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When the melting pot spills over: The contemporary populist backlash of perceived immigration pressures in Brazil and the United States

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<p>Key words: The Immigration; Brazil; United States; biopower; biopolitics.</p>	<p>When the melting pot spills over: The contemporary populist backlash of perceived immigration pressures in Brazil and the United States Abstract: President Donald Trump of the United States and President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil have both employed strategic anti-immigration, xenophobic discourse and policy as a political tool to both attract and solidify their electoral bases. In both cases, campaign rhetoric has carried into the administration. The implications of this strategy on public perceptions of immigrants will be considered through the underlying foundation of Michel Foucault's theories on biopower and biopolitics and their mobilization through political discourse and public policy. The study ultimately questions to what extent this reactionary political agenda of a motivated minority represents a long-lasting trend in public opinion regarding the social model these countries have historically been built upon, particularly in a polarized political environment.</p>
<p>Palavras-chave: Migração; Brasil, Estados Unidos; biopoder; biopolíticas.</p>	<p>Quando transborda o "caldo cultural": A reação populista contemporânea e a percepção da imigração no Brasil e nos Estados Unidos Resumo: O presidente dos EUA, Donald Trump, e o presidente do Brasil, Jair Bolsonaro, usam discurso e política anti-imigração como ferramenta política para atrair e fortalecer suas bases eleitorais. Nos dois casos, o discurso da campanha foi transmitida à administração. As implicações dessa estratégia na percepção pública dos imigrantes serão examinadas com base nas teorias de Michel Foucault sobre biopoder e biopolítica e sua mobilização através do discurso político e das políticas públicas. O estudo questiona até que ponto essa agenda política reacionária de uma minoria motivada representa uma tendência duradoura na opinião pública com respeito ao modelo social que estes dois países têm historicamente praticado, particularmente num ambiente socialmente polarizado.</p>
<p>Palabras clave: Sueño Inmigración; Brasil; Estados Unidos; biopoder; biopolíticas.</p>	<p>Cuando el crisol se derrama: El clamor populista contemporáneo de las presiones percibidas de inmigrantes en Brasil y los Estados Unidos Resumen: El presidente de los Estados Unidos, Donald Trump, y el presidente de Brasil, Jair Bolsonaro, han utilizado estrategias y discursos xenofóbicos, así como una política antiinmigratoria como herramienta política para atraer y fortalecer sus bases electorales. En ambos casos el discurso de campaña ha sido llevado hasta la administración de sus respectivos gobiernos. Las consecuencias de dichas estrategias en la percepción pública de los inmigrantes serán aquí estudiadas en base a las teorías de Michel Foucault sobre el biopoder y la biopolítica en su movilización a través del discurso político y en las políticas públicas. El presente estudio cuestiona hasta que punto esta agenda política reaccionaria de una minoría entusiasmada incita una tendencia duradera en la opinión pública con respecto al modelo social que estos dos países han representado históricamente, particularmente en un entorno socialmente polarizado.</p>
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Introduction

Anti-immigration and xenophobic sentiment¹ is bubbling up across the globe at the same time the United Nations (UN) has registered record numbers of migrants² worldwide, “reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 248 million in 2015.” (UNITED NATIONS, 2017, p. 4). Within this group, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has identified a historically high 70.8 million people forcibly displaced persons worldwide in 2018³. As these migrants spread out from volatile countries and regions across the globe in search of a better life, they are coming into direct contact with countries having varied historical precedents with welcoming foreigners from far away lands. Even Western countries traditionally welcoming and integrating foreigners have been reluctant to do so, reacting to growing voices of resentment and reticence within their respective populations. Certain nationalist groups and like-minded politicians have capitalized on this wave to transform their country’s approach to immigration policy. In the Americas, this nationalist movement has been led by the presidential elections of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro. What primal forces are driving these two leaders in their anti-immigration initiatives? How have these two presidents differed in their approaches to immigrants and immigration policy? To what extent do these minority voices represent majority will?

While the scientific debate on the precise sources of anti-immigrant public opinion goes beyond the scope of the current study, the aims and results of fomenting these sentiments will be a central focus. In this article, we will first attempt to reveal the motivations behind the anti-immigration populist sentiment through an analysis of the theories of biopolitics and biopower of the French philosopher Michel Foucault. The analysis will show how the respective governments have embraced these two concepts in an attempt to socially reengineer the national populations towards a nostalgic “ideal” society through a number of discursive and political strategies. The second part of the article will give a brief overview of the immigration history of Brazil and the United States, with a particular emphasis on the historical periods of selected restrictions. Highlighting these episodes is meant to give a more refined perspective of the current period of

1 According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), xenophobia is defined as, “attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity.” (UNESCO).

2 According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there is no legally accepted definition of a “migrant” under international law. Instead, it is a commonly used umbrella term to describe, “a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.” (IOM). This should not be confused with “refugee” or “asylum-seeker”, which are related terms of forced migration, wherein someone is seeking international protection for lack of protection in their home country: “Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is an asylum-seeker.” (IOM). At times these three terms are coupled in international statistics, but they represent two legally distinct categories.

3 The 70.8 million is divided into 25.9 million refugees, 41.4 million internally displaced people and 3.5 million asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2019, p. 2).

anti-immigration sentiment that is currently permeating political discourse. This is an important distinction to make as it clarifies the continuity of the nationalistic rhetoric of the two current presidents, nuances the perception of immigration in each country, and further reveals the motivations behind the norms and policies being currently implemented.

The changing faces of the immigration debate

Public attitudes towards the issue of immigration are influenced by a confluence of factors and vary considerably within regions and even among populations. The two principal hypotheses of these negative perceptions are based on perceived economic hardships caused by immigrants' arrivals, as identified by Borjas (2003) and Dustmann, Schonberg, and Stuhler (2017), or perceived cultural adversity and inability or unwillingness to assimilate to the host country's culture, as shown in Abramitzky & Boustan (2017). Furthermore, a 2014 study of Jens Hainmueller and Daniel Hopkins (2014, p. 227) identifies the most recent attitudes towards immigration as being, "mostly driven by symbolic concerns about the nation as a whole." Classifying these as "symbolic" concerns is a way of marrying the previous two together into a correlative whole by encompassing the larger, more ambiguous issues of national identity and the national economy. As societies are organic organisms undergoing constant mutation and transformation, the precise sources of immigration angst are in similar flux.

As globalization has accelerated, so has the anthropological diversity of migrant-friendly countries with diverse populations, most notably in expanding urban spaces. Recognizing and formulating strategies to combat the growing intensity of racism and xenophobia that has accompanied this cultural mix attracted the attention of the international community back in 2001 at the United Nations with the Durban Declaration Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Since then, major global and regional events such as the financial crisis of 2007-2008, the ongoing Syrian civil war begun in March 2011, climatic irregularities, violence and political instability have raised immigration numbers even higher, straining the ability and willingness of the destination countries to welcome them. Conservative, right-wing parties anchored on identity politics have risen to power as a result (GREVEN, 2016, p. 2-4). The effects of this rise continue to reverberate.

New stories, new prejudices

In absolute terms, the majority of immigrants and refugees can be found coming from and migrating to so-called South countries, known as South-South migration (SSM). Yet alongside the ever-increasing numbers of migrants, the current trends are changing:

Indeed, the perception is that SSM is growing faster than South-North migration. This is not true according to available data. If we look at the stocks of migrants for the data points we have across years, SSM is actually decreasing relative to migration towards the North. (GAGNON, 2018).

This last data point represents a new inflection point in the history of international immigration. As Southern countries continue to develop, they are increasingly producing a new class of immigrant looking to migrate North to continue building their wealth and self, not based on the traditional reasons of escaping poverty or political instability.

In countries and regions that are historically ethnically diverse and which represent the main destinations of immigration from the South to the North, public sentiment towards welcoming these immigrants appears to be trending negatively, although with many caveats. In Europe, for example, “Contrary to appearances at times, Europeans have become more receptive to immigration in recent decades.” (DIZIKES, 2019). Yet the most recent cross-national study done by Caughey, O’Grady, & Warsham (2019, p. 682) demonstrates that while conservative views of immigration across Europe have receded, the recent waves of African and Middle Eastern migrants have stalled the liberalization trends. In the United States, the current president Donald Trump has made anti-immigration policies a cornerstone of his political agenda, symbolized in the repeated desire to build a wall along the Southern border with Mexico. It is still too early to reasonably measure the concrete effects of President Donald Trump’s anti-immigration and refugee⁴ rhetoric on voters (HOOGHE; DASSONNEVILLE, 2018, p. 529), but recent opinion surveys show a considerable increase in anti-immigrant sentiment among conservative voters, while holding steady for Democratic-leaning voters.

A PEW Research Center poll conducted in July 2019 showed that while 62% of Americans as a whole continue to believe that remaining open to immigration is an inherent American trait, 57% of Republican or Republican-leaning respondents feared that being too welcoming could “risk losing our identity as a nation”, up 13% from a similar poll surveyed in September 2017 (BROCKWAY; DOHERTY, 2019). In the latest Chicago Council report, 78% of the Republican-

4 According to U.S. law, “a refugee is a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her home country because of a ‘well-founded fear of persecution’ due to race, membership in a particular social group, political opinion, religion, or national origin.” (AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, 2019, p. 2).

leaning electorate views immigration and refugee arrival as the highest critical threat facing the United States, more dangerous than climate change, China, Russia, economic inequalities, North Korea's nuclear program, or even international terrorism (SMELTZ; DAALDER; FRIEDHOFF; KAFURA; HELM, 2019, p. 25, 34). Tellingly, their report shows a substantial increase in anti-immigration opinion (17%) between 2017-2019, the period where the Trump administration began to implement its many anti-immigration policies and ramp up its accompanying political messaging (SMELTZ; DAALDER; FRIEDHOFF; KAFURA; HELM, 2019, p. 25). This demonstrates a clear correlation between Mr. Trump's anti-refugee, anti-immigration agenda and the marked reaction of his electoral base. Meanwhile Latinos, who are a constant target of Donald Trump's anti-immigration rhetoric, have increasing concerns about their place in America under Trump, regardless if they are legal citizens, temporary migrants or undocumented (LOPEZ; GONZALEZ-BARRERA; KROGSTAD, 2018). The sustained pressure campaign is creating reverberations throughout American society.

Brazil, like the United States, has a diverse⁵ population: "In fact, for much of the twentieth century Brazil was widely held to be a shining example of a harmonious and successful multiracial society." (MONK, 2016, p. 416). Much of this doctored imagery of Brazil's multicultural "harmony" comes from Gilberto Freyre's pseudo-social theory of Lusotropicalism (ANDERSON; ROQUE; SANTOS, 2019), which attempted to show how the Portuguese colonial model was particularly adept at creating harmonious societies in the tropics. While it has not received nearly the same amount or type of sustained immigration as the United States, it is undeniably an immigration nation (FIGUEREDO; ZANELATTO, 2017, p. 78), as the current composition of Brazilian society today is the culmination of four centuries of intense migratory fluxes (ZAGO DE MORAES, 2014, p. 145). However, despite this history, immigration and refugees have not been a major popular political issue in Brazil.

Generally avoiding the national debate, public opinion polls probing questions about immigration are still rare (MUNDIM; RODRIGUES DOS SANTOS, 2019, p. 7). In 2015 one such opinion poll, when asked their opinion on foreigners moving to Brazil to live, found 43.3% approve, 39.9% disapprove, and 16.8% gave no response (MUNDIM; RODRIGUES DOS SANTOS, 2019, p.7). While immigration has not received the same public attention in Brazil as the United States, an amalgam of events has positioned the issue at the forefront of the political campaigning and onto political agendas.

The lodestar of populist appeal

⁵ The official racial categories recognized by the Brazilian census bureau (IBGE) are *branco* (white), *pardo* (brown), *preto* (black), *amarelo* (yellow, for Asians), and *indígena* (indigenous) (MINISTERIO, 2015, p. 15).

With the latest rounds of presidential elections, debates on immigration have garnered significant public attention and helped propel both conservative candidates to the presidency riding on a wave of populism⁶. Strains of populism adapt to the local climate, but they all share certain characteristics. In understanding these dynamics, we will take up the Freedom House's definition of populism, as being:

a mystically unified 'nation' against corrupt 'elites' and external enemies, and it claims for a charismatic leader the power to voice the will of the nation. It is therefore fundamentally illiberal, rejecting diversity of identity and of opinion within society and discarding basic principles of modern constitutional thinking: that democracy requires constraints on the will of the majority and checks on the decisions of the executive. (REPUCCI, 2018, p. 2).

Under the guise of populism, the United States under Donald Trump and Brazil under Jair Bolsonaro have since used the socially divisive issue of immigration as both an electoral strategy and as a guide for policy positions.

Both presidents have railed against supposedly defunct national immigration laws and "open border" policies (AGENCE PRESSE FRANCE, 2019), as well as the United Nations' insistence on each country's obligation and responsibility taking in vulnerable refugees (MALINOWSKI, 2018). Their public discourse denigrating minorities, immigrants, and refugee seekers, among other policy pronouncements⁷, has polarized their respective populations (LEVITSKY; ZIBLATT, 2018), creating deep fissures within the civil society. This speech, while divisive, serves a clear purpose: "Discourses on identity can be interpreted as an exercise of symbolic power – established by recognition –, which produces the existence of that who enunciates, as Bourdieu (1989) has demonstrated." (MORENO, 2015, p. 7). The exercise of this symbolic discourse serves to create a wedge between those who identify within the political power in place, and those excluded from it. Nostalgic discourse of an idealized historical period, now lost but still attainable, is a central motor to populist appeal and fueling this symbolic moment in history is key to furthering populist legitimacy.

Laying the foundations for restrictive migration policy: biopolitics and biopower

Philosopher Michel Foucault introduced his ideas of biopolitics and biopower in 1974⁸ and 1976 (FOUCAULT, 1976b), respectively. He saw these concepts as intersecting around the role of

6 This article will not attempt to analyze the concept of "populism" in itself, as it is highly variable on nationally specific factors. For a contemporary analysis of the concept, see for example: (PANIZZA, 2005, p. 1-50).

7 For example, their disregard for the scientific consensus on the need to fight against global heating (PIRES, 2019), the vast exploitation of the natural resource base despite environmental concerns (SANDY, 2018), the deregulation of business and proposing deep cuts to social programs (BILLER, 2019).

8 The term was first evoked in a conference at the Institute of Social Medicine at the University of Rio (Brazil). It was

a government in safeguarding the health and maximizing the productive capacity of its population. The advances of civilizations and the increases of globalization have provoked unprecedented competition among nations as each vies for strategic advantages in the consolidating marketplace of ideas, goods and new technologies.

Competitive advantage demands each government to adopt a technocratic focus on the biological optimization of their respective population within its sovereign territory, including both citizens and foreigners present in the territory. Inherent in this endeavor is the *maîtrise* of governability and providing security for those under government control. This purely scientific approach to public policy is inevitably influenced by the historical social and cultural pressures that accompany the construction and evolution of any particular nation-state. In the cases of the United States and Brazil, their Eurocentric foundations and the hierarchization of society through racial segmentation⁹ have had a profound impact on the construction of the nation. It is in the inherent power of the State apparatus to transform specific migratory regimes and mold public opinion that biopower and biopolitics are mobilized.

Harnessing Biopower

The concept of biopower is defined as, “a power that is exercised, positively, on a life, that undertakes its management, its improvement, its multiplication, the exercise over it, its precise controls and combined regulations.” (as cited in KERN, 2015, p. 1). According to Cisney and Morar (2015, p. 4-5), the notion of biopower has been transformed throughout history alongside the evolution of knowledge and the invention of new technologies, initially appearing in the seventeenth century.

Firstly, at the micro level, “It manifests in a host of disciplinary mechanisms and institutions: militarily, pedagogically, medically, and at the level of labor. The human body comes to be seen as a machine, complete with functions and utilities, inputs and outputs, predictabilities and precisions.” (KERN, 2015, p. 4). Micro level biopower amasses disciplinary mechanisms that mold the citizens of a country or a sovereign to perform specific functions to serve distinct ends defined by the elite handlers of the political system.

The second function emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century, building on the first, while widening its scope from citizen to citizenry and thus expanding its focus and potential. As new technologies and techniques emerged, centered on the overall health and productive

later expanded and defined in his lectures at the Collège de France on March 17th entitled *Il faut défendre la société* (FOUCAULT, 1976b) and in his work *La volonté du savoir* (FOUCAULT, 1976a).

⁹ According to Ellis P. Monk, Jr., “Race may be split into three primary components – ancestry, physical appearance, and sociocultural elements – with the salience and consequentiality of each particular component varying throughout history and depending on the case in question (i.e., variation throughout time and space).” (MONK, 2016, p. 416).

capacity of the individual, the administrative state consolidated its sources of knowledge by tracking population data and social indicators with the goals of engineering systems to produce improved overall health and hygiene. According to Kern (2015, p. 5): “These two aspects, according to Foucault, the disciplinary power mechanisms of the body and the regulatory mechanisms of the population, constitute the modern incarnation of power relations, labeled as biopower.” Once these relations have been identified, mechanisms must be found to mobilize them.

Within a country built on the rule of law, enacting policy through legislation is one of the central sources of power the State exerts over the population, but the forces moving and molding this power flow in both directions:

Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power. They are never the inert consenting targets of power; they are always its relays. In other words, power passes through individuals. It is not applied to them. (FOUCAULT, 1976, p. 29).

Going from the individual to the State, the distribution of power within these networks is present on every scale of relationship, “Foucault, however, indicates that power is organized in multiple ‘corridors’ in society and not only at the level of political rulers and subjects. Power also function in all relations of life including those between lovers, spouses, parents and children, etc.” (as cited in APATINGA, 2017, p. 38). Power is the fleeting, interconnecting force weaving all actors together. Rather than being a top-down structure, its bottom-up dynamics are just as important.

Responding to grassroots animus plays a major role on how far a populist anti-immigrant administration is willing to go in its quest of building and retaining political capital. While Foucault initially defined biopower as being a *positive* exercise on life, the manipulation of this power for political means could just as easily direct policies to undermine specific sectors of a given populations. Resources for promoting biopower can therefore be directed to certain portions of the population to advance their productive potential, while cutting it off from others to harm or hinder their capacity to develop¹⁰.

10 See for example the refusal of the Trump administration to administer flu shots to migrants being held in the detention centers, despite being the cause of death of at least six migrants since September 2018 (SILVERSTEIN, 2019). Another example of encouraging biopower deficiencies, a court judge ruled that basic hygiene products such as soap, toothpaste, and edible food had to be provided to the detained migrants, a position officially argued against by the Department of justice (GUARDIAN, 2019).

Biopolitics & Social Engineering

Whereas biopower describes the biological capacity of societal development, biopolitics channels its energy. Biopolitics, in the words of Foucault, is the administrative process destined, “to ensure, sustain and multiply life, to put this life in order.” (FOUCAULT, 1976, p. 138). In the years since he began developing this idea, the use and function of such a tool has been applied to explain a vast array of theoretical concepts: “Some argue strongly that ‘biopolitics’ is necessarily bound to rational decision-making and the democratic organization of social life, while others link the term to eugenics and racism.” (LEMKE, 2011, p. 1). While exploring biopolitics through the lens of immigration policy, we will analyze it through the latter perspective.

Foucault’s vision of biopolitics was connected to the historical discovery of new knowledge and disciplines (biology, statistics, demography, chemistry, mathematics) informing the process of social organization: “These disciplines make it possible to analyze processes of life on the level of populations and to ‘govern’ individuals and collectives by practices of correction, exclusion, normalization, disciplining, therapeutics, and optimization.” (LEMKE, 2011, p. 5). The advancement of technology and the reorganization of the bureaucratic state have proffered new and advanced power mechanisms to mold civil society to the desires of policymakers. Given these new realities, “there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations [...]” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 140, our ellipses). When these techniques are used to further elite populist rhetoric designed to divide a population, the outcome pushes targeted social groups to increasingly marginalized sectors of the society, even despite the existence of an established civil society capable of sustained and organized push back.

The policy debate on immigration provides a clear example of populist biopolitics weaponized under the guise of health and security in order to steer the composition of civil society towards a desired norm. With this goal in mind, Terry (1989, p. 13-43) explains that, “under the guise of health and welfare, the administrative state turns politics into biopolitics, where decisions and choices are constructed in terms of preserving life and determining benevolent destruction.” But policies designed to ensure public safety through regulating who can and cannot enter and stay have secondary effects that can be just as important as the purported purpose.

Historically, the use of biopolitics through immigration policy in Brazil has been organized around the principle of giving preference to European immigration over other nations: “This is because for many Brazilian intellectuals, politicians and scientists of the second half of the 19th century and the beginnings of the 20th, one of the finalities of European immigration was the ‘whitening of the race.’”(ZAGO DE MORAES, 2014, p. 148, our translation). Brazilian biopolitics

at the turn of the 20th century were thus centered first and foremost on actively encouraging a Europeanized socio-cultural foundation and future. Meanwhile,

Immigration policy in the United States has, from the start, been shaped by contending forces advocating that the nation should serve as a refuge for the world's dispossessed and those who believe that immigration policy should seek to sift the wheat from the chaff – to admit the immigrants who add to the U.S. economy and society and exclude those who may become a burden. The fundamental tension is evident throughout the evolution of immigration policy in the United States. (FIX, 2019, p. 9).

Governments have numerous strategies and technologies to pick and choose whom they hope to attract and whom they endeavor to deter.

In exclusionary populist rhetoric, techniques of deterrence become a major focus for immigration policy: “These technologies of power take the form of deportations, detention centers, and limited access to job opportunities, health care, housing and education to eliminate immigrants.” (APATINGA, 2017, p. 41). In the balance of power of immigration, the transactional nature Foucault describes applies first and foremost to individuals within a shared, closed system of laws and citizenship. While the outsider status of an immigrant has certain protections enshrined in international law, most importantly here the right to solicit asylum¹¹, not having the full powers of others in a network puts these migrants at an enormous disadvantage and at the whims of benevolent or malevolent changing administrations.

A history of (restrictive) immigration policies

Michel Foucault's ideas on biopower and biopolitics provide a path to understanding the theoretical underpinnings of the historical waves of migrations, ultimately culminating in the anti-immigrant and anti-refugee policies of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro. While both the United States and Brazil can be considered as “melting pots” of the Americas (including Canada as well), the constitution of their respective societies has followed a much different path to achieve their current composition. The United States, the country of immigration *par excellence*, has been a beacon for immigrants ever since its founding. Today, it contains over 50 million migrants, equivalent to 19% of the world's total (UN, 2017, p. 6). This number represents approximately 14% of the total U.S. population, nearing the previous record high of 14.8% experienced in the 1880s (CONNOR; BUDIMAN, 2019). Brazil's population, on the other hand, is comprised of only approximately 1% of regularized migrants and refugees (CARDIN; DA SILVA, 2017, p. 262).

¹¹ Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum if being persecuting in other countries (UNITED NATIONS, 1948).

Brazil's contemporary history has been much less open to immigration than the century following its independence.

For both countries, a policy of selection and rejection of certain peoples has historically accompanied the process of social consolidation and the construction of a national identity. Bowing to internal social and political pressures, both have enacted *de facto* and *de jure* attempts at slowing, halting, or banning immigration from certain destinations, with the list of undesirables constantly updated. The abrupt return of selective anti-immigrant sentiment to the forefront of government policy should therefore be considered as a historical continuation rather than a rupture.

Founding the American “melting pot”

The population of the United States shares that of Brazil as having at its foundation a socially dominant base sourced from European immigration, alongside a large mass of descendants of the slave trade with the African continent and a small minority of indigenous peoples. This dynamic began to significantly change in the 1800s for the United States when the government forbade the importation of slaves, though the official abolition of slavery would not come until 1862 with the second Confiscations Act declaring slaves in territory occupied by the Union to be free and in 1863 with the Emancipation Proclamation, culminating in 1865 with the passage of the thirteenth amendment of the Constitution. During this same time period, the first half of the century, the United States received approximately 30 million immigrants, moving the foreign-born share of the population, “from 10 percent in 1850 to 14 percent in 1870, where it remained until 1920.” (ABRAMITZKY; BOUSTAN, 2017, p. 4). The majority of the arrivals were from Northwestern Europe, followed later by migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. These massive waves of migration would create serious changes in the character of the nation and provoke reactionary policies to mold the subsequent waves in a way that more mirrored the desires of the dominant white elite officials leading the country.

One of the first legal restrictions that resulted was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to prohibit entry to Chinese laborers and ultimately reduce the Asian share of the population. This legislation was enhanced through the Immigration Act of 1917, also known as the Literacy Act, which both imposed literacy tests on immigrants in general, while also prohibiting immigration from the Asia-Pacific region¹² (EWING, 2012, p. 1). Shortly thereafter, an elaborate quota system was unveiled to restrict immigration, basing quotas on the total population of each country living in the United States in 1890:

¹² Excepting Japan and the Philippines (DEPARTMENT OF STATE)

The 1924 immigration law, known as the Johnson-Reed Act, drastically limited immigration and made permanent restrictions designed to keep out Southern and Eastern Europeans, particularly Italians and Jews, Africans, and Middle Easterners, barring Asian immigration entirely. (SERWER, 2017).

Western hemisphere nations were excluded from the law, while Northwest European nations were allowed larger quotas as they had the highest populations already living in the country in 1890. This was clearly a feature, not a bug, of the legislation: “When the law passed, its primary Senate author, Rhode Island Senator David A. Reed, expressed relief in *The New York Times*, writing that ‘the racial composition of America at the time is thus made permanent’.” (SERWER, 2017). The law’s author made clear the true intentions of these targeted restrictions as a form of social engineering to preserve a Western European social character. This quota system would transform the profile of American immigration for decades to come.

During the period of WWI and WWII, immigration slowed considerably. When America got involved in the war effort Mexican workers were brought in as a supplemental workforce through the Bracero program, which brought approximately 5 million field workers into the country (EWING, 2012, p. 5). The name of the program, literally “arms” from the Spanish *brazo*, evokes both the biopower of the bicep as a source of human strength, but also the importance of the biopolicy of exploiting the power of migrants. This relationship with Mexican migrants would later become a central focus to the post war American economy providing a steady stream of low-skilled, low pay labor.

As a diplomatic overture to its WWII ally China, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was also repealed in 1943, though migration from China remained restrictive. After WWII, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, also known as the McCarran-Walter Act (EWING, 2012, p. 5). This Act was primarily led by Cold War fears of Communism and managed immigration accordingly. Not only did it restrict incoming immigration, it also focused on removing the growing level of unauthorized Mexican immigrants. Since the early 1940s, raids and mass deportation targeted undocumented migrants, culminating in the 1954 bi-national law enforcement campaign “Operation Wetback,” rounding up and deporting about one million Mexican immigrants (HERNÁNDEZ, 2006, p. 422). The next decade, “[t]he Immigration Act of 1965, passed one year after the Civil Rights Act, abolished the discriminatory national-origins quota system by eliminating race, ancestry, or national origin as a basis for denying immigration to the United States.” (EWING, 2012, p. 5). This is the law remains operative today. Likewise, the Act increased the quota cap from 150,000 to 270,000 per year (ABRAMITZKY; BOUSTAN, 2017, p. 10). This new regional quota system was the first Latin America was affected, on a regional basis (EWING, 2012, p. 1). Under this immigration regime, “[t]he foreign-born share of the population increased from 5 percent in 1970 to 14 percent in 2010. [...] In 2010, 51 percent of the migrant stock was from Latin America

and 28 percent was from Asia.” (ABRAMITZKY; BOUSTAN, 2017, p. 10, our ellipses). These legislative actions looked to manage future migration waves, but did little to address past illegal immigration.

The lack of significant legislative reform on immigration since the 1960s has led to a situation where irregular immigration has become a fundamental issue to resolve. A large number of the undocumented immigrants come from Latin America: “In 2017, 4.9 million unauthorized immigrants from Mexico lived in the U.S., down from a peak of 6.9 million in 2007. Mexicans now make up fewer than half of the nation’s 10.5 million unauthorized immigrants (47% in 2017).” (GONZALEZ-BARRERA; KROGSTAD, 2019). The current near record rise of the foreign-born population as a percentage of the total population, the continued diversification of the civil society as previous generations build families, and the millions of undocumented migrants have provoked much angst within America’s still majoritarily white population. Adding to this anxiety, “[t]he U.S. Census Bureau projects that by sometime in the middle of this century, the United States will no longer be a majority white nation.” (HAJNAL; RIVERA, 2014, p. 773). These cumulative factors produced a fertile ground for a populist political messaging campaign exploiting anti-immigration sentiment among a receptive segment of the population wary of adapting to change.

Brazil’s miscegenistic foundations

The Portuguese colonization of Brazil and its colonial political economy based on natural resource exploitation powered by African slaves produced the first major waves of miscegenation of modern Brazilian society. This mixture of indigenous, African and Portuguese peoples formed its basis. After independence in 1822, “[...] [i]t’s only after 1870 that Brazil begins to receive a large contingent of Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, German and Japanese immigrants, that occupy the non-colonized parts of the territory, establishing themselves in diverse regions of the country.” (FIGUEREDO; ZANELATTO, 2017, p. 78, our ellipses). The country badly needed new workers after the slave trade was legally ended in 1850 (ZAGO DE MORAES, 2014, p. 147), culminating with the abolition of slavery in 1888, fundamentally transforming the foundations of the export-based economy and establishing free, rather than forced, labor (VAINER; BRITO, 2001, p. 5). Similar to the Western expansion of the United States in search of new opportunities, Brazil attracted immigrants from across the world in search of “New World” riches. “Overall, immigrants from more than 60 countries came to Brazil before 1930.” (WEJSA; LESSER, 2018, MPI). From the end of the slave trade to the Great Depression, Brazil opened itself up to over five million migrants, the majority coming from Europeans lands.

The strongest period of Brazil's cultural and social miscegenation would not last long, however: "In the subsequent period there was a significant reduction of immigrants due to the crisis of 1920 and to the closure of the borders resulting from the Constitution of 1934, which institutionalized quotas for the admittance of immigrants." (ZAGO DE MARAES, 2014, p. 145, our translation). The age of official restricted migration thus began. Between 1889-1930, "during the First Republic, the definition of Brazilianness began to be constructed by exclusion, in opposition to the foreigner [...]." (ZAGO DE MARAES, 2014, p. 154, our translation, ellipses). The composition of contemporary Brazil has largely stemmed from this exceptional period of mass migration.

Table 1: Immigration arrivals to Brazil (1850-1930)

<i>Years</i>	<i>Number of immigrants</i>
1851 – 1860	220,000
1861 – 1870	95,000
1871 – 1880	215,000
1881 – 1890	530,000
1890 – 1899	1,998,327
1900 – 1909	622,407
1910 – 1919	815,453
1920 – 1929	846,647
<i>Total</i>	5,342,834

Source: (VAINER; BRITO, 2001, p. 9, 12)

The imposition of quotas was the beginning of the immigration system of the corporatist regime establishing the Estado Novo. The motivations behind the strategy were numerous: "The justifications against immigration included the defense of the national worker, the risk of the individuals entering that represented risks to national security and also the concepts of eugenics and race from the period." (GERALDO, 2007, p. 1, our translation). The exclusionary model established in 1934 was, "modeled after the restrictive, race-based U.S. National Origins Acts of 1924." (WEJSA; LESSER, 2018), also known as the Johnson-Reed Act. The former liberal policies of immigration were abandoned as new guiding philosophies began to take root.

Under the Estado Novo, the government began experimenting with eugenics that it hoped would "improve" Brazilian society by modeling it on a Euro-centric civilizational model: "Eugenics was a scientific attempt at 'perfecting' a human population by means of prioritizing certain hereditary traces – a popular notion through Europe and the Americas in the period between the World Wars." (DÁVILA, 2005, p. 31, our translation). The Brazilian elite, starting with the educators who would determine the syllabus for the nation's future, equated blackness with laziness, criminality and bad health, which could only be treated through miscegenation and education, while "whiteness incarnated the virtues of health, culture, science and modernity." (DÁVILA, 2005, p. 25, our translation). In Brazil's conception of eugenics at the time, race was not

based on biology and could undergo transformation through following a rigid regime of healthy practices.

Education was therefore seen as the central motor of social change particularly on the subject of sanitation. The theoretical underpinnings of this change were eugenics: “Structurally and scientifically, Brazilian eugenics was broadly congruent with the sanitation sciences and was interpreted by some as simply a new ‘branch’ of hygiene. Hence the Brazilians’ insistence that ‘to sanitize is to eugenize’.” (ADAMS, 1990, p. 121). The government under Vargas therefore moved to act on “whitening” the population within its borders while imposing the new quota system that favored lighter-skinned sources of migrants.

The nascent industrialization process of this period produced a reorganization of labor with the modernization of the economy taking hold throughout the 1950s and 1960s, moving workers from rural to urban-industrial work: “The figures are quite astounding: from 1950 to 1960, 36,701,000 people abandoned the fields and countryside; and if the 80’s are considered as well, the number rises to 48,836,000. The expression *rural exodus* certainly applies.” (VAINER; BRITO, 2001, p. 22). The restructuring of the economy moved the political power centers from the rural areas to the cities, provoking instability within the economic and political elites.

A *coup d’état* in 1964, powered in part by the fear of organized labor and a Cold War-inspired communist menace, both foreign and domestic, further pushed the doors shut on international immigration. The heavy-handed dictatorship was singularly focused on social control and stability. In 1980, the military government enacted the Law n° 6815, known as the “Foreigner Statute”. Besides severely restricting immigration into the country, the law also prohibited foreign residents from organizing in associations and limited their participation in unions out of fear of social disorder (TARGIONI, 2017, p. 10). This law, focused on national security, held its foundation in biopolitics by limiting the physical movement and interaction of a specific segment of the population, national and foreign, deemed to be potentially dangerous for the overall health and well-being of the nation as a whole (WERMUTH, 2015, p. 2-3). This oppressive regime, coupled with the economic stagnation of the 1980s throughout Latin America, led many Brazilians to move abroad.

Even after the end of the dictatorship, the strict conservative mentality remained in force until the 1980 law was replaced in 2017 by the Migration Law n°13.445 put in place by the administration of Dilma Rousseff. The newest law moved the government from a strict vision of restrictive biopolitics based on national security concern, to a more humanitarian approach based on the respect of human rights (CARDIN; DA SILVA, 2017, p. 263-266). This legal about-face signaled a softer stance of state control over the biopower potential of international migrants within

the Brazilian government. The arrival of Bolsonaro, who openly exults the dictatorship era, put this new law and its rights-based approach under serious pressure.

Trumpian populism heralding a new era in the Americas?

Racial animus is nothing new in the history of these countries. For the United States, what makes Mr. Trump's political position significantly different than past modern Presidents is not only his desire to publicly and directly alienate major ethnic minorities as a central political power strategy, but also the sheer scale of his constant attempts to move the administrative machinery of the entire government in a relentless attempt to socially engineer America's civil society. The administration first set its sights on restricting immigrants of Muslim faith in an attempt to marginalize and minimize Islamic influence across the population, consequently promoting other religions. It is well documented that the evangelical Protestant electorate is a particularly important force in the President's voting bloc and stand steadfastly¹³ behind his administration (SCHWADEL; SMITH, 2019). The battle over the religious character of the country was the first priority of the incoming administration.

Within the first week of taking office, Donald Trump signed an executive order on January 27th that suspended entry to the country from seven Muslim-majority countries for 90 days and suspended refugee admission for 120 days. This led to mass protests across the country. The administration was forced to modify the executive order after it was blocked in the courts in February and May 2017, eventually getting the third version before the Supreme Court which upheld the order in June 2018 on the basis that the Executive branch has the, "power to craft national security policy and [...] authority to 'suspend entry of aliens into the United States'." (McCARTHY; SIDDIQUI, 2018, our ellipses). After the institution of Executive Order 13780, also known as the Muslim Ban, the U.S. placed travel limits on citizens from Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, North Korea, and Venezuela.

Beyond stigmatizing the Islamic faith, President Trump has held a consistent political discourse denigrating specific nationalities and geographic areas. In December 2017, while frustrated by his inability to unilaterally change immigration laws, he was reported to have been angry at the number of visas his administration had issued, singling out Haitians migrants coming to the United States claiming they "all have AIDS" and that Nigerians entering the country would never "go back to their huts." (SHEAR; DAVIS, 2017). The biopower implications are clear, as Haitians are directly linked to a deadly terminal virus and Nigerians associated with lacking modern

13 In March 2019, 69% of evangelical Protestants supported Donald Trump's presidency, slightly down from a high of 78% after his election (SCHWADEL; SMITH, 2019).

hygiene practices as well as education. Within this frame, these nationalities would be a hindrance, rather than a benefit, to the nation's progress.

On the topic of immigration and refugees, both Presidents dovetail in political discourse as well as sharing certain policy positions. The United States under Donald Trump has strategically built a new system of detention centers for Latino migrants seeking asylum that have been heavily criticized for their inhumane living conditions¹⁴, a testament to the government's sense of responsibilities to the overall welfare of these migrants. Rather than investing in maintaining the biopower of the people under their custody, the migrant camps reveal structural and systemic degradation. For concrete examples, the administration has refused to provide flu vaccinations to detained migrants (SILVERSTEIN, 2019) and was forced by a judge to provide basic hygiene supplies such as soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste (DICKERSON, 2019). These policies are clearly detrimental to the biopower strength of the migrants as they await processing. Facing a different immigration dilemma, President Bolsonaro has joined the efforts of the UNHCR under the name of *Operação Acolhida* in building temporary shelters in the northern state of Roraima for Venezuelans fleeing economic and social hardship. The partnership with the UNHCR means that the degraded conditions seen in the American camps will likely be avoided, as international standards are to be implemented.

Bolsonaro: between bias and obligation

Bolsonaro has agreed to work alongside the UNHCR to manage the humanitarian flow of Venezuelans, yet he has also echoed Donald Trump's rhetoric on the dangers of "open border" policies. The concept of "open borders" has very different notions between the two countries. In the United States, no open border policy exists. Rather, it is a derogatory political talking point used by the Republican Party and championed by President Donald Trump to paint the Democratic Party as being soft on immigration and law enforcement in general. In Brazil, however, Jair Bolsonaro's evocation of "open borders" was in response to the growing refugee populations, which has from 3,538 officially recognized cases in 2011 to 80,057 in 2018 (BRASIL, 2019). His position could potentially have much more serious social and economic consequences. Over the last twenty years, the South American nations participating in the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) have been slowly building a free trade zone based on the European Union model. After the recent primary electoral defeat of his conservative Argentinean ally President Mauricio Macri to the

14 While the White House administration has never admitted to the squalid conditions of the camps, its own Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security published a report decrying "dangerous overcrowding", "prolonged detention of unaccompanied alien children" that violated the Flores Agreement fixing detention time of minor to 72 hours maximum, some migrants had "no access to showers" and some camps had "no laundry facilities" with one senior manager describe the situation as a "ticking time bomb." (UNITED STATES, 2019).

leftwing candidate Alberto Fernández and his vice president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Bolsonaro has threatened to pull out of MERCOSUR if a new administration would demand reforms to the deal (INOUYE, 2019), fearing a new wave of Argentines fleeing further economic instability under a left-wing administration.

Bolsonaro's desires to limit border crossings follow the norm, not the exception, in Brazil's history. In fact, "[...] Brazilian society shows itself culturally conservative and historically selective, with racial democracy being a fallacy and hospitality a myth." (CARDIN; DA SILVA, 2017, p. 267, our translation). Brazil has had such little immigration that it in the 1990s, it became a country of emigration as the number of Brazilians abroad was larger than the number of foreigners in the country (FARAH, 2017, p. 15). The trends began to change the following decade. In the 2000s, Brazil's expanding economy and political stabilization attracted not only foreigners, but also Brazilian returnees, accelerating into a crescendo today.

Brazil began to be seen as an attractive option for people seeking a better life, "[i]n the period between 2010 and 2015, demands for refugee status increased 2,868% in Brazil and went from 966 in 2010 to 28,670 in 2015. Until 2010 there had been only 3,904 refugees recognized in Brazil and, at the end of 2015, there were 8,863." (FARAH, 2017, p. 14, our translation, ellipses). One part of the explication of the sudden and significant rise in immigrant arrivals was the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, as well as the arrival of Syrian refugees¹⁵ fleeing the ongoing civil war begun in mid-2011. Since then, the economic and political crisis in Venezuela has provoked a massive wave of economic migrants and asylum seekers within Brazil.

Then a federal deputy on 18 September 2015, Jair Bolsonaro expressed alarm at the weakness of the country's armed forces to confront these growing migration numbers, declaring them the "scum of the Earth" who represented a threat to the nation, specifically identifying Haitians, Senegalese, Bolivians, and Syrian refugees (VITOR, 2015). Haitians and Senegalese embody African customs and ancestry and Syrians' Islamic traditions contrast with the conservative Catholicism of Brazil. Bolivians could appear as the outlier of the list of potential "threats" to the white, Catholic, conservative Brazil that Bolsonaro's discourse emulates, but Bolivia's population is approximately 64% indigenous (CIA FACTBOOK). Bolsonaro's public disdain for indigenous culture and lifestyle has been amply documented.

On the first day in office, Bolsonaro began dismantling Brazil's National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), the main institution charged with protecting indigenous lands (13% of the national territory) and communities (900,000 citizens) by signing, "an executive order transferring the regulation and creation of new indigenous reserves to the agriculture ministry – which is controlled

15 Syrian refugees accounted for 40% (3,326) of the recognized refugee cases in Brazil between 2011-2018 (BRASIL, 2019a).

by the powerful agribusiness lobby.” (PHILLIPS, 2019). This executive order was later overturned, but the animosity towards the indigenous peoples and the pro-business agenda is clear. Bolsonaro’s public disdain towards the indigenous populations goes back to 1998 when on the floor of Congress as a Federal Deputy lamented that Brazilian cavalry wasn’t able to decimate the indigenous peoples as effectively as the American cavalry against the North American Native Americans (MARÉS, 2018). These policies and statements all point toward a biopolitics of exclusion and marginalization of these targeted peoples.

While in Washington D.C. visiting President Donald Trump, Bolsonaro gave an interview with Fox News where he declared support for the construction of the border wall with Mexico that has yet to be built. Furthermore, Bolsonaro opined that a large part of immigrants do not have good intentions nor do they help the American people. The Brazilian President quickly backtracked from his statement after receiving domestic criticism. Given that the United States is a prime destination for Brazilians travelling abroad, and that 336,000 currently live in the United States (ZONG; BATALOVA, 2016), he was implicitly denigrating his own citizens. He reversed his statement later the same day by proclaiming that the majority of immigrants in the US did have good intentions, but a minority does not, specifically referencing those living illegally in the country (SOARES, 2019). Furthermore, upon his return to Brazil on January 9, 2019 he reiterated that Brazil, based on a security defense of national sovereignty, could not accept indiscriminate immigration into the country. However, Brazil would “never” hold back from helping those in need (AMARAL, 2019). The President finds himself constrained between his innate desires and his obligations as head of State.

The complexities of international migration are apparent in a leader who favors a restrictive biopolitical position but must remain adaptable to external pressures. Bolsonaro’s response to the Venezuelan migration crisis is arguably more humane than the policies currently employed by the once-welcoming American government. In populist rhetoric, the two presidents remain in similar categories, yet in practice the roles have switched. Brazil respects, grudgingly, international commitments while the Trump administration, led by its immigration hardliner Stephen Miller, finds ways to undermine them.

Molding the melting pot

Summarizing these analyses, what then is the “ideal” type of migrant under the vision of Mr. Trump and Mr. Bolsonaro? In defining the ideal type these Presidents favor, it is important to analyze their political discourse to define both the desired and undesirable traits they seek. Based on their pronouncements, we can attempt to build a typology of the ideal “man” *that* these leaders

would prefer to welcome as migrants as well as the typology of migrants they would prefer to exclude through restrictive immigration policy.

Table 2: The “ideal man” of Trump and Bolsonaro

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>American</i>		<i>Brazilian</i>	
	<i>Favorable</i>	<i>Unfavorable</i>	<i>Favorable</i>	<i>Unfavorable</i>
<i>Geographic origin</i>	European (Norway)	Africa (Chad, Nigeria, Somalia, Liberia, Libya), Mexico, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Haiti	European	Indigenous Brazilians, African descendants, Bolivians, Senegalese, Haitians, Syrians
<i>Culture</i>	Western	Middle Eastern	Judeo-Christian, Western	Indigenous, African
<i>Religion</i>	Christian, Evangelical	Muslim	Catholic, Evangelical	----

Source: (ANDERSON, J.L., 2019; DONNAN, 2017; FEINBERG, BRANTON, MARTINEZ-EBERS, 2019; FORREST, 2018; GUARDIAN, 2018; HOOGE, DASSONNEVILLE, 2018; KIRBY, 2018; LONDOÑO, 2019; McCARTHY, SIDDIQUI, 2018; SANDY, 2018; SCHWADEL, SMITH, 2019; SHEAR, DAVIS, 2017; VITOR, 2015).

The United States and Brazil have become proverbial “melting pots” due to their unique histories in the formation of their Nation-States. Both countries,

[...] with all of their specificities, share a historical process – both their celebration of a racially democratic national identity and their racial segregation are concepts that have helped hide discreet and daily mechanisms that reproduce and renovate historical inequalities. (DÁVILA, 2005, p. 16, our translation).

The historical record shows that the current structure of their respective civil societies has been accompanied by repression and xenophobia targeting specific social groups according to the distinctive dynamics of social hierarchy at the time. Few groups or nationalities have not found themselves targeted at some point in history. Presently, regional and global instability has forced both countries to react to new migration pressures and both Presidents have exploited these recent stresses on the immigration system to demagogue in favor of systematic change. Executive demagoguery can be extraordinarily influential, yet it faces serious limits in democratic systems.

Firstly, the federal system of the United States government in particular makes centralized, unitary action on immigration extremely difficult for long-term change:

Trump came to office intent on pursuing a very different vision of immigration policy, one colored by a nativist understanding of the role of immigrants in U.S. society. However, like his predecessor, he is finding that executive actions and declarations are flawed substitutes for congressional legislation, while also encouraging resistance from state and local actors. (REICH, 2018, p. 391).

President Barack Obama's immigration legacy is wound up in his two signature immigration policies, DACA (Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals) and DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans), enacted through executive order due to the intransigence of the Republican-led House and Senate. DAPA was invalidated¹⁶ by the Supreme Court and DACA is similarly awaiting its legal fate. While American presidents have considerable leeway in crafting immigration policy, its clear limits have been exposed by the Obama administration.

In Brazil, the federal system is much more centralized on the matters of immigration¹⁷, but significant pressure has come to bear from the international community regarding obligations to respect norms on refugees and asylum seekers. Jair Bolsonaro has attempted to return immigration policy to the national security perspective championed by the dictatorship. The Decree n° 666 of 25 July 2019 was issued in the Official Diary of the Union published by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, announcing the summary deportation of foreigners considered "dangerous" and having committed acts that go against the principals of the Federal Constitution. This Decree was later condemned in a letter by the UNHCR to the Brazilian Ministry of Justice claiming that the "summary" deportation of refugees violates Brazilian and international laws on the protection of refugees, in particular the 1951 Refugee Convention and the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1967 (MELLO, 2019). It remains to be seen whether the law will be modified.

In whipping up fear of migrants, both populist leaders are elevating their crystallized, conservative visions of their "ideal" nation, then harnessing the biopower devices inherent in this model population (economic class, skin pigmentation, good health, educated, belief in conservative family values) to promote these social classes above all else through biopolitical policies. Nevertheless, the resulting rise of xenophobic policies and rhetoric has not translated to an overall increase in anti-immigrant sentiment among the respective populations:

In the U.S., the nation with the world's largest number of immigrants, six-in-ten adults (59%) say immigrants make the country stronger because of their work and talents, while one-third (34%) say immigrants are a burden because they take jobs and social benefits. Views about immigrants have shifted in the U.S. since the 1990s, when most Americans said immigrants were a burden to the country. (GONZALEZ-BARRERA; CONNOR, 2019).

In Latin America, too, immigration trends have been in constant transformation over the last decades: "Latin America and the Caribbean are no longer characterized as a region for extra-regional immigration: between 1970 and 2010, intra-regional immigration went from representing 24% to more than 63%." (CARRASCO; SUÁREZ, 2018, p. 9, our translation). Brazil's major

16 DAPA was effectively struck down in June 2016 by the Supreme Court deadlock 4-4 due to the death of Antonin Scalia. The fate of DACA will be decided by the Supreme Court in its next term beginning in October 2019.

17 See item XV of article 22 in: (CONSTITUIÇÃO).

economy makes it a major destination for these growing regional migrations, with the Venezuelan crisis being at the forefront of this change.

Due to the restrictive migratory laws put in place during the dictatorship, Brazil does not have a modern precedent for the increasing migration numbers it is currently experiencing. Assisting Venezuelan migration is supported by 68% of Brazilians in a DataFolha survey administered in April 2019 (DATAFOLHA, 2019). At the same time, another poll taken in December 2018 registered 67% of Brazilians favoring stricter border controls on migrations, divided between 72% favorability for Bolsonaro voters and 58% for those having voted for the opposition candidate Fernando Haddad (MANTOVANI, 2018a). However, Brazil's overall public perception of increasing migration is significantly skewed.

A 2018 Ipsos poll entitled "Dangers of Perception" asked average Brazilians how much of their population comprised foreign immigrants. Of 37 countries, Brazil ranked fourth in the highest discrepancy between perception (30% total) and reality (.4% total) (MANTOVANI, 2018b)¹⁸. This increase of immigrants into Brazil and its misconception were likewise accompanied by an alarming rise of xenophobia: "Just in the year 2015 the denouncements related to xenophobia, for the Disque 100¹⁹, prepared by the Special Secretary on Human Rights, increased 633% in relation to the previous year." (CARDIN; DA SILVA, 2017, p. 270, our translation). This can be attributed to a legitimate increase in xenophobic acts, or more willingness to declare them to authorities. In the case of Donald Trump, a study by the *Washington Post* found that his mere presence provoked a 226% increase in hate crimes in the cities that host his political rallies (FEINBERG; BRANTON; MARTINEZ-EBERS, 2019). While these Brazilian xenophobic attacks come from a pre-Bolsonaro era, it remains a clear possibility that his anti-minority rhetoric could similarly lead to further rises in xenophobia.

Conclusion: Public opinion under pressure

In Europe, the United States, and Brazil, public opinion on immigration has either slowed its liberalizing trend or turned negative. In Europe, the liberalization trend appears to have been halted after the stream of migrants flowing in from the destabilizing wars in the Middle East, including against the terrorist group known as the Islamic State and the interminable civil war in Syria, as well as the endless boat arrivals crossing the Mediterranean Sea of a mixture of migrants and asylum-seekers from North and Sub-Saharan Africa. This highly publicized wave of mixed

¹⁸ The poll also found that Brazilians believed 16% of the population self-identifies as Muslim, while the reality is less than 1%.

¹⁹ A portal managed by the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights where alleged human rights abuses can be registered.

migration has consequently given rise to nationalist groups across Europe, bolstering conservative political parties and likely blunting any European Union policy on liberalizing immigration for the time being.

Meanwhile, both the United States and Brazil are experiencing migratory pressures at the same time that their leaders have denounced these trends as harmful to the nation. The binary classification of their populist rhetoric goes beyond a division of nationals and foreigners, as both leaders denigrate parts of their own populations as well. Both leaders, motivated by biopolitics, have attempted to suppress and restrict migration policy in favor of solidifying a future nation incarnated by the traditional values they purport to elevate. The impacts of the xenophobic populism practiced by these current leaders have concretely shaped immigration policy. On public opinion, attitudes show sign of shifting.

Brazilians remain conservative in their overall opinion of immigration, but their overall perception of the character of migration to Brazil vastly exaggerates reality, leaving them susceptible to misinformation as they are one of the world's biggest consumers of social media (NEWMAN; FLETCHER; KALOGEROPOULOS; LEVY; NIELSEN, 2019, p. 166). Americans, on the other hand, have as a whole become progressively more open to the idea that migrants are a positive force for the nation as a whole, despite a considerable negative trend among a part of the conservative electorate.

It remains to be seen how this shift in conservative opinions will affect future debates on immigration reform, as the Republican party as a whole has grown increasingly more ideologically extreme and rarely willing to compromise on polarizing issues in a bipartisan fashion (INGRAHAM, 2015). The recent elections pushed the issue of migrants to the center of electoral politics. Whether it be for perceived economic competition, demographics or a loss of cultural identity, this policy and discourse have enflamed the passions of a significant portion of each country, occasionally spilling over into rising xenophobic attacks. With emotions running high and a record number of migrants on the move worldwide, two of America's historical melting pots will continue to have their borders tested as reelection campaigns loom on the horizon ready to exploit this standoff for political gain.

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