS Y PREJUICIO ÉTNICO-RACIAL HACIA INMIGRANTES HAITIANOS EN EL SUR DE BRASIL

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify acculturative orientations of a Brazilian host community from a small countryside city toward Haitian immigrants and investigate which factors, related to racial prejudice, quality of life, and sociodemographic characteristics, were associated to the adopted acculturative orientations. 88 host community members were interviewed and the results indicated that the most adopted acculturative orientation are individualism and integration.

1 Artículo de investigación.
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Higher quality of life and lesser racial prejudice is related to the acculturative orientations of individualism and integration, whereas lower perceived quality of life and greater racial prejudice is related to the acculturative orientation segregation and exclusionism. The results show the importance of a migratory policy that follows the integrative model, informing the population about the theme and focusing on actions that can tackle racial prejudice, which is the leading sphere related to acculturative orientations that exclude Haitian immigrants from society.

*Keywords:* acculturation; prejudice; quality of life; Haitian immigration; Brazil.

**Resumen**

El objetivo de este artículo es identificar orientaciones aculturativas de una comunidad brasileña - pequeña ciudad rural - hacia inmigrantes haitianos e investigar qué factores, relacionados con los prejuicios raciales, la calidad de vida y las características sociodemográficas, estaban asociados con las orientaciones aculturativas adoptadas. Se entrevistó a 88 miembros de la comunidad de acogida y los resultados indican que las orientaciones de aculturación más adoptadas son el individualismo y la integración. Una mayor calidad de vida y un menor prejuicio racial están vinculados a las orientaciones aculturativas del individualismo y la integración, mientras que una menor calidad de vida percibida y un mayor prejuicio racial están vinculados a las orientaciones aculturativas de la segregación y la exclusión. Los resultados demuestran la importancia de una política migratoria que siga el modelo integrador, que informe a la población sobre el tema y se centre en acciones que puedan abordar los prejuicios raciales - que es la esfera principal relacionada con las orientaciones de aculturación que excluyen a los inmigrantes haitianos de la sociedad.

*Palabras clave:* aculturación; perjuicio; calidad de vida; inmigración haitiana; Brasil.
Introduction

The migratory phenomena have been present in the history of Brazil since its beginnings, especially due to the colonization policies that brought Europeans and Africans to populate the country (Figueroedo & Zanelatto, 2017). Currently, Brazil has been opened to a new flow of immigrants and refugees. Data from official governmental agencies show that from 2011 to 2019, 1,085,673 migrants were registered, including all legal protections (OBMigra, 2020). Among these migrants, around 660,000 were Latin-Americans with a long-term staying projection – more than one year of residence in the new country. This number could be even higher, although the strike of the Covid-19 pandemic implied several difficulties for the mobility processes, mainly because of the closure of the international borders, which resulted in a significant drop in the number of immigrants and asylum requests in 2020 (UNHCR, 2021).

According to the official data, the second highest number of immigrants or asylum seekers in Brazil is the Haitian community, accounting for around 100,000 people until 2018 (Cavalcanti et al., 2020). Haiti is a nation located in the Caribbean with an estimated population of 10.32 million people, which has been struck by three major natural disasters – an earthquake, in 2010, and the hurricanes in 2016 and 2020 –, factors that have contributed to this migratory movement, known as the Haitian Diaspora (Joseph & Neiburg, 2020). Cogo (2014) proposes that poverty and natural disaster are fundamental, though not absolute factors in this massive migratory shift. Pre-migratory relations between Brazil and Haiti are closely related to the current migratory activity and policies. Emotional and symbolic bonds, established during the Brazilian humanitarian mission in Haiti, turned Brazil into a destination among immigrants as well (Cogo, 2014). In addition, Brazil was seen as a welcoming country, since it has an
expressive proportion of Afro-descendants and also many working and studying opportunities. At the time, the country was also in a favorable historical context because the nation was chosen to host the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics (Mejía & Cazarotto, 2017). Furthermore, the Haitian’s migratory process to Brazil was stimulated by the opening of the Brazilian’s borders in 2010, in contrast to the restrictive migration policies of the United States or European countries at the time (Meroné & Castillo, 2020).

When Haitian immigrants crossed Brazilian borders, they had usually claimed the status of refugee, mainly due to precarious living and sustenance conditions in Haiti after the natural disasters. However, this prerogative did not meet the Brazilian immigration legislation established at the time, the “Statute of the Foreigner” (1980) and the “Refugee Law” (1997) (Yamamoto & Oliveira, 2020). As an immediate response, Brazil began to accept the entry of Haitians immigrants based on a humanitarian visa, only applied to those who did not have any criminal record (Mejía & Cazarotto, 2017). This special visa allowed immigrants to request necessary documents to formally enter the labor market in the country. This means that Brazil did not have specific laws to deal with migration flows until the very recent past. It was only in 2017 that the “Migration Law” was instituted, which removed the conception from the law that immigrants are a threat to national security and also established several rights and duties to any sort of migration context (Zanatti et al., 2017). Among the law establishments are the guarantee of equal conditions to nationals in terms of the right to liberty, security, and the access to public health and education services. However, hosting and their specific necessities may be disregarded by this law and public policies. Bourhis et al. (2010) showed that different policies should be adopted that go further than state levels, providing local, community, and institutional actions.
Among the psychosocial characteristics, the processes of acculturation have gained weight, especially due to the relation to predictive factors of mental health and quality of life (Sam & Berry, 2010). Acculturation is the engagement of immigrants into another cultural context. It can be perceived in the changes that occur with individuals and groups from different cultures coming into contact with other people, cultural and national contexts, wherein they have to reorganize their lives (Sam & Berry, 2010). Since the 1960s, many definitions have been proposed as an attempt to better explain these cultural contact processes. In the Psychology field, acculturation as a concept becomes internationally known through Gordon (1964), in an assimilationist and individualizing perspective, which sees the process as the acquisition of the dominant culture by immigrants.

Since this model, the most popular one is the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM), developed by Bourhis et al. (1997), which permits the analysis of acculturation phenomena both from the perspective of immigrants and the communities they settle. The host community can adopt five acculturative orientations for immigrants: Integration – when the community wishes the immigrants to adopt elements of the new culture, while they maintain certain elements from their cultures of origin; Assimilation – occurs when the desire is for immigrants to adopt the new culture, abdicating their cultures of origin; Segregation – the community wants the immigrants to live according to their cultures of origin, without adopting elements from the new culture; Exclusion – immigrants are not expected to be part of any culture, they should abdicate their cultures of origin and not adopt any elements of the new culture; and Individualism – when the community sees the immigrants as individual people, without considering aspects of their cultural origins. Lastly, Montreuil et al. (2004) complemented the model with the orientation of
Transformation, which deals with the host community accepting to make certain changes in its context to better adapt the immigrant's culture.

In terms of chosen regions by the Haitians immigrants, considering that Brazil is a country of continental size, the southernmost states (Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and São Paulo) are the leading destinations (Zamberlam et al., 2014). However, there are still very few studies within this context about the new inhabitants. Among these, a survey was conducted with 96 Haitian immigrants in 2014. Participants were male and living in Rio Grande do Sul, outlining the sociodemographic profile of this population. The majority aged between 25 and 34, married or in a stable union, arriving in Brazil as of 2010. Most had left children in Haiti, had a complete or incomplete high school education, spoke Creole and/or French, were religious and sent money back to their families. In addition, studies were conducted on employment insertion, identifying that the majority of these immigrants were employed in the food, furniture and civil construction industries, and other fields, or in some cases, they were unemployed since arriving in Brazil (Zamberlan et al., 2014). This information provides an overview of this immigration, though more expansive studies are still required, especially those that include Haitian women and children, as there is still no official data about these groups.

Regarding phenotypic characteristics, Haitian population is largely black (95%; CIA, 2014). According to the Brazilian Demographic Census of 2010 (IBGE, 2010), despite the fact that 50.7% of the Brazilian population self-describes itself as black or mixed race, the state of Rio Grande do Sul, colonized mostly by Germans and Italians, has the second lowest population of self-described black or mixed race (16.2%) people, followed by Santa Catarina (15.3%). Hypothetically, this may be seen as a factor that contributes to the manner in which racism is manifested in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. One of the factors that plays a role in assuming
acculturative orientations by the host community is prejudice, with racial discrimination standing out in this case (Bourhis et al., 2010; Rojas et al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2013).

In addition, Brazil is structured on a racist model, a legacy of the country’s history of colonization and enslavement of indigenous and black people. This structural racism still integrates the functioning and organization of the political and socioeconomic dimensions of society, which reproduces several inequalities and violence against racialized people (Almeida, 2018). When international immigrants arrive in the country they are also racialized and welcomed in different ways, according to their ethnic-racial social marker (Oliveira, 2019). Even though racism is easily observed in social disparities, the way it is individually or collectively expressed nowadays is no longer as explicit as in the past. Actually, it is gradually being replaced with a more subtle and "politically correct" form of discrimination, which is referred as modern racism (Santos et al., 2006). According to the same authors, this type of racial prejudice is presented in two dimensions related to the denial of the existence of racism and affirmation of differences between white and black populations.

In a study by Rojas et al. (2014), in Spain, immigrants that suffer greater prejudice tended to reject the new culture more, while immigrants that reported having suffered less prejudice sought to integrate more cultural elements from this new context. In turn, individuals from the host community that show greater prejudice also tend to be more assimilationist with regards to immigrants. This attitude may be due to the fact that these members of the host community believe that the immigrants are obliged to adopt the customs of the context in which they are now part. Therefore, trying to convert immigrants into people more similar to local inhabitants will reduce the perception of immigrants as being threats.
In another study conducted in Quebec, encompassing Haitian, French, Latino, Asian, and Jewish immigrants (without specifying nationalities), results showed that the local population saw Haitian immigrants as the least hard-working, punctual, honest and intelligent, while also seen as more aggressive and violent than the others (Tchoryk-Pelletier, 1989). Starting with these stereotypes, Montreuil and Bourhis (2001) conducted a study with the Canadian host population, monitoring acculturative orientations regarding Haitian and French immigrants in Quebec. The results showed that the host community adopts orientations of individualism and integration regarding immigrants in general. These orientations tend to be more prominent in relation to French immigrants, while simultaneously showing themselves to be less segregationist, assimilationist, and exclusionist with French immigrants than in relation to Haitian immigrants (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). Lastly, a study held in Germany has shown that there is a higher expectation by the host community that the children of immigrants from "devalued" groups adopt an assimilationist approach. As such, parents are permitted to maintain their cultures of origin, though their children should assimilate more elements from the new cultural context (Kunst & Sam, 2014). These findings corroborate the presumptions of the IAM, since it indicates acculturative orientations sensitive to the group to which the immigrants in question belong. As such, certain groups are considered "valued" while others are "devalued" (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001).

Regarding specifically the Haitians’ point of view, a study sought to access the perception of 67 of these immigrants about their psychosocial aspects: access to public policies and social support, sociodemographic and socioeconomic profile, acculturative orientations, prejudice, and quality of life in Brazil (Author, 2019). Participants were aged between 19 and 58 years, mostly men (77%), and also residents of an interior city. Results suggested that
immigrants adopted the acculturative orientation of integration while living in this Brazilian community. However, segregation was the second acculturation orientation most scored, indicating ambivalence toward immigrants, since this result is in the opposite direction of the highest outcome, integration orientation. The study stated that Haitians immigrants mostly tended to integrate into the community, since they have a better quality of life and perceive less prejudice when compared to Haitians immigrants hosted in France and the United States. However, the authors also suggest caution when interpreting the results, since the time of migratory mobility in Brazil was shorter than in these other countries.

The authors of the IAM noted that the acculturative orientations adopted by the host community influence and are influenced by the State's social policies (Bourhis et al., 2010; Wagner et al., 2013), which may either facilitate or complicate immigrants' interaction with the host community in terms of the acculturation process. Countries with intense migratory flows, such as France and the United States, have adopted largely assimilationist public policies (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Wagner et al., 2013). Though there is consensus that integrationist policies result in reduced acculturation-related stress and better psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of the immigrants.

Studying the perception of a Brazilian community that receives a large number of Haiti immigrants in a short period of time provokes changes and reactions that may be beneficial or not to the migratory process of these immigrants, as well as the community that hosts them (Bourhis et al., 2010). In addition, it is also important to carry out investigations about immigration, racism, and discrimination in contexts other than state capitals or large urban cities, since Brazilian Migration Policies are prioritizing strategies to interiorize and host immigrants in countryside cities, where they could have more economic opportunities (UNHCR, 2021). The
most recent example is the “Operação Acolhida” (Shelter Operation), a governmental task force that was developed to support the increased number of Venezuelans who were seeking refuge in Brazil. The task force is supported by the Brazilian National Armed Forces, which aims to welcome, shelter and interiorize Venezuelan immigrants to small-medium size cities in Brazil - places where generally industrial or fridge companies are seeking a cheap work force (Silva et al., 2021). Even though the policy was based on the distorted conservative narrative “saving people from communism”, the operation has already interiorized over 56 thousand Venezuelans to more than 670 Brazilian cities (UNHCR, 2021). However, this policy seems to basically support Venezuelans, not embracing other nationalities of immigrants who are seeking refuge in the country.

Considering this, addressing how a host community perceives the arrival of a new group of immigrants in the south of Brazil may shed light on the community relationships among them, as immediate interpersonal relationships are established within these communities. This study addressed this issue, since we aimed to identify the acculturative orientations adopted by a host community in relation to Haitian immigrants in the countryside of Brazil and the influence of sociodemographic variables and racial prejudice. We hypothesized that: (a) older age and higher income would predict higher racial prejudice outcomes and higher tendency to adopt segregation/exclusion acculturation orientation; (b) higher racial prejudice outcomes would also be associated with higher tendency to adopt segregation/exclusion acculturation orientation.

Furthermore, as far as we know, there are no studies available that investigated the relationship between quality of life and acculturation orientations in host communities. Thus, we also aimed to explore these possible associations in the targeted population. Regarding this
objective, our hypothesis was that worse quality of life outcomes would predict higher tendency to adopt segregation/exclusion acculturation orientation.

Method and instruments/materials

Participants

This study includes the participation of 88 Brazilian inhabitants from a city in the countryside of Rio Grande do Sul. The sample was largely women (62.5%), aged between 18 and 72 years old, while the average age and years of study for all participants were, respectively, 33.63 years (SD= 13.82), and 12.69 years (SD=4.06). The study sample was by convenience and representative (90% degree of confidence, sample error of 10%).

The city was selected for hosting the largest number of Haitian immigrants in relation to its population (3%) in the region. Sample criteria employed data from the most recent census by the IBGE (2010), which on the date of data collection initiation stated a city population of 20,514 inhabitants, with a high Municipal Human Development Index (.076), largely white population (89.6%) and low unemployment rate (3.6%), when compared to the national index (11.6%).

Materials

Sociodemographic Data Questionnaire. A sample profile was generated considering age, gender, education level, profession, employment, income, marital status, and socioeconomic class.

Host Community Acculturation Scale (HCAS) (Bourhis & Montreuil, 2013). Instrument that assesses the six acculturative orientations – integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion,
individualism, and transformation – of the host community members relative to a specific group of immigrants. This is a self-applicable, Likert-type scale of 7 points. The domains included were: Culture, Values, Customs, Endogamy/Exogamy and Employment, which resulted in an instrument comprising 30 items. The instrument was translated into Portuguese and adapted to the Brazilian context based on the original instrument in French (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001), and presented adequate internal consistency (0.74). Other studies from a number of countries, like France, Canada, and Italy, have confirmed its validity (Montreuil et al., 2004; Trifiletti et al., 2007; Author, 2019).

*Modern Racism Scale* (Santos et al., 2006). The Modern Racism Scale, validated and adapted to the Brazilian context by Santos et al. (2006), measured the cognitive components of subtle racial attitudes. The Likert-type scale of 7 points features 14 items and is composed of two factors: Denial of Prejudice and Affirmation of Differences. Its internal consistency was adequate (0.74) and was validated by Santos et al (2006).

*World Health Organization Quality of Life BREF (WHOQOL – BREF)*. The WHOQOL is an instrument to assess quality of life as a subjective construct. The abbreviated version (BREF) was used, composed of 26 questions with the best psychometric performance extracted from the original version (WHOQOL-100). The instrument is composed of four domains: Physical, Psychological, Social Relations and Environment. The version used in Portuguese presented adequate internal consistency (between 0.69-0.84) and was validated in Brazil by Fleck et al. (2000).

**Procedures**
Pen and paper questionnaires were applied by Psychology students and professionals in a Brazilian host community, situated in a small countryside city in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil. The application of all instruments lasted around 40 minutes. This study was approved by the Scientific Board of the School of Psychology and by the Ethical Research Committee of the [include after peer review process]. All of the participants answered the Term of Free and Informed Consent and agreed to take part in the study.

One important side aspect for analysis is the drop out cases. 19 cases [mostly men (89.47%)], who initially agreed to participate in the research, decided not to continue answering the instruments when they found out its subject. Furthermore, other 42 community inhabitants refused to participate in the study right after reading the research topic, available in the Term of Free and Informed Consent. All these cases were not included in the sample, but they are noteworthy to be mentioned since they may be reflecting the resistance that the host community has toward immigrants.

Data analysis

The collected data were codified, typed, and stored with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program, version 21.0 for Windows. The dependent variables were the host community's acculturative orientations, while sociodemographic variables, prejudice, and quality of life were used as independent variables. Initially, descriptive analyses were conducted, providing a panorama of the sample. Later, analyses were conducted on association (Pearson's correlation), the differences among averages (Student t-test) and multiple linear regressions, using the enter method, to indicate the explicative variables of the acculturative orientations adopted by the host community.
Results

The acculturative orientations of the host community in relation to Haitian immigrants demonstrate a predominance of individualism (M=25.57, SD=6.61) and integration (M=22.48, SD=5.63), while segregation (M=17.07, SD=6.24), transformation (M=15, SD=6.74), exclusion (M=13.56, SD=5.97) and assimilation (M=11.02, SD=4.8) obtained lower scores. The modern racism scale showed that the affirmation of differences gained the highest score (M=3.69, SD=1.23), while denial of prejudice gained a lower score (M=2.82, SD=1.01). Both spheres featured below average on the scale (>4).

By checking the relation among variables, initial analysis looked at differences in averages between sociodemographic variables of the sample and variables of acculturation and racial prejudice. Surprisingly, the only significant result indicated that men scored higher than women in the denial of prejudice variables [t(88)=2.3, p=.03] and regarding the acculturative orientation of segregation [t(88)=2.09, p=.04].

Analysis of the Pearson correlation indicated to which acculturative orientations variables, racism and quality of life were associated (Table 1). Linear regression was analyzed using the enter method, for six acculturative orientations (Table 2).

Table 1.

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<th>Modern Racism Scale</th>
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### Table 2.

Multiple Linear Regressions for Acculturative Orientations Adopted by the Host Community in relation to Haitian Immigrants

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<td>Social Relation</td>
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<td>.283*</td>
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<td>Environment</td>
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Notes. *p < .01; **p < .001.
Analyses of linear regression show that the racial prejudice variables have explicative power over five of the six acculturative orientations approached. Integration and individualism orientations were more often adopted when the individuals revealed a lower score in the prejudice denial variable, while the assimilation, segregation and exclusion orientations were explained by a higher score in the same variable, corroborating our hypothesis. Segregation and exclusion orientations were also explained by higher scores in the affirmation of differences variable. All the regression models were significant, with acculturative orientation of exclusion having the highest explicative power ($r^2=.33$) and the denial of prejudice variable the leading factor for the adoption of this acculturative orientation ($\beta=.47$).

As expected, quality of life variables were associated with acculturative orientations. The highest score for quality of life in the domains: psychological, interpersonal relations and environment showed an explicative power for the adoption of acculturative orientations of integration, individualism and transformation. On the other hand, we perceived that a quality of life score lower in the physical, psychological and environmental domains, were factors that, on some level, forecast the adoption of assimilation, segregation and exclusion acculturative orientations, partially corroborating our hypothesis.

**Discussion**

Study results demonstrate that the residents of the analyzed city showed willingness to integrate the immigrants into the local community, while also valued the individual aspects of these people. In some cases, they demonstrated being open to making social modifications, as well as changes in their own actions in order to improve the benefits of living with immigrants.
However, to a lesser degree, there was evidence of adopting acculturative orientations of exclusion, assimilation, and segregation among the participants. This was largely evident among men, who also tend to show the most racist attitudes. They appear significantly more inclined to adopt acculturative orientations of segregation and deny the existence of racial prejudice. This result can be associated with the refusal to conclude the questionnaires, which occurred with 19 participants, mainly men (89.47%). They initially agreed to take part in the study, though dropping out when discovering the subject. A similar situation had happened before with other 42 potential participants, who did not agree to participate in this study right after reading about the research topic, in the presented Term of Free and Informed Consent.

The choice for higher levels of adoption of acculturative orientations of integration and individualism corroborates studies in other contexts and in reference to other migratory groups (Bourhis et al., 2009; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Sapienza et al., 2010), demonstrating that the community under study is relatively receptive to Haitian immigrants. According to Bourhis et al. (2010), integration and individualism orientations, both from the social point of view and in relation to state policy, are the acculturative orientations that provide immigrants with more satisfactory insertion into another context by perceiving respect for their culture and ways of living.

Racial discrimination also appeared as a factor with a direct influence on adopted acculturative orientations. The three less tolerant ones regarding integration and maintenance of the cultural reference of immigrants – segregation, exclusion, and assimilation – were associated with racism, in both spheres studied – denial of prejudice and affirmation of differences. These results corroborate the literature (Bourhis et al., 2010; Rojas et al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2013)
and reiterate that discrimination, racism, and xenophobia remain a structured social problem that affects minority groups in Brazil, such as Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups.

Additionally, we found that racial discrimination was mostly based on the affirmation of differences between white and black populations, as shown by Santos et al. (2006), in the validation study for the Modern Racism Scale in Brazil. Despite the score being higher to the affirmation of differences factor than the denial of prejudice factor, the latter demonstrated greater explicative power regarding the acculturative orientations adopted in relation to Haitian immigrants. The idea that racial prejudice does not exist in Brazil and that minority groups should face up to their problems without any form of help or special aid extends to the manner in which the studied communities position themselves regarding the acculturation process of Haitian immigrants (Santos et al., 2006). People that believe racism is something existent and pertinent to Brazilian society seem to be more receptive to Haitian immigrants and the maintenance of other ethnic and national identity, in comparison to a small portion of the population that denies the existence of racial discrimination as a social problem.

Even though no studies have been identified that associate quality of life to acculturative orientations, we found that in the four domains studied – physical, psychological, personal relations and environment – there was an association between the levels of quality of life and the acculturative orientations. As such, higher quality of life may provide an opening to the arrival and integration of immigrants, just like the orientations that reject the presence of immigrants are related to a lower perceived quality of life. Even though there are strong evidences regarding the associations between racial discrimination and poor physical and mental health in immigrants (Moline et al., 2019; Bergeron et al., 2020), little is known about prejudice and quality of life in host communities. This is an issue which could be addressed by future studies, in order to better
understand the phenomena from a different perspective. Since the majority of studies on immigrants carried out in Brazil are eminently qualitative, and in order to better illustrate particularities of racism and discrimination against Haitians, we propose to discuss the results presented in this paper also with findings from this approach.

Gomes (2017) aimed to address the narratives produced by Haitians in the capital of Santa Catarina, southern Brazil, through interviews and participant observation. Data analysis showed none of the interviewed immigrants had actually any level of relationship or affective bounds with native citizens even though most of the immigrants referred to Brazilians as welcoming people. Similar ambiguity was noticed when immigrants reported not having experiences with discrimination, however, the observation data shows segregation and exclusion against immigrants, according to their ethnicity and nationality. There were also few narratives related to explicit discrimination, fact which could lead to a speculation that prejudice is not a frequent or even an actual phenomenon. Gondim et al. (2016) had similar results when conducting a group session interview with immigrants from different nationalities (Haitians included), regarding the ambivalence of the Brazilian community attitudes toward them, in terms of kindness and hostility. According to Gomes (2017), what can be playing an important role in this ambiguity of Haitians not perceiving racist, xenophobic, or discriminative behaviors toward them while these actually take place, are the differences in terms of language and cultural symbolic comprehension. These disparities could be a topic for future studies to lean over and better comprehend their associations.

On the other hand, contextual information may be another path to thoroughly discuss the findings of this study. Despite Brazil being traditionally seen as a welcoming nation, since its progressive immigration laws even from an international perspective, there is an important lack
of public policies to guarantee other immigrants’ rights (Cá & Mendes, 2020). The available supportive initiatives are usually from civilian, religious or philanthropic levels, as they turn into substitute approaches to provide minimum subsistence conditions for these people, such as shelter and food. This insufficiency of public policies in the country associated with the raising perspectives of neoliberal and conservative ideology, may lead Brazilian society to an intensification of xenophobia with immigrant population (Gomes & Miranda, 2018).

According to Bauman (2017), Brazilian society is already antagonist and polarized regarding migration. There are progressive groups in favor of welcoming immigrants, with a humanitarian perspective of guaranteeing their rights, although there are also neoliberal conservative groups against the admission of immigrants in the country, who identify themselves with all sort of narratives as “they are coming to steal our jobs” or “they want to survive only through government public policy”. Thus, the recent rise of extreme conservative parties in Brazil is enforcing this anti-immigration ideology, which can be associated to tendencies of racist and xenophobic behaviors towards immigrants (Oliveira, 2019). Phenomenon that can be perceived at a micro-level in data gathered, since we had a high index of refusal from the host community to take part in the study. Although, it can also be seen at macro-level in politics, since in 2018 the president of Brazil withdrew from the United Nations Global Compact, unveiling the opposed position of the current extreme right-wing government regarding humanity immigration policies (Cá & Mendes, 2020).

In terms of advancing theoretical framework regarding prejudice toward immigrants, some authors suggest that only the definition of racism might not be enough to explain all sort of implicit or explicit prejudice and discrimination immigrants may experience in a Brazilian host community, especially due to the racist model that historically structures its society (Almeida,
This applies to the definition of xenophobia as well, since European immigrants are differently welcomed in the country, when compared to Afro-descendants immigrants (Oliveira, 2019; Faustino & Oliveira, 2019). Therefore, Oliveira (2019) describes the “xenoracism” concept, in order to emphasizes how prejudice, discrimination, and xenophobic beliefs and attitudes are intertwined with structural racism, when we take into perspective immigrants with specific phenotype. This relatively new concept may shed light to future studies on how these biosocial markers can modify the way that the Brazilian host community applies different acculturation orientations to different immigrants, according to their ethnicity-phenotype.

Conclusions

This study aimed to identify the acculturative orientations adopted by a host community in relation to Haitian immigrants in the countryside of Brazil and the influence of racial prejudice and quality of life perceived in these orientations. The proposed discussions demonstrate that, despite a higher rate of receptivity and respect for Haitian immigrants, racism and perceived quality of life are still factors that affect this process. The study results may serve as a subsidy for migratory and hosting policies that will be sensitive to the particularities of the groups that arrive in Brazil. It is also important to consider that Haitian immigration into Brazil is a recent phenomenon and still relatively small in comparison to other countries. Thus, the results of this study should be viewed with caution, as the process for the formation of opinions about migration is still at an early stage.

The study is limited to approaching only a small Brazilian city in the south, and the results cannot be generalized for other contexts, especially in view of the diversity and plurality
of a country the size of Brazil. For future studies, the perception regarding other groups of immigrants and refugees that have been exponentially increasing in Brazilian context should also be studied, such as the Venezuelans, since they have been received, sheltered, and interiorized to small-medium cities in Brazil through a government task force (Silva et al., 2021; UNCHR, 2021). Investigations should be carried out with other migratory groups as well, who do not have race markers and involuntary migration for survival – groups of valued and devalued immigrants (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001).

Based on the results identified, we would like to bring to mind the importance of a migratory policy that follows the integrative model, informing the population about the theme and focusing on actions that can tackle racial prejudice, which is the leading sphere related to acculturative orientations that exclude immigrants from society. Promoting a better quality of life for the entire population also reflects an improvement in terms of hosting new groups, fostering space for harmonious coexistence.

References


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