

# "Immigration is a privilege, not a right"

By Andrés Dauhajre, hijo

100 years ago, Haiti had a per capita income of US\$ 947, in 2007 PPP dollars, greater than in the Dominican Republic (US\$ 925). This year, ours will reach US\$ 12,222, eight and a half times that of Haiti (US\$ 1,436).

The monthly minimum wage is US\$ 239 in the Dominican Republic, almost three and a half times the Haitian of US\$ 73. Unemployment in Haiti reaches 14.0%, the highest in the region, almost three times the Dominican Republic's 5.1% .

While poverty's incidence in the Dominican Republic is expected to reach 22.7% of the population at the end of 2018, in Haiti it will reach 60%. Income inequality (Gini) is considerably more intense in Haiti (0.592) than in the Dominican Republic (0.460). While malnutrition affects 10.3% of the Dominican population, in Haiti it reaches 45.8% of the population.

100 years ago, 75% and 60% of the land area of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, respectively, were covered by forests. Today, while in the Dominican Republic it reaches 42%, in Haiti it hardly represents 3%, although some say it does not exceed 1%. In 1962, the availability of renewable water per year in Hispaniola amounted 6,674 m<sup>3</sup> per inhabitant in the Dominican geography and 3,487 in the Haitian. The latest available information reveals, on both sides, the supply of renewable water has registered a dramatic drop: to 2,282 m<sup>3</sup> per inhabitant in the Dominican Republic and only 1,215 m<sup>3</sup> in Haiti, the lowest levels in the region.

A total of 21.4 million people lives on the island, 11.1 million in Haiti and 10.3 million in the Dominican Republic. By 2050 it is projected that we will surpass 32 million, 14.7 in the Dominican geography and 17.7 in the Haitian geography. Starting from the fact that there is nothing on the scenario that leads us to think that the abysmal difference of 8.5 times existing between the expected income in the Dominican Republic and in Haiti will disappear, the prediction of the Harris-Todaro model is highly worrying: the migratory flow from Haiti towards the Dominican Republic will continue, with intense inflows every time that Haitians' expected income are deteriorated by a natural catastrophe or by the recurring storms of violence that take place in that failed nation.

Haiti is not viable. What was sold as an epic country, worthy of being emulated, a rebellion of slaves in front of one of the colonizing empires that gave birth to the first independent nation in the region, has led to historical chaos and, without a doubt, the main Dominican problem.

There is no foreseeable future. Insisting on democracy as a political model for Haiti may reflect two things: a joke on the part of irresponsible developed nations that understand that Haiti is an eminently Dominican problem or a recommendation emanating from unicellular brains. Unfortunately, there is no market in the world where nations can hire the services of a benevolent dictator, Lee Kuan Yew, Deng Xiaoping or Augusto Pinochet-type, licensed to impose order and enforce the law, while freeing the only alternative that Haiti has from uncertainty, so that its inhabitants can get jobs and raise their expected income: continuous and massive foreign investment.

The United States, France and Canada have given up on Haiti. The greatest support that Xi Jinping's China could give to the Dominican Republic is to invest in Haiti everything they plan to invest in our country, multiplied by two. These Chinese capitals, in addition to capitals from the Dominican Republic and other nations, will gradually transform Haiti into the Caribbean's Vietnam. That would need, however, the necessary abolition of democracy in Haiti, the establishment of a pragmatic authoritarian regime, and the flexibilization of the Monroe Doctrine.

As the previous falls in the land of the "wishful thinking", some begin to contemplate the construction of an anti-tunnel wall, of reinforced concrete, in the of 388 kms.-long border, as a more feasible option. They think that this infrastructure, with a cost possibly exceeding US\$ 4,000 million, would help contain the peaceful invasion of Haitians into our territory. This amount excludes the cost of maintaining a permanent fleet in Pedernales and Montecristi to prevent the thousands of annual "marieles" that would sail from Haitian beaches and ports. The fact that these solutions are being discussed is a clear example of the growing concern in the "developed" area of Hispaniola that generates considerable Haitian immigration.

I stole this article's title from Donald Trump, who postulated the new doctrine on March 17, 2017. Trump is right. The indiscriminate opening of borders is an intertemporally inconsistent rule. Sooner rather than later, internal pressures will arise, leading the liberal states to modify it, if they have not previously been swept away by a right-wing nationalist tsunami.

Angela Merkel ignored this reality. After the negative results of the regional elections that were held in October 28, she announced that she will not run for re-election in December as president of the Christian Democratic Union. In 2021, she goes home. Hillary Clinton, former candidate for the presidency of the progressive liberals of the United States, has finally understood the strength of the Trump doctrine. Last week she said that "Europe needs to control migration because that is what ignites the flame". She pointed out that if European leaders want to contain the spread of right-wing populism on the continent, they should send stronger messages that they will not continue offering "refuge and support" to immigrants.

The leaders of the progressive and liberal parties of the Dominican Republic should learn from Europe's experience with uncontrolled immigration. So far, they have sailed with the wind in favor. But the chaos existing in the failed neighboring nation and the lack of rigorous control on the border to contain immigration, could unleash, in the near future, a nationalist right-wing

storm with enough intensity to wreck Dominican progressive liberalism. In the campaign season ahead, take note: "Immigration is a privilege, not a right."