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Lived Experiences of Haitian Immigrants In the United States during the Trump Administration

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Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Klaudya Phillips

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Lived Experiences of Haitian Immigrants
In the United States during the Trump Administration

By

Klaudya Phillips

MA, Walden University, 2016

BS, Strayer University, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

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November 2021

Abstract

Racism that is either blatant or perceived has contributed to all contemporary markings of group advantage and disadvantage along ethnic and racial lines, which includes differences in education, employment, housing, health, and health care. Understanding how these elements are impacting immigrants will be the key to helping this population overcome problems they might experience. One demographic whose emotional experiences have yet to be fully explored are Haitian immigrants. The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to explore how the political climate under the Trump administration impacted the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020. Critical race theory was the theoretical foundation for the study. The study was conducted through semi structured, telephonic interviews by having the nine participants describe their stories regarding depression under the political climate of the Trump administration. The information collected was transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify any overarching themes. Three themes and six subthemes were found among the data. Theme 1 was better opportunities, and subthemes were life was not easy and better quality of life. Theme 2 was immigration process, and the subthemes were obstacles and South Florida. Theme 3 was Trump administration, and subthemes were personal gain and racial climate. The information gathered will contribute to positive social change by identifying the effects of the political climate, the immigrant's mental health, and the stressors that face Haitian immigrants. The findings of this study may lead to a better understanding of how to facilitate mental health care for this population.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to myself. Through this process, I have learned patience, perseverance, and tenacity. This process has also taught me that it's ok to dream the impossible dream because girl you did it!!!! Congrats and kudos to you!

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I want to first acknowledge my parents and all of the many sacrifices that they made. My children for keeping me motivated and encouraged. I want to thank Drs. Rachel Piferi and Michael Becerra for believing in my vision and helping me bring it to life. Dr. Kimberly McCann, Chair thanks for your patience, guidance, and reassurance you have no idea how much that has meant to me! Dr. Debra Wilson, Committee Member thanks for joining the team! I look forward to working with you!!!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Studies of immigration reveal that immigrants often report experiencing racial discrimination that can result in experiences of anxiety and depression (Artiga & Ubri, 2017; Carlisle, 2015; Terrazas, 2010; Yakushko, 2009). Furthermore, immigrants also report that political policies can cause fear (Hiers et al., 2017; Tobar, 2017; Yee, 2017). The political climate of the Trump administration was like no other in modern history, creating an opportunity to further examine the phenomenon of Haitian immigration. Past studies provided information on immigrant experiences, but there is a gap in knowledge regarding the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants in the United States during 2017–2020 (Carlisle, 2015). Implications for this study are that the findings may benefit mental health practitioners by providing additional information regarding this phenomenon and population. This chapter includes the background on the phenomenon, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research question, the theoretical framework, the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, the scope and delimitations, limitations, the significance of the study, and a summary.

Background

A study by Artiga and Ubri (2017) showed that Haitian immigrants reported great fear of deportation and family separation following the political threat to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS), an act designed to protect immigrants from certain countries threatened by armed conflict. Similarly, (Callaghan et al., 2019) found that immigrants, both legal and undocumented, were fearful to interact with health and social services because of the current political climate. Additionally, the researchers found that

immigrant children faced barriers in participating in social programs. As can be seen from this research, immigrants can experience anxiety, depression, and fear during immigration due to the political climate. In some cases, these barriers can be perceived as discrimination and the emotional distress associated with it can even lead to physical illness (Carlisle, 2015).

Since the earthquake that devastated Haiti in 2010, as well as the ongoing political discourse and climatic unrest, the United States has received a surge in mass migration of Haitian nationals. Following the coup d'état of ousted President Francois Duvalier in the late 1980s, the country descended into chaos, which initiated the arrival of Haitian immigrants in large numbers to the United States. Because of the nature of their migration, many Haitian nationals qualified for humanitarian protection provided by the TPS prior to the Trump administration. Between 1980 and 2000, the Haitian-born population residing in the United States more than quadrupled from 92,000 to 419,000 (Terrazas, 2010). Scholars in the field are not familiar with how the political climate during the Trump presidency impacted the lived experiences and psychosocial stressors of recent Haitian immigrants who have resettled in the United States. This study addressed this gap by examining the lived experiences of Haitian immigrants. The results of the study may provide strategies and interventions to facilitate feelings of wellbeing for Haitian immigrants in the United States.

Political climate can have different meaning for different people, so there is no formal definition in the literature. What has been found in the research is that political climate can be made up of its ideological bias. Elazar (1984) defined and characterized

three political subcultures—individualistic, moralistic, and traditionalist—and believed that the absence or presence of one of these subcultures explained the political views of the constituents about the role of government in society. Other researchers defined political climate through political ideology, where they measured a state’s position on government regulation and growth of state government (Elazar, 1984; Gray & Hanson, 2004). A state defined as conservative is less supportive of increasing government regulations and a state defined as liberal supports increasing levels of government regulation Gray & Hanson, 2004). President Trump won the presidency as the Republican candidate, and therefore the political climate under the Trump era was conservative. In a recent study on the political climate, specifically the mental health effects of the Trump era on the undocumented and documented Latino population, 58% of the participants indicated moderate to severe range with symptoms of depression and/or anxiety (Rojas, 2019). This study seeks to build upon the literature of the lived experiences of Haitian immigrants.

Problem Statement

The general problem addressed in this study was the insufficient understanding of the lived experiences and emotions of Haitian immigrants in the United States. Specifically, Haitians who immigrate to the United States report perceiving racial discrimination, which has resulted in cases of anxiety and depression (Artiga & Ubri, 2017; Terrazas, 2010). Additionally, after President Trump mentioned he would end the TPS upon entering office, deportation and family separation have become common fears among Haitian immigrants (Artiga & Ubri, 2017). The TPS is only given to eligible

nationals from countries affected by armed conflict or natural disasters to live and work in the United States for a limited time (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [USCIS], 2019). According to USCIS (2019),

On Oct. 3, 2018, in *Ramos, et al. v. Nielsen, et al.*, No. 18-cv-01554 (N.D. Cal. Oct. 3, 2018) (PDF, 458 KB), the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California enjoined DHS from implementing and enforcing the decisions to terminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti and El Salvador, pending further resolution of the case.

What used to be a program to help immigrants flee armed conflict and integrate into American society over time, the TPS program allowed Haitian nationals to remain in the United States only until January 2020 when those protections were set to expire (USCIS, 2019). This abrupt change has caused newly immigrated Haitians, and those with lawful status, an increased level of fear and uncertainty amid the current political climate (Artiga & Ubri, 2017). Additionally, Carlisle (2015) mentioned that there is an association between chronic physical illness and emotional distress caused by perceived discrimination among the Haitian population, which supports the need for this research into developing better psychological interventions. In summary, this study explored the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants in the United States during 2017–2020.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to examine how the political climate under the Trump administration impacted the psychosocial lived experiences of

Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020. The goal of this study was to examine the lived experiences of this demographic.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study: How do Haitian immigrants who moved to the United States between the years of 2017 through 2020 describe their lived experience since their migration to the United States under the political climate of the Trump administration? To help answer this question, I asked the participants to describe their personal stories and emotions since their immigration under the political climate of the Trump administration. The goal of this research was to learn about the perceived impact of political climate on the experiences and emotions of Haitian immigrants during 2017–2020.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study was the critical race theory (CRT), which observes the presence of race and racism across a dominant cultural, such as the Haitian immigrant community in the United States. Cortese (2005) mentioned that racism has contributed to all contemporary markings of group advantage and disadvantage along ethnic and racial lines, which include but are not limited to differences in education, employment, housing, health and health care. The CRT will be the perceived experiences of Haitian immigrants.

Since this study involved the challenges and treatment of this specific demographic, the CRT best provided a logical connection among the concepts of the epistemological and qualitative paradigms. The CRT helped frame the findings with the

use of an inductive approach to the literature reviews and the participants' perspectives. From these readings, I identified the concepts and principles that addressed the research problem. As such, the theoretical framework of the study was synthesized through several concepts, empirical data, research findings, and theoretical perspectives.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative narrative study design was used to generate rich, descriptive data of the personal stories of the Haitian population in the United States during the Trump Administration (2017–2020). I gathered and recorded every response to the research question; the participants were asked open-ended questions that could be answered through in-depth interviews and through the participation of observation (Cartwright, Washington, & McConnell, 2009). Obtaining quantitative results was not my goal because the analyses do not include the personal stories of the immigration process that can be found in qualitative analyses.

When conducting a qualitative study, a researcher can choose from five different research designs: ethnography, narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, and case study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) opined that qualitative research attempts to understand individuals, groups, and phenomena in their natural settings in ways that are contextualized and reflect the meaning that people make out of their own experiences. Rubin and Rubin (2012) also stated that qualitative interviews allow the researcher to grasp the intimate parts of the participant's lives which are not ordinarily viewed, examined, and often overlooked.

The qualitative narrative study method was most appropriate for this study because it emphasizes the personal stories of the Haitian immigrant. This study also gave professionals in the field a thorough comprehension of the cultural norms of this population (Gay, 2018). The qualitative research method also considered the stressors that the Haitian population is experiencing which are contributing to an increase in anxiety and other physical distress. The objective of this narrative study was to obtain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon and all the factors that contribute to their presenting issues through in-depth interviewing strategies.

The main source of data was semi structured interviews. Interviews with the participants were used to retrieve information about their ways of life, personal stories, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and their interactions with the American culture. A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to collect names, ages, career information, and family histories to learn specific details about their assimilation while in the United States.

Definition of Key Terms

Colonialism: A system of economic dominance imposed by a country seeking authoritative rule, such as that of the French in Haiti during the late 18th Century (Edmonds, 2012).

Hate speech: Any form of expression designed to incite hatred or intended to vilify or humiliate (Ward, 1998).

Militia: Civilian population who stand in as a military, such as the Haitian rural farmworkers (Brown & Brown-Murray, 2010; Dubois, 2013)

Nativism: The view that citizens of a country should have priority and that government should limit immigration (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001),

Neoliberalism: A liberal market that favors free market capitalism such as those espoused by President Clinton during the 1990s (Farmer, 2004).

Nonimmigrant: An alien who seeks temporary entry to the United States for a specific purpose (United States Homeland Security, 2018).

Permanent resident: Having the ability to live and work in the United States permanently, or otherwise called immigrants (United States Homeland Security, 2018).

Political climate: The common opinions about current political affairs among the people, such as U.S. citizens living under the Trump administration (Cortese, 2005).

Psychosocial strategies: Methods that help people recognize the need for treatment or skills for better controlling moods (Reilly-Harrington & Sachs, 2006).

Sovereignty: The ability of a state to self-govern, such as Haiti in 1804 after defeating the French for authority over their economy (Edmonds, 2012).

Assumptions

Assumptions of the study are what is known already about the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The first assumption of this study was that there are multiple realities that exist in a study, such as the realities of the researcher, participant, and reader. A second assumption was that I engaged with the participants in a warm and friendly tone to minimize the distance between researcher and participant.

Scope and Delimitations

The delimitations of a study are the researcher's boundaries for the study that included and excluded their decisions (Simon & Goes, 2013). Two examples of delimitations in this study were the decisions made to collect data and data analysis. The first delimitation was the decision to interview participants by phone due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The second delimitation was the decision to have the interviews transcribed using a professional transcription service called Rev.com (<https://www.rev.com/>).

Limitations

Researchers cannot control the limitations uncovered in study design and construction (Simon & Goes, 2013). Likewise, the student researcher was a novice and could potentially cause errors due to not having conducted independent research and data analysis before (Elo et al., 2014). Additional challenges and limitations of the study included participation from the participants. Race and race relations are a hot button issue that most immigrants shy away from because of fearing retribution.

Significance of the Study

In this qualitative narrative study, the perceived psychosocial impacts of the political climate were expressed by the personal stories of Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017 through 2020. This study will contribute to research already conducted on Haitian immigrants. Bybee (2018) mentioned that Trump's incivilities towards the Haitian community were apparent when he stated that he did not want to grant an extension on the TPS for Haitian immigrants because they come

from “shithole” countries (Dawsey, 2018). On November 20, 2017, the Trump administration announced that they would be ending the TPS for Haitians at the end of July 2019, which would mean that over 60,000 Haitian immigrants would face deportation (Edmonds, 2017). The president’s comments, as well the administration’s actions to end the TPS, further exacerbated how this population had been received and perceived. Past research studies indicated that racial discrimination had a direct effect on this population’s mental and physical health (Artiga & Ubri, 2017; Carlisle, 2015). Past reports also included that mental health and chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, or health behaviors such as smoking, drug and alcohol use, and substance had resulted in some of the effects felt by this population (Carlisle, 2015).

Summary

In Chapter 1, I described the studies of immigration that revealed the reports of immigrants experiencing racial discrimination resulting in experiences of anxiety and depression (Artiga & Ubri, 2017; Carlisle, 2015; Terrazas, 2010; Yakushko, 2009), as well as reported that political policies could cause fear (Hiers et al., 2017; Tobar, 2017; Yee, 2017). Immigrants could experience several mental health issues that included anxiety, depression, and fear during immigration due to the current political climate. It could also lead to physical illness (Carlisle, 2015).

The general problem as the foundation of this study was the lack of understanding of the lived experiences of Haitian immigrants. I investigated perceptions of Haitian immigrants to the United States, who reported perceiving racial discrimination which had resulted in cases of anxiety and depression (Artiga & Ubri, 2017; Terrazas, 2010).

President Trump mentioned he would end the TPS upon entering office, which caused fears among the Haitian immigrants about deportation and family separation (Artiga & Ubri, 2017).

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to examine how the political climate under the Trump administration impacted the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who migrated to the United States during 2017 through 2020. The goal of this study was to examine the lived experiences of this demographic.

Chapter 2 provides a synthesis of the literature review, focusing on any possible gaps with this phenomenon. The chapter addresses the conceptual framework of the CRT and interest convergence, nativism and immigration, hate speech, stage developmental model of hate severity, The Republic of Haiti, Haitian history and immigrant mental health, United States immigration, and the political climate of Trump administration (2017–2020).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to examine how the current political climate impacted the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020. The goal of this study was to examine the lived experiences of this demographic. This chapter includes research for the literature review that focused and extended the CRT; provides a description of Haitian culture, history, mental health, as well as reasons for immigration to the United States; and outlines a brief history of events during the Trump Administration from campaign to the fourth year of his presidency, as well as the factors contributing to the current political climate.

The overarching problem essential to this study was the insufficient understanding of how political climate could affect the mental health of immigrants living in the United States. The political climate during the Trump era was unlike one we have experienced before in the United States. Partisan politics, biased media, a pandemic virus that led to a lockdown, and social unrest have impacted our American society remarkably over the past four years. Past researchers have stated that the president's comments regarding so-called "shithole" countries, as well the administration's actions to end the TPS, further exacerbated how Haitian immigrants have been received and perceived for the past four years during the current administration (Bybee, 2018, Dawsey, 2018; Edmonds, 2017). It was also stated that mental health and chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, or health behaviors like smoking, drug and alcohol use, and substances have resulted in some of the effects felt by this population (Carlisle, 2015).

Missing from the literature are qualitative studies on the mental health factors of racial discrimination, depression, fear, and anxiety that impacted Haitian immigration to the United States during this political environment. To address this gap in the literature, I explored how the perceptions of the political climate under the Trump administration impacted of the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020. Additionally, the personal stories of Haitian immigration situated within the current political climate needed to be examined to better understand the effect political leadership has on immigrants' assimilation to American society, which could subsequently affect social change.

In this study, the term *Haitian immigration* was understood as Haitians who have moved to the United States and who live mostly in 10 states, with the majority living in Florida, followed by New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Connecticut, Maryland, Illinois, and California, respectively (Lucien, 2015).

Literature Search Strategy

After conducting a review of various concepts, definitions, and research to identify the research problem, I developed a search strategy to locate, assess, and synthesize the most relevant scholarly material. The purpose of the literature search was to understand the most current literature trends about my subject. The primary strategy was to explore the numerous sources that I wanted to acquire and the years of sources. I conducted a search of research publications in the following electronic databases: The Digital Commons, Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations, ResearchGate, and ERIC (EBSCO). In these databases, I searched for peer-

reviewed articles published from 1950 to 2020. Thus, the goal of this narrative study was to contribute to the existing literature on political climate and mental health as well as the stressors that face Haitian immigrants.

The search process involved the use of essential search terms and a combination of search terms in each of the databases. These search terms and phrases included the following: *critical race theory, immigration policy for Haitian immigrants, Haitian immigration, immigration law, legal studies, Haitian immigrant assimilation, Caribbean studies, Haitian politics, Haitian culture, Haitian history, Haitian mental health, poverty, USAID, Haitian presidential coup, Little Haiti community, Florida Haitian community, professional Haitian-American associations, political climate, partisan politics, President Trump immigration policies, Trump shithole countries, MAGA and Haitian immigrants, Black Lives Matter and Haitians, and lastly, COVID-19 and Haitian immigrants.*

Conceptual Framework

The narrative research design posed a conceptual framework for inquiry to include three elements that are explored concurrently: temporality, sociality, and place (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). First, temporality is an element that reflects events in temporal transition that leads the researcher to past, present, and future as well as the people, places, and events that are being researched. Second, sociality is an element that reflects the personal and social condition such as the hopes, feelings, and desires in both the inquirer and participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Third, place is where the inquiry takes place that includes the physical and geographical area.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

After conducting an exhaustive search of my chosen topic, I quickly deduced that there was a tremendous gap in literature. To determine the possible gaps in literature, I examined the phenomenon's strengths and weakness in the inherent approach, I had to research topics that were somewhat related to my study. Key variables in this chapter cover Critical Race Theory, convergence, nativism, and immigration, hate speech and the stage developmental model of hate severity, the Republic of Haiti, Haitian history and immigrant mental health, United States immigration, and the political climate of Trump Administration. The personal stories of Haitian immigrants to those unfamiliar with their livelihood were addressed in the context of current debates and their proposed instability relating to the Trump administration's handling of the TPS program.

CRT

Past research has credited the origin of CRT to Derrick Bell, a law professor at Harvard University in the 1980s and 1990s (Aleshire, 2014). Bell was known for his work regarding race and racism in the American law (Bell, 1980, 1995a, 1995b); specifically, he coined the term "racial realism" to describe the argument that Blacks should forget about full equality. Later, researchers stated that the importance of CRT was to also challenge the colorblindness of American legal discourse and to strengthen race-consciousness among Blacks and people of color (Bell, 1995).

In CRT, the dominant discourse (Delpit, 2006; Urrieta, 2004) or master narrative (Delgado, 1989) was what the dominant cultural group used to normalize their power over others by reinforcing their group identity as above other subordinate groups. To

highlight this point, Huynh et al. (2011) stated: “Although the United States is historically an immigrant nation with an ethnically and culturally diverse population, members of ethnic minority groups are often innocuously denied the American identity and treated as if they were perpetual foreigners” (p. 134). CRT has been used in a number of research studies that were highlighted in this section.

Conversely, counter narratives in CRT help strengthen race-consciousness by placing Blacks and people of color in control of their story since it allows them to tell their personal histories (Dunbar, 2008). Using counter narratives, Shelton (2018) stated that “Critical race theory as an analytical lens offers a way to understand the significance of resisting the dominant discourse in current U.S. immigration debates” (p. 130). Other CRT tenets noted by Delgado and Stefancic (2001) are that racism is normal, ordinary, and a product of social thought and that the voice of people of color is important in CRT. For example, one can assume that American society reflects the dominant group because White owners control our academic, cultural, financial, legal, and social agendas, which minimizes the influence and interests of people of color. Haitian immigrants’ lived experiences of moving to the United States during the political climate of 2017–2020 are an important counter narrative to document in order to explore factors that can help create psychosocial strategies to cope with perceived racial discrimination, depression, fear, and anxiety.

CRT and Convergence

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), interest convergence is defined as “the majority group tolerates advances for racial justice only when it suits its interest to

do so” (p. 149). For example, the current public opinion in support of Black Lives Matter has increased compared to 2 years ago (Cohn & Quealy, 2020), and a Republican (and White) senator, Mitt Romney, who participated in a protest march to the White House, signaled to other sympathetic Republicans that it was acceptable to support the movement. Delgado and Stefancic (2001), reflecting on the civil rights work of Derrick Bell, wrote that “civil rights advances for blacks always coincided with changing economic conditions and the self-interest of elite whites” (p. 18). It has been stated that the racial diversity is in the self-interest of elite Whites since President Trump took office (Yglesias, 2019). Past research noted that working and non-working-class Whites switched their votes for President Trump because of racial resentment and attitudes towards immigration rather than economic anxiety (Reny et al., 2019), but liberal Whites in the Democratic party have become enthusiastically supportive of diversity and a possible reason for racially conservative Democrats switching parties (Yglesias, 2019). This current partisan political climate was where the examination of Haitian immigrants lived experiences of their immigration to the United States were situated for analysis.

Shelton (2018) provided an example of interest convergence related to immigration reform and undocumented student college access. There was a benefit for undocumented college students, for the institution, and for American society. Having a diverse workforce put the United States in a competitive economic global position. Additionally, keeping these students in the United States ensures that our country retains talent from moving abroad. A college-educated individual can contribute positively to American society and higher education as well. According to Ortiz and Hinojosa (2010,

p. 64), the United States “desperately needs an educated work-force with high multicultural and linguistic competence, a fierce drive to succeed, and proven tenacity and resilience.” The tenacity and resilience are demonstrated by undocumented college students who are motivated by the desire to prove stereotypes wrong (Bullington and Arbona, 2001). This can be said of Haitian immigrant college students pursuing higher education in the United States. The move to improve oneself can be a driving factor for upward mobility instead of being overqualified for a service-related job during a political climate that is looking to limit the number of foreigners in the country.

CRT was used as a framework for a study exploring interest convergence of the topic of immigration reform among the editorials of two newspapers, *The Arizona Republic* and *La Prensa Hispana*, between 2007 and 2011 (González-Carriedo, 2014). This study was important because newspapers are considered a mass media because of control of access and news control, which can influence public opinion (Santa Ana, 2002). Journalistic bias can occur when certain groups have access to express their opinions versus those who may not (Crawford, 2004; González-Carriedo, 2014), which is why we see media geared towards ethnic communities. There are differences between what gets covered on Spanish-language media and English-media. González-Carriedo (2014) relied on important CRT analytic tools of majoritarian storytelling (master narratives) and counter storytelling (counter narratives) to help demonstrate how the dominant cultural group described their values and beliefs about immigration reform to justify their actions, as well as how the minority cultural group describes their values and beliefs about immigration reform that challenged the stories of those in power. Despite

different goals, the results from González-Carriedo's study (2014) showed that *The Arizona Republic* cited the need for immigration reform because of American business interest and *La Prensa Hispana* cited the need for immigration reform because of the well-being of the immigrant community. The well-being of the immigrant community is a shared common goal. The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to examine how the current political climate impacted the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020. The goal of my study was to examine the lived experiences of this demographic.

Interest convergence and immigrant workers could extend to service jobs in agriculture, construction, and maintenance industries as well. President Trump was accused of hiring undocumented Polish workers to build the Trump Tower before campaigning against immigrants and immigration reform. According to a New York Times article,

In 1980, under pressure to begin construction on what would become his signature project, Donald J. Trump employed a crew of 200 undocumented Polish workers who worked in 12-hour shifts, without gloves, hard hats or masks, to demolish the Bonwit Teller building on Fifth Avenue, where the 58-story, golden-hued Trump Tower now stands. (Bagli, 2017)

Shelton (2018) stated, “This is one example of a white person in a position of great power attempting to criminalize undocumented individuals until it becomes in his interest to keep this community in the U.S. on precarious terms for his own gain to do difficult and dangerous work with limited worker rights” (p. 136). President Trump ultimately paid

\$1.375 million in a lawsuit settlement where he had to give \$500,000 to a union benefits fund and lawyer's fees and expenses (Bagli, 2017).

CRT is interdisciplinary and has been used in education, law, and social work. Over the past several years, research framed by the CRT covered topics important to immigration regarding Latinos and the undocumented (Aleshire, 2014, Ayon & Philbin, 2017; Gonzalez-Carriedo, 2014; Shelton, 2018), but none have investigated Haitian immigrants. These immigration studies applied the theory and further extended during the current political climate with topics such as the following: (a) removing programs that focus on the histories of Mexican-American studies program in Arizona (Aleshire, 2014); (b) research on the difference of communication relating immigration between English and Spanish newspapers in Arizona (González-Carriedo, 2016); (c) counter narratives regarding creative strategies (or weapons of the weak) of immigrants that are used to survive in a dominant cultural society (d) immigrant children in Arizona who experienced racial discrimination and micro aggressions at school (Ayón & Philbin, 2017), and (e) to how undocumented college students related to the current political climate (Shelton, 2018). These studies contribute to the literature on CRT. These studies provide a framework for applying CRT to a Haitian immigration narrative study that was seeking to uncover psychosocial strategies to help create better psychological interventions for this community.

Nativism and Immigration

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), nativism is the view that U.S. citizens should have priority and the government should limit immigration. Republican

presidents such as George W. Bush have stated that the United States is a nation built by immigrants (George W. Bush Presidential Center, para 1). That changed on July 1, 1924, when the Immigration Act of 1924 took effect, all arriving noncitizens had to present a visa when applying for admission to the United States (USCIS, 2019). People from other countries who wanted to come to America had to make appointments with the U.S. Consulates back then, similar to the process that happens today. A person born outside the United States would be labeled with the legal term *alien* and would not be considered a natural citizen of the privileged country. The 1790 Naturalization Act first introduced the word, *A Bill to Establish a Uniform Rule of Naturalization, and to Enable Aliens to Hold Lands under Certain Restrictions*, which continued to describe alien as a free white male, as women and people of color had no rights regardless of if they were in the United States or outside. It also limited naturalized citizenship to White males. During the last hundred years, aliens' rights are depicted through visas and green cards to demonstrate the immigrant's lawful reason for being in the country (Marciniak, 2006). Nativism today reflects the same view that U.S. citizens should be the only benefactors of the American privileges.

The Pew Research Center (2019) published a study regarding Americans' sentiments towards immigrants by asking participants to rate a survey statement, "If America is too open to people from around the world, and we risk losing our identity as a nation." Results were separated by political party, Republicans and Democrats. The findings reported that 57% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents believed that we risk losing our identity as a nation. Only 14% of Democrats shared the same

sentiment. When the data were further explored, men represented the biggest percentage (40%) versus women (25%); those who identified as White (38%) versus Black (15%) versus Hispanic (29%); with the older demographic 65+ showing a stronger belief (42%) versus those aged 50-64 (40%) versus those aged 30-49 (31%) versus those aged 18-29 (18%). In conclusion, fewer (37%) say America's openness to those from other countries was essential to who we are as a nation, according to 1,502 adults. The results from this study reflected the overrepresentation of White men in the Republican Party situated within the current political climate.

Hate Speech

U.S. law does not provide a legal definition of hate speech. Protected by the First Amendment, the government has a duty to protect a robust public debate on public concern. For example, *Snyder v. Phelps* (No. 09-751, 2011), was the case involving Westboro Baptist Church, whose members peacefully picketed Marine Lance Corporal Matthew Snyder's military funeral 30 minutes before it began and held signs that said "Thank God for Dead Soldiers," "Fags Doom Nations," "America is Doomed," "Priests Rape Boys," and "You're Going to Hell." The Supreme Court reversed a judgment made by a jury in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland that had awarded Phelps \$5 million (which originally was lowered from \$10.9 million) because Phelps was protected by the First Amendment.

According to Ward (1998), hate speech is defined as any form of expression through which speakers primarily intend to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against their targets" (p. 765). These *targets* are individuals come from diverse racial, religious, sexual

orientation backgrounds as well as those with a disability and other traits. For example, the *targets* in this narrative study are Haitian immigrants who have experienced racial discrimination, depression, fear, and anxiety since living in the United States from 2017 through 2020 under the current political climate. Immigrants who had to hear rhetoric regarding immigration policy and their presence in the country have become a target for some of the right-wing. Ward (1998) stated, “One should conclude that speakers employ hate speech if their attacks are so virulent that an observer would have great difficulty separating the message delivered from the attack against the victim” (p. 766).

CRT often places the principles of the Fourteenth Amendment above the liberty principles of the First Amendment (Demaske, para 1). This is because CRT scholars do not believe there is freedom of speech (Delgado, 2001). Exercising this view, Lawrence (1990) believed that hate speech should be regulated when victims, who are the marginalized groups, are the captive audience of remarks that cause injury. According to an example provided by Demaske (para 6) regarding the position of CRT scholars towards hate speech,

instead of helping to achieve healthy and robust debate, the First Amendment actually serves to preserve the inequities of the status quo; there can be no such thing as an objective or content neutral interpretation in law in general or of the First Amendment in particular; some speech should be viewed in terms of the harm it causes, rather than all speech being valued on the basis of it being speech; and there is no “equality” in “freedom” of speech. (The First Amendment Encyclopedia, MTSU)

Because a principal CRT tenet is that racism is part of the American society, hate speech is inherent in the causes involving racial inequality that CRT scholars seek to combat by suggesting laws to punish it. (Demaske, para 1).

Stage Developmental Model of Hate Severity

The Stage Developmental Model of Hate Severity is an extension of CRT (Cortese, 2005) and provides a tool for measuring such hate speech. Stage one is Unintentional Discrimination (Offending minorities, but not on purpose). Basically, these micro-aggressions that occur “just below the surface of ordinary social behavior” by members of the majority group (Cortese, 2005, p. 5). An example of this type of offense would be a woman touching a Black woman’s braids without permission, but while complimenting her on them (Cortese, 2005). The types of micro-aggressions that Haitian immigrants face in the United States would be negative comments about immigrants.

Stage two is Conscious Discrimination (Intentionally Denigrating Minorities) and is considered hate speech. To receive compensation for the hate speech in a court of law, the plaintiff needs to meet four basic criteria, such as: (a) intent, (b) extreme and outrageous behavior, (c) causation, and (d) severe emotional distress (Cortese, 2005). For example, since attacking domestic minorities based on race is taboo, taking out social frustration on noncitizens of color about their immigration status provides another way to vent hatred (Johnson, 1998). There is clearly an intent by the action, but the hate speech may not be considered extreme and outrageous behavior or cause severe emotional distress since it is a generalized comment, and not held up in court.

Stage three is Inciting Discriminatory Hatred (Generating Feelings of Hatred for Minorities) and Stage four is Inciting Discriminatory Violence (Encouraging Violence against Minorities) would be considered hate speech. On January 11, 2018, President Trump asked a bipartisan group of senators “Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?”, and by shithole countries, he referenced immigrants from Haiti and African nations (Dawsey, 2018, para 1). The statement about shithole countries and that Haitians “all have AIDS” (Shear & Davis, 2017, para 1) could be considered Stage 3 to some, as it incited discriminatory hatred towards Haitian immigrants. For example, according to Sacchetti (2018), in a series of tweets, Trump denied the comments attributed to him. But Haitian Americans, and others, demanded an apology. “The president should be ashamed of himself,” said Jean Bradley Derenoncourt, a newly sworn-in city council member in Brockton, Mass., who fled the earthquake in 2010 and became a U.S. citizen. “My blood is boiling right now.” U.S. Rep. Mia Love (R-Utah), the only Haitian American in Congress during the Trump Administration, tweeted Thursday that “this behavior is unacceptable from the leader of our nation.”

Even though these words were not directly spoken to individuals specifically and protected under the First Amendment, the president of the United States does carry power as the highest political office and can influence public opinion. Additionally, these words weren't made to the public, so it would be difficult to determine whether they would meet stage three. Although hurtful, the words spoken by the president did not incite violence, therefore, it would not meet stage four. As stated, hate speech is protected under the First Amendment but can be criminalized under if the speech incites violence. Haitians who

have migrated to the United States during 2017–2020 have encountered a political climate that is partisan with hateful rhetoric towards immigrants, providing a need for the creation of psychosocial strategies for perceived racial discrimination, depression, fear and anxiety.

The Republic of Haiti

The Republic of Haiti is located on Hispaniola and was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492 for the Spanish. The country was colonized by European settlers, and after Spain ceded the western portion of the island of Santo Domingo to the French in 1697, the slaves working at the sugar cane production made Haiti one of the richest of the world for well over a century. The country became a prosperous point for exportation in the Caribbean region that was built on the backs of slaves. The Haitian revolution, which started in 1791 during the French Revolution, was started by slaves and free people of color. On January 1, 1804, Haiti became the first independent nation in Latin America and the Caribbean to be formed by a slave revolt (Edmonds, 2012).

Since its first days of sovereignty, Haiti has dealt with several problems that prevented their development. Upon becoming a sovereign nation, the colonial powers of Europe and the United States pressured the country with economic debts to prevent slave revolts and the slavery and colonialism systems from crumbling in the Americas (Edmonds, 2012). Haiti also agreed to pay France 150 million francs (US \$21 billion today) as reparations to the French plantation owners and their inventory of loss slaves and land, after being threatened with global isolation (Dubois, 2013; Farmer, 2004; Noailles, 2010). It took Haiti 150 years to pay off the debt which continues to impact the

country's investment in domestic institutions, infrastructure, economic and social development that is still felt to present day (Edmonds, 2012).

One of the biggest reasons for Haitian immigration is due to the country's extreme poverty and lack of social development. According to the World Bank (2012), Haiti has a GINI coefficient of 59.2, (out of 100) which is a measurement of the populations' inequality of the distribution of wealth and income (Daly & Farley, 2011). The closer a GINI coefficient reaches 100, the more inequality and wealth concentrated among a few people. This minority in Haiti is the ruling class that holds the wealth concentration. The inequality is perpetuated by a small number of elites who control the economic development in the country, as well as the large rural peasant class of people through authoritarian political behaviors (Dubois, 2013; Farmer, 2005; Schuller, 2007). Divisions started to occur between the elite and peasant classes throughout the country. These divisions also excluded the peasant class from holding government office because very few could read, write and speak the official language of French, that didn't change until 1987 (Dubois, 2013). Additionally, a consecutive father/son dictatorship was marred by military coups; followed by globalization policies that have created centuries-long problems of dependency; a lack of infrastructure and plan for the country's economic and social developments; and international NGO's and foreign government interference compounded the country's ability to develop autonomously and prosperously (Brennan, 2004; Edmonds, 2012).

Since gaining independence in 1804, 53 presidents have governed Haiti to the detriment of the country as some of these kleptocratic regimes were the worst in history

(Dash, 2001; Dubois, 2013; Lundahl, 1989). Of those 53 presidents, 23 of them were assassinated, overthrown or died while in office, and nine completed a full term (Dubois, 2013; Noailles, 2010). The country is governed by military officers and the elite class. Francois Duvalier, who was known as Papa Doc, served a 14-year term from 1957 – 1971. Papa Doc ran on a platform of education and better health standards for the poor but was confronted by military coups (Noailles, 2010). In 1958, Duvalier was challenged by a military coup and won, which led to a consolidation of power as he appointed himself president for life. This consolidation of power gave him control of a rural militia that was large in numbers (Brown & Brown-Murray, 2010; Dubois, 2013; Noailles, 2010). Before Papa Doc died, he made his 19-year-old son Francois Duvalier, Baby Doc, president to succeed him to carry out his rule. Baby Doc continued his father's dictatorship throughout the 1970's and most of the 1980's. In 1986, Baby Doc was exiled out of the country by an uprising, stealing the Haitian treasury worth US \$1.6 billion with him (Lundahl, 1989). The legacy of the Duvalier family dictatorship by the mid-1980's left Haitian habitants hungry, despaired and with disease, which led to the classification as the poorest country in the Western world (Brown & Brown-Murray 2010).

The time between the ousting of Baby Doc and the first democratic election in 1990 saw five different interim governments as well as military coups, all while trying to attract the development from the international community (Edmonds, 2012). Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who spoke out against Baby Doc's regime at the time, was seen as someone who was a connector among the rural poor and government institutions, which ultimately led him to win the first democratic election in Haiti (Dubois, 2013; Farmer,

2003; Noailles, 2010). A military coup plagued his rule after the first year but was put back into power in 1993 with the support of U.S. government of President Clinton. This support came with strings attached as Aristide was expected to promote neoliberal development policies in response to the humanitarian crisis that was created by the military coup (Farmer, 2004). Aristide came back to power in 2000 after his term ended in 1996, and won on a campaign platform that France should repay US \$21 billion debt to Haiti, as well as with a promise of ending the privatization of state industries, to build more clinics, schools, and hospitals, to increase the minimum wage, and to protect local farmers (Farmer, 2003; Noailles, 2010). Unfortunately, in February 2004, Aristide was overthrown again by the Haitian elite who viewed his administration as a threat after having built 195 new primary schools, 104 new public high schools, devoting 20% of the Haitian budget to universal schooling, and after building the first free public medical school (Farmer, 2003).

NGO's, international donors, and foreign government entities started arriving to Haiti in the 1990's when Aristide came into power with the goal of supporting Haiti's economy through neoliberal policies. According to Diaz, Schneider and Sante Mantal (2012), "International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Development Bank, and United States Institute for Aid and Development tied loans and development packages to the GOHs [Government of Haiti] agreement to implement SAPs [structure adjustment programs] (p. 495)". The researchers further stated that implementing SAPs would ultimately,

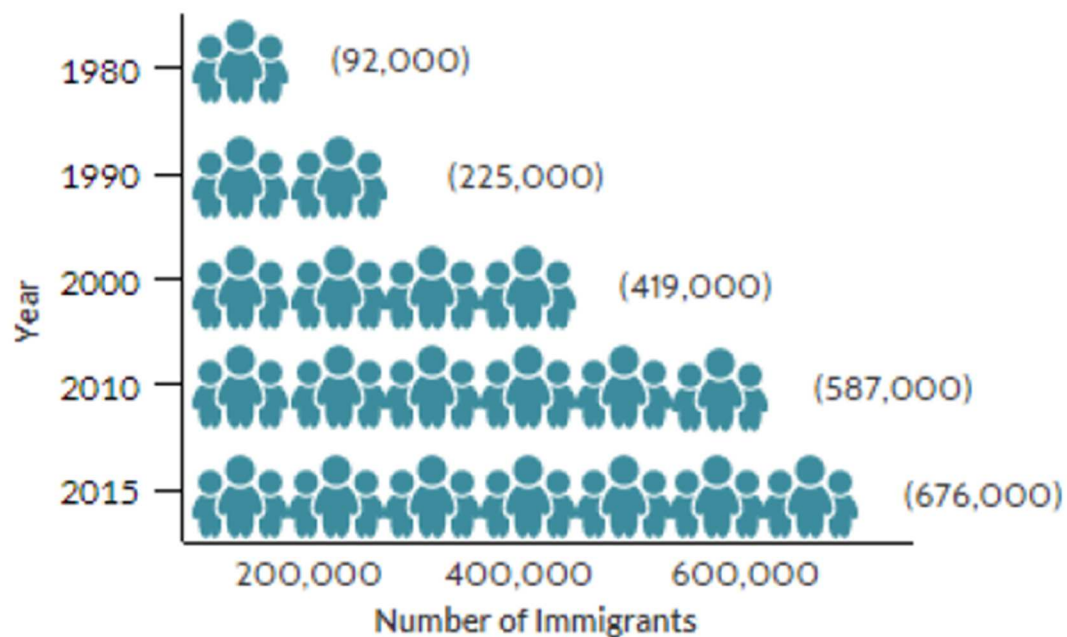
Cut government workers, increased taxes on the poor, provided subsidies to assembly industries, decreased import tariffs to near zero and privatized nine state enterprises...that resulted in the loss of agricultural livelihood, loss of subsistence farming, and the externalization of profits through industry privatization. (p. 495)

The result from of Haiti's colonialism, political instability and corruption, and economic globalization were never adequately developed, which ultimately led to poor social and physical infrastructure and poor public and mental health of its habitants (Diaz, Schneider, Sante Mantal, 2012).

Haitian immigration to the United States is broken up into five different times in history: French colonization (1697–1791); the Haitian revolution (1791–1803); the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915–1934); the Duvaliers' regime (1957- 1986); and the overthrow of President Aristide (Jackson, 2011; Stepick, 1992; Stepick & Swartz, 1998). The unfortunate results of political instability, endemic poverty during the followed by the Duavlier's regime collapse, as well as a natural disaster caused by an earthquake that occurred in 2010, triggered mass Haitian immigration to the United States that started over the last thirty years (Schulz & Batalova, 2017).

Figure 1

Haitian Immigrants in the United States, 1980–2015



Note. Data from U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2015 American Community Surveys (ACS), and 1980, 1990, and 2000 Decennial Census. From *Haitian Immigrants in the United States*, by K. Olsen-Medina and J. Batalova, 2020, Migration Policy Institute (<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/haitian-immigrants-united-states-2018>).

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Following that devastating earthquake, the U.S. government gave immigrants from Haiti a temporary protected status (TPS) which allowed them to work in the country without fear of deportation. According to the Migration Policy Institute, “In 2015, there were 676,000 Haitian immigrants in the United States, up from 587,000 in 2010; Haitians account for less than 2 percent of the U.S. foreign-born population” (Schulz & Batalova, 2017, para 5). The United States is home to the largest Haitian immigrant community outside of the country, with 79% currently of working age between 18 and 64, and 15% were 65 and older. According to Lucien (2015), 65% of Haitian immigrants and Haitian Americans live in Florida. Romero (2018) stated that there were 333,000 documented Haitian immigrants, of whom 244,000 were U.S.-born or naturalized in South Florida as of 2017.

Haitian History and Immigrant Mental Health

Immigration to a new country can create several stressors for migrants, especially when having to learn a new language and assimilate to a new culture, finding employment in less than desirable conditions, changing diets from organic to processed foods of the Western world, and accessing medical services. Immigrants who move, leave behind their family and friends, their home, and their culture. They also have endured different levels of trauma including political, poverty, and natural disasters coupled with acculturative adaptations (Stepick, 1998; Zephir, 2004).

There is limited research regarding the mental health challenges and needs of Haitian immigrants because of underreporting or underrepresentation as some Haitians self-identify as African American (Carson, Stewart, Lin & Alegria, 2011). According to

results from a study on the prevalence and distribution of Major Depressive Disorder in African Americans, Caribbean Blacks and Non-Hispanic Whites (Williams et al. 2007), Lifetime MDD prevalence estimates were highest for whites (17.9%), followed by Caribbean blacks (12.9%) and African Americans (10.4%); however, 12-month MDD estimates across groups were similar. The chronicity of MDD was higher for both black groups (56.5% for African Americans and 56.0% for Caribbean blacks) than for whites (38.6%). Fewer than half of the African Americans (45.0%) and less than a quarter (24.3%) of the Caribbean blacks who met the criteria received any form of MDD therapy. In addition, relative to whites, both black groups were more likely to rate their MDD as severe or very severe and more disabling (p. 305).

As this past research found, Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States were at risk for depression, coupled with the mental health challenges that come with chain family immigration that occurs in over 85% of Black Caribbean families (Carson, Stewart, Lin & Alegria, 2011; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002; Lashley, 2000). Experiences of racism have also been shown to be a factor of interest among Haitian immigrant youth in Canada that depicts a correlation with symptoms of conduct disorder and mental distress (Rousseau et al., 2008). Likewise, Haitian immigrant youth have shown a prevalence of depression (14%) and PTSD (11.6%) but with only 1.6% who ultimately seek out mental health care (Fawzi et al., 2009). According to Martsolf (2004), 60% of Haitian women and 85% of Haitian men in Haiti have experienced childhood abuse or neglect that impacts Haitian youth mental health in the United States (Desrosiers & St Fleurose, 2002; Douyon et al., 2005). This research provided the support for

ongoing research in Haitian immigrants perceived racial discrimination, depression, fear and anxiety that comes with emigrating during a tumultuous political climate in the United States.

Spiritual and religious practices have been known to help Haitians cope with health-related problems, emotional and mental, their strength and their wellbeing (World Health Organization (WHO), 2010). Mental illness, in general, has been seen as taboo for Haitian immigrants and can be a source of stigma for the family and community, as well as a challenge for them to seek out mental health care (Nicolas et al., 2009). Additionally, higher socioeconomic Haitians have been known to seek support from a medical practitioner/psychiatrist who treat mental illness from a biomedical approach (Desrosiers & Fleurose, 2002).

In a foundational study that first investigated depression among Haitian women, researchers found three distinct types of depression that included the following: (a) *douleur de corps*, which is pain in the body, (b) *soulagement par Dieu*, which is relief through God, and (c) *lutte sans victoire*, which is fighting a winless battle (Nicolas et al., 2009). The first type of depression that depicted as pain in the body reflected the most common form of depression among Haitian immigrants. This type of pain included physical symptoms of weakness, faintness, digestion issues, headaches, and stomach problems, as well as feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, which were often first presented to medical practitioners without any luck of successful treatment (Nicolas et al., 2009). The second type of depression depicted by relief through God reflected the Haitian immigrants' ability to conceptualize their depressive symptoms, which are

relieved by their faith with God. In other words, their depressive symptoms were not bad because God would soon relieve them of it. Finally, the third type of depression depicted by fighting a winless battle reflects the need to accept the fate that comes with living a negative life resulting from suffering, tragedies, and trauma. Haitian immigrants with this type of depression would reflect a dysthymic diagnosis because they take little pleasure out of living and often talk about their impending death (Nicolas et al., 2009). Not knowing how Haitian culture affects immigrants and the presentation of depression conditions could lead to misdiagnosing, which is why research on Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during the Trump administration is important to explore and to gain more insight into their perceptions of racial discrimination, depression, fear and anxiety.

There is a strong connection between depression and stress with evidence to show stressors being present prior to major depressive episodes (Hammen, 2005; Gillespie, Whitfield, Williams, Heath, & Martin, 2005; Kendler, Karkowski, & Prescott, 1999). Further, acculturation and migrant-related stress showed greater depression symptom severity despite over the past 20 years of research literature, albeit only two studies focusing on the Haitian population (Nicolas et al., 2009; Nicolas & Smith, 2013).

Initially, Haitian immigrants faced racial discrimination and experienced migration stress during the 1970s when immigrants who were referred to as *boat people* arrived at South Florida. They were thought to bring with them disease such as tuberculosis, and who were also incorrectly reported as being a primary group at risk for AIDS according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Stepick, 1992).

Consequently, Haitians were prevented from donating blood well into the 1980s because of this stigma (Stepick, 1992). Today, this stigma continues and has perpetuated racial discrimination and the overwhelming feelings of stress that comes with being a Haitian immigrant in the United States because of a comment made by President Trump who stated that Haitians all had AIDS.

United States Immigration

Immigration to the United States has existed over the past 400 years, but large-scale immigration has occurred primarily over four different time periods: (a) the peopling of the original colonies, (b) westward expansion during the middle of the 19th century, (c) the rise of cities at the turn of the 20th century, and (d) the 1970's to present (Hipsman & Meissner, 2013, para 7). In 1882, federal oversight of immigration led to the establishment of the Immigration Act, which established fees to noncitizens at a U.S. Port of Authority and regulatory standards to prevent people from entering who were deemed a “convict, lunatic, idiot, or person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge” (Hipsmann & Meissner, 2013, para 8).

Although the country was open to foreigners to live in the country, exclusionary practices and racial discrimination persisted originating with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, which stopped Chinese laborers during the gold-mining days of the West. It ultimately led to Congress passing the 1888 Scott Act (banning return of Chinese nationals with lawful status in the U.S. from returning) and the Geary Act in 1892, which extended the 10-year ban on Chinese labor immigration (Hipsman & Meissner, 2013). Congress would later veto the president to pass the 1917 Immigration Act that would ban

individuals from British India, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, as well those who were previously deported and illiterate individuals over the age of 16.

The U.S. government established a national-origins quota in the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1924 to limit the numbers of immigrants from each country. This racially discriminatory law guided immigration policy until the civil rights era. It was President John F. Kennedy who publicly and vociferously, first defined the nation of the United States a country of immigrants. It was in his speech at the 50th Annual Meeting of the Anti-Defamation League where he spoke these words,

America was to be the great experiment. A testing ground for political liberty. A model for Democratic government. And although the first task was to mold a nation on these principles, here in this continent, we would also lead the fight against tyranny in all continents. This is a great inheritance. It is a proud privilege to be a citizen of the Great Republic. To realize that we are the descendants of 40 million people who left other countries, other familiar scenes to come here to the United States to build a new life to make a new opportunity for themselves and their children. I think it is not a burden but a privilege to have a chance to share that great concept among all of our people. (Nation of Immigrants Speech)

Currently, immigration reform is challenged by political climate and rhetoric creating stressors for immigrants, such as those from Haiti, to suffer from racial discrimination, depression, fear and anxiety, which supports the reason for pursuing research that will help create psychosocial strategies for working with this population.

It was a tumultuous time in Central America during the 1980's that led large numbers of individuals from Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua to flee their countries because of civil wars. President Reagan was not in favor of immigration during the Cold War era and admitted low numbers under political asylum laws of the United States. During the 1990's the United States admitted immigrants fleeing from Cuba, the former Soviet Union and Southeast Asia, when their governments were collapsing or social unrest. During the 2000's, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 had also turned immigration reform to a contentious topic vacillating between political parties and leaders. The terrorists from Saudi Arabia had entered the U.S. with valid visas, which led to the expansion of the Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the USCIS (Hipsman & Meissner, 2013). The 9/11 terrorist attacks also led to the creation of the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (INS Special Registration) that led to the registration of individuals from the following 25 countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (INS, 2002). The law would later be removed on December 23, 2016.

Political Climate of Trump Administration (2017-2020)

Donald J. Trump was inaugurated as the 45th president of the United States on January 17, 2017, in what seemed to be a surprising victory to those on the Left side of the country's politics, beating out Democratic Senator and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The once-reality TV star had a background for the presidency unlike most

modern presidents that came before him. Ronald Reagan was the only with Hollywood credits prior to becoming a Republican president of the United States but did not have the notoriety that followed him to office. During his presidential run, Donald Trump demonized immigrants through misinformation and boasted plans for building a wall through a campaign called “America First” (Boyer, 2019; Jacobson, 2015). Additionally, President Trump included immigration reform his presidential platform to pass it (Jacobson, 2015). He created a culture of demonizing immigrants and centered misinformation on immigration (Jacobson, 2015; Hipsman & Meissner, 2013). According to Mark (2017, para 3), Trump inaccurately described and negatively characterized the immigrant visa program (green card lottery) by stating:

“You think the [foreign] country is giving us their best people? No. . . . What kind of a system is that? They come in by a lottery. They give us their worst people, they put them in a bin. But in his hand when he’s picking them is really the worst of the worst” (Mark, 2017, para. 3).

Throughout his entire campaign and administration, President Trump called for a wall to be built at the Texas/Mexico border that would cost US \$21.6 billion and take 3.5 years to build (Ainsley, 2017), and would later be the political fight that led to the government shutdown from December 22, 2018, to January 25, 2019 (Everett, Ferris & Opyrsko, 2018). He scaled back on the number of immigrants entering the country while rejecting a Department of Health and Human Services study that reported the positive impact of refugees and their contribution of government revenue totaling US \$63 billion from 2005-2014 (Davis & Sangupta, 2017).

President Trump boasted an increase of 40% ICE arrests of undocumented individuals during the second year of his presidential administration (Miroff & Sacchetti, 2018). Also, in 2018, President Trump ordered the arrests of undocumented individuals and the separation of families for those who were trying to cross the border, which he successfully was able to separate 2,300 children. It was also reported to be a negotiating tool to leverage Democratic support (Scherer & Dawsey, 2018) That same year, President Trump's administration had attempted to add a citizenship question on the 2020 Census but was challenged by California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and later overruled by the U.S. Supreme Court in July 2019 (Kumar & Oprysco, 2019). During the midterm elections, President Trump ordered 5800 troops to the US/Mexico border to stop a caravan of Central Americans that were headed to the border (Gibbons-Neff & Cooper, 2018). It was reported that after the midterm elections, the political rhetoric surrounding the caravan had all but disappeared (Gibbons-Neff & Cooper, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 would accelerate the travel bans that were already in place in 2017.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the literature search strategy, reviewed the literature that included the theoretical framework, including CRT and hate speech; the Republic of Haiti, including the political history that drove Haitian immigrants to the United States; and Immigration in the United States including the political climate of the Trump administration. The Trump era political climate was unlike one we have ever experienced before as a society in the United States. Partisan politics, biased media, a pandemic virus that led to a lockdown, and social unrest have impacted our American society remarkably

over the past four years. Past researchers have stated that the president's comments regarding shithole countries, as well the administration's actions to end the TPS, further exacerbate how Haitian immigrants have been received and perceived for the past four years during the current administration (Bybee, 2018, Dawsey, 2018; Edmonds, 2017). Missing from the literature are qualitative studies on the mental health factors of racial discrimination, depression, fear, and anxiety that affect Haitian immigration to the United States during this political environment. To address this gap in the literature, psychological factors related to immigration were highlighted to humanize the topic of immigration and help psychologists become better prepared to intervene with the Haitian immigrant population and potentially serve as advocates during this unstable time for them in the United States.

Derrick Bell who taught at Harvard University in the 1980's and 1990's (Aleshire, 2014). Bell was known for his work regarding race and racism in the American law (Bell, 1980, 1995a, 1995b); specifically, he was the one who coined the term *racial realism* to describe the argument that Blacks should forget about full equality. Conversely, counter narratives in CRT help strengthen race-consciousness by placing Blacks and people of color in control of their story since it allows them to tell their personal histories (Dunbar, 2008). Using counter narratives, Shelton (2018) stated that "Critical race theory as an analytical lens offers a way to understand the significance of resisting the dominant discourse in current U.S. immigration debates (p. 130). Other CRT tenets noted by Delgado and Stefani (2001) are racism is normal, ordinary, and a product of social thought and People of Color's voice is important in CRT. CRT is

interdisciplinary and has been used in education, law, and social work. Over the past five years, research framed by the CRT covered topics important to immigration regarding Latinos and the undocumented (Aleshire, 2014, Ayon & Philbin, 2017; Gonzalez-Carriedo, 2014; Shelton, 2018), but none have investigated Haitian immigrants.

Since its first days of sovereignty, Haiti has dealt with several problems that prevented their development. Upon becoming a sovereign nation, the colonial powers of Europe and the United States pressured the country with economic debts to prevent slave revolts and the slavery and colonialism systems from crumbling in the Americas (Edmonds, 2012). Since gaining independence in 1804, 53 presidents have governed Haiti to the detriment of the country as some of these kleptocratic regimes were the worst in history (Dash, 2001; Dubois, 2013; Lundahl, 1989). Of those 53 presidents, 23 of them were assassinated, overthrown, or died while in office, and nine completed a full term (Dubois, 2013; Noailles, 2010). According to the Migration Policy Institute, “In 2015, there were 676,000 Haitian immigrants in the United States, up from 587,000 in 2010; Haitians account for less than 2 percent of the U.S. foreign-born population” (Schulz & Batalova, 2017). The United States is home to the largest Haitian immigrant community outside of the country, with 79% currently of working age between 18 and 64 and 15% were 65 and older.

Haitian immigrants who immigrate to the United States are at risk for depression, coupled with the mental health challenges that come with chain family immigration that occurs in over 85% of Black Caribbean families (Carson, Stewart, Lin & Alegria, 2011 Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002; Lashley, 2000). Experiences of racism have also been shown

to be a factor of interest among Haitian immigrant youth in Canada that depicts a correlation with symptoms of conduct disorder and mental distress (Rousseau et al, 2008). Likewise, Haitian immigrant youth have shown a prevalence of depression (14%) and PTSD (11.6%) but with only 1.6% who ultimately seek out mental health care (Fawzi et al., 2009). According to Martsolf (2004), 60% of Haitian women and 85% of Haitian men in Haiti have experienced childhood abuse or neglect that impacts Haitian youth mental health in the United States (Desrosiers & St Fleurose, 2002; Douyon et al., 2005).

Immigration to the United States has been going on over the past 400 years, but large-scale immigration has occurred primarily over four different peak time periods: (a) the peopling of the original colonies, (b) westward expansion during the middle of the 19th century, (c) the rise of cities at the turn of the 20th century, and (d) began in the 1970's that continues today (Hipsman & Meissner, 2013). Unlike President Obama who was unsuccessful in passing comprehensive immigration reform, President Trump made it his presidential platform to pass it (Jacobson, 2015). He created a culture of demonizing immigrants and centered misinformation on immigration (Jacobson, 2015; Hipsman & Meissner, 2013). In Chapter 3, I discuss the research methodology and design of the study, as well the data collection procedures, analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This qualitative narrative study facilitated an understanding of the how current political climate impacts the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020. Fears of deportation and family separation are additional emotional triggers for Haitian immigrants after President Trump threatened to end the TPS upon entering office (Artiga & Ubri, 2017).

This chapter begins with the research design and rationale, defining the phenomenon, the role of the researcher, power differentials, and incentives, followed by discussion of managing the researcher’s biases. The Methodology includes several subsections: Participant Selection; Instrumentation; Procedures for Recruitment of Participation, and Data Collection; and Data Analysis. I then discuss credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability, followed by a description of ethical procedures and a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

To gain a proper understanding of how the current political climate and the Trump administration’s immigration policies have affected the overall wellbeing and the mental health of Haitian immigrants, I sought to answer the following research question: How does a Haitian immigrant who moved to the United States from 2017 through 2020 describe their personal stories in relation to their perceived discrimination and any mental health obstacles felt regarding under the political climate of the current administration? The research question allowed the study participants to describe their personal stories and

emotions about their immigration experience under the political climate of the Trump administration.

A qualitative narrative study design was used to develop an in-depth analysis of this demographics perceived discrimination through the personal stories. The study addressed any mental health impediments felt by the Haitian immigrants who moved to the United States during 2017–2020 under the political climate of the Trump administration.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the researcher is considered as an instrument of data collection (Maxwell, 2013). In other words, my role as the researcher was to observe and conduct a semi structured in-depth interview with my targeted demographic. The interview process was organized according to the self-prepared pre-approved open-ended interview questions. The interview questions were formatted to induce the personal insights of the participants in relations to the proposed phenomenon. I recruited participants through first contacting the presidents of the Haitian American organizations to solicit participants. Next, email invitations provided by the presidents of the organizations were sent out to participants. To ensure validity of the study in relations to the number of participants in the study, I asked the participants for recommended participants using a snowball sampling method if I was unable to recruit enough Haitian immigrants.

Power Differentials

Identifying any possible power differential is vital when conducting a viable study. The respondents who participated in the study would not be subjected to any power differential. As the researcher, I had no relationship or personal interaction with these participants. In essence, any interactions between the participants in this study and myself as the researcher did not have any potential personal or professional conflicts or power imbalances.

Incentives

To maintain the validity of the study, no form of monetary or any other kind of incentives were given to the recipients of the research study. The recipients of the study were informed of this policy before proceeding with the study. The information gathered during the interview process was utilized to address any gaps in literature to address this phenomenon.

Managing Researcher's Bias

Biases are an unfortunate byproduct of our culture and experiences or, in some cases, of outcomes that we desire (Berg, 2017). It is imperative that a researcher remains objective and is aware of any biases that they might foster. With the political climate being as polarized as it is, I can honestly admit that even I have some biases when it comes to the Trump administration. Fortunately, many such biases can be measured and, in some cases, effectively managed (Berg, 2017).

When addressing biases, the researcher must first acknowledge its presence and then take steps to minimize its influence on important decisions and results. To mitigate

any biases, I refrained from interjecting any preset opinions on the subject matter, and I adhered to the pre-approved interview questions. Conducting the study in this manner ensured that the data collected and the results of the study reflected the worldview of the participants certifying that the research lives up to the highest qualitative standards.

Informed Consent

I informed the participants of the confidentiality, informed consent protocols, and any risks involved in participating in the study. Additionally, I informed the participants of the study procedures and reminded them that their participation is voluntary. Lastly, I also collected a signature indicating participant consent prior to starting the interview.

Methodology

The narrative study design allowed me to explore the current political climate and the mental health of Haitian immigrants new to the United States. It was important to address these issues using qualitative methods to better capture rich information about how participants perceived racial discrimination, depression, fears and anxiety (Artiga & Ubri, 2017; Terrazas, 2010) through interviews and observations. A qualitative narrative study assumed that people understand and give meaning to their lives through the personal stories they tell (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2013; McMullen & Braithwaite, 2013, Ntinda, 2019). The research methodology used in the study provides an understanding of the relationship between the participant and researcher, where they worked collaboratively in constructing meaning of the phenomena (Ntinda, 2019).

The narrative research design posits a conceptual framework for inquiry to include three elements that are explored concurrently: temporality, sociality, and place

(Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). First, temporality is an element that reflects events in temporal transition that leads the researcher to past, present, and future as well as the people, places, and events that are being researched. Second, sociality is an element that reflects the personal and social condition “feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reaction and moral disposition of the inquirer and participants” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). Third, place is where the inquiry takes place that includes the physical and geographical area.

Participant Selection

A qualitative narrative study was used to develop an in-depth analysis of this demographics perceived discrimination through the personal stories. To examine how the current political climate impacts the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020, I selected a purposeful sample from this demographic using specific selection criteria and snowball sampling. Utilizing this method allowed me to gather ample rich information to assist in achieving a level of saturation by systematically obtaining the best possible sample size that would suffice for this study. I contacted the God of Compassion Assembly in South Florida to recruit participants interested in the study. I sent emails to 100 potential adult participants for the study who express interest. I narrowed the number of interested participants to 9–15 with the goal of obtaining saturation. I emailed Walden University’s informed consent form 2 weeks prior to the start of the study to those who contacted me to participate. I sent out a reminder email 1 week prior to the start of the study to remind them of the upcoming interview.

Instrumentation

Due to the nature and the design of the study, I conducted telephonic interviews utilizing a qualitative survey with questions that were pre-approved by Walden University. One-on-one interviewing was the most efficient methodological instrument to utilize due to the research collection method and the reporting tool (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). The information gathered during the interview process was used to address any gaps in literature to address this phenomenon. This narrative study provided the evidence of consistency and repeatability to guide future researchers in data collection. I recruited a purposeful sample of 9 participants to participate in semi structured one-on-one interviews. Six open-ended questions were asked to encourage in-depth participant feedback through significant story telling leading to further data collection, analysis, and synthesis of the information gathered (Shorter-Gooden, 2004). The interview questions (see Appendices B and C) asked the participants to describe their lived experiences related to the political climate of the Trump Administration. I created the interview questions myself based on existing literature.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

A qualitative narrative study design was used to generate personal stories of the Haitian population in the United States during the Trump administration (2017–2020). A population is defined as an entire group selected by geographic location, age, sex, and variables such as occupation, religion, and ethnic group; and a sample is any part of the fully defined population (Chaudhury & Banerjee, 2020). The reason for identifying a representative sample is that every member of the population has to potential to be

selected (Chaudhury & Banerjee, 2020). The target population was Haitian immigrants who have moved to South Florida during the years of 2017–2020. As of 2018, the Haitian population numbered 228,000 living in the South Florida area where the sample will come from for this study (Olsen-Medina & Batalova, 2020). The sample population for this qualitative narrative study was selected from God of Compassion Assembly in south Florida. The data for the study were collected from the participants' responses. The participants were the primary source of data used to retrieve information on their way of life, personal stories, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and their interactions with the American culture. Additionally, a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to collect names, ages, career, and family histories to learn specific details about their assimilation while in the United States. The study recruitment materials and interview questions were translated to Haitian Creole (see Appendices B and C) to maintain consistency and tone.

Data Analysis Plan

To remain in compliance with the data collection procedure protocols, I began the digital recording for those who consented to the recording. The source of data that was used to address the research question was through semi structured interviews. The participants were thanked for their participation and were reminded that they had an opportunity to read over the transcripts a week later for clarity and to correct any errors. The interviews were sent to the online transcription service Trint (<https://trint.com>) to be transcribed. Then, the data were securely stored on in Microsoft Word. Once I received

the transcribed interview transcripts from Trint, I read them through and verified prior to emailing them to participants. Open coding was used to organize the data and themes regarding the lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated during the political climate of the Trump Administration. The transcripts were securely uploaded to Microsoft Word, and analysis took place on Microsoft Excel to search for patterns and insights of the phenomenon (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Post-positivist qualitative studies align with standards of inquiry used in conventional quantitative research such as “internal validity (isomorphism of findings with reality), external validity (generalizability), reliability (in the sense of stability), and objectivity (distanced and neutral observer)” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114). As such, qualitative studies have inherent threats to transferability (external validity), credibility (internal validity), conformability (objectivity) and dependability (reliability) (Morrow, 2005). Likewise, limitations are inherent in all research designs of studies. The researcher recruited 9-15 participants who were Haitian immigrants that immigrated to South Florida between 2017 through 2020. Since this is my first independent study, my inexperience with conducting and analyzing data was a limitation according to the literature (Elo et al., 2014). To maintain conformability and to ensure that there are no potential biases, the researcher set limits, or boundaries, inherent of the limitations of the study to increase feasibility.

Credibility

Credibility in this study referred to the idea of “how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so” (Gasson, 2004, p. 95). The researcher established credibility through the careful design of the study, research questions to be answered, interview questions to ask participant, how the participant describes their experience with mental health stressors from immigration during this presidential administration to ensure narratives reflect their meaning (Morrow, 2005). Trustworthiness required triangulation strategies such as persistent observation in the field, peer debriefs or peer researchers, researcher reflexivity, and participant checks (Morrow, 2005). Additionally, one or two key articulate participants were asked to validate and make credible the results. The researcher also enhanced credibility through prolonged engagement with participants to capture thick descriptions “thorough description of source data and a fit between the data and the emerging analysis as well as by thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973; 1983; Morrow, 2005, p. 252).

Transferability

Having the ability to replicate this study by future researchers was the goal and responsibility of the researcher, so therefore, trustworthiness, credibility, authenticity, dependable, and transferrable are important to ensure the study’s reliability and validity (Yilmaz, 2013). The audit trail created by the interview transcripts allowed participants to member check. As mentioned, research participants had the opportunity to review and correct their interview transcript providing clarity and any additional information not

mentioned during the interview. I, as the researcher, am a Haitian American from South Florida and could potentially present a bias while collecting and analyzing the data.

Dependability

Dependability refers to “the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques” (Gasson, 2004, p. 94). The researcher has provided a detailed account of the research process to help future researchers with achieving dependability in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). According to Shenton (2004), an audit trail helps other researchers to replicate the study procedures such as research design, data collection, reporting outcomes and a discussion of the findings. The researcher also kept detailed memos and observations to enhance dependability as well (Morrow, 2005).

Conformability

Conformability refers to “findings should represent, as far as is (humanly) possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories, or biases of the researcher” (Gasson, 2004, p. 93). Morrow (2005) suggests that “the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings (p. 252). I sought conformability through capturing the participant’s experience with the phenomena and how it is interpreted, as well as how the data is gathered and the interpretation of the data. Additionally, one or two key articulate participants were asked to validate and confirm the results. The researcher is a Haitian

American and therefore biases were mitigated through peer debriefing with dissertation advisor.

Ethical Procedures

The researcher-maintained compliance protocols to ensure the consistency and the reliability of the research. Before conducting the study, I was required to complete Institutional Review Board (IRB) training as well as seek study approval through Walden University's IRB. When approval number 04-23-21-0531699 was granted, I sought out participants and provide them with research information and procedures that explain informed consent and confidentiality. I reminded the participants that their participation was voluntary with the agency to quit when desired. I redacted the participant demographic information and participants were assigned a number identified only by the researcher. I used a digital recording device as well as a microphone (if needed) to record the interviews. Once the interviews were recorded and transcribed, I will store the digital recordings for five years in a locked cabinet stored at my home office. During data analysis, I used open coding and thematic analysis to create initial codes and organization of themes.

Summary

Chapter 3 included the following sections: (a) Methodology; (b) Participant Selection; (c) Instrumentation; (d) Procedure for Recruitment of Participation, and Data Collection Analysis Plan; (e) Issues of Trustworthiness; (f) Creditability; (g) Transferability; (h) Dependability; (i) Conformability; (j) Ethical Procedures; and (k) Summary. A qualitative narrative study allowed the researcher to ask *who* and *why*

questions for deeper exploration of the real-world phenomenon more than a quantitative design that uses experiments and numerical data. (Yin, 2020). The source of data that was used to address the proposed research questions were semi-structured interviews. The target population was Haitian immigrants who have moved to South Florida during the years of 2017–2020. The sample population for this qualitative descriptive study was selected from Haitian American organizations in Florida.

First, a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to collect names, ages, career and family histories to learn specific details about their assimilation while in the United States. Second, the participants were asked open-ended questions (see Appendices B and C) that can be answered through in-depth interviews. Having the ability to replicate this study by future researchers was the goal and responsibility of the researcher, so therefore, trustworthiness, credibility, authenticity, dependable, and transferrable were important to ensure the study's reliability and validity (Yilmaz, 2013). The audit trail created by the interview transcripts allowed participants to member check.

The following assumptions were part of this study: (a) the Haitian immigrants who agreed to participate in this study will have immigrated to the United States during 2017 and 2020, (b) the Haitian immigrants who agree to participate will be People of Color, (c) participants will respond honestly to the interview questions, and (d) the participants will clearly understand the concepts of perceived racial discrimination, anxiety, fear and depression. The following were delimitations of this study: (a) the study is confined to Haitian immigrants who moved to South Florida during 2017 through 2020, and (b) the study is confined to the personal stories of perceived racial

discrimination, depression, fear and anxiety. I complied with the required forms to seek approval and to complete IRB training as well as sought study approval through Walden University's IRB. When approval was granted, I sought out participants and provided them with research information and procedures that explain informed consent and confidentiality.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Understanding how political climate could affect the mental health of immigrants living in the United States and how that could trigger emotional distress was the foundation for exploring the phenomena of mental disturbances regarding Haitian immigrants who moved to the United States from the years of 2017 through 2020. Likewise, fears of deportation and family separation were additional emotional triggers for Haitian immigrants after President Trump threatened to end the TPS upon entering office (Artiga & Ubri, 2017). The source of data used to address the research question was semi structured individual interviews conducted with nine male participants who met the qualifications that helped explain immigration during the Trump administration. Open coding was used to organize the data and themes regarding the lived psychosocial experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated during the political climate of the Trump Administration. After the audiotaped interviews were conducted, I securely uploaded the transcripts to Microsoft Word and conducted the analysis on Microsoft Excel to search for patterns and insights of the phenomenon (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Three core themes and six subthemes emerged from the lived psychosocial experiences of the Haitian immigrants that are used to respond to the research question.

Research Question

A qualitative narrative study was used to develop an in-depth analysis of Haitian immigrant's perceived discrimination through the personal stories. I asked the participants to describe their personal stories and emotions since their immigration under

the political climate of the current administration. The goal of this research was to learn about the perceived impact of political climate on the experiences and emotions of Haitian immigrants during 2017 through 2020. A carefully worded research question and six interview questions were created to guide the data collection and analysis.

RQ: How do Haitian immigrants who moved to the United States between the years of 2017 through 2020 describe their lived experience since their migration to the United States under the political climate of the Trump administration?

Chapter 4 includes emergent themes and subthemes uncovered using open coding. I provided information regarding managing researcher bias, participant demographics, and data collection procedures, as well as evidence of trustworthiness and results of the study. The chapter ends with a summary of data, conclusion, and transition to Chapter 5, where I discuss the implications of the results.

Setting

As mentioned in Chapter 3, biases are an unfortunate byproduct of our culture and experiences or, in some cases, of outcomes that we desire (Berg, 2017). The qualitative research methodology used in the study provided a guide as to relationship between the participant and researcher, where they work collaboratively in constructing meaning of the phenomena (Ntinda, 2019). These two factors made it imperative for me to remain objective and aware of any biases that I might foster. President Trump did not win reelection in 2020, and is therefore no longer in power, but his departure has been marked with an ongoing and unsuccessful vote recount as well as an insurrection on the White House on January 6, 2020, resulting in multiple deaths. With the political climate still

polarized as it is, I have some biases regarding the Trump administration. Fortunately, many such biases were effectively managed (Berg, 2017) by acknowledging that they were present and taking steps to minimize the influence, by refraining from interjecting any opinions on the subject during the interview process, and by adhering to the pre-approved interview questions. Conducting the study in this manner ensured that the data collected and the results of the study reflected the worldview of the participants certifying that the research lives up to the highest qualitative standards.

Demographics

The participant population for this study was Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020, the years of the Trump administration. Inclusion focused on participants being from Haiti and living in South Florida. The first delimitation was the decision to interview participants by phone due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The second delimitation was the decision to have the interviews transcribed using a professional transcription service called Trint.com. I was not particularly concerned with recruiting a specific number of female and male participants, but those who chose to participate were only male, between the ages of 35 and 50. During the semi structured interviews, I reminded the participants that their participation was voluntary with the agency to quit when desired. I also redacted the participant demographic information and participants were assigned a number identified only by me. I used the digital recording and microphone functions to record the interviews on my smartphone.

Data Collection

I collected data through participants' responses. Interview transcripts were the primary source of data used to retrieve information on their way of life, personal stories, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and their interactions with the American culture. A demographic questionnaire was used to collect names, ages, career, and family histories to better describe the participants as well. The translation was also sent to the participants as well to make sure they were accurate. Lastly, the study recruitment and interview questions were translated to Haitian Creole to maintain consistency and tone.

Data Analysis

The research question for this study asked participants to describe their lived experience since their migration to the United States under the political climate of the Trump Administration. After reading the interview transcripts five times, three overlapping themes and six subthemes evolved from re-reading of the interview transcripts (see Table 1).

Table 1*Themes and Subthemes from Data Analysis*

Themes	Subthemes
Theme 1: Better opportunities	Subtheme 1: Life not easy Subtheme 2: Better quality of life
Theme 2: Immigration process	Subtheme 1: Obstacles Subtheme 2: South Florida
Theme 3: Trump Administration	Subtheme 1: Personal gain Subtheme 2: Racial climate

Theme 1: Better Opportunities

All nine participants agreed that the impetus for migrating to the United States was to seek out better opportunities than what they could find in their home country of Haiti. Their specific reasons for migrating to the United States varied, however.

Subtheme 1: Life Not Easy

Haiti is in crisis with violence increasing throughout the country. Migrating to the United States and having to learn a new culture, language, city, and community adds challenges to adjusting to life in a new country. For example, Participant 2 stated:

Okay, just to come here because I came here for a better life. Yeah, because in my country, things are pretty difficult; things are tough, you know and things are getting worse by the day, you know. So I had to make this move for a life for myself and for my family. Like in my, growing up, you know, we used to have a company in my country that functioned very well, you know, employing youths. So because of the crises we having like, you know, sometimes there're crises,

political crises and all that. So the companies they start pulling out one after the other, leaving us the youths, you know, they leave us without jobs. So it becomes tough. You know, they just kept pulling out of the country one after the other because of political crisis, and community crisis. So it's more like you're done studying, you graduated but there's no job out there for you, you know. So that's the system and I could not take it anymore. So I don't face it anymore because I have better dreams for myself. So I had to make this move. To make a living there is, it's tough right now there.

Participant 5 shared his experience of political persecution his family experienced in Haiti prior to migrating to the United States. He stated,

I migrated to the US because of the political situation back home. I had graduated in school but because my parents were opponents to the ruling government, I could not find a job to do. We were politically persecuted like my father had been imprisoned so many times over nothing. And then soldiers would not stop coming to our house all the time. They would do weird things. So when an opportunity came to migrate to the US, I just took it with double hands. Oh yeah, yes {politically persecuted}. Because when my father was imprisoned then; he was basically the breadwinner. And every time he was taken to jail then we could go days without even food at the house. Some of us had to stay home from school because we could not afford tuition fees.

Participant 7 reported feeling like an outsider in the United States:

I could feel the vibe that I'm an outsider. It wasn't like a case where it openly shared or communicated but I definitely felt the vibe that I was an outsider like my accent, you know. No, but I mean it wasn't directly done but indirectly I could sense that, you know. They would try to treat me normally but if you are very observant and vigilant you can see, you know, in some circles, in some circles you are accepted but in other circles you are, they remind you that you're an outsider, you know.

Subtheme 2: Better Quality of Life

All participants reported that their reasons for migrating to the United States were to improve their situation, whether it be economic, educational, or career. Participant 1 stated, "All I try to do is live the best I can do for me and for my children because I don't do no wrong. I make sure I live in the right way and ensure what they need to do to have a better life." Similarly, Participant 8 stated,

I was here at first came here, I visited the United States before. So it wasn't new for me because I lived in France so it wasn't really new so it was okay. Now, the second time that I came to the United States I making sure I was coming here for a while, I was staying for a while. So I was feeling different. I was feeling good because it's a matter of life – starting life – so it wasn't that easy. But I can say, I'm really happy, I'm glad that I made it.

Participant 5 stated,

But when I settled into Florida and then I started moving around the entire US, I found Florida much better than any other state. One, the weather itself is just

compatible, it's a tropical. And I'm used to tropical weather because that's what I've grown up from home – the rain, the sunshine and then the green forests and, you know. So I just love it. Yeah, I just loved the nature in Florida. And then, and then, it's always warm. I'm not afraid of having jackets on and dealing with the snow, shoving the snow, you know. Then I just became a Floridian 311. I just loved it. And when I started traveling all around the US, I realized Florida has the best roads, like there's no state in the US that has roads better than Florida's. Yes, the first friends I made in Florida were not immigrants. They were born Americans or raised in America; they had been here way too long. So I just blended in. The first people I met were so helpful. They taught me a great deal of a lot of things; we shared a lot of fun, we joked around. It was fun, I had no problems with them. They really treated me like one of their own, and they were willing to teach a lot of things. I didn't have a car but there was someone who always came to home to pick me up for work. And then when I applied for work I wasn't, you know, like segregated. I immediately got the job I was looking for.

Theme 2: Immigration Process.

Seven out of the nine participants reported a negative experience with the immigration process to the United States.

Subtheme 1: Obstacles

Participants described obstacles that they encountered in the immigration process. For example, Participant 1 stated,

When it came to the paperwork for the immigration, I tell you this is my first time and I didn't know where to go, who to talk to, and they asked me for a lot of money to fill out paper A, B, C, D and it took a lot of time. And I had to ask for interpreter sometimes for them to explain to me because I didn't understand. And then I had to wait for them to approve to make sure that everything is okay. And I make sure that I tried to fill all my papers to make sure that if they need more information, if I don't know, I wait and then I find out how I can get the information for them. Well, for me, it was long for me because I wanted to come here. I thought it was going to be fast but they said, "You have to make sure everything is correct in the system". And I don't know what the system is but they want to make sure all the document is fine. I have to make sure that all the documents are signed. If they need more information I wait to make sure that I don't have any background, anything bad in my background. So I'm good.

Participant 2 stated,

It was really frustrating, I must tell you that, you know. It is frustrating, it is confusing because there are a whole lot of bunch of paperwork to fill-out. It's confusing because a lot of forms to fill and all of them come with a price, you know. And they are expensive, you know. And you keep coming for a bunch of interviews on different occasions. And that doesn't even guarantee that you're going to be granted, you know. So it was really, really frustrating, tiring. You know, sometimes it makes you feel as if you're wasting your time, you know. Yes, paperwork, exactly. There's a whole bunch of them. You have to fill a lot of

forms. You have to pay for those forms and they are expensive, you know. So it's very frustrating. It didn't make it easier, you know.

Participant 6 stated,

That was the difficult part. It take long; you spend a lot of money. You have to be very patient to go through the process. Actually, you have to keep up with everything, like any mistake you do on your papers can deny your case. Like I said, it's not easy, you need money to go to the paper, you know. So basically if you don't have money, you not going to be able to have your papers if you don't keep up with other. Everything is hard in the immigration situation.

Subtheme 2: South Florida

Participants described how living in South Florida was similar to living in Haiti.

For example, participant 1 stated,

For me, Florida is the same as Haiti. We have the same beach; we have the same weather; it rains a lot and there's a lot of sun like in Haiti same thing with Florida. And then I have a lot of family here so when I had to come here and I didn't have no money, I had no place to stay, then my family in Florida make sure I have a place to sleep to make sure I can find a job. So Florida was okay for me.

Likewise, participant 4 stated,

Well, they told me South Florida is like a little Haiti. So I was under the impression that being around my people, being around the Haitians, things would be a little smoother to me but it was so difficult because it's still a different culture. Well, because it's a mixed culture. I mean just because you're Haitian,

you're in the United States; the laws is different; the way of life is different, for example, in Haiti, most of the people in Haiti a lot of the time things are so hard in Haiti, they don't have to work hard. In the United States even though you are from the Haitian community, you still have to get a 9 to 5 job. And there are times you have to do all the time. So yes, you're in the Haitian community but it's different, culture-wise and the laws is different. And if you don't work, you don't pay the bills. So that's why it was difficult. I think I was accepted, I mean somewhat. I was accepted, yeah.

Additionally, participant 6 stated,

When I was coming I didn't know really about Florida but when I come, it's like the weather. It's the weather. Where I'm from, almost the same thing. And that was a place when I come, I got some friends who received me at the house over here so that's why I come and I stay. I stay here so no other places. So I come to Florida I like the weather; I like where I stay, I didn't go anywhere else.

Theme 3: Trump Administration.

All the participants stated positive and negative experiences of living under the political climate of the Trump Administration.

Subtheme 1: Personal Gain

While all participants agreed that they witnessed negative experiences living under the political climate of the Trump Administration, some also agreed that they benefitted positively as well. For example, participant 5 stated,

I saw an increase in my income. I think he was good with the economy for that part. I also realized that the gas prices were so low because I remember buying diesel and gas at about \$1. So I think he did well with the economy.

Likewise, participant 7 stated,

What I experienced under the Trump administration, because of the tax cuts that he gave did, you know, in terms of there was a good desire for businesses to hire you know. And it was very evident paying less taxes, small businesses were able to expand, in my opinion, from what I've observed, you know. So that was good for the economy, it improved the economy. And some many of the policies were pro-business. No, well, it didn't benefit me but in terms of climate, you know, in terms of climate. These are my observations. But it also benefitted me as an immigrant.

Additionally, participant 9 stated how living under the political climate of the Trump Administration helped with his business,

I have mastered my craft like the video shooting and all that, you know, I've happened to see people who like my stuff through YouTube to see all my content and they've contracted me, like some artistes to shoot some music videos for them. So that was like some positive vibe I got because I was still getting into the craft but they already love my job. So that was positive vibe for me.

Subtheme 2: Racial Climate

All participants agreed that living under the political climate of the Trump Administration created a negative racial climate that was felt by the group. For example, participant 2 stated:

I have had an experience... I was working with some friends so we just came up. It was two of us, like we're three; two of us are Black and the third guy is a White guy. So when these cops they pulled us over and they didn't even search the White guy. You know we all just going and they stopped us and know, "Show us your IDs", and we did. They didn't want to talk to the White guy; they didn't even ask him as if he is free. You know, they just started like searching us, pulling us, you know. It was like, what's happening? So I really felt bad that day. I felt bad. I feel like arguing but you don't just argue with them. So when they tell you to do something you need to just obey. Like even before they ask me to raise my hands, my hands are already up. Yeah, I've seen what the outcome was so I don't want fall victim someday, so. I just do what they say.

Participant 5 stated: "Under Trump, when I came through Kennedy Airport in New York, I was stopped and I was asked a number of questions that I felt that wasn't okay. But you know, it was his administration and people were so much against the immigrants." Participant 1 stated,

Well, the reason why I came to the United States is to come to America for a better life for me and my children; to give them the best education so they can have a good job to buy a house and to live. Because in my country, we didn't

have that. We don't have no way to go to get that. And when we come here, everything was possible. So I know with this, I can go anywhere. Well, this guy is, I will tell you the truth, is not a good guy. Donald Trump, for me is not Obama for me. He doesn't like Black people; he doesn't like Spanish people. He said many, many, many bad things – many bad things. For me, the Black community, especially, the police brutality and when he say things on TV, why? Why are you saying that? You make people have hate in their heart especially a lot of racism – Black, White, Spanish, everything. Well, well, when I applied for a job and the guy asked me where I come from, I said I'm Haitian. He said, "How long did it take you to speak English? I said, "I start English before you, right?" He said, "Well, sir, we just want to make sure to know your education". And then he tell me, "Can you, can you tell me American history?" I said, "Why? I know I could do the job. Why I need to tell you American history? I'm not born here. I'm from Haiti, I've just come here." So I feel he just want to create something because he didn't have anything to tell me. The job is simply picking up trash and throwing the garbage. What do I need to know about American history? I'm coming to work to supply for my children. Well, I just tell myself, you know, this is not the worst thing I've ever met with my life. Like I came here, from here I had to fight to eat. So whatever he said to me is not going to hurt me because I'm going to continue to fight because I know I'm going to fight for myself and for my life. Well, we, I didn't get the job but thank God, I have a friend; he has a business. He

said “Charles do, you need to work?” I said, “Yes, I can do anything”. He said, “Come along, I can help you”. And I’ve been working there ever since.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I established credibility through the careful design of the design of the study, research questions to be answered, interview questions to ask participant, how the participant describes their experience with mental health stressors from immigration during this presidential administration to ensure narratives reflect their meaning (Morrow, 2005). Credibility in this study refers to the idea of “how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so” (Gasson, 2004, p. 95). Trustworthiness requires triangulation strategies such as persistent observation in the field, peer debriefs or peer researchers, researcher reflexivity, and participant checks (Morrow, 2005). Additionally, one or two key articulate participants will be asked to validate and make credible the results. I also enhanced credibility through prolonged engagement with participants to capture thick descriptions “thorough description of source data and a fit between the data and the emerging analysis as well as by thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973; 1983; Morrow, 2005, p. 252).

Transferability

I am responsible to future researchers for the creation of a replicable study Having the ability to replicate this study by future researchers is the goal and responsibility of the researcher; making trustworthiness, credibility, authenticity, dependable, and transferrable important for ensuring the study’s reliability and validity (Yilmaz, 2013).

The interview transcripts created a paper audit and allowed participants to member check. Research participants had the opportunity to review and correct their interview transcript providing clarity and any additional information not mentioned during the interview. I am a Haitian American from South Florida and could potentially present a bias while collecting and analyzing the data.

Dependability

Dependability refers to “the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques” (Gasson, 2004, p. 94). I have provided a detailed account of the research process to help future researchers with achieving dependability in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). An audit trail helps other researchers to replicate the study procedures such as research design, data collection, reporting outcomes and a discussion of the findings. I kept detailed memos and observations to enhance dependability as well (Morrow, 2005).

Conformability

Conformability states that “the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings” (p. 252). I obtained conformability through capturing the participant’s experience with the phenomena and how it was interpreted, as well as how the data was gathered and the interpretation of the data. Additionally, one or two key articulate participants will be asked to validate and confirm the results. I am a Haitian American and therefore biases will be mitigated through peer debriefing with dissertation advisor.

Results

Themes and Theory

The research question for this study focused on how Haitian immigrants who moved to the United States between the years of 2017 through 2020 describe their lived experience since their migration to the United States under the political climate of the Trump administration. There were three themes identified in this study: (a) better opportunities, (b) immigration process, and (c) Trump Administration. There were six subthemes identified: (a) life not easy, (b) better quality of life, (c) obstacles, (d) South Florida, (e) personal gain, and (f) racial climate. The theoretical foundation for this study was CRT. CRT helps strengthen race-consciousness by placing Blacks and people of color in control of their story since it allows them to tell their personal histories. Hate speech is protected by the First Amendment and the government has a duty to protect a public robust debate on public concern. Hate speech is defined as any form of expression through which speakers primarily intend to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against their targets” (Ward, 1998, p. 765). These targets, as defined by the American Bar Association, are “groups based on race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or other traits.” (ABA, 2020, np). Ward (1998) stated, “One should conclude that speakers employ hate speech if their attacks are so virulent that an observer would have great difficulty separating the message delivered from the attack against the victim” (p. 766).

For example, the targets in this narrative study are Haitian immigrants who have experienced perceived racial discrimination, depression, fear, and anxiety since living in

the United States from 2017 through 2020 under the current political climate. Participant 2 reported,

Why I think the fact that this racism, I wasn't expecting that it is too much is like too much I wasn't expecting this. I've heard that, yeah, there's racism over here but I didn't know it is this much, you know. Because the Trump administration the racism is being shown to your face and that is sickening. It became very worse in his administration because they don't even need to hide it any more. And as a Black person living here in America, like I'll be honest with you, I've been living in fear, you know, because it is too bad because you come across it like every day, and I don't know why. That you can't even just go to the grocery store and you might just get harassed. Sometime by the cops they just want to search you, they just want to pull to ensure you're clean and all that. So it's kind of harassment just because I'm Black, you know.

Immigrants who have to hear rhetoric regarding immigration policy and their presence in the country have become a target for some of the right-wing. Participant 5 reported,

The environment became so hostile. For the first time, I really felt like I was Black. Yes, I really noticed I was Black because the racial tension was extremely high. I started fearing going into White communities; I started fearing being around White people for way too long because it was clear that America was divided. I think it is either the president that fueled it but for the first time, I felt so insecure being around people who are not of my race. It really made it worse for, I think, every Black person. In fact, I had never been afraid of meeting police

people but for the first time, with Trump in office, I started fearing coming into contact with the police guys because I always felt like there's going to be a shooting at one point.

CRT often places the principles of the Fourteenth Amendment above the liberty principles of the First Amendment (Demaske, para 1). This is because CRT scholars do not believe there is freedom of speech (Delgado, 1993, 2001). Exercising this view, Lawrence (1990) believed that hate speech should be regulated when victims, who are the marginalized groups, are the captive audience of remarks that cause injury. For example, the participants shared their feelings when President Trump referred to their home country as a shit-hole.

I remember he said something on I believe, CNN, saying that Black people they come from a shit-hole place. And I thought to myself, "Why, a man with so much power would say that?" Because you influence so many people to think that way. And for me to come from my country to come here to be disrespected; I don't steal; I never do anything wrong here for you to call me that. I come here to work to make America better but he make America worse when he was there. Well, I'll tell you the truth, when they said they want to impeach him, we had a party because we didn't want him to stay there because this guy doesn't need to be there. This guy only bring war and distraction. Nothing in his mouth come out good. And when I sit down with my friends to chat, you right, because we have to come to together to make sure that we say something because what he is doing is not right. It will never be accepted. (Participant 1)

Another participant shared similar feelings. Participant 4 reported about his feelings about his home country being referred to a shit-hole country:

When he says that, he once made a statement that, you know, Haiti is a, sorry my language, is a shithole. So that it says a lot about the type of administration we are under. He described Haitians as such, that we are a bunch of shit-hole. Well, obviously all of us were very offended. We were very offended. I mean, I think the way, the way he described the Haitians, he described us as less than an animal. So yeah, a lot of us were offended.

Participant 9 reported,

Talking about racism, it was way too much to our faces. It was very challenging, you know, because you need to mind the places you go to; need to know the people you trust. Yeah, it was challenging because you know, I wasn't really, you know, I wasn't living freely. Yes, to an extent, I feel so, yes. I feel like there're certain places I wouldn't want to go, yeah, just to be safe. To some extent, I didn't feel safe, and to some extent, I didn't feel welcome. Because there're some places you go as a Black person, they just looking at you as if you were an animal, you understand. Some will almost spit while you pass. You know, it's just to your face. That's it, that's it you know. And there're some places you go and you don't feel safe because coming back you might just get just for being Black.

Summary

My goal for pursuing this research was to gain more insight on how Haitian immigrants described their lived psychosocial experiences under the political climate of

the Trump Administration from 2017 through 2020. I recruited nine male participants for the study and the semi-structured interviews generated rich data about their lived experiences over the past six years. I interpreted the data using open coding analysis which yielded three themes and six subthemes generalized among all participants' experiences. In Chapter 4, I have provided the details of how I conducted the study, starting with presenting the research question, managing researcher bias, participant demographics, the themes and subthemes, a discussion on the theoretical framework, evidence of trustworthiness that included credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability, and a summary.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The political climate of the Trump administration has been unlike no other in modern history, creating an opportunity to further examine the phenomenon of Haitian immigration. Additionally, scholars in the field are not familiar with how the current political climate has impacted the lived experiences and psychosocial stressors of recent Haitian immigrants who have resettled in the United States. The purpose of the present study was to examine how the current political climate impacted the psychosocial lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who immigrated to the United States during 2017–2020.

The qualitative narrative study method was the most appropriate for this study to learn about the personal stories of the Haitian immigrant. The qualitative research method also allowed me to explore the stressors that the Haitian population experienced which contributed to an increase in anxiety and other physical distress during the Trump Administration. I recruited nine male participants for the study and the semi structured interviews generated rich data about their lived experiences over the past four years. There were three themes identified from the data: (a) better opportunities, (b) immigration process, and (c) Trump administration. There were six subthemes identified from the data: (a) life not easy, (b) better quality of life, (c) obstacles, (d) South Florida, (e) personal gain, and (f) racial climate.

In Chapter 5, I begin with a restatement of the purpose and nature of my study, followed by interpretation of the results, including the context of the CRT framework,

limitations, and recommendations for future research, as well as implications for positive social change. I end Chapter 5 by pointing out the importance for my study and how it will impact future studies.

Interpretation of the Findings

RQ: How do Haitian immigrants who moved to the United States between the years of 2017 through 2020 describe their lived experience since their migration to the United States under the political climate of the Trump administration?

Data collected regarding the lived experiences of Haitian immigrants who moved to the United States indicates that the political climate created an unwelcomed feeling despite the possibility of better opportunities that sparked the idea to migrate in the first place. For example, one of the participants talked about their gratitude for a friend who gave him work upon migration after receiving negative comments from a potential employer asking about his knowledge of American history for a job that only required him to pick up and throw away trash. Participants agreed that they migrated to the United States for better opportunities because life was not easy back in Haiti. They all migrated to South Florida because of family and because the climate is like back home. Some also agreed that they did receive some personal gain during the Trump administration but that it created a racially tense environment to live in.

Immigration reform is challenged by political climate and rhetoric creating stressors for immigrants, such as those from Haiti, to suffer from racial discrimination, depression, fear, and anxiety, which supported the reason for pursuing research that could help create psychosocial strategies for working with this population. Participants spoke of

their obstacles when completing immigration paperwork and the amount of time it would take to get interviews or whether their visa application was accepted. The immigration process alone triggered stressors for participants.

On January 11, 2018, President Trump asked a bipartisan group of senators “Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?” (Dawsey, 2018). This statement and President Trump’s comment that Haitians “all have AIDS” (Shear & Davis, 2017, para 6) could be considered Stage 3 hate speech to some as it incited discriminatory hatred towards Haitian immigrants. All participants mentioned their ill feelings towards the president of the United States for using his power to go after a group of people. Participants reported feeling disrespected. Participants also believed that moving to America and working hard would benefit not only them, but society (interest convergence). Although President Trump, or his administration, was never charged for a hate speech crime, Haitian immigrant participants of this study believed that he created a hostile environment and political climate. The last vestiges of the Trump administration are reflected in the states headed by Republican governors who are creating laws to ban the teaching of CRT in the public-school systems, 6 months after the departure of President Trump from the White House.

Haitian immigrants sharing their lived experiences of moving to the United States during the political climate of 2017–2020 would be considered an important counter narrative to document for exploring factors that can help create psychosocial strategies to cope with perceived racial discrimination, depression, fear and anxiety. Past researchers showed that Haitian immigrants reported great fear of deportation and family separation

following the political threat to end TPS, an act designed to protect immigrants from certain countries threatened by armed conflict (Artiga & Ubri, 2017). One factor that proved to be a coping strategy is living in an area that feels most like home. All participants were in agreement that South Florida most reminded them of back home because of the similar tropical climate and the Haitian-American community. Living in South Florida puts participants near family and friends and other diverse immigrant communities. The United States is home to the largest Haitian immigrant community outside of the country, with 79% currently of working age between 18–64 and 15% were 65 and older. Sixty five percent of Haitian immigrants and Haitian Americans live in Florida (Lucien, 2015). Romero (2018) stated that there were 333,000 documented Haitian immigrants, of whom 244,000 were U.S.-born or naturalized in South Florida as of 2017. Living close to family and friend's increases social support and can serve as a protective factor against stressors.

Past researchers found three distinct types of depression among Haitian women that included the following: (a) *douleur de corps*, which is pain in the body, (b) *soulagement par Dieu*, which is relief through God, and (c) *lutte sans victoire*, which is fighting a winless battle (Nicolas et al., 2009). Specifically, the third type of depression depicted by fighting a winless battle reflects the need to accept the fate that comes with living a negative life resulting from suffering, tragedies, and trauma. Likewise, past researchers investigated the mental health effects of the Trump era on the undocumented and documented Latino population and found 58% of the participants indicated moderate to severe range with symptoms of depression and/or anxiety (Rojas, 2019). Although

participants were not tested for depression in this study, the third type of depression corresponds to some of the participant responses regarding the helplessness of being an immigrant fleeing the crisis in Haiti to live under the political climate of the Trump administration in the United States.

Limitations of the Study

One notable limitation of the study is the lack of female participants. Although researchers cannot control the limitations uncovered in study design and construction (Simon & Goes, 2013), the biggest challenge proved to be the recruitment of women participants. Another limitation of the study was that, as a student researcher, I was a novice and could potentially cause errors due to not having conducted independent research and data analysis before (Elo et al., 2014). Additional challenges and limitations of the study may include participation from the participants. It may could be due to race and race relations being hot button issues that most immigrants shy away from because of fearing retribution.

Recommendations

The first recommendation for future research is to extend this qualitative narrative research to include women's voices in order to understand a more holistic lived experience of Haitian immigrants who migrated during the Trump administration. Understanding how women conceptualize the immigration process as well as their feelings regarding the political climate would also provide more counter narratives of what life was like during that time.

The second recommendation for future research is to conduct a quantitative study regarding anxiety and depression of Haitian immigrants to better understand the number of Haitian immigrants who meet criteria for an anxiety or depression diagnosis. Past research has focused on the depression rates of Haitian youth. Current quantitative data regarding anxiety and depression among Haitian could be data that launches psychosocial programs or outreach tailored specifically to the population.

Implications

Between 1980 and 2000, the Haitian-born population residing in the United States more than quadrupled from 92,000 to 419,000 (Terrazas, 2010). According to the Migration Policy Institute, Haitians accounted for less than 2 percent of U.S. foreign-born population totaling 676,000 in 2015 up from 587,000 in 2010 (Schulz & Batalova, 2017). The immigration debate in the United States is influenced by each new president that takes power. Past presidents have had their challenges in creating immigration law that seeks to serve those in need and to keep out those that may cause harm to our society. In order to impact social change, the goal of researching the lived experiences of Haitian immigration under the current political climate needed to be examined to better understand the impact their mental health.

At the individual level, the potential impact for positive social change is reflected in our better understanding of how Haitian immigrants processed their feelings after President Trump called their country a “shithole.” Anxiety and depression stemming from feelings of fear and disrespect are potential target areas for working with this population. At the family level, the potential impact for positive social change is reflected

in the connections of Haitian immigrants with their American-based family, friends, and others in the Haitian American community. Having a strong social support is a protective factor for psychosocial stressors. At the organizational level, the potential impact for positive social change could be in the form of an updated immigration system that includes user-friendly design for immigrants with limited English language skills. A more mainstreamed immigration process could provide less stress for those applying to migrate to the United States. Finally, at the societal/policy level, the potential impact for positive social change could be seen in the extension of the TPS for Haitian immigrants. Haiti is currently in the middle of a pandemic crisis and a postponed constitutional referendum is making the country a dangerous place to live.

The first recommendation for practice is the use of the intervention of storytelling for sharing lived immigrant experiences to the United States. Allowing Haitian immigrants to tell their story of leaving Haiti and migrating to South Florida appeared to be healing as they were too able to share in a safe space and with a Haitian American student. The second recommendation for practice is the strategy of creating career development programs tailored to Haitian immigrants as jobs were something that Haitian immigrants struggled to find when arriving to the state. The third recommendation for practice is the outreach of information on how to complete immigration paperwork required by USCIS.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore the lived experiences of Haitian immigrants with the hopes of providing strategies and interventions to facilitate feelings of wellbeing for

Haitian immigrants in the United States. The participants of this study shared brave stories of fleeing political persecution and violence. The findings indicate that life under the Trump administration was not easy, but some Haitian immigrants did gain in their personal lives with jobs, new friends, a tropical climate, and family who lived close by.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

1. First and Last Name: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Year of Immigration to United States: _____
5. Occupation: _____
6. City of Residence in South Florida: _____
7. Immigration Status: _____

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Please describe the reasons why you chose to immigrate to the United States.
2. Please describe your experiences during the initial immigration process to the United States. Anything that stands out?
3. Please describe your experiences upon arriving to the United States. What are your reasons for choosing to live in South Florida?
4. Please describe how you perceive the current political climate and anything that stands out to you?
5. How has the current political climate in the United States made you feel? Is there anything that stands out?
6. Please describe any experience positive or negative that you have had that you think is due to you living in this current political climate?

Appendix C: Interview Questions in Haitian Creole

- 1.) Tanpri dekri rezon ki fè ou te chwazi imigre Ozetazini.
- 2.) Tanpri dekri eksperyans ou pandan premye pwosesis imigrasyon nan Etazini.
Nenpòt bagay ki vle di soti?
- 3.) Tanpri dekri eksperyans ou lè ou rive Ozetazini. Ki sa ou ye rezon pou chwazi viv nan Sid Florid.
- 4.) Tanpri dekri kijan ou wè klima politik aktyèl la ak nenpòt bagay ki vle di ou?
- 5.) Kijan klima politik aktyèl Ozetazini fè w santi w? Èske gen yon bagay ki kanpe deyò?
- 6.) Tanpri dekri nenpòt eksperyans pozitif oswa negatif ke ou te genyen ke ou panse se akòz ou k ap viv nan klima politik sa a kounye a?

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