

Misguided Multilateralism? The Saga of UN Peacebuilding in Haiti

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There have been various international actors with a long presence in Haiti, rendering heterogenous and complex effects that have not been systematically studied. This article analyzes the United Nations active involvement in Haiti since 1990, by focusing on the legacy of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), 2004-2017. This article explains MINUSTAH's limited effectiveness and discusses its consequences for Haiti in the context of the political, security, and humanitarian situation in the country after the mission ended, though the UN presence remained in the country alongside different international actors. Finally, MINUSTAH is reviewed in peacebuilding studies and is interpreted through the lenses of seven theoretical frameworks on peacebuilding.

Keywords: Haiti, MINUSTAH, multilateralism, international intervention, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, security, human rights

Introduction

This article studies the consequences of multilateralism in Haiti with a focus on the influence of the United Nations (UN). It traces the UN's involvement in Haiti since 1990, with a close attention on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) during 2004-2017 and beyond. Of course, international involvement in Haiti has a much longer history, dating to the isolation of the second independent post-colony in the Americas by the United States (US), and the imposed reparations by France early in the Nineteenth Century.¹ A great variety of actors, including formal international organizations, have complex and heterogeneous effects. The UN is part of the context of multilateralism, which is wide and complex. It is compiled by actors with diverse interests and powers, norms, the international political economy, and an emerging instability of nascent multipolarism, as well as a most challenging political environment inside Haiti characterized by sultanistic rule, massive corruption, impunity, gangsterism, a flattened civil society, and widespread poverty.

Historically, the UN has been present in Haiti since 1949, starting with an integrated assistance program by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), followed in 1954 by the United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) helping to certify persecuted Haitians for refugee status in order to resettle.² Decades later, came various UN agencies and the United Nation Resident Coordinator (UNRC) which is the highest ranking representative of the United Nations development system (UNDS) at the country level. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was active in giving interest-free loans. If you asked somebody in downtown Port-au-Prince in 1990 where the UN was, they would point you to the UNHCR and UNDP offices. This changed in 1990, which marked the start of UN active involvement in Haiti with almost continuous missions, certified every six to twelve months by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) or the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Three types of missions can be conceptualized for the period since 1990; the first was from 1990-1991, which was a unidimensional peacekeeping mission which focused on elections and was divided between the UN and the Organization of American States (OAS). The second was the 1993-2000 multidimensional peacekeeping mission, which was divided between the OAS on elections, the UN on human rights, and the US via the Army Corps of Engineers infrastructure projects but was subsequently unified by the UN and OAS field staff. It was based on the UN's earlier El Salvador and Cambodia experiences, which combined human rights and election monitoring. The third was the 2004-2017 complex multidimensional peacekeeping mission MINUSTAH, which was established in response to the political instability in Haiti after regime collapse earlier that year. In the words of Sandra Honore, UN Special Representative (UNSR) and Head of MINUSTAH from 2013-2017, the UNSC decided that “[w]ith the presence of 18 UN aid programs already operating in the country, ... a multidimensional integrated mission with a stabilization mandate was the most suitable model of peacekeeping to address the situation” (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2017). This third phase of UN peace operations is the largest by far and is at the center of the present analysis.

We locate MINUSTAH, as a part of a longer-term UN involvement in Haiti, in peacebuilding studies and interpret it through the lenses of seven theoretical frameworks on peacebuilding. There has been little academic work within the peacebuilding concept in Haiti as such. The existing studies of MINUSTAH mainly describe it in broad terms, usually highly critical of its performance and effects. Thus, there is a need for a more nuanced and focused study of MINUSTAH's impact and implications for Haiti; this task is at the hearth of this article's research question. MINUSTAH's effectiveness was limited in time and scope. It was essential to restore stability in Haiti, which proved unsustainable after the end of the mission. It reformed the Haitian National Police (HNP), which has been the primary provider of security in Haiti since the end of the UN mission. It was less effective in strengthening the rule of law and human rights systems. Haiti seems to be in a vicious circle; after 2004, political instability was overcome under the UN's watch. Haiti went through a period of stagnation in political, socioeconomic and human rights areas, and slid back into political turmoil in mid-2019, and since the July 2021 assassination of then president, Jovenel Moïse, the country has been in a political gridlock, left ineffective to deal with escalating and expanding violence and the resulting multifaceted humanitarian crisis.

The UN presence in Haiti continues into 2024, with most of the multidimensional peacebuilding activities intact, except for the presence of thousands of soldiers, which arguably were the most visible, harmful, and controversial aspect; they were also the least essential, given that Haiti had no army to supervise it for most of its tenure, and the UN police mission and rule of law mission addressed Haiti's primarily political-legal deficits. While the UN troops can be credited with deterring coups and regime changes, their departure was not accompanied with a police and justice system capable of managing the takeover of much of the country, especially Port-au-Prince, by organized crime gangs, the political elites, and parties with whom they collaborate. Elections, the main dimension of democracy, were conducted poorly in 2016 without the UN election monitoring system, declaring Jovenel Moïse the winner of dubious first-round votes. This proved that Haitians remain as capable of rigging elections as the US, in coordination with the UN and OAS in its predecessor, Michel Martelly's 'selection' in the 2010-2011 vote, and the manipulated false majority that was declared for Rene Preval in the 2006 presidential election.

Multilateralism

Multilateralism is defined as the practice that “coordinates behavior among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct” (Ruggie, 1992, p. 574). Generalized principles of conduct entail indivisibility and generate diffuse reciprocity among the members of a collectivity.³ Multilateral organizations (MOs) are distinguished from the institution of multilateralism (IM) (Caporaso, 1992, Martin, 1992). The meaning of multilateralism is not fixed, and it can be understood within the context of the evolving world order - the kind of members in multilateral relations, the kind of systems that connect those members, and the conditions of the world system (Cox, 1992). Contested multilateralism explains contemporary multilateralism, which is not essentially cooperative and characterized by integrated rules and arises when the members “either shift their focus from one existing institution to another or create an alternative multilateral institution to compete with existing ones” (Morse and Keohane, 2014, pp. 386-387). Consequences of multilateralism may vary depending on the present conditions. It may have democracy-enhancing effects in already well-established democracies (Keohane *et al.*, 2009). Multilateralism may also have debilitating effects on democracy – “promote special interests, violate rights of minorities, diminish the quality of collective deliberation, or seriously degrade the ability of people to participate in governance without compensating democratic advantages” (Keohane *et al.*, 2009, p. 27). Critics particularly point to the democratic deficit of international institutions due to their bureaucratic, diplomatic, and technocratic nature, their elite-driven agendas, and lack of democratic deliberation and direct popular accountability.

Multilateralism has been studied through different theoretical lenses (Cox, 1992). Realism and various critical theories share the view that international organizations (IOs) are nothing more than the great powers that comprise and fund them. The UN is not autonomous and is merely an agent of the power structure in the international system. Its programs can be insidious because this is a convenient way for great powers – the US in this case – to blame all the failures in Haiti on the UN when in fact the US is dictating and directing its actions.

The world systems approach, created by Immanuel Wallerstein and elaborated for Haiti by Alex Dupuy, is based on the premise that the international system divides the world into a center and periphery and argues that the periphery states are not allowed to develop and their national autonomy and policies do not matter. The economic structure of the international system matters the most, and global capitalism has been detrimental for Haiti. The UN is a part of this structure and is often utilized as a tool for the great powers, namely the permanent five (P5) members of the UNSC, which include China, France, Great Britain, Russia and the United States.

Liberalism, and to some extent constructivism, believe that ideals and norms are consequential as they elevate expectations and standards. Constructivists particularly emphasize ideas and identities. Change starts when people start enunciating discourses about human rights violations; something that did not happen in Haiti during the Duvalier family dictatorship, except towards the end of the Baby Doc period and to some extent along with the Catholic Church's transformation and the Social Doctrine. When in Port-au-Prince, the Pope said things had to change; this was partly because the Vatican itself was starting to talk about human rights in regards to how policies were changing around the world, particularly in the Southern Cone.

The UN and Peacebuilding

UN missions can be authorized by the UNSC, such as MINUSTAH and all Chapter VI and VII missions, and by the UNGA, such as the 1990-91 UN electoral mission in Haiti. The UN is

primarily an intergovernmental organization (IGO) that reflects the interests of the UNSC and the UNGA, though its decisions may often reflect big power preferences. UNSC decisions on Haiti usually reflect US preferences, as the rest of the P5 do not have geopolitical interests in Haiti.⁴ As the world order becomes more multipolar, less coalescence over issues can be expected. There is also interests of UN bureaucracies, such as the UN Secretariat, which includes the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO). MINUSTAH, with its own bureaucracy was placed under the UNDPKO and was overseen in a decentralized way by different special envoys, who at times reported to the Secretary General, the UN's supra-national aspect, or the UNDPKO. The UN's intergovernmental decision-making would prevail during the beginning and the end of the mission, and super-national decision-making would prevail during the mission dominated by the UNDPKO. There is also interests of the UN national units, which report in their own separate chains of command and are not necessarily loyal to the UN strategy. Finally, UN international personnel deployed on different missions have their own career objectives and personal interests.

Three trends have changed the nature of peace operations in the 21st century. First, missions, budgets, and personnel of peace operations have been growing. Second, peace operations have been most often deployed in complex post-conflict environments, which led the UN to rethink its principle of the non-use of force except in self-defense. Third, in order to achieve more lasting solutions, peace operations have shifted from traditional peacekeeping to peacebuilding, tasked with building and strengthening institutions (Benner *et al.*, 2011). Peacekeeping is defined as “the deployment of a neutral military-diplomatic mission to observe and potentially enforce the terms of an armistice agreement and/or a mandate handed down by the UN Security Council” (Benner *et al.*, 2011, p. 5).

Peacebuilding is defined as “rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war ... which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali quoted in Benner *et al.*, 2011, p. 5). Adopting Michael Doyle's concept, MINUSTAH falls under the category of complex multidimensional peacekeeping operations. The UN characterizes peacebuilding as operations that “facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law” (United Nations Peacekeeping, undated[a]). The literature underscores the complexity of modern peace operations:

“[t]he mandates of modern peace operations essentially fused peacekeeping and peacebuilding tasks in a way that also blurred the line between the responsibilities of DPKO and those of the roughly three dozen other Secretariat departments, funds, programs, and agencies that have come to engage in some aspect of civilian peacebuilding” (Benner *et al.*, 2011, p. 5).

Studies of peace operations distinguish between relatively successful and failed cases. Case studies explain each country's conditions for and constraints upon peacebuilding and examine the quality of international responses (Cousens *et al.*, 2001). Large-N analysis has shown that UN involvement in post-civil war environments does in fact increase the chance for peace (Doyle, 2006). The findings underscore the importance of development programs for lasting peace. Peacebuilding requires “the provision of temporary security, the building of new institutions capable of resolving future conflicts peaceably, and an economy capable of offering civilian employment to former soldiers and material progress to future citizens” (Doyle, 2006, p. 5).

Peacebuilding has been interpreted through seven interpretive frameworks: realism, liberalism, constructivism, cosmopolitanism, critical theories, locality, and policy analysis (Carey, 2021). For realism, strong coercive authority is essential for peace, and the top-down approach is the only way to achieve peace. International organizations are not autonomous and represent the self-interests of big powers. Unlike realism, liberalism distinguishes between democratic and non-democratic regimes, and believes that international cooperation is possible, international politics can be a positive-sum game, IOs can promote cooperation and peace, and ideas and norms are consequential. Like realism, liberalism adopts a top-down approach to peacebuilding, but focuses on democratic norms rather than state interests. Constructivism, which comes in different variations, emphasizes ideas and identities. Cosmopolitanism is an argument for implementing international law the way it was supposed to in that all human beings are members of a single community. Cosmopolitanism focuses on people's interests and redefines peace as being more than just the absence of violence. For critical theory, peacebuilding starts at the level of an individual. Locality focuses on the local context and culture as factors that need to shape peacebuilding. It criticizes approaches like liberalism that try to extend one (Western) model over all cases without contextualizing that model. Policy analysis is a micro-economic rational choice approach that conducts cost-benefit analysis and other linear programming and techniques to maximize the efficiency of the outcome. No one paradigm has a monopoly on truth and there are certain elements from all the paradigms that have an element of truth to them (Carey, 2021).

Peacebuilding in Haiti

Throughout the 1990s the UN was involved in Haiti to support democracy through different initiatives: monitoring elections, promoting human rights, imposing mandatory economic sanctions and arms embargo, authorizing the use of force, etc. However, the UN failed to make a lasting positive change in Haiti – “failed to stabilize the country and improve its standard of living” (Hawrylak and Malone, 2005, p. 33-39).

The first UN peacebuilding mission in Haiti was the 1990-1991 Organization for the Verification of Elections in Haiti (ONUVEH), which was authorized by the UNGA and focused on verifying elections. It was staffed, as the overlapping missions for the 1990 Nicaraguan elections (ONUVEN) and 1991 El Salvadoran elections (ONUSAL), by most of the same groups of international civil servants, such as Mario Gonzales and Maria Grossi. ONUVEH was supported by a contingency of mostly Venezuelan military officers, commissioned by then Venezuelan President, Carlos Andrés Pérez, who was active in the two Central American elections as part of his self-proclaimed mission to promote democratic regime changes. The Haitian army had violently disrupted and cancelled the 1987 elections, when the UN and OAS, and a few international NGOs besides the International Human Rights Law Group were present.⁵ The Venezuelan officers ensured that the Haitian military protected the December 16th 1990 elections, which only had one important violent incident in Petionville after Aristide's final campaign rally on the Champs de Mars in downtown Port-au-Prince. The Venezuelan officers were crucial to crushing the failed coup attempt in early January 1991 by Roger Lafontant, a former Haitian army commander of legendary brutality.

The second round of elections, which was for most of Haiti's hyper-federalized system of elective offices, occurred without violence, but with less than a five percent voter turnout. The OAS, which was led by Pierre Coté of the Quebec election office, provided counterpart support to the UN's civilian mission headed by González, who had been the second in command of the

two Central American missions, which were led by Iqbal Riza and supervised by the former US Attorney General Elliot Richardson while such supervision occurred in Haiti. The UN and OAS in all three elections conducted a “quick count,” a relatively representative sample of the election results, which provided indicative results for the presidential vote, and prevented uncertainty in light of the number of days it would have taken to count the vote. In Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide had a landslide victory with 67.5% vote based on the count of one-hundred voting precincts. 300,000 ballots, one-fifth of those cast in the first round, were lost with the voting tally sheets. The second round of elections were between the top two finishers for each available seat based on these incomplete vote counts. The UN and OAS maintained silence or did not discover this sad reality until nine months after the elections, when the fact was published and the Aristide presidency had already been overthrown in a coup (Carey, 1998). The UN and OAS were actively involved after the September 29-30, 1991 coup that overthrew President Aristide. Both organizations supported an embargo on Haiti to pressure the regime, but it benefited monetarily by monopolizing smuggling goods on inflated prices (Carey, 1991).

In February 1993, the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH), a joint UN and OAS human rights monitoring mission, was established. It continued to evolve under a variety of different names throughout the 2000 elections. For the sake of simple explanation, they are all referred to as MICIVIH here.⁶ From the beginning, the mission came across difficulties in implementing its mandate due to little cooperation from the Haitian military. There was intimidation of those who cooperated with the mission, and failure of the military high command to take action on the mission’s complaints about human rights violations by the Haitian military and police. However, during its first phase between February and October 1993, the mission played an important role in keeping the international community aware of the human rights situation in Haiti, deterring the military from human rights violations to some extent by the mission’s mere presence, visiting prisons and detainees and freeing some detainees, providing emergency medical assistance to human rights victims, and finding safe houses, food and clothing for those being persecuted by the military. While the mission’s work encouraged the Haitians to exercise their freedoms more assertively, the Haitian military did not tolerate such popular activeness and intensified its repressions in the summer of 1993, followed by political assassinations in October 1993. Having anticipated such developments, UN experts emphasized the urgent need for finding a political solution (O’Neill, 1995).

After a peace pact was finally negotiated at Governors Island in July 1993, which would allow the end of the embargo, amnesty for violent human rights violators, and the reinstatement of Aristide, the UN approved a small peacekeeping mission. It was about the same size of a few dozen troops that had been present for ONUVEH, to monitor compliance with the Governors Island Agreement. However, on October 11th 1993, a week after the “Black Hawk Down” debacle in Somalia and intimidated by a few drunk protestors at the dock, President Bill Clinton aborted the disembarking of Canadian and US peacekeeping troops in Port-au-Prince (Carey, 2005a). Days later, the UN police monitors and the MICIVIH monitors left Haiti. Thus, the multilateral effort ended prematurely without achieving its goal to restore democratic rule in Haiti (Martin, 1994). MICIVIH had another short phase from January to July 1994, when the Haitian de facto government expelled the mission.

On 19 September 1994, the Multinational Force (MNF) was authorized by the UNSC Resolution 940 and led by the US, which deployed 20,000 troops in Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti. The coup regime resigned on October 10th 1994, and President Aristide

returned to power on October 15th 1994 (and served his term till February 1996). At first, the mission provided no armed protection of Haitian civilians. It changed after the US media aired US soldiers observing the shooting of civilians by thugs and looting of medical supplies and food warehouses. But no arrests were made of those responsible, in the past or present, for political violence. Eventually, Army chief Raoul Cédras, Police chief Michel Francois, and CIA informant Emmanuel “Toto” Constant were all permitted to leave the country with their stolen money so long as they kept quiet about their connections to US intelligence (Carey, 2002a). In the end, the US invasion in 1994 was a reflection of US domestic politics, then-President Clinton’s and his predecessor George H.W. Bush’s soaring rhetoric and campaign promises in 1992 to restore democracy in Haiti and the Americas, following the OAS Santiago Declaration of 1991 to preserve democracy in the Americas (Carey 1997/1998a, 1997/1998b, 2001). MICIVIH’s reporting on the human rights situation also played a significant role in that decision (O’Neill, 1995, p.125).

MICIVIH was re-established after Aristide’s return (United Nations Archives, undated). MICIVIH oversaw the creation of the new Haitian National Police (HNP) in 1996 after Aristide abolished the armed forces in December 1995, a creature largely and initially of the 19-year US occupation of Haiti from 1915-1934. A variety of UN missions were commissioned by the UNSC, UNDPKO, and UNGA, which evolved directly or indirectly from the original 1993 MICIVIH human rights monitoring mission. The UNSC’s decision in 1994 to authorize use of force to restore democracy in Haiti was unprecedented in the organization’s history. The UN had declined to make a similar authorization earlier after the coup when it was officially requested by Aristide, having considered coups strictly a domestic matter posing no threat to international peace. The 1994 decision reflected the growing political salience of democratic governance in international relations (Dohono, 1996) and the international law doctrine of humanitarian intervention (Carey, 1998b). Though it can be argued that the 1994 intervention was tasked to implement the 1993 Governors Island Agreement (Cousens *et al.*, 2001), it is also argued that restoring democratic rule “was asserted as the UN goal in and of itself” rather than as a “means to anchor fragile peace agreements” (Hawrylak and Malone, 2005, p. 34). Moreover, UN humanitarian interventions and especially the “fusion of geopolitics and U.N. peacekeeping” are argued to be doomed to failure, unlike UN security missions in response to clear acts of aggression (Falk, 1995). Arguably, the US national security interest, traditional or redefined, was not at stake either. First, a non-democratic Haiti was a threat to US national security interests given that the US had tolerated and supported non-democratic regimes in Haiti (and elsewhere) in the past. Second, the US could control or absorb the Haitian refugees, which partly were a result of the imposed economic sanctions on Haiti (Donoho, 1996; Beardslee, 1996).

MINUSTAH

During Aristide’s second term from 2001 to 2004, with the UN and the OAS gone, and under the pressures of economic sanctions, foreign aid was withheld, and amid growing domestic opposition, Haiti descended into political instability and resurgence of armed gangs. Aristide had won a second term in the November 2000 presidential elections boycotted by the opposition after controversial legislative and local elections in May of that year. The UN had worked closely with rebel leaders like Guy Philippe. In retrospect, the UN could have mediated a truce or peace agreement with his forces, who went on to take over all of Haiti’s police stations and had planned to attack the capitol Port-au-Prince, when Aristide left Haiti after the US decided to

remove his personal security detail and offer him a safe departure. However, instead of the UN negotiating, the US advised the rebels through an employee of the International Republican Institute. Under pressure, Aristide resigned in February 2004 and was exiled from Haiti (Carey, 2004, 2005b). Haiti collapsed into “a profound state of instability, characterized by political and economic turmoil, as well as rampant violence perpetrated by armed groups said to have varying linkages to the country’s political spectrum” (Sandra Honore at CSIS, 2017).

In April 2004, the UNSC Resolution 1542 authorized the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti or Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en Haiti (MINUSTAH). Technically, a transitional administration with a different name managed the two-year period following Aristide’s overthrow. It was formally established in 2006 in order to hold elections to replace the transitional government. MINUSTAH maintained its name as the umbrella for all its names during 2006-2017, but also included the following: two UN police missions – CIVPOL and UNPOL, the armed forces mission (UNMIL),⁷ and any number of coordinated activities with other UN agencies and other governments and NGOs that were involved with the earthquake, elections, refugees (UNHCR) migrants (IOM), economic policy (UNDP), children (UNICEF), Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council (Independent Expert on Haiti), and UN human rights treaty bodies (e.g., CCPR).

In April 2017, the UNSC unanimously ‘decided’ that the 2,370 soldiers serving in MINUSTAH had to be gradually withdrawn by 15 October 2017. A smaller peacekeeping mission, the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) took over with 1,275 members of the MINUSTAH police monitoring and advising unit (UNPOL), as well as correction officers and international civilians. Two of three Indian military units with about 300 troops, which had served in MINUSTAH, remained in MINUJUSTH, however, its mandate ended on 15 October, 2019. MINUJUSTH had a more limited mandate; its main mission was to assist the Haitian government in strengthening the rule of law, monitoring human rights, and further developing the HNP. In October 2019, MINUJUSTH was replaced with a political mission, the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) with an initial one-year period. However, as of 4 July, 2023, the UNSC extended the mandate of BINUH until 15 July 2024. BINUH’s mission is to assist the Haitian government to advance stability, strengthen the rule of law and protect human rights. In many ways, its goals are unchanged from MINUSTAH’s, even though the absence of tens of thousands of soldiers and military bases throughout the capitol and the country has changed both its perception and capabilities.

Unlike former UN missions in Haiti, MINUSTAH focused on addressing human security problems and had a much stronger uniformed personnel capacity. Comparatively, the UNSC resolutions that authorized its missions in Haiti in the 1990s did not focus on human rights and human security in Haiti, while those two issues were at the heart of the resolution that created MINUSTAH. The interventions in the 1990s presented a “model of how not to intervene in a fragile state” and they were terminated prematurely. Conversely, MINUSTAH had an “extremely robust and ambitious agenda” (Heine and Thompson, 2011, p.15). MINUSTAH was the first UN peacekeeping operation with a majority of its troops from Latin America. This exemplified the region’s shift from a strong preference for the principle of nonintervention to a greater interest in participating in peace operations (Kenkel, 2013). Latin America’s influence on the mission goes beyond the number of troops. In the words of Edmond Mulet, MINUSTAH’s Head during 2006-2007 and 2010-2011:

“[t]he emphasis that MINUSTAH has – more than in any other peace operation – on civil affairs, quick-impact projects, community violence reduction programs and, since the devastating earthquake of 2010, in recovery and reconstruction efforts is due to the influence that Latin American countries have exerted in legislative and budgetary bodies in the UN” (Kenkel, 2013, p. xvii).

Brazil provided the mission’s military command, presenting a sharp contrast to its non-interventionist stance in the 1990s and specifically its opposition to the 1994 US-led intervention. Brazil’s decision might have been guided by a pragmatic interest to expand its power within the UNSC and in relations with the Global South, by a moral obligation as an emerging power to take on greater responsibilities in maintaining the international order, or by the concept of “non-indifference” towards Haiti with which Brazil shares not only identity background but also several deeply-rooted societal problems. It has also been argued that MINUSTAH was a laboratory for Brazil to test its public policy of using military force to address urban violence. The Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) drew parallels between Brazilian forces’ pacification of the slums in Port-au-Prince and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro (Gomes, 2006).

On January 12th 2010, Haiti was struck by a 7.0-magnitude earthquake. It killed over 316,000 people, injured 300,000, and displaced over 1 million people (Carey, 2010a, 2010b; Cecchine *et al.*, 2013; estimates vary). The earthquake destroyed over 100,000 structures, including the presidential palace, the parliament building, and 14 of 16 government ministries. The MINUSTAH headquarters collapsed and 102 UN staff died, including 97 MINUSTAH personnel, the mission’s head and his principal deputy – the greatest loss of life in a single event in UN peacekeeping history (Cecchine *et al.*, 2013; United Nations Peacekeeping, undated[b]). The international community’s response to the earthquake was “swift and generous” amidst general “donor fatigue” (Heine and Thompson, 2011, p. 3). The UNSC authorized to increase MINUSTAH’s 9,000 uniformed personnel by 2,000 troops and 1,500 police officers (United Nations Peacekeeping, undated[b]). MINUSTAH continued to provide security and stability in post-earthquake Haiti. In coordination with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), MINUSTAH established a joint operations and tasking center (JOTC), which served as a single point of contact for requests for military and police assistance. MINUSTAH worked in coordination with the joint task force (JTF-Haiti) established by the US military. To avoid confusion and duplication, the leadership agreed that MINUSTAH would provide security and that JTF-Haiti would provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (Cecchine *et al.*, 2013).⁸ More likely, the earthquake and other natural disasters prolonged MINUSTAH’s stay in Haiti. In Edmond Mulet’s words:

“[w]ith the earthquake, everything has changed not only for Haiti and Haitians, but for us also – the UN and peacekeeping. So we have to be here for a longer time in order to help the government to stabilize the country and assist in the recuperation and reconstruction of the country” (MaximsNewsNetwork, 2010).

A reoccurring theme in the existing studies of international involvement in Haiti is the country’s persistent problems in search of the most effective approach to tackle those problems. Haiti is said to have been caught in a conflict-poverty trap (Verner, 2007). One component of this trap is Haiti’s demographic and socioeconomic factors, such as high population growth rate, poor economic performance, rapid rate of urbanization, high population turnover, especially in metropolitan areas, widespread poverty, high inequality, low human development, and high unemployment. The second component is the Haitian state’s low institutional capacity to provide

public goods and manage social risks. Education, health, and infrastructure have suffered from insufficient investments due to the government's weak capacity to generate revenue, poor expenditure targeting, and frequent withdrawals or the redirection of international development assistance. The non-state sector, largely uncoordinated and unregulated, became a larger provider of health, education, and security. The rule of law and security institutions have been weakened by corruption and political interference. The third component, which needs to change first to break this trap is political. Haitian politics has suffered from "capture by privileged elites who harness government to protect their dominant position in society; and populism that neglects the country's long-term institutional and economic development while paying lip service to the poor" (Verner, 2007, p. 73). Given these domestic problems, many scholars have questioned the effectiveness of the UN's approach in Haiti.

MINUSTAH's greatest achievement in *relative* terms was restoring stability in Haiti. After MINUSTAH left, the achieved political stability collapsed. Organized crime gangs and ransom-for-profit rackets returned with a vengeance as soon as the troops left. Sandara Honore explains that the underlying social, political and economic drivers of instability in Haiti were not tackled, and such unresolved grievances triggered violent protests, and increase in crime and gang violence (CSIS, 2017). "The problem of public security was dealt with solely as a security problem, not as a political problem," said Carlos Alberto Dos Santos, MINUSTAH Force Commander during 2007-2009 (Guidi, 2009). Patrick Elie, a Haitian sociologist and former defense minister, predicted the unsustainability of the MINUSTAH-provided stability well before the mission ended:

"[i]f we just accept the dictate of MINUSTAH or the US or Canada, we're going to hit a wall in about 5 or 10 years. ... If you don't deal with the socioeconomic problems, and all you think about is how many more policemen you're going to have, or if you are going to have an army that can go down in the shantytowns with tanks—... you're going nowhere very fast" (Guidi, 2009).

Instead, Haiti needs a "holistic approach" to its security threats aimed at addressing the "root causes of fragility" (Heine and Thompson, 2011, pp. 19-20). Another criticism is that the UN could have put its resources to a better use in Haiti (Quigley, 2014). There was skepticism about the relevance of MINUSTAH to the daily lives of Haitians in predominantly peaceful rural areas where "the struggle of day-to-day survival in the face of severe poverty and serious food insecurity was greater than the largely urban issues of kidnappings, gang violence, and common crime" (Farmer, 2012, p. 315). The billions of dollars that MINUSTAH spent in a country with no civil war could have been used for "economic revolution" (Richardo Seitenfus, OAS Special Representative in Haiti during 2008-2011, in *Right Now I want to Scream*, 2020). MINUSTAH did not solve any structural problems - political, socioeconomic or legal. Because MINUSTAH did not oversee the economic and social programs, it is not fair to judge it by Haiti's failures in those realms. But MINUSTAH institutionalized Haiti's problems by supporting the stability of the regime that has not solved Haiti's socioeconomic problems and by supporting the parallel-NGO state in Haiti which lacks accountability.

Haiti: The Regime and Socioeconomic Factors

For most of its history, up through 1986, if not beyond, Haiti was a predatory state used for extortion. Without strong national security, Haiti was unable to deliver economic performance; the regime stability and survival relied on the use of paramilitaries during the Cold War. Strongly

hated, the paramilitary was later disbanded though its remnants continue to this day in decreasing numbers. Now Haiti is a patrimonial state or a competitive electoral regime where elections are not regularly held, and their integrity is questionable. Haiti has suffered from weak governance, high corruption, low socioeconomic development, and high inequality. The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project ranks Haiti very low on all of its six broad dimensions of governance: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption (Kaufmann and Kraay, 2023). Between 1996 and 2022, Haiti had the following trends; first, even with very low starting points in 1996, all six WGI indicators in Haiti further declined for the following several years, reaching the lowest point for the period in 2003-2004, except for the estimate of Government Effectiveness, which after hitting a low point in 2004 improved till 2008, remained relatively stable till 2013, and thereafter resumed its downfall reaching its lowest point for the period in 2022. All six WGI indicators for Haiti improved for several years starting 2003-2004, stabilized for several more years, and started to decline in deferent years during 2013-2019. Finally, despite some ups and downs throughout the period, five out of the six WGI indicators hit a lower mark in 2022 than in 1996, and one indicator, the Rule of Law, had equally low marks in 1996 and 2022.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Critics of international intervention emphasize that regionally it is the most impoverished country, its socioeconomic situation being the result of systematic and deliberate international policies pressured upon Haiti for centuries (Technology and Culture Forum, 2002). According to the World Development Indicators, Haiti's GDP per capita (constant 2015 US\$) slightly improved from 1,279.5 in 2004 to 1,430.8 in 2018, then dropped for four consecutive years to 1,247.9 in 2022. Haitians heavily rely on remittances, which in 2022 made up about 22.4% of the country's GDP. As of 2021, Haiti had the lowest Human Development Index in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, and the third highest value for the Coefficient of Human Inequality in the world. According to the World Food Programme, over half of Haiti's population faced chronic food insecurity in 2023 – one of the highest levels in the world.

MINUSTAH: Analysis

MINUSTAH's primary mandate was "to ensure a secure and stable environment within which the constitutional and political process in Haiti can take place." Its broad mandate also included: assisting the transitional government in reforming the police; disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating armed groups; restoring and maintaining the rule of law; supporting the constitutional and political process; holding elections; promoting and protecting human rights. The official mantra of the UN intervention in 2004 was to stabilize the country. But the case can be made that the UN intervened in the first place because the US had forced Aristide out or had facilitated his removal; one can call it a US-assisted Haitian coercion. The US role and motivations in Aristide's resignation is a contentious issue.⁹ Critics of US foreign policy argued that the US viewed Aristide as a left-wing danger in the Caribbean and supported the anti-Aristide movement.

The US animosity to Aristide can be traced to the 1990 presidential elections when he won the race over the US administration's favored candidate Bazin, a former World Bank official and advocate of economic liberalization. International financial assistance to this very poor country was frozen to bring down his rule. Defenders of US policy in Haiti blamed the Aristide regime,

pointing to his unfulfilled promise to the Haitians as a revolutionary new leader. The US cut off direct aid to Haiti, while humanitarian assistance continued bypassing the government because the aid allegedly was not going to the people. Both critics and defenders agree that Aristide had disappointed the Haitians on a number of issues, but they argue whether the US wanted to help Aristide develop the country or they wanted to “break him.” In any case, there was a broad-based domestic opposition to Aristide’s rule. His ouster could have been a combination of local armed revolt and the US assistance used to push him out.¹⁰

MINUSTAH was comprised of a military and civilian component – troops, civilian police, international and local civilian personnel, and UN volunteers. MINUSTAH was one of the largest UN peacekeeping operations by the number of uniformed personnel and budget, both in absolute and per capita terms, ranking 3rd or the 4th among the UN then-current peacekeeping operations during most of the years of its operation. MINUSTAH was authorized to start with over 6,700 troops and 1,622 civilian police. Growing almost annually since its start, its capacity peaked in 2010-2011, when the number of troops was authorized to increase to 8,744 and civilian police to 3,240. That year, its budget reached \$853,827,400, which was equivalent to about 50% of Haiti’s annual government expenditures and 10.7% of the country’s GDP (Johnston, 2011). The cumulative expenditure for MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH from June 1, 2004 to June 20, 2020 was \$7,768,638 (UN, 2021).¹¹ According to Sandra Honore’s evaluation of MINUSTAH’s work:

“[a]midst the vast needs and challenges facing Haiti and many setbacks which Haiti has had over the past 13 years, ...concrete and visible headway has been made. However, the results in respect of the multitude of tasks mandated to the mission have been mixed” (CSIS, 2017).

MINUSTAH can be credited for stabilizing the situation and restoring state authority in the country. Kenneth Merten, a former Ambassador to Haiti said, “MINUSTAH has done what it was established to do – create a measure of stability in Haiti ...job well done” (CSIS, 2017). It combated organized crime, drastically cut the rates of homicide and kidnapping, and gained back the control of several neighborhoods from armed gangs. MINUSTAH can be credited for the HNP’s growth in size, strength, and professionalism, as well as its de-politization, as sustainable as it may be. From 2004 to 2017, the HNP significantly grew, increasing the police to population ratio from 0.6 officers per 1000 people in 2004 to 1.3 in 2017. The HNP had about 14,000 officers in 2017, 9.5% of them female. As of 2020, the HNP grew further to include about 15,000 officers (CSIS, 2017; Congressional Research Service (CRS), 2020). MINUSTAH took down (remnants of) Duvalier’s paramilitary structure, which reduced but did not eliminate selective assassinations. Recent administrations have not traversed the path of mass terror, which as effective as it is, can also be costly for the economy as well as the country’s reputation. It can be argued that President Martelly’s regime resorted to selective assassinations. However, MINUSTAH failed to establish the rudiments of a political system during the 2004-2006 transitional government.

The provisional electoral council marginalized Aristide’s political movement, disqualifying all of its candidates initially in 2004 and then in the 2005 to 2006 elections. Since then, Haiti has not had a mass-based ideological party. MINUSTAH continued the practice of establishing a provisional electoral commission, instead of a permanent one required by the 1987 Constitution. Elections had to be reestablished with a new electoral law for each subsequent round of elections to the present day, along with a new set of commissioners, who are usually inexperienced in elections. The commissioners lack a permanent data base of registered voters or national citizens’

list (both of which have been used in different elections) and are widely corrupt from bribes to include or exclude candidates, as well as procurement kickbacks, to petty theft of equipment. MINUSTAH, like previous peacebuilding missions in Haiti, turned a blind eye to these aberrations. Local, parliamentary, and three presidential elections were held during MINUSTAH’s mandate.

The provisional government came to an end with the 2006 presidential election. Rene Preval got 49% of the vote in the first round. By excluding blank ballots, they increased his vote percentage to over 50% to avoid a second round. The election was supervised by the International Commission to Verify Elections. Serious electoral problems were reported, but the international community did not delegitimize the election. Beginning in 2006, the UN set up a system where they actually counted the regional balloting papers to avoid post-poll rigging in the counting stages. The next presidential elections were held in 2010-2011. During the first round in November 2010, former first lady Mirlande Manigat finished in first place; Preval’s candidate Jules Celestine finished second, and singer Michel Martelly finished third. There was electoral fraud and irregularities by many candidates. The government dropped its candidate from the runoff ending a stalemate with the US, moving Martelly forward to run in and win the second round in April 2011. The US administration conditioned provision of over \$1 billion in aid to Haiti on elections that it would find credible (NYTimes, 27 January, 2011). Then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton flew directly from Cairo during the Arab Spring, complained about the first round, and insisted on removing Celestin from the second round. President Martelly suspended all the scheduled elections for five years and appointed his own loyalists to the entire country’s mayors, Communal Councils (CASECs) and the Communal Section Assemblies (ASECs). Following the former, the next presidential elections, together with parliamentary elections were scheduled for August/October 2015. The results of August’s first round presidential election were annulled due to significant electoral fraud, and fresh presidential elections were held after mass protests and several cancellations in November 2016. Haitian authorities controlled the administration of the November 2016 elections, the first since 1990 that were not advised and monitored by the UN or OAS. In the absence of the UN’s elaborate election verification system and with abuse of the powers of government, Martelly’s handpicked candidate Jovenel Moise was announced the winner after the first round with a surprising 56% vote. Thus, MINUSTAH can be credited for no coups under its watch and for the survival of elected presidencies.

In support of rule of law and human rights systems, oversight institutions were established such as the General Inspectorate of the HNP and the Office of the National Human Rights Ombudsperson. The mission also supported legislative reform such as the draft Criminal Code, the draft Code of Criminal Procedure, and the draft Penitentiary Law. The mission supported the creation of the Superior Council of the Judiciary, the School of Magistrates, and the Juvenile Tribunal outside the capital. Therefore, when evaluating MINUSTAH’s legacy, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of what UN missions may achieve given domestic constraints. Sandra Honore identified Haiti’s political challenges as the main impediment to the consistent progress in policing, rule of law, human rights, investment and job creation. Laying out the role of MINUSTAH’s successor missions, Honore remarked that “[u]ltimately, the success [of the UN missions] will reside in the hands and in the minds of the Haitians” (CSIS, 2017).

MINUSTAH's Controversial Legacy

MINUSTAH's legacy was marred, however, with several problems – the illegal killings of civilians, the cholera outbreak, and the sexual exploitation and abuse of Haitians. Moreover, the way the UN handled these problems affected the public's attitude toward them. The mere presence of the UN troops in Haiti in the absence of a civil war was controversial:

“This is Haiti, this is the land of Juan Jacques Dessalines, this is a people that vowed never to be controlled and chained and slaved again, and here is a military force walking around in full battle regalia with hands on the trigger and who treat the people with great deal of contempt,” said Mario Gousse of the Haitian Support Group (TRT, Oct 14, 2017).

Human Rights Violations

MINUSTAH was accused of systematic attacks resulting in deaths and injuries of civilians, unlawful detention, and enabling the police to engage in illegal killing of civilians and suppression of political dissent (Halling and Bookey, 2008, pp. 461-462). It has been criticized for disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force during its raids on armed gangs in densely populated slums, mainly Cité Soleil – Haiti's largest and poorest slum. Since the mid-1990s, Cité Soleil was under the effective control of armed gangs that conducted kidnappings for ransom and enacted in drug trafficking, as documented in a film called *Ghosts of Cite Soleil (2006)*. With a series of incursions in Cité Soleil between 2004 and 2007, MINUSTAH disbanded many of its gangs, reduced kidnapping, and reestablished state authority over the areas previously controlled by the armed gangs (Guidi, 2009). The targeted areas had concentrations of supporters of Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party. Some critics argued that those raids were purposeful attacks against Lavalas party activists and Aristide supporters (Haiti Information Project, 2007).

Between 2005 and 2007, MINUSTAH conducted fifteen major raids in Cite Soleil. During Operation Iron First on July 6th 2005, it used 22,700 firearm cartridges, 78 grenades, 5 mortar shells (*It Stays with You, 2018*). The operation killed a gang leader and his associates but also innocent civilians. The death toll was estimated at 30, with 26 gunshot victims, including 20 women and at least one child which sought medical assistance. After another major raid in Cite Soleil on December 22nd 2006, MINUSTAH was criticized for its use of heavy artillery, such as shooting from helicopter gunships, and indiscriminate killing of civilians (Buncombe, 2006). It resulted in a death toll estimated as high as 70 people. The Red Cross was not immediately allowed into the area to assist the victims, which included wounded children. According to survivors' accounts, people lived in constant fear due to MINUSTAH's operations. It was not safe outdoors or indoors, as many were shot dead inside their homes. Houses were ruined after the bombings (*It Stays with you, 2018*). MINUSTAH claimed that they did not target civilians and took “all possible measures to reduce the risk of civilian casualties in their operations.” However, they did not deny the possibility of collateral victims as “the nature of such missions in densely populated urban areas is such that there is always a risk of civilian casualties” (MINUSTAH, 2005).

Later, the UN admitted that innocent people may have been caught in the crossfire between MINUSTAH and gangsters (Buncombe, 2006). US Ambassador to Haiti, James Foley, stated “it is likely that rounds penetrated many buildings, striking unintended targets.” Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Haiti, Douglas Griffiths, stated that the allegations that MINUSTAH had killed 20 women and children were “credible” (*It Stays with You, 2018*). The

connection between MINUSTAH's heavy-handed military operations in Haiti's slums and the militarized approach to public security used by the Brazilian police in their favelas is well established (*Right Now I Want to Scream, 2020*). First, in both countries, entire poor neighbourhoods were criminalized and targeted due to a few gangs operating there. Second, Haiti served as a laboratory for the Brazilian troops training and testing their approach to public security. Several Brazilian generals continued their careers in the government after their deployments in Haiti.

Cholera Outbreak

Before the 2010 cholera outbreak, inadvertently introduced by UN peacekeeping troops, Haiti had never registered a case of cholera. The first case of cholera in Haiti was confirmed on October 22nd 2010, and within ten weeks the epidemic spread throughout the country (Bode, 2016). From October 2010 to March 2022, Haiti had nearly 10,000 deaths and 820,000 suspected cases of cholera (UN, 2022). The transmission declined to about 720 suspected cases in 2019 and there was no laboratory-confirmed case for over three years after February 2019 (CDC, 2022). But Haitians continued to be vulnerable to the disease due to poor conditions of water, sanitation, and health systems. In October 2022, cholera resurfaced in Haiti and as of September 2023, had spread to over 75% of communes, resulting in about 64,496 suspected cases of cholera and 906 deaths (UNICEF, 2023). The situation is exacerbated due to the resurgence of violence as “gangs have reportedly prevented patient access to health facilities and denied medical staff entry to affected communities,” as well as many health facilities shutting down or reducing their activities (CRS, 2023, pp. 8-9). For many Haitians, MINUSTAH is associated with the healthcare crisis caused by the cholera epidemic. The UN had failed to test its Nepalese peacekeepers coming from a city with an active cholera outbreak and followed poor sanitation practices at its camps in Haiti discharging raw sewage into Haiti's major river system, thus contaminating water used by thousands of Haitians for cooking and drinking. Several factors contributed to a rapid transmission of cholera across the country due to most Haitians lacking access to safe water and sanitation, and the earthquake that had devastated the country earlier that year. The epidemic further strained Haiti's already overwhelmed public health system.

The UN did not immediately acknowledge its responsibility. On December 17th 2010, then-Secretary General Ban Ki-moon ordered an investigation into the cause of the cholera outbreak. The official report, released in May 2011, was “scientifically accurate and politically cautious” (Bode, 2016, p. 766). It provided a careful analysis of circumstantial and genetic evidence that pointed to UN responsibility. It lacked a strong conclusion as it did not determine the source of the pathogen. That is because the UN did not allow testing of its camps and Nepalese troops (Bode, 2016). Until August 2016, the UN denied involvement in the cholera outbreak, and only in December 2016 did Ban Ki-moon briefly apologize to the Haitian people in Creole and in English, accepting the UN's moral responsibility to the epidemic's victims. However, moral responsibility is different from legal responsibility, which the UN still has not conceded. The shift in the UN's official position on the cholera outbreak was caused by a combination of actors and campaigns pressuring the UN to accept responsibility (Freedman and Lemay-Hébert, 2019). Among these was the strategic collective action suit against the UN initiated by the IJDH and BAI in 2013, after having unsuccessfully sought alternative resolution mechanisms on behalf of cholera victims with the UN.

The courts have upheld the UN's claim to absolute immunity. As the victims' attorney argued, absolute immunity enabled the UN misconduct, “[a]ny time an organization feels it can never be held accountable, that's when mistakes happen, corners are cut and things are done that are

negligent or worse” (Guardian, 2019). Arguments for the UN’s absolute immunity say it protects the UN against baseless and politically motivated suits in national courts, and against diversion of resources from programs to such lawsuit payments and characterize the UN as a public non-profit entity that provides benefits to people without compensation and has a structural incentive to reduce malpractices (Bode, 2016). The UN has failed to undo the harm caused by the epidemic. In 2016, Ban Ki-moon announced a new plan to solicit \$400 million in voluntary contributions by UN members from MINUSTAH unencumbered balance towards the UN Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). According to the MPTF’s Annual Report 2021, as of that year, only \$21.8 million was donated to the fund. For the sake of comparison, MINUSTAH’s average annual budget was \$593 million.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

MINUSTAH soldiers have been accused of sexual exploitation and abuse against Haitians, including the rape of minors and transactional sex in exchange for food and medicine. The UN claimed that they took allegations of sexual misconduct very seriously with thorough investigations, worked with the perpetrators’ countries of origin to deliver justice, and tried to help the victims with employment. However, victims tell a different story (*Haiti by Force*, 2017). Those include the “MINUSTAH wives” who did not receive paternity recognition and allowances for their children, which were fathered by UN peacekeepers.

First, the UN failed to investigate many allegations. Second, when investigated and sustained, such allegations resulted in little or no punishment for the perpetrators in their home countries, and the victims received little or no assistance and compensation (Ivers and Guillaume, 2017). Third, many victims chose not to file claims due to little trust in the UN proceedings and feared the stigma. Justice was not served in one of the most horrific sexual crimes by MINUSTAH; several Uruguayan peacekeepers gang raped a teenage boy. The act was documented on video and it quickly spread over the internet, sparking anti-UN protests (Sadri, Al-Jazeera English News, 2012). Five of the peacekeepers were deported, put on trial and later released in their home countries. As is commonly known, since sexual exploitation and abuse had been reported as a problem with other UN peacekeeping missions, in 2016, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse. MINUSTAH was one of the UN peacekeeping missions with the most allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by its personnel. However its successor mission, MINUJUSTH, was not marred by such allegations, either because of a lack of cases or the victims’ reluctance to report them. While sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers cast a dark shadow over its mission to keep the Haitians safe, some Haitian women and girls living in tents found MINUSTAH a source of security; “[f]or some the UN are protectors, for others they represent much that is wrong with Haiti; it is a contradiction in a country which already has many” (Al Jazeera, 2011).

Another source of controversy of the UN actions has been its unwillingness to release its detailed human rights internal reports. Those are often confidential documents that could have been shared with the government. The UN held the Haitian government accountable for certain issues, such as prison conditions, keeping people in detention without bringing charges against them for years, etc. However, the UN has not held the Haitian government accountable for the failure of the police and court systems to arrest people properly, and to prosecute people properly, especially as concerns human rights violators. Releasing detailed internal reports on the government is one

way to hold them accountable, but exposing the links between some human rights violators and the government is risky; it could jeopardize UN relations with the host country.

MINUSTAH’s controversial actions and the way in which the UN handled them have fueled Haiti’s deeply rooted and well-founded culture of suspicion about foreign intervention and despise of dependence, which go well beyond public mistrust of the UN. In turn, negative public perception of the UN may taint the legitimacy of international involvement and complicate the work of successor missions. When speaking about the prospects of MINUSTAH’s successor mission, critics argued that:

“without the means to make amends to those who have been harmed by these misdeeds already acknowledged by its own experts and review panels, the new UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti cannot have real legitimacy as a moral authority on justice and human rights as proposed” (Ivers and Guillaume, 2017, pp. 639-640).

Post-MINUSTAH Politics

Upon MINUSTAH’s departure, President Moise’s patrimonial regime continued to dominate Haitian politics, amidst increasing political and socioeconomic instability, and resurgent gang violence, until his assassination on 7 July 2021, which left the country in a political stalemate, unable to deal with escalating gang violence and a multifaceted humanitarian crisis. Regular mass protests started in Port-au-Prince and other regional cities in September 2014. The first wave of protests erupted over rising food prices due to world scarcities and the depreciating national currency. These protests had demographic and economic roots - internal migration from the rural countryside into cities, where people were alienated; overpopulated areas struggled to earn a living while governments were accused of poorly managing the economy amid massive corruption scandals. Mass protests resumed in 2017 over the government’s socioeconomic policies, including protests against increased fuel prices, increased taxes, remobilization of the army, the Petro-Caribe scandal, and other allegations of corruption.

In November 2017, the Haitian Senate released a report, entailing that then-current and former Haitian officials allegedly engaged in embezzlement and fraud, managing \$2 billion in loans from Venezuela’s Petro-Caribe discounted oil program from 2008 to 2016. President Moise was being investigated for his possible engagement in various corruption activities, of which he denied. A May 2019 court report by state auditors to the Senate alleged that Moise had embezzled millions of dollars (CRS, 2020; Nugent, 2019). The country entered a turmoil in mid-2019. Mass protests intensified calling for an end to corruption and resignation of the president. During the September-November 2019 protests, at least 42 people died and 86 were injured. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) concluded that state authorities responded to the protests with excessive use of force (IACHR, 2019). The HNP was not able to stop the resurgence of gang violence and crime in Haiti (Haiti Times, 2020) as some of its resources were directed at dealing with anti-Moise protests. Yet, there is the problem of linkages between armed gangs and elites.

Gangs fight for control over areas to extract protection fees, and trade drugs and arms. Politicians provide the gangs with weapons and impunity in exchange for repressing dissent. When paid by the government, the gangs stop anti-government protests; when paid by the opposition, the gangs force people to protest (Paultre and Marsh, 2019). Links between armed gangs, the police, and local government officials were reported during the tragic events of the La Saline massacre (Charles, 2019a). The massacre, which was carried out during November 13–17,

2018, resulted in an unknown number of injured people and close to one-hundred murders (59 officially according to MINUSTAH, 2019; at least 71 according to IACHR, 2019). The culprits of the massacre were:

“bandits tied to gang conflicts over control of a sprawling outdoor market where protection rackets are the norm, but also guns-for-hire by powerful politicians and well-heeled businessmen seeking to control votes in the run-up to upcoming legislative and mayoral elections” (Charles, 2019a).

There were allegations of the complicity of state actors in the massacre, and charges were pressed against two high officials of the state (IACHR, 2019; UN, 2019, para. 38). After MINUSTAH left, the regime’s survival greatly relied on the HNP. Other possible factors included a new army, international support to the regime, fragmented opposition, and the COVID-19 pandemic’s limiting consequences on Haiti’s discontent masses. There was a concern that the police would become a force of repression to ensure regime survival at any cost. However, MINUSTAH’s main legacy is the highly professionalized police.

It is a result of multilateralism in Haiti that started and progressed throughout the UN missions, including CIVPOL/UNPOL. The regime’s remobilization of a small new army in November 2017 was controversial due to the former army’s horrible mark on the Haitian history. Before the army was disbanded in 1995 by then-president Aristide, it had earned a terrible record of coups and gross human rights violations. The stated role of the new army is to patrol the country’s border with the Dominican Republic, combat smuggling, and assist in post-natural disaster recovery efforts. However, there was skepticism about whether Haiti would need an army at all to protect itself against outside threats. There were concerns that the new army might instead engage in internal political repression (CGTN America, 2017), especially with Moise’s recruitment of former army soldiers (CRS, 2020). Haiti and the Dominican Republic had hostile relations in the 1820s. They have engaged in hostile rhetoric from time to time, but they have never had territorial invasions. Also, the two countries are economically interdependent. By primarily working with the government, international actors legitimized Moise’s regime. They talked about the need for a dialogue and underscored the importance of following the electoral process for changes in political power (CRS, 2020, p. 3). However, the opposition claimed that international actors wanted to “impose a solution without listening to the popular demands of the population” (Charles, 2019b).

During and after the intense UN presence of ONUVEH (1990-1991), MICIVIH (1993-2000), and MINUSTAH (2004-20018), that is, ever since the 1990-1991 national elections, which were regarded as Haiti’s first free elections,¹² Haiti has been unable to complete its democratic transition (Linz and Stepan, 1996). Haiti has clearly not passed the second phase of consolidating democracy. Since the end of the Duvalier family dictatorship in 1986, the Haitian authorities have not invested enough in preparing for holding regular elections. The international community has not made it a top priority either. As of February 2024, Haiti does not have a permanent Electoral Commission. This is important not only for the integrity of the electoral process, but also for the development of prerequisites for a more democratic and sustainable political order, i.e. the development of more permanent political parties and consolidation of the party system around an ideology rather than an individual or access to patrimony.¹³

Haiti’s semi-presidential structure of government, adopted in the 1987 Constitution, has often led the president to struggle to operate with either an obstructionist parliament or a parliament with no functioning majority. As a result, Haitian presidents sometimes ruled by

decree, such as Martelly, from the January 2015 dissolution of the parliament to the end of his term in February 2016, and Preval, from January 1999 to the end of his first term in February 2001. President Moise ruled by decree after mid-January 2020 when the terms of most of the legislature expired. Because the government had failed to hold the legislative elections scheduled for October 2019, they were left with no functioning legislature. As of February 2024, Haiti’s last held elections were in 2016. Failure to hold elections according to schedule pushed Haiti into a downward political spiral. Another structural problem is Haiti’s hyper-federalized government with too many local elections. Those positions are often not filled or filled through patrimonial politics.

Since the July 2021 assassination of Juvenal Moise, Haiti has been governed by Prime Minister Ariel Henry¹⁴, who was named to the position by Juvenal Moise two days before his assassination, however, Henry was not sworn in, and as most of legislators’ terms had expired, they lacked quorum to select a president to serve for the rest of Moise’s term. During the second half of 2023, the CARICOM Eminent Persons Group tried, without much success, to facilitate a dialogue between the High Transition Council (HTC) which was established by the government, and political and civil society stakeholders in Haiti, and to bring them closer to a political consensus about a governance framework and a pathway to elections (CRS, 2023). The government failed to hold elections in 2023, as anticipated by the December 21, 2021 transition proposal put forward by the government and signed by many stakeholders. Thus, calls for Henry’s resignation intensified in early 2024 with disruptive anti-government protests held across Haiti, especially leading up to and on February 7 – a highly symbolic date for transfers of power in Haiti. Guy Philippe, one of the 2004 coup leaders, who was repatriated to Haiti in November 2023 after serving several years in a US prison for money laundering, has called for civil disobedience across the country and joined the anti-government protests. He is a charismatic populist figure and is backed by an armed brigade in the Environmental Ministry. Philippe opposes the deployment of an international security mission to Haiti (Charles, 2024; Merancourt and Coletta, 2024).

The prospect of Philippe gaining popularity in Haiti is viewed problematic by the US, and other actors in the international community, who continue to support Henry’s holding on to his position at least until elections. Given the security issues in Haiti, the only type of elections feasible in Haiti would be an interim government, which would be quasi-extra-constitutional but possible, as the country has already been operating in this way. And, while there have been major structural problems with all elections in Haiti, they have had the most success when votes were counted by UN election staff.

The current political stalemate “has hindered Haiti’s ability to respond to worsening security and humanitarian crises caused by rampant gang violence, food and fuel shortages, and a resurgence of cholera” (CRS, 2023). Gang violence has escalated and expanded within and outside the capital. Especially since 2023, Haiti has seen a surge in murders, injuries, kidnappings, sexual violence, destruction of private and agricultural property, as well as attacks on infrastructure, including on judicial and police institutions, and various public and private infrastructure, and the response of police and judicial authorities has been inadequate and inconsistent (UN, 2023). Over 8,400 were direct victims of violence, including killings, injuries, and kidnappings in 2023 – a 122% increase compared to the previous year (UN, 2024). The International Organization of Migration tracked a rapid increase in the number of internally displaced people in Haiti from about 24,000 in September 2022 to 200,000 in November 2023 and to 313,000 in December 2023. Haitian migration to the US more than doubled in 2022-2023,

with over 160,000 Haitian immigrants making it to the US in 2023 (Walsh and Robles, 2024). The HNP, under-numbered and out-gunned, as well as weakened by “corruption among police and politicians linked to criminal groups,” has failed to curtail violence (ICG, 2024). According to the UN recommended ratio, the HNP should have over 25,000 officers, and it has fewer than 9,000 in 2024. Its main trade union estimated that the force lost about 3,300 officers over the past three years, about 90% of which were fired for abandoning their posts, 123 resigned and about 80 died or disappeared (Reuters, 2024). A vigilante movement, called Bwa Kale, emerged in April 2023 as a form of self-defense, which has also engaged in lynching men suspected of belonging to gangs.

In October 2023, a year after Henry’s initial request, UNSC Resolution 2699 authorized the Multinational Security Support (MSS) Mission in Haiti; it is mandated for one-year, and to be reviewed after nine months. Its mandate is to provide operational support to the HNP, by planning and conducting joint security operations to counter gangs, secure key infrastructure, to help ensure unhindered and safe access to humanitarian aid for the population, to re-establish security and build conditions conducive to holding elections, protect critical infrastructure and transportation locations, as well as to help the HNP to maintain public safety, which includes arrest and detention. However, it is not clear how this will work in practice. This is not an UN-led mission and will be financed by voluntary donations (the US has pledged \$300m), rather than assessed contributions by the UN. Kenya volunteered to lead the mission with the deployment of about 1000 police officers, and other countries have promised to contribute another 1,500 more to the mission.¹⁵ International actors, particularly the US, played an important role in the authorization of the mission. Georges A. Fauriol, CSIS Senior Associate, Americas Program, has characterized it as “an initiative that is derived from US diplomacy,” and while acknowledging Washington’s “unfortunate history of trying to impose political outcomes in Haiti,” he argues that the US can also play an important political role in helping the Haitians reach a consensus about transition and governance, which will allow different security, humanitarian, and socioeconomic initiatives to move forward timely and coherently (CSIS, 2023).

Previously, the Thirdway Alliance, a Kenyan opposition group had challenged the government’s decision to deploy police to Haiti and in October 2023 obtained a court order to suspend the deployment. Nevertheless, in November 2023, the Kenyan parliament approved the deployment. On January 26, 2024, Kenya’s High Court ruled the government’s decision to deploy police to Haiti illegal, finding that deploying police requires “a reciprocal arrangement” with the host government but not a domestic parliamentary approval, unlike deploying militarily. The government announced they would appeal the ruling, and the opposition insisted that only a democratically elected legitimate president in Haiti could make such a request or enter into a reciprocal agreement with another government (Reuters, 2024). The court’s ruling was ambiguous; it found that “Kenya’s government had not followed correct procedure in authorizing the mission to Haiti — although it also appeared to leave room for it to proceed” (Walsh and Robles, 2024).

It is argued that the money pledged by the US can be put to better use by helping to build Haitian institutions, particularly the HNP (Robles, 2024). Former Haitian diplomat Edwin Paraison suggests using Haiti’s military, “even if it is at an embryonic stage,” and would include over 600 Haitian soldiers recently trained in Mexico to support the police to fight gangs (NPR, 2024). However, a more important question is whether the MSS will succeed in Haiti, especially when the current conditions in Haiti are characterized as unprecedented and

much worse than the conditions for past missions – much deeper political and humanitarian crises, and gang violence that is out of control (Christopher Hernandez-Roy in CSIS, 2023).

Addressing the UNSC on January 25, 2024, BINUH Head María Isabel Salvador described an ambitious and complex road to a lasting success:

“[t]he continuous support to the Haitian National Police; the deployment of the MSS; a sustained political process resulting in credible, participatory and inclusive elections, constitute fundamental elements that can contribute to restore security and stability to Haiti, where consequently the rule of law, democratic institutions, and sustainable development become a reality for the people of Haiti.”

Of utmost importance, MSS should avoid the mistakes of past missions, which are partly reflected in the safeguards described in Resolution 2699. Georges A. Fauriol underscores the need for the security mission to be synchronized with humanitarian, social and economic initiatives, all of which should be carried out in partnership with a governance structure and in an environment of political consensus. Also, instead of training more HNP officers, it may be more effective to specify what the force can and should do and find ways to expand and diversify Haiti’s national security capabilities, for example through the private sector, as the HNP has arguably developed into an all-purpose security force with an overly general mission, ultimately unable to carry it out (CSIS, 2023).

There is a shared sentiment that to succeed, any security mission should prioritize Haitian voices. While calling for the international community’s urgent action to improve the security situation and “break the cycle of crises in Haiti.” BINUH Head Salvador, acknowledged that “long-term stability can only be achieved through a nationally owned and inclusive political process” (UN, 2024). For Fritznel D. Octave, Haitian journalist and author, the ongoing crisis in Haiti is not just a security issue that can be resolved with the deployment of international forces (such results have been short-lived), but rather a multifaceted crisis that calls for a holistic approach to understand all the different aspects and tackle the root causes, and any framework to come out of the crisis should be designed in a dialogue with all different stakeholders in Haiti. He calls for Haitians to dig deep into their souls to understand why the nation, which celebrates 220 years of independence in 2024, has failed and to find good will to build a country for everyone to thrive, and not just for the few (CSIS, 2023).

Conclusion

This analysis has focused on the United Nations active involvement in Haiti since 1990, by focusing on the legacy of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) from 2004 – 2017. This analysis draws two main conclusions for peace-building in general and for Haiti in particular. Peace can be built from a pact or peace-treaty after a war or some constitutional order that exists on paper through common understanding, and then to continue to work things out through negotiations. This is how countries can successfully build democracy after conflict when clearly identified sides come to make a social or a political pact, according to the pact model of *Transitions from the Authoritarian Rule* (O'Donnell et al., 1986). This process heavily relies on local elites, representing broad classes of people in the society, to come up with the pact so that they could be mediated by, for example, the Catholic Church in Catholic Latin America, or the UN and the Good Offices of the Secretary General. But this model does not fit Haiti, where troops were sent to stabilize the situation but no political agreement was made.

After Aristide's ouster, a transitional government (2004-2006) took over, which on purpose or not, decided that Aristide's party would not qualify for a number of sequential elections. Thus, Aristide's force ended politically as a competitive factor. Other parties, that probably did not meet the minutia of all the rules of signing petitions on ballots, managed to get on the ballot. This was followed by interruptions of democracy, including electing Preval in 2006 and Martelly in 2010-2011, in ways that were not strictly according to the letter of the law, and the dubious 2016 elections, which brought Moïse to power in which Haiti held its own, without the UN supervising and counting the ballots, like in 2006 and 2010-2011. Thus, the political process that unfolded in Haiti does not represent the entire country, and the government of Moïse lacked legitimacy. The political turmoil that followed was in part due to the quality of the election that occurred without the UN present. In this sense, without MINUSTAH, the earlier elections could have been far worse than they were. In the absence of a pact, there is no coherence and no consensus among elites. Thus, gangs and traffickers replaced Aristide's mass party with the rule of warlords in alliance with elected officials, who are formally and informally connected to the gangs amid significant urban centers throughout the country and in rural areas as well. Certainly, the southern half of the country has been overtaken by organized-crime gangs. In general, the UN has never succeeded in such situations involving organized gangs. However, the UN had important accomplishments in Haiti that should not be undervalued.

These accomplishments include the professionalization and growth of the HNP, which ended the kidnapping for ransom epidemic in 2007-2009; the absence of coups; the practice of elections; as well as some reasonable economic growth and economic activeness rather than the paralysis that followed MINUSTAH's departure. But a major problem for the UN was going into Haiti with a stabilization mission without any plan for national reconciliation. This is partly because the former antagonists are not involved politically in any recognizable form. The mass-party phenomenon that Aristide introduced in 1990 has no real equivalent today. Instead, the elections are contested among newly formed and weak parties with small bands of followers around individual leaders. And parties that did survive set up what one could call a sultanistic regime based on Max Weber's conceptualization.

The term sultanism is developed out of authoritarianism and is the least consolidated form of quasi-democratic rule. What Haiti has is authoritarianism with elections but no rule of law. There seems to be no viable set of policy solutions for Haiti in the short or medium-term without having addressed the macro-factors, among them deeply embedded poverty, and the structural factor of center-periphery relations. If the path to development is set to go through prioritizing economic development, the state of democracy arguably should not be a concern as there is no necessary correlation between the two. Of course, political stability under authoritarianism has been shown in East Asia to be beneficial for economic development, which in some cases produced democratization. However, these were rapidly industrializing countries that experienced economic takeoff. The US industrialization policy for Haiti was designed for light manufacturing at low wages, without any prospects of creating a large enough middle class to even inaugurate democracy, let alone sustain it. The UN verified elections in 1991, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2011 and 2016 only proved that elections can be held without the institutions needed to govern democratically.

Political stability, the main interest behind MINUSTAH since 2004, is different from protecting a functioning democracy. If progress is possible in any realm, it begs the question of whether it is interdependent with other structural improvements. If there was a "benevolent" or

"smart" dictatorship, that hypothetical assumption clearly is not necessarily going to be implemented in any realistic scenario either-- as not only the 29-year Duvalier dictatorship years so well demonstrate, but also most other presidencies of any regime type.¹⁶ One could argue that MINUSTAH, in particular, was important and desirable because the country avoided mass protests, paralysis from the gang kidnapping for ransom plague in Port-au-Prince, and the armed rebellion led by former Army officers and drug traffickers. The same argument could be made for what transpired after the MICIVIH departed with its engineering troops after 2000, and when UN troops had departed by 2017 (though technically two Indian units of soldiers remained under the subsequent UN missions that had allowed Brazilian forces to bomb Cite Soleil in the previous decade). Haiti was in near lockdown for most of 2018-2019, with gang leaders allying with politicians to control the country, while ostensible democratic oppositions protested to demand the resignation of President Moïse, not only because of his non-credible election, but also because of the massive Petro-Caribe corruption scandal, which implicated the President and many of his associates, political allies, and cabinet ministers.

Gangs are an extended arm of the government; they have more power than the police and terrorize all of the slum areas. Their candidates are free to campaign and govern, but there is no real competitive option allowed in gang-controlled areas, such as the entire area of Port-au-Prince from Cité Soleil to Carrefour and the entire area of the Plateau Central and the Artibonite valley. It is no longer safe to drive from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haïtien. So, the situation was better when the UN was in control with its soldiers. However, what really counts in any peacebuilding mission is what is left behind as sustainable governance, political economy, and rule of law. Instead, MINUSTAH left the country and soon thereafter, Haiti continued in the same chaos that ensued when the gangs ruled the capitol in the early years of the new century. The government's legitimacy was protested after the May 2000 legislative election fraud, which resulted in not only constant protests, but there was also a suspension of foreign aid.

The only difference now is that the international community used the UN to install an anti-Aristide, anti-progressive transitional government in 2004-2006. Then, under a UN continued presence in Haiti, there was the illegitimate rule of President Moïse which was supported by foreign governments and the UN agencies operating in Haiti. In this second, more apt formulation, MINUSTAH and the UN generally had failed to mediate political solutions, which is a prerequisite for the kind of political and economic stability and sustainability needed for peacebuilding success. The challenge in Haiti has been great, but ultimately, the UN could have said "no" to the US in negotiations. However, once the UNSC authorized the stabilization project, not only the UN, but all of its member states were legally bound to support the mission. The realist proposition is not only that the UN cannot do more, but it is also the fault of the UN member states for not developing a more sensible plan of implementation and to monitor its compliance in its oversight and financing roles.

Another unfortunate tendency of many UN peacebuilding missions was replicated in Haiti, the mixing of the roles of critic and pact verifier as well as technical advisor and occasional implementor. This was perhaps most dramatic in Afghanistan and Namibia, where the UN implemented elections and then turned a blind eye to deviations from electoral and human rights standards. This is not unique to the UN by any means, as bilateral election delegations and NGOs are often biased and/or conceal vital information from the public. The International Mission to Verify Elections in Haiti, which was uniquely formed by election officials and agencies in the Americas, never made public the varieties of documented acts of malfeasance, including

corruption and electoral law violations by some of Haiti's political parties and election commissioners. To some extent, UN missions, which are usually funded by voluntary contributions by UN member states, reflect the latter's priorities, which in the case of Haiti, was usually led by the US. Even if one is not conspiratorial about these financial relationships, the UN has its own institutional interests and reputation to defend. The result is that many historical details remain hidden and classified at UN headquarters, or simply have been lost to history. Author Carey has made various types of requests to gain access to these files without success—just as many have tried and failed to gain access to US government records in Haiti, such as the CIA archive on the 1991-1994 FRAPH files on Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, the leader of the paramilitary force/death squad.

Interpretive frameworks offer some insights into the UN's experience at peacebuilding. Realism suggests that international organizations, like the UN and its financiers and controllers in the UNSC (especially the US), do not have the same interest as that of Haitian civil society. Furthermore, peacebuilding is constrained when economic elites dominate the Haitian state for their own interests, or undermine mass parties, who, in turn have been ill-served by some of their leaders. Liberalism identifies the vast challenges in Haiti for which multilateral cooperation is required. However, collective action problems make it extremely difficult to get coherence among the international community, let alone coordination with the Haitian government. Constructivism emphasizes that ideas matter, without specifying which ideas. It means if the Haitian people do not want the UN there, the UN cannot be effective. At a certain point, MINUSTAH became very unpopular, especially after its bombing of Cite Soleil, after the 2010 cholera epidemic, and after Haitians believed that the international pressure for elections was interference with their sovereign domestic affairs. They were, in theory, promoting international human rights, the right to free and fair elections which is found in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Like most elections in Haitian history, the reality was far from ideal and arguably below the threshold of credibility, often deemed "free and fair." In practice, the UN and most foreign actors have applied a lower standard, "good enough for Haiti," given the absence of documented fraud, but in politics, perception is reality; this is the heart of Constructivism.

The perception among a lot of Haitians, probably the majority nationally, and certainly the overwhelming majority in Port-au-Prince where all the protests were taking place, was that the UN was up to no good, the UN was riding around in expensive cars, staying in their bases. Then at a certain point, the scandal about the UN peacekeepers engaging in not only prostitution, but also human trafficking, added to the perception that the UN was actually causing more harm than the accidental cholera epidemic. Constructivism explains, in part, why the UN could not be effective even if it wanted to, because of the way the UN mission was socially constructed. The UN had its own interests, that whoever they were serving - the US or the UN or some vague concept of humanitarian intervention or responsibility to protect - it was not in the interest of the Haitian people. Haitian people suspected this, as their quality of life never improved; this same situation happened when the UN intervened in 1994. They just succeeded in stopping the mass killing by FRAPH – a paramilitary group organized by Emmanuel "Toto" Constant. Of the three missions, the 1994 invasion succeeded to reinstate Aristide and to stop the mass murders. The daily grind of existence in Haiti probably did improve statistically, yet the basic underdevelopment, poverty, and insecurity did not improve.

Cosmopolitanism shows what can be effective when the norms are observed and when Haitians are actively engaged with determining whatever national politics they want to implement. The international community faces a dilemma in cosmopolitanism, where the local actors are unwilling or unable to observe norms, but also listen to the Haitians themselves, when they spoke of violations and of their right to sovereignty. They were quite legitimately complaining about a force of intervention, even to reinstate Aristide under the supposed notion that the country was ready to self-govern itself before it was able to self-govern.

Critical theory is a skeptical approach, which says whether it is the inability of local government, or the inability of the international community to resolve their own differences or cooperate locally, and that international capital is driving most of the Marxist interpretation or the anti-imperialist interpretation of critical theory. International capitalism and the lack of attention and respect for local and domestic sovereignty and autonomy will not work.

The penultimate peacebuilding paradigm, locality, says that there are regional and national approaches (Carey, 2021). The UN takes a cookie cutter approach, does the same thing every time or only modifies it because of its budget, or whoever pays the piper chooses the tune. The UN did not customize an approach for Haiti. Instead, they established a commission headed by Bill Clinton after the earthquake to give out all the aid. According to press reports, only 10% off the pledged money was actually even given, and Haiti never even got that in the end. Supposedly by having Prime Minister Lamothe on the commission that co-chaired with Clinton, Haiti would have some say in how the funds were distributed and utilized. First, they did not get the funds. Second, the funds that were given were directed at projects like the Caracol Industrial Park, and not for the things that the Haitian government really wanted. Third, the Haitians who are on the commission were hand-picked by the international community - people that saw things the way they wanted to see them.

While policy analysis is a rational choice approach, things are not very rational in Haiti. How many cost-benefit analyses have the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, USAID and other such organizations conducted? They planted trees to combat soil erosion, and still they have terrible deforestation problems. They spent a lot of money to build highway roads to the Caracole Industrial Park, and instead of having 60,000 employees, they have about 10,000 employees. They could not even get the Clintons to agree to raising the minimum wage to some pathetically low level - \$3 a day. In other words, Haitians did not receive a living wage that would have made a difference to their livelihoods. Was policy analysis correct in any sense? Nominally, there has been improvement in income. To that extent, any number of these projects have been somewhat effective. There are some incredible statistics - \$3 billion of Haiti's GDP every year comes from remittances from Haitians in the diaspora, probably two thirds or more from the US and the rest from Canada, France and elsewhere. It is quite likely that most of this nominal doubling of income are situations that are attributed to the increase in remittances. Then another large hundreds of millions, if not a billion dollars, have to do with drug and other smuggling operations that are brought into the country and are distributed to the rich and the other crooked elites. There is little evidence that policy analysis has done much good for Haiti, even though that is the standard programmatic evaluation beforehand and post-project evaluation afterwards. There does not seem to be too many lessons learned from this experience.

Part of the problem is that the effectiveness of any outside actor is very much the result of an interaction effect. There are the outside actors' capabilities, influences, strengths and weaknesses, priorities, and limited resources. The inside actors, which are primarily the political

system, its institutions and its leading elites, limit the effectiveness of the outside actors. The domestic system can act as a veto player, but, it can also act as a polarized society, which is what Haiti has always been. Polarization is nothing new to Haiti. Also, the long-term impact is seen after the mission ends. In 1994, when the US invaded Haiti with the UN Security Council's authorization, (initially it was just US troops), but it was said that the test of the impact of this invasion would be after all the troops left. However, most of the troops left within a year, some troops remained almost the entire period from then till about 2000, but then the troops were back in 2004, only four years later. What is left now is chaos, with the gangs, non-stop protests and police shooting at militia and vice versa and the economy has been closed. Moreover, all of this started before COVID-19.

The country has been paralyzed; it is not completely shut down because even a poor country like Haiti, the poorest in the hemisphere, cannot close everything down because of COVID-19. But they are in a situation where there is a high correlation between MINUSTAH's absence and its polarization. The UN did not cause the polarization, as it existed before between the economic and political elites and the government. Moreover, there is the failure of Haiti to hold free and fair elections, first sponsored by the international community; the international community was in a dilemma where they had an unfair presidential election yet did not want to admit failure and redo it. For the first time since 1990, Haitian authorities controlled the administration of national elections without UN or OAS help in November 2016. Moise won in the first round, which was a surprise to all. Arguably those elections were not free and fair, and the result was rigged. Certainly, it was not fair because Martelly used all the powers of government to favor his candidate Moise, and also because they did not have the elaborate system set up by the UN to verify the results. Beginning in 2006, the UN set up a system where they actually counted the regional balloting papers to at least make sure that they were not rigged in the counting stages in the post-poll rigging phases, as this happened in 2000 when Aristide announced that he would not count places above fourth place. This also occurred in 2006 when Preval obtained 49% in the first round. Then there was some gimmick about excluding blank ballots in order to get his percentage over 50% to avoid a second round because the mobs were protesting. These were extremely serious violations of electoral law. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) was rife with corruption (Carey, 2006).

It is noteworthy here that the UN did not establish a "Special Political Mission" for Haiti, which would have specialized in policy and mediation for the many political impasses and crises that occurred during the UN tenure from 1990 to 2017, and which continued with MINUJUSTH and then to the present day with BINUH. Neither MICIVIH (1993-2000), MINUSTAH (2004-2017), nor MINUJUSTH (2017 to the current UN Integrated Office in Haiti, BINUH) have made any serious attempt to mediate political and/or violent conflicts.¹⁷ For example, when legislative elections were not held and the legislature was closed, it forced presidents to rule by decree, like President Préval in 1999-2000, President Martelly in 2011 and 2014, and President Jovenel Moise in 2020, who not only ruled by decree, but also appointed most of the country's elected officials extra-constitutionally. Instead, the UN provided a country-specific Special Procedure, the Independent Expert on Haiti, who provided annual human rights reports, culminating in March 2017 (UN Independent Expert, 2017).

There was international supervision of the 2006 election, not by the UN or OAS, but by the International Commission to Verify Elections, however, there were problems. This Commission did the same thing that the international community historically does; when there is a problem, you can delegitimize the election by telling the truth, or you have a choice of telling the truth

about how badly the elections are going and then you do nothing about it. For example, in 2010, Hillary Clinton interfered with elections, she complained about the first round and moved Michele Martelly up from third place so that he could make the second round of elections. That is electoral fraud and interference by the outside. If the elections were not appropriate, you cannot declare somebody else to go forward, but you hold the elections over again. There was fraud and rigging and irregularities by many candidates, not just by the candidate nominated by Rene Preval. And the reason Hillary Clinton changed course is because of the US government, for reasons that remain completely unclear. The US went from begging Preval to run in 2006, to declaring him effectively no longer "our person," "he won't cooperate with us." The reason may be because Preval opposed the limitations on minimum wages for a number of projects and wanted Haitian workers to be paid more.

International actors like the UN face this kind of problem most starkly in an election because the stakes are clear: you either accept the results and move on, however imperfect they may be. However, you can accept the elections and move on but admit what went wrong, or you can accept them and act as if they never happened by keeping all the information secret, or you can hold the election again and say the election is not credible. Most countries may say that this election is good enough or they can't document the fraud within the tiny window of time that is considered reasonable - four or five days after an election. The Haitian elections of 2000, the Senate elections (that Aristide tried to steal), was caught in the third week by the OAS, not the UN, because the OSA was in charge primarily with electoral monitoring of the legislative elections. It was a presidential election year, but they had the Senate, legislative, and local elections in the first round in May of 2000. The Presidential elections were postponed to later in the year, and those elections were fraudulent as Aristide ran unopposed because the opposition boycotted his electoral rigging of the legislative elections.

Another problem in elections is the polarization between the economic elites and the masses. The Electoral Commission has been so rife with corruption that there has not been a mass party. In 2004, they did everything to keep Aristide's mass party from qualifying to run in those elections. That party has never recovered, and there has never been a mass party since then. Haiti has basically an elite party whose leadership is populated by the Duvalier regime elites - Michelle Martelly, Moise, or people who play by their rules. The politicians are basically opportunists trying to make money, because throughout the whole country, with all the local elections, the way to get ahead is trying to get an education or getting involved in politics. So, politics become dirty and ugly in a country that does not have the rule of law. Although the police has improved a lot over the years, there is still a lot of corruption, especially in the case of human rights and politicians, there is impunity and very little punishment, and even a lack of investigation of perpetrators of political violence. The UN has tried to fight human rights impunity but has failed. Part of the problem is that the UN has reports but does not provide them to the government. Or, maybe they give them to the government, but nothing happens to them because the judiciary should be independent, but the prosecutors are scared for their life to go after politicians. Or the prosecutors, who in the civil law system are investigating judges and are not independent prosecutors like in the British-American system, are bribed.

Martelly engaged in the systematic, but selective assassination of people. Carey personally investigated five earlier assassinations allegedly perpetrated by three Martelly associates during his presidency in his 2015 and 2016 in trips to Haiti. This kind of pattern has only become worse since MINUSTAH left. But even while there, MINUSTAH was incapable (if it was monitoring

human rights) to mobilize the information and reporting that they gathered, which was quite extensive. This pattern of not providing information also occurred in the 1990 elections and the 1991 January 2nd round elections. The UN reported (but only in a tiny paragraph eight months later), well after Aristide took office and around the time that Aristide was deposed in a coup in the end of September 1991, that 300,000 ballots were lost in the first round of elections. The UN never admitted this because they basically knew Aristide won by a large margin based on the survey of a mere 100 voting precincts. Thus, the UN reported it too late and it is unclear whether they even realized the loss of ballots for a number of months. UN reports in those days did not automatically appear on the Internet, and one had to be in a UN depository library, etc., to find reports. A pattern of activity results from the UN, and for that matter the US, with its information reporting through the CIA, keeps most of the information to itself simply because it does not want to get involved. They want to be involved in controlling the country according to their own interests; this is particularly true of the US. But, the UN also has an interest, which is to be seen as successful, whether you are monitoring elections or overseeing the judiciary or in a stabilization mission like Haiti. The UN does not address the problem head on or publicly. It is not clear if they even released the information to the government. But if it is released to the government, and the government is in charge, the government has the same incentive not to let the public know about all of these issues, for example political assassinations, bribes, and any other malefactors.

The interest of outsiders, the UN or US are different from each other and different from the Haitian people. The US' true motives in Haiti include keeping Haiti off the front pages (it used to be to keep the boat people away), controlling communism and progressives that would destabilize the existing international political order by demands for justice and progress. Do the US interests in Haiti change along with a change in their own administration? No, it may be a factor but it is not a driving factor. The UN interest is to be successful and keep its benefactor, the financier of the projects going; there is also the context of foreign aid by separate countries.

The interests of the Haitian people do not necessarily converge with the interests of outsiders – including the UN and US interests, which are also different from each other. Haitian exceptionalism is also a factor, as Haiti is treated exceptionally differently than most foreign countries by the UN, the US and the rest of the international community

What would have happened in the absence of MINUSTAH? In terms of counterfactual speculations, comparing MINUSTAH's legacy with the post-MINUSTAH period resembles a natural experiment. On the one hand, MINUSTAH stabilized the country and restored the constitutional order. Without MINUSTAH, the political process could have been less stable. Without MINUSTAH, there would not be its controversial legacy either. But the devastating earthquake and hurricanes would still occur, albeit without MINUSTAH's logistical support to the humanitarian relief efforts. On the other hand, upon MINUSTAH's departure, the restored security proved unsustainable and Haiti slid back to political turmoil. But one cannot assume that the post-MINUSTAH instability was not caused by the fact that the UN was there in the first place, just as one cannot assume that the instability in Haiti from 2001 to 2004 was not affected by the UN/OAS prior presence. Complex interdependence continues even after international actors leave. In terms of long-term solutions, one conclusion is that the UN prevents the Haitians from figuring it out on their own. Whether the Haitians could have figured it out on their own with so much poverty, corruption, and political instability cannot be answered with much certainty. Ambassador Kenneth Merten reasons:

“One of the challenges that Haiti has, excuse me for saying this, psychologically is that every time they find themselves in an impasse, neighbors for better or worse are always there to help fix the situation. We often help Haiti avoid what we fear is going to be the worst in terms of political uprisings or so forth, but I think it creates in a certain respect a level of dependency on external intervention in Haitian affairs which allows the local political actors not to have to take responsibility for their actions, not to take responsibility or blame, if you will, for not finding a compromise” (CSIS, 2017).

After MINUSTAH, discussions started about whether there would be another UN stabilization mission in Haiti if the situation deteriorated. Back in 2017, Juan Gabriel Valdés, former SRSR & Chilean Ambassador to the US, answered this question negatively, arguing that “[t]here is no other alternative than to give and to allow the Haitians to resolve their problems and take their own responsibilities” (CSIS, 2017). Thus, another UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti seemed unlikely in the foreseeable future for three main reasons. First, there was fatigue with such missions due to their mixed record.¹⁸ Stabilization missions have sometimes proven rather destabilizing. Second, there was a change in the motives for involvement beyond the stated mantras. The US did not have the concern of a large inflow of Haitian refugees and favored the façade democracy in Haiti. Third, MINUSTAH's controversial legacy further fueled a negative public perception of the UN; this attitude taints the legitimacy of future international involvement and complicates their mission. The situation on the ground has changed dramatically since 2017, and the fate of the UN-authorized security support mission remains unclear. For the time being, the US and the international community have not only Haiti fatigue, but there has also been a rise in nationalist populism as a counter-weight to the liberal institutionalism and multilateralism that prevailed in the decade after the Cold War ended in 1991.

Currently, there are large uncertainties over Haiti's political direction and security situation. Gangs and weapons are a huge part of the current situation in Haitian society; thus, it is imperative that future research examine the root causes as to how gangs have penetrated Haitian politics since its inception and how arms have continued to flow into Haiti unabated since this is one of the main causes of Haitian instability. BINUH has been extended until 15 July 2024. Future research should assess BINUH and the current MSS mission in Haiti combined in order to assess its successes/failures as compared to previous missions. The MSS faces great challenges in Haiti, with complex political turmoil, rampant gangs, a collapsed economy and Haitians in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Thus, it will be interesting to see how these two missions work in providing Haiti with operational support, planning and conducting joint security operations, securing key infrastructure, re-establishing security and building the conditions conducive to holding elections within an extremely volatile environment.

ENDNOTES

1. Other international actors have been involved in Haiti for decades; the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), the Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Free Trade Area (CAFTA), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB); these are the formal IOs with direct influence. MERCOSUR, EU and other free trade areas have trade agreements with Haiti. The EU also has a foreign assistance program in Haiti. Influence is exerted through relations with foreign

- governments, bilateral aid programs, and foreign investment; the UN interacts with many of these too. Other components in the organization of the international system include international regimes, and the “good offices” of presidents who are cooperating in a multilateral fashion with other countries, and the “good offices” of the UN and OAS, special representatives of the Secretary General, UN Treaty-based bodies for dozens of major human rights treaties, and UN Charter-based human rights organizations, including the Special Procedures and Independent Experts of the UN Human Rights Council that regularly report on Haiti. The most significant has been bilateral relations, especially with the United States, Canada, Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, France, Germany and the UK. A full discussion of their involvement in Haiti is beyond the scope of this chapter.
2. The IMF offered Haiti a line of credit up to \$6 million in this period, while the World Bank’s subsidized loan window, the International Development Association, made a fifty-year low-interest loan of \$300,000 to Haiti in November 1962. The OAS, the Economic Commission on Latin America, the America, the Inter-Americana Bank all had projects in Haiti by 1961-1962 (Plummer, 1992, pp. 171-72).
 3. An example of indivisibility is the collective security system, which “rests on the premise that peace is indivisible, so that a war against one state is, ipso facto, considered a war against all” (Ruggie, 1992, p. 569). Generalized principles of conduct refers to “principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence,” such as most-favored nation (MFN) treatment in trade (Ruggie, 1992, p. 571). Diffuse reciprocity refers to the expectation by the members that the arraignment will yield “a rough equivalence of benefits in the aggregate and over time” (Ruggie, 1992, p. 571).
 4. The UN reaction to the cholera outbreak in Haiti is used to explain the power dynamics inside the UNSC. Freedman and Lemay-Hébert (2019) show how elected members may play a crucial role inside the UNSC when the P5 take a backseat or do not coalesce on an issue. During UNSC debates in 2016, the US took a backseat as it was preoccupied with litigation. France did not want to speak out as it did not want its colonial history and the independence debt to surface in the news. The UK had little interest in Haiti, nor did Russia and China, which at that time were preoccupied with Syrian resolutions. Thus, the P5 behavior opened the door for the E10, led by Venezuela, to influence UN discourse on the epidemic.
 5. The IHRIG election delegations had set the standard for international election monitoring in the 1980s, epitomized by its How-to guide (*Garber, 1984*). The first UN election mission was the decolonization election of Southwest Africa (Namibia) in 1989. The Haitian election was the fourth major mission for the UN, though the latter had also supervised two rounds of elections in South Korea before and after the Korean War in the 1950s and was prevented from doing so in Vietnam by the US opposition to the Geneva Accords that had planned elections there. For further information on the historical evolution of election campaign monitoring, see Ace, *International Election Observation* (at <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/international-election-observation/iii.-origins-and-evolution-of-international>).
 6. UNMIH (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/untmih.htm>) was replaced in its functions by the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), which was followed by other operations: the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH) and the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH). The reason for these name changes mostly reflects UN politics and legal authorizations but not necessarily a change in function.
 7. Other UN mission names included: MINUCI (2003–2004); UNMIL (2003–2018); UNOCI (2004–2017); ONUB (2004–2006).
 8. The US disaster response to Haiti was based on a “whole-of-government” approach involving multiple federal departments and agencies, led by the USAID and with significant support from the DoD. Twenty-five other countries provided military assistance to support the earthquake response. The largest contributors after the US were Canada and the Dominican Republic (Cecchine *et al.*, 2013).
 9. For a debate on this question see Charlie Rose interview: Did the US break Haiti? (1 March 2004, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6Y75mCaJwY>) with Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, and Michelle Montas, Director of Radio Haiti, on one side and Timothy Carney, former US Ambassador to Haiti under President Bill Clinton, and Republican Representative Mark Foley of Florida on the other side of the argument. For a presentation of the historic context and consequence of US foreign policy in Haiti, including the economic embargo, see Noam Chomsky and Paul Farmer at Technology and Culture Forum, 2002.
 10. Parallels can be drawn with the 1994 US intervention in Haiti, when the UN authorized force to reinstate democracy but it has been argued that the real reason of intervention was to stop the inflow of the Haitian boat people.
 11. Note: UN peacekeeping uniformed personnel includes troops, police, and military observers. Data for 2012-2019 are utilized from the UN Peacekeeping Operations Fact Sheet reports for respective years, and data for earlier years are utilized from the UN Peace Operations Year in Review reports for respective years. The 2010 budget figures are utilized through the MINUSTAH by the Numbers report.
 12. During the first round of elections on 16 December 1990, a fifth of the ballots – 300,000 of about 1.6 million ballots – were lost. Aristide was elected president with a quick count sample of a hundred precincts, all of them in urban areas. Aristide had a large lead. In fact, an hour after the US Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Bernard Aronson gave his announcement recognizing Aristide’s victory, the Carter Center held a press conference announcing the elections were not over yet as they had not counted the ballots. The integrity of the legislative and regional/local elections was compromised.
 13. Party training in Haiti has been mainly supported by the International Republican Institution (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI).
 14. This paper was updated on February 19, 2024, and does not account for the developments that followed in Haiti, including Prime Minister Ariel Henry’s resignation in April 2024, months after he was blocked out of the country after his Africa trip, and the installation of a transitional council.”
 15. “Haiti in-depth: Ten key questions as Kenyan police deploy to restore order,” The New Humanitarian, 26 June, 2024; available at <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2024/06/26/haiti-ten-key-questions-kenyan-police-deployment>.
 16. Other countries have pledged either personnel or logistic and financial support: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Canada, Chad, France, Germany, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Spain, and the United Kingdom. See: The New Humanitarian | Haiti in-depth: Ten key questions as Kenyan police deploy to restore order.

17. Only René Preval's two presidencies, 1996-2001 and -2006-2011 come closest in Haitian history to being benevolent. Despite being Haiti's best president, his record was severely marred in the first term, when Préval refused to disobey his benefactor Aristide's order to rig the May 2000 elections by only counting the votes cast for the top four positions, thereby disenfranchising about one-third of the votes cast. In his second term, Préval disappeared in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake, rather than exhibit leadership when it was most necessary.
18. "Haiti in-depth: Ten key questions as Kenyan police deploy to restore order," The New Humanitarian, 26 June, 2024; available at <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2024/06/26/haiti-ten-key-questions-kenyan-police-deployment>.
19. There has been general fatigue with foreign entanglements. For example, the failure of the Iraq and Afghanistan missions has contributed to it. Another negative experience was the Libya – intervention without a peace-building mission in place.

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