Haiti's Structural Vulnerability at the Juncture of Ineptitude

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This article addresses the intricate complexities of natural disasters and structural vulnerabilities within the context of post-colonial governance and dictatorial regimes. The overarching goal is to establish a new topography of the prevailing effects of structural vulnerability on the Haitian people. Politico-anthropological mapping is provided to both construct and deconstruct the body of analysis contributing to instructive theoretical discourse on Haiti's structural vulnerability as it relates to an ecology of violence, indifference, and health-related ramifications of disaster. This article also demonstrates how social factors such as poverty, political instability, rapid urbanization, and the fragility of the state constitute the very etiology of sustainable underdevelopment in Haiti. The corollary effects of natural disasters not only expose the weaknesses of the State, but irrevocably compromise the future of the Haitian people.

Introduction

As the world witnessed in the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake of 2010, the cholera epidemic as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, Haiti's geographical location in the Caribbean Sea renders it susceptible to natural disaster and catastrophe—the impacts of which might only be mitigated by amenable, future-oriented policies. The viability of the Haitian people and their land should not be dependent upon the caprices of "God," but must exist within the parameters of amenable policies to ensure that each generation has the legal and ethical power to thrive. This article places at the forefront the importance of establishing an analytical framework that asserts that the needs of all Haitians are essential to the survival of the country.

Essentially, the article argues that the spaces deemed minimally important—*andeyò* /the countryside—are the most integral. This article also demonstrates that Haiti's structural vulnerabilities are due to societal denial of the interrelated concepts of *Moun Mòn*—the mountain folks who were excluded from the polity of the new nation yet provided the nation its labor force and its nourishments—(*moun + mòn = totalite* / people + mountains = totality). By denying the quintessential essence of the *moun mòn*, Haitian society negates the foundational principle of the modernist revolution, "*tout moun se moun*" (all people are people), and in the process, marches toward collective suicide as fundamental human needs are sacrificed.

Stuctural Vulnerability

After spending many weeks reading documents from the United Nations (UN) and the Haitian government, I wondered how it could be possible for Haiti to reach the 2035 Sustainability Goals and make qualitative developmental leaps (DSNCRP, 2007; CHPSSN, 2010) when Haiti is not only exposed to hurricanes almost every year but also rests on active tectonic fault lines. In addition, social factors such as poverty, political instability, rapid urbanization, and the fragility of the state constitute the very etiology of sustainable underdevelopment in Haiti. The corollary

effects of natural disasters not only expose the weaknesses of the state, but irrevocably compromise the future of the Haitian people.

The January 12, 2010 earthquake was not only a cataclysmic event of devastation, but it also laid bare gaping fault lines undergirding Haitian society that render the nation structurally vulnerable. This vulnerability impacts millions of Haitians and people of Haitian descent who currently live in subhuman conditions in Haiti and neighboring countries (e.g. Dominican Republic sugar plantations). The earthquake revealed Haiti's unfortunate susceptibility to health-compromising pathogens (*Vibrio cholerae*) and made other institutional weaknesses fully palpable. Despite this truth, however, the Haitian political, social and economic elite have ultimately failed to address the root causes of Haiti's impoverishment and susceptibility to destruction.

The term "vulnerability" comes from the Latin noun *vulnus* (*volnus*, *vulneris),* which means having a wound. The adjective is *vulnificus*, which means wound-inflicting or wounding. The suffix -*abilis* refers to a relationship (external alteration) or being able to be carried away (i.e. exposed to attack), or a possible failure of the internal balance; whereas, -*ability* comes to mean having a mental or physical capacity, being able or having the power to accomplish something. According to the *Oxford American Dictionary*, the vulnerable person is the one "who can be injured, wounded, harmed, or exposed to damage; the one who can be easily reached, the unshielded." The synonyms of vulnerability are fragility, precariousness, uncertainty, and frailty. In the New World, vulnerability was established through Atlantic slavery and maintained via the economic and political apparatus of North Atlantic imperialism. To speak of structural vulnerability is to admit the paradox of the underlying fragilities of a country that has miserably failed in anticipating and managing monumental and continuous population growth. The population of Haiti has increased nearly 500% in the past 70 years as chaotic urbanization has overtaken Port-au-Prince and its environs. During this time various administrations have spent enormous political energy fighting over control of executive power. Meanwhile, the demographic, economic, financial, political, cultural and technological power required to establish functioning cities elude the grasp of the capital city, the center of power, that so many politicians fight over. The "political sphere," according to Michel-Rolph Trouillot, has an "unruly nature," and it "exacerbates [the] process of social exclusion because it restricts and sometimes annihilates forms of interaction—both civil and political—that could challenge mechanisms of exclusion" (2001, p. 123).

Since the end of the Duvalier family dictatorship in 1986, Haiti has experienced significant instability triggered by various factors, including coup d'états, violent protests, military insurgencies, ideological and constitutional disputes, epidemics, natural disasters, drug trafficking, political factionalism, and challenged political legitimacy. Despite a multitude of promises to address and redress Haiti's political instability, including the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the country has experienced hiccups of change and appreciable improvements only to be thwarted by deeper chasms undergirding the fabric of Haitian society—thus, exposing Haiti's structural vulnerabilities.

The nation is the life-world, and human security within the life-the world is the biological system. Since 1804, when Haiti proclaimed its independence, Haiti's life-world, Haiti's *biological* system, has been under attack both externally and internally. Alex Dupuy (2014), argues that the slave rising of 1791, which would "eventually lead to the independence of Haiti and the creation of an entirely new social order" (p. 38), was motivated by several grievances,

including "those that had to do with social justice, land reform, jobs, higher wages, healthcare, education, and social services" (p. 3). However, these grievances, expressed in 1804, 1915, 1935, 1946, 1957, 1986, 2004, 2010, and continuously since, have never been fully redressed, contributing in large part to Haiti's structural vulnerabilities. The continuous struggle for democracy has morphed into a power struggle over access to the state, which continues to be the primary, yet derisory, engine for economic development. Such persistent struggle leads to corruption, socioeconomic inequalities, dictatorial politics, clientelism, and the murky delineation between the public and private sectors of the economy. As a result, Haiti has not been a viable environment for competitive politics, economy, or democracy.

All societies or nation-states do not have the same potential for sociopolitical and economic transformation, for each has its unique macrosociology. Additionally, we must consider key aspects of each nation-state: its size, education, history, geopolitical location, and natural resources. Due to these quintessential variables, each society presents itself on the world stage as a complete and distinct *living entity*. The living, in Heideggerian terms, is its being or its beingness in the world. As such, the living entity, which is the society, can be fathomed as an intrinsically organized biological system. It can also be considered an organization of variable units of energy, all interrelated and interacting with one another within a bio-socio-politico logic. In this context, structural vulnerability becomes a fundamental phenomenon which raises the question of the relationship of individuals to the society in which they live. It questions the quintessential representation of the human, which is linked to our human condition. Our **mounness**—*tout moun se moun* (everyone is a human being), the primary ethical and philosophical foundation of the nascent Haitian society—functions as an integral part of society. Structural vulnerability is concerned with the economical, ecological, social, political, cultural, and linguistic. It fundamentally involves the totality of society and its functioning.

Since no life can escape injury, being wounded, or living vulnerably, I see a nation's life-world as a biological system or an integrated building. Vulnerability constitutes our original human condition as much on the ontological level (which characterizes the human being) as it does on the psychological (in the very broad sense of the term psyche, or on the ethical level), concerning our fundamental relation to others. Vulnerability therefore is a common, universally shared structure of existence. However, being structurally vulnerable is not a viable condition of living and being.

Paul Farmer (2011) reintroduced the socio-medical concept of "acute-on-chronic" (p. 3) as he addressed a barrage of problems facing the Haitian population immediately after the January 12, 2010 earthquake. Water insecurity, which was already primordial, coupled with the threat of cholera, which materialized due to the introduction of foreign, waterborne pathogens. Displacement, lack of sanitary living conditions, and the structural problems of health-care delivery became extremely critical. "If past were prologue," Farmer claims, "Haitians themselves would be blamed if such problems were not addressed. But many factors, within Haitian borders and without, had weakened Haiti's institutions and made its people so vulnerable to the quake" (p. 77). For one thing, foreign aid was used as a weapon. Moreover, the "foreign aid apparatus," Farmer asserts, "kept too much overhead for its operations and relied too heavily on international NGOs and contractors" (Farmer, 2011). In addition, one might consider the German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas (1994), who claims that "material poverty and political oppression are *also* the responsibility of the indigenous elites, whether they react in a totalitarian manner or not" (p. 19).

The Haitian elites, or the possessing class, have never given this much thought—that they are ecologically interconnected with the rest of the materially abject population.

Structural vulnerability is generatively a very broad notion in terms of the subjects it encompasses and the possibilities of analysis it can engender. As a result, the notion of structural vulnerability and its correlation with stress and risk factors are more than a referential category, but a practical category of analysis and of action for policymakers. Maturana (1970), reminds us that a biological system is "characterized by exergonic metabolism, growth and replication, all organized in a closed causal process" (p. 5). A society can also be categorized as an organically tethered system, functioning by defined and closed tessellations of response that form and reform the operative life of perpetually renewable human beings living within that structure. Since behaviors are learned, I would argue that history then becomes tessellated cells expressed in a repetition of constellations, some more colorful than others—or, in sociopolitical terms, some more violent than others. In this regard, the Haitian Revolution did not eradicate colonial structures of class and racial antagonism; they were reproduced and retrenched. "Mulattoes," according to Alex Dupuy's cogent reading, "practiced their own racism against blacks by excluding blacks from their social networks and intermarrying among themselves or with whites if possible" (p. 39). These practices, which are still at the heart of wealth consolidation and maintenance, "were at the root of the reproduction of the class relations and divisions that came to be expressed ideologically as relations between whites, mulattoes, and blacks" (Dupuy, 2014). Unfortunately, Haitian society is still operating within a dominant sociopolitical logic that reproduces class vulnerabilities and enlarges the national wound.

State Against Nation

The structural vulnerability of Haiti is inarguably a product of its harsh legacy of slavery, occupation, dictatorship, hyper-exploitation, and willful neglect. This has eroded the thin fabric of the nation, leaving a country that is, as Trouillot describes, a "state against nation," where the interests of the state and its political actors supersede the collective interests of the nation. Additionally, internal forces, including the structural polity engendered by post-colonial rules, fail to reconstitute an imbalance created by France in the form of divisive class and race politics, as well as the politics of integral territoriality that are psychologically embedded in the draconian policies of nationhood. As Robert Fatton Jr. (2006) points out, "Haiti's predicament is not rooted in the absence of a nation, but rather in the ruling class's incapacity to construct an 'integral' state," meaning "a state that is capable of organizing both the political unity of the different factions of the ruling class and the 'organic relations between…political society and civil society'. The integral state expresses therefore the hegemonic governance of the ruling class" (Fatton, *TWQ*, pp. 115–116).

It is the absence of nation-state integrality that has caused such grave structural vulnerability. Problems arising from the lack of social and political governance have affected every sector of civil society, creating a warped dynamic of independent selves, rather than sculpting a diversely unified Haitian identity. Also integral to the problematic of nation-state integrality is the notion of representation. Although Haiti has periodically had legitimate governments, equitable representation has always been at the core of the struggle for power and political survival. In the ineffectual and disjoined nation-state, the incentive to obey the rule of law is never fully a legal or a nationally constructed ethos, but rather is the result of a self- or community-based moral expectation. Those who are in a position of power are the first violators of the rule of law. Again,

Robert Fatton Jr. (2002), is correct in asserting that in Haiti "[b]oth the possessing and ruling classes have no social project, except the day-to-day struggle of keeping themselves in positions of power, wealth, and prestige" (p. 37).

The structural vulnerability of Haitian society has eroded even the venerable religious and secular traditions where a form of communal ethos, a *koumbitaj*, has maintained the integrity of individuals within the corruptible political space. Increasingly, dishonesty and one-upmanship have regressively become the normative functions of society since the feeble state, along with the non-productive possessing class, have, as Fatton Jr. remind us, "neither a national vision nor a coherent ideology… whatever unity they achieve is rooted in an opportunistic convergence of interests" (pp. 37–38). This convergence of interests is hardly ever nationally oriented, and civil society is unable to maintain its esteemed traditions for the reason that relationships, more and more, are based upon opportunistic kinships that eat away at the fabric of the society. The grave structural vulnerabilities revealed by the 2010 earthquake prompted members of the Chamber of Commerce to declare in March 2010 that:

> For the first time in the history of Haiti, a unified and inclusive private sector, organized around the Private Sector Economic Forum (PSEF) has decided to break with the past and formulate a shared vision and roadmap for the sustainable development of Haiti… we re-affirm our commitment to working to create an equitable, fair and opportunity-laden society for all Haitians… (*Forum Economique Secteur Privé*: Introductory Memo, March 23, 2010)

The formative processes of structural vulnerability are less a function of one-party responsibility, resting with the possessing class, but are a synchronous confluence of malevolent, corrupted practices sanctioned by the inept state and the nonproductive possessing class to impact the marginalized and exploited civil society. The aforementioned private sector's statement is indicative of its conscious and willful neglect of the masses since the inception of the nation.

Historical Antagonism—War Against the Peasants

The three main social groups in Haiti—the black peasants/masses, the educated blacks, and the tiny mulatto possessing class—have a historically antagonistic relationship. The majority black peasants are only called upon to serve as low-paid laborers or domestics, to pay taxes without representation, and to occasionally vote. They are the *moun andeyò* (outside folks or excluded folks). *Moun andeyò*, Trouillot (2001) remarks, is a term "used to describe peasants or urbanites of peasant origins, verifying the lack of sociocultural cohesion on the national scale" (p. 119). Already, through the practice of naming, the Haitian peasant is the *Other*, a curious object of abjection.

In an extremely powerful article that appeared in the Boston Globe on April 22, 1985, Pamela Constable wrote: "in this desperately poor agricultural country, where thousands of tiny farms perch among breathtaking rocky ridges, people have always prized two possessions as fundamental to survival: arable land and pigs" (p. 2). When the article was written, Haiti had a population of 5.8 million people. In 2020, the population has doubled, with 11.5 million inhabitants. Since the 1980s, most of the arable plains have been used to "build" new towns or expand the boundaries of an existing town. At the same time, Haitian pigs were slaughtered in the interest of American farmers who wanted to sell their own farm-raised Iowa pink pigs (*kochon grimèl*) to Haitians.

Both the Jimmy Carter and the Ronald Reagan administrations pressured the Haitian government to kill the Haitian black pig population, but it was under the Reagan administration that the eradication campaign materialized. Over a million pigs were slaughtered, wiping out peasants' savings. At the same time, several hurricanes devastated many southern Haitian towns, thousands of boat people made their way up to Miami in leaky boats, and the United States falsely accused Haiti of being the vector of the AIDS epidemic, destroying the tourism industry. Through all these calamities, the early to mid-1980s distilled the perfect storm that first exposed Haiti's structural vulnerability. Of the multiple traumas that shook Haiti during that time period, however, Constable reports, "the official slaughter of 400,000 native black pigs in 1982-83—a campaign undertaken with US backing to prevent a swine fever epidemic—has had the more acute impact on farm families" (p. 2). The slaughter of the Haitian black pigs did not concern the Haitian possessing class, which makes up less than one percent of the nation, because they dominated import-export commerce, and, therefore, controlled the new pink Iowa pigs, seeds, feed, and building materials to house the pigs. Since independence, this small and powerful group has used all possible tactics and methods to maintain and amass power, including by forming foreign alliances that are detrimental to the national interest. "Haiti's so-called international partners will not change course" Robert Fatton Jr. (2014) astutely claims, "on behalf of the nation because their interests, as the outer peripheral model clear, are served too well by existing neoliberal policies" (p. 176).

All the while, as Pamela Constable observed in 1985, "the gradual, massive erosion of topsoil due to years of intensive over-farming," as well as the cutting down of trees to make space for crops and making charcoal, have left the soil with no anchors, and "tropical rains have gradually eroded entire mountainsides and left rivers alternately flooded and parched" (p. 2). Unfortunately, these conditions remain true some 35 years later. Instead of replenishing the land, rain has become another element that aggravates Haiti's vulnerability. With minimal livestock and a land which yields less and less, Haiti continues to pivot around patronage, corruption, and optimizing a system of spoils (the Petro-Caribe scheme as the latest example), rather than responding to the needs of the people.

The fundamental challenge of Haiti remains that a stagnant state structure is unable to cope with the disconcerting effects of leaders' ineptitude, profound corruption, and a rapidly changing society that has become gangsterish and destitute. Demands on the acephalous state are growing as its capacity shrinks. Especially alarming is the vile ineptitude of leadership in crisis after crisis, particularly regarding structural security affairs. The state apparatus has failed. It seems as though instead of the nation fighting corruption, it allows it to become more entrenched.

Many of the crises facing Haiti have taken the form of natural disasters, which have had undesirable effects on production and presented a major obstacle to the growth of the economy. In order for the country to cope with these natural disasters, it must take necessary measures to mitigate their impact, such as building equipped shelters throughout the country and securing reserves of grains and other dry goods. On the other hand, a tighter fiscal policy needs to be applied throughout the higher echelons of government—from parliament to the executive—with limitations on traveling and per diem expenditures, to leave more room for increased spending in emergency situations. Such measures are of particular importance for the poorest Haitians, as Kasia Mika (2019) contends that "urban factors add to and can determine the hazardous and potentially deadly nature of environmental phenomena" in Haiti (p. 33). Some of the slums around the *Bicentenaire* area are actually built on a precarious landfill, and previously occupied land were built, as Mika claims, "without an accompanying development of the city's infrastructure [that] further contributes to people's vulnerability in case of floods, mudslides or earthquakes" (2019, p. 33).

Haiti is ranked 18th out of 197 countries in terms of population density per square mile and is the 6th most populous nation. In comparison, the Dominican Republic is ranked as the 18th most populous nation out of the 197 countries (UN, 2019). Additionally, the 2019 United Nations Human Development Index ranks Haiti 168th out of 189 countries. As of 2020, 56.1% of the Haitian population is urban and 30% experience food insecurity. This marks a significant change since 1985, a year before the Duvaliers' exodus to France, when Haiti was overwhelmingly rural at 85%, amid food insecurity, despite the killings of the pigs, and this was not yet a major issue. By 2000, with massive migration to the urban centers, poverty as well as proletarianization became acute. Dupuy, astutely identifies the process of proletarianization within the context of power struggle for sovereignty and access to Haitian resources:

> The 20th century began with the 19-year US occupation (1915-34), which led to the second major transformation of the economic, social, and political landscape of Haiti. That process of transformation was characterized by: (1) the substitution of US dominance for European, primarily French, in the 19th century; (2) the proletarianization of Haitian peasants combined with the export of Haitian workers to other parts of the Caribbean and North America; and (3) a transition to a weak or minimalist democracy and the disempowerment of the people to effect substantive change (2014, p. 62).

The notion of "disempowerment" fundamentally runs counter to any real notion of democracy, confirming Dupuy's suggestion that Haiti's attempt at democracy was "minimalist." The term "democracy" is derived from the Greek words *demos* and *Kratos*, meaning rule by the people or the majority. What is often overlooked is that Greece had a large population that was poor, similar to Haiti, and the rulers wanted government to be representative of the people, not governed against them. In a sense, the establishment of democracy in Greece was a revolutionary act that ushered in the voices and interests of the poor. However, since the Greeks, no nation has achieved democracy without overt social conflict relating to economic equality, quality education, a just police force, and equal political representation. Despite the grounding of communities within the rural areas around the *Lakou* system (extended kinship compounds), the public democratic sphere has never developed proper political provisions capable of addressing the exigencies of the rural areas.

Recognizing democracy as a site of struggle transcends the realm of politics, particularly politics of contestation, in order to highlight other key structures of society (economic, cultural, educational, judicial, health, physical security, environmental, human rights, and labor) that must be beneficial for the majority and the recognition of common national interests. Democracy cannot superficially be reduced to the vague notion of majority rule politically, while the minority controls the economy. This permanently imprisons the nation's interests for the minority's economic and political benefit. As is evident throughout the world, especially in formerly colonized countries like Haiti, democracy cannot function without a fundamental vision of common interest nor the common will to foundationally establish economic, educational and social equality. Whatever vulnerabilities, and there were plenty, that existed in Haiti prior to the US occupation, they became exacerbated by the violent disregard of the majority's interests within a capitalistically racialized society that viewed black bodies as machines of production for agricultural products to benefit the minority.

On Dictatorship, Democratic Hiccups, and Being
The inner space of one's thoughts, regardless of their level of positive freedom (cognitive), can never fully live outside the containment of a dictatorship, for one is one with it: physically, psychically, and temporally. Dictatorship is an overwhelming sea and it produces anxiety within its subjects. It transgresses all realms and sits in the nook of beings. Capitalist dictatorship has never been about the people's interests. Hannah Arendt (1968) reminds us that dictators "naturally rule to the advantage of their own class and at the disadvantage of all others" (p. 257). Whether under the Duvaliers or other dictatorial/ authoritarian regimes, the military has always been used as an instrument of repression. Thus, in Haiti, any perceived threat to established draconian control has always led the Haitian armed forces to crush resistance. As Dupuy reasons, the Duvalierist regimes:

"sought to preserve power not simply for its own sake, but to enable them to plunder the public treasury for their own benefit. The Duvalierists ran the state and the government like an organized gang, with the Duvalier family originally at its head" (2014, p. 86).

The disposition of, acclamation, or acculturation to a dictatorial system of governance plays a particularly important role in the development of sources of both community and identity at the national and personal level. One acquires a way of being that is fundamentally affective in both a rhetorical and grammatical perspectival sense. The collective "we" becomes superficial, for it gives precedence to the "I" within the context of an immediate future and constant present; for the long-term future is never thinkable, or attainable, within the territoriality of lack, deprivation, and violent poverty. The "we" is superficial and manipulative when it is the "I" that establishes the dictatorial supremacy over the "we" for the sole benefits of the "I" or the "my." So, as Haitians, we learn very early to play a linguistic tongue-twister that demarcates possession: *pa m' se pa m', pa ou se pa m', pa m'pa pa ou* (what's mine is mine, what's yours is mine, mine is never yours). The horizon of being a part of, with, and toward the world, which must be acquired at an early stage of development within a context of shared communal perspective, is shattered or contorted within the composite realm of a dictatorial "we" that is never fully inclusive of a national "we."

Being repeatedly identified as the "Poorest Country in the Western Hemisphere" not only places Haiti on the outer margins among nations, but this label carries dire consequences in terms of safeguarding sovereignty and inscribing symbolic poignancy to its citizens. Additionally, in terms of economic policies, being incorporated within the capitalistic world of the so-called free market, Haiti further succumbs to neoliberal indifference regarding the fundamental needs of the country and savage exploitations that proceed unchecked and unchallenged. Haiti's survival and recovery of sovereignty requires a new form of a decolonization campaign. This would have to be a national campaign that prioritizes the collective needs of the citizenry. Unfortunately, at this point, Haiti remains a Port-au-Princean acephalous state that neglects the body of the country. The heavy macro-acephalous structure creates a constant pounding due to the warring factions competing for access to the state's vault against the nation's interests. When a capital city becomes a "microcephalia," as Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2001) asserts, the "most provincial towns lose residents or become steppingstones to longer migratory flows to the capital or to foreign lands" (p. 117). Having such a heavy administrative and institutional presence in one location, the capital, creates a locus of order and disorder that reverberates throughout the country, not only through rituals of symbolic power but also through rituals of brute force instrumented by the military and, now, the National Police. The processes of disorder are due to the macro-acephalous structure of the Haitian society, which is its colonial inheritance of the power structure.

Dupuy (2014) concisely articulates the fundamental issue of accountability, corruption, and encroachment of power: "the formal trappings of democracy in Haiti notwithstanding, the government has been hijacked by and essentially functions as the privileged domain of the wealthy and powerful classes by negotiating on their behalf with international actors who ultimately hold veto power over the state and its agenda" (pp. 133-4). Hence, the failure of Haitian governments to make long-term and quality investments in education, healthcare, environmental protection and rehabilitation, infrastructure, food security, and job creation has fundamentally ensured the persistence of grotesque poverty and baffling inequality. The Port-au-Princean macro-acephalous bedlam creates structural disorder that results in a dubious space of shambolic sociopolitical activity. In Haiti, the moral authority of the state was always lacking due to generational abject poverty, power struggles, and an indigent superstructure of power that lacks the trappings of grandeur and institutional respectability. Instead, the ritual of power has always been symbolically represented by military/police uniforms and paramilitary accoutrements. As elements of order, their rituals have been those of repression, which has served to legitimize the state's authority in using various forms of violence. According to John Shattuck (2003), "repression in Haiti has always had a special logic… repression keeps the lid on freedom and destroys those who try to pry it off" (p. 77). Thus, Haiti remains unsecure, structurally vulnerable with a violence-ridden environment that impairs the country.

Since the removal of the Duvalier regime in 1986, the Haitian military, with the backing of the United States and the Haitian possessing class, has been unable to prevent any democratic movement from taking root. Four years later, after several military coups and provisional governments, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, then a well-known and beloved radical theology priest, became the spearhead of the people's movement and won the 1990 national election in a landslide. As Dupuy (2014) correctly observes, the "democratic movement fought to rid the country of dictatorship, democratize the government, eliminate corruption in public office, reform the military and police, and create a more just and equitable society" (p. 67). That movement became another earth-shattering moment to the Haitian society, a moment that altered the possibilities of achieving real democracy, as it was violently interrupted while exposing internal contradictions within the movement and society at large. Again, Dupuy argues that the popular democratic:

"movement comprised many different political, religious, civic, human rights, neighborhood, women's, student, professional, labor, peasant, and media organizations that gave voice to the people and formulated their aspirations. Yet, the interests of the minority, as well as those of the imperial United States, superseded those of the majority: "[t]he bourgeoisie responded by backing a military coup against Aristide in September 1991 that sent him into exile" (2014, p. 67).

This coup killed over 9,000 people between 1991 and 1994. Through this coup, military/police violence undermined democracy by sapping the pro-democratic camp's ability to address critical issues of transparent governance, sovereignty, reformation of the justice system, and control over Haiti's natural resources.

Searing Inequality and Democratizing Democracy
The searing inequality experienced daily by the people, as well as their deep desire to participate in the democratic future of Haiti, have not been enough. Haiti's structural vulnerabilities attest that democracy cannot be established in the absence of shared national values of respecting and uplifting the intrinsic rights of each human, *chalk moun*, to be recognized as a deserving, free

being through communal policymaking. Despite Aristide's shortcomings as a leader, his ideas about democracy are valid. At a United Nations' Leadership Seminar held at Brussels in June 1996 and co-hosted by the Belgian parliament, Aristide asserted that "one of the main tasks facing today's civil society, particularly the countries of the South, is that of **democratizing democracy** [Aristide's emphasis]. It is a task facing the men and women of Haiti" (1996, p. 14). Democracy critically requires democratic institutions that can safeguard the sanctity of the human as a right-bearing being within an avowed constitutional republic. Hence, Aristide's remarks are apropos when he later claims:

> in Haiti 1% of the population still possess half of the wealth in a country where we have only two doctors per 10,000 inhabitants… where the remaining 0.3% of wooded land will be reduced to 0.1% if we do not give greater impetus to a reforestation campaign which requires an agricultural reform in compliance with the constitution (p. 15).

Unfortunately, the poor and the marginalized are most commonly reproached for environmental degradation in underdeveloped or developing countries; yet, they are the ones most victimized by it. What Aristide meant to relay is that such poverty and ecological degradation is quintessential in understanding the confluences between power, inequality, poverty, and the environment. Without a grounded understanding of those intersections, sustainable development will never be achieved.

Democracy without practical implementation of socioeconomic policies of advancement, access to quality education that reflects the nation's needs, and robust policies that protect the environment is not a democracy worth having. Jürgen Habermas (1994) aptly posits that "the failures of old-fashioned developmental aid programs has served as a reason, and pretext for the increasing unwillingness to continue the export of capital into developing countries. But one mustn't look only to the barbarian living conditions to see where modernization brings neither prosperity nor freedom" (p. 85). Countries like Haiti cannot continue to be a place of material extraction and hyper-cheap labor. Trouillot (2001) reminds us that "the plantation system was the dominant form of integration of the Caribbean into the world capitalist economy" (p. 106), and that mode of production cannot be easily erased. Consequently, Trouillot asserts, "areas dominated by mines or plantations, ownership of the major means of production is limited to the state or to transnational corporations" (p. 111). One cannot contemplate the human dimensions of poverty without pondering the environmental dimensions as well. The poor in Haiti, especially in the rural areas, depend upon the surrounding environment for their livelihoods. Hence, the absence of available and sustainable economic opportunities establishes a paradox: when the environment is sustenance, with no other alternatives, there is no incentive to prioritize long-term sustainability over immediate survival. In an article published in *Foreign Affairs*, anthropologist Sidney W. Mintz (1995) expresses Haiti's fundamental problematic:

> …existing terrible asymmetry of economic power in Haiti is just what has kept the vast majority of the Haitian people utterly defenseless for centuries…. the present situation is the outcome of 200 years of a war of attrition against the people by a ruling class. U.S. rule early in this century confirmed, sustained, and underwrote that asymmetry (pp. 85–86).

In that sense, socioeconomic and political inequalities compel the poor to dig their own graves, interred by the thrashing of their natural capital. The thrashing of the environment, in effect, started in 1493 when the Spaniards began planting sugarcane on a large scale in order to

harvest their white gold, and such agriculturally intense labor and land usage continued for 178 years under French colonial slavery (1625–1803), with many forests destroyed for sugar production (Benitez-Rojo, 2005, p. 38). In his journal, Christopher Columbus noted on December 13, 1492, that "the land was so lovely and fertile" (pp. 94–95). Columbus also informed Queen Isabella of Spain that "these lands are such of extent, good and fertile, and especially those of this island of Española, that no one knows how to describe them and no one can believe it, unless he has seen it" (p. 101). The impoverishment and deforestation of Haiti does not have a Haitian genesis, but a European one. From 1804 to today, the land has been heavily exploited by various multinational corporations (Gulf and Western, Reynolds Metals, Doles, the Haitian American Sugar Company, and others), as well as by the people for subsistence. From 1493 to 1957, 80% of Haiti's forests disappeared. During the United States' occupation alone, 30% of the land was deforested. The prized mahogany tree, the hardwood trees (campêche), as well as the cotton-silk trees were chopped down. One must also take into consideration the massive campaign of *rejete*, the violent anti-Vodoun superstition movement spearheaded by the Catholic church and supported by the government that was instrumental in eliminating the *repozwa lwa*, the trees in which the Vodoun spirits dwelled.

Haiti's structural vulnerabilities are intrinsically linked to its environmental destruction, which is entrenched in international political economy and policies. SHADA (Société Haitiano-Américaine de Dévelopment Agricole) played an integral role in this process after its foundation in 1941 under the Antoine Élie Lescot government (May 15, 1941–January 11, 1946), which intended to establish Haiti as a major supplier of rubber to the United States: "SHADA expropriated peasant land, destroyed their houses, devastated their fields, and cut down their trees. Not a single ton of rubber was produced" (Dayan, 1995, p. 87). According to Matthew J. Smith (2009), "by 1943, an estimated 47,177 acres were cleared to make way for the planting of cryptostegia… the large labor force mostly comprised peasant farmers lured from food crop cultivation to meet increasing rubber demands" (p. 44). Although Haiti had moments of droughts and food shortages, it was under the Léscot government that a rural exodus began and small-scale food insecurity (*lavi chè*; *pa gen manje*) emerged as a frequent occurrence of the Haitian vocabulary, including in literature. Additionally, the purging, or riddance, of natural habitats such as forests into industrial farm fields resulted in significant loss of biodiversity. This remains a major threat to Haiti's terrestrial and coastal environments. If Haiti manages to emerge from its condition of dependence on foreign aid and technical support to a viable condition of economic independence, the country will need robust and enforceable environmental policies that might be able to ensure a collective survival within a novel, sustainable context.

Land Use, Natural Disasters, Poverty, and Water

Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world and is also "the most water-insecure country in the hemisphere" (Farmer, 2011, p. 71). Haiti faces a series of problems that prevent it from taking the path toward sustainable development. These problems are linked to two forms of disaster. One is man-made, resulting from acute political crises (coup d'états, military occupations), and the other is caused by natural disasters resulting from poor risk management. More than 85% of domestic wastewater, including most of the human sewage from Port-au-Prince, is untreated or, at minimum, receives primary treatment before being discharged into the three primary tributaries that run into the bay of Port-au-Prince. According to a 2000 CIDIHCA documentary, *Potoprens Se Pa'm*, directed by Rigoberto Lopez and Frantz Voltaire, 90% of the air that people breathe in the center of Port-au-Prince contains fecal combustion particles.

Port-au-Prince is a polluted city with a bay that is filled with excess nitrogen, phosphorus, and industrial waste, including cars. Festering over time, this pollution leads to algal blooms, loss of seagrasses and other fish habitats, fish kills, coral reef degradation and death, and shellfish poisoning. According to water expert Lamothe Lormier (2005), the public water transported around Port-au-Prince has been rendered undrinkable due to an *E. coli* infestation. Making matters worse, the packets of water sold by street vendors throughout the city contain an extremely high level of Bisphenol A (BPA), a colorless solid that is soluble in organic solvents, but poorly soluble in water. Exposure to high temperatures creates a photochemical breakdown that causes a leaching effect. Encyclopedia Britannica claims that "from the mid-1990s, numerous studies determined that both high-level and low-level exposure to BPA can adversely affect reproduction and development in animals." With a lack of enforceable regulations, Haitians might be exposing themselves to greater health risks while trying to remain hydrated in a water-insecure country.

It should also be noted that the Republic of Haiti is exposed to all forms of risk and disaster in relation to its geospatial position and colonial history that brought various diseases (syphilis, smallpox, mange, and scabies) to the land. However, it is the devastating forces of the earthquake that we tend to forget, since we are so preoccupied with the political quakes. James E. McClellan III reminds us not only of the frequency, but the impact that earthquakes had on the development of Port-au-Prince after it became the political center of the colony: "[t]he earthquake of 1751 destroyed three-quarters of what had been built by then, and the quake of 1770 destroyed the still-nascent town completely" (2010, p. 27). As a result of the frequency and destructive forces of earthquakes, "authorities ordered that Port-au-Prince be rebuilt only in wood" (p. 28). This mandate was certainly forgotten by the time we entered the period of U.S. occupation as well as the modernization project that President Dumarsais Estimé oversaw. In 2020, the inhabitants of Port-au-Prince are fully facing the same conditions that Sabine Manigat recorded in 1996–7: "alarming unemployment, deplorable living conditions, low incomes, and lack of job security" (p. 119).

This country of 27,700 square kilometers is threatened by other natural disasters too, including hurricanes, cyclones, and extreme heat. These disasters, whatever their degree, their gravity, always seem threatening and have caused great losses in human lives, as well as animal lives and material. They have halted developmental projects and caused substantial economic regressions. Even prior to the 2010 earthquake, the infrastructure of Port-au-Prince was (is) in a state of complete collapse. Garbage lay heaped in most Downtown streets, and certain neighborhoods were impractical to navigate through. To this day, public sector workers go unpaid for months; meanwhile health hazards increase, and a collective despair embraces the city. Certainly, natural disasters cannot be avoided, but their effects can be mitigated through responsible policies and forward-thinking governance, which are currently entirely lacking.

Decisions around risk and disaster management are prioritized in countries that desire sustainable development, and this should be especially true for Haiti. As Gérard Holly (1999) remarks, "water has become the limiting factor for development" (p. 72). Access to quality potable water in Haiti would reduce the risks of water borne-illness and alleviate poor sanitation in the country. It is wholly possible for Haiti to leave its ranking as one the poorest countries in the world if Haitians become socio-politically determined to follow a sustainable development route as a matter of collective survival over the vulgar opulence of a microscopic few who rapaciously continue to amplify Haiti's structural vulnerabilities.

The January 2010 *Goudou goudou*, an earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale, affected the west and southeast departments. The overcrowded capital Port-au-Prince and the city of Léogâne, epicenter of the earthquake, were the most affected. Within one minute, about 300,000 lives were destroyed. In the immediate aftermath, the economy collapsed; the loss from damages amounted to approximately 120% of the 2009 GDP, or $7.9 billion dollars (PDNA, 2010). The *Goudou goudou* rendered 1.7 million people homeless. Government institutions were critically affected. In September of the same year, Hurricane Tomas further harmed the agricultural sector. The overall GDP growth was -5.5% against a forecast of 4%. Haiti's poverty deepened, and its reliance on foreign aid and foreign actors catapulted an army of NGO parasites into its wounds.

In order to prevent the Préval government from launching agrarian reforms and moving the country to the left, the United States, along with major international donors, pushed Haiti to accept and adopt the recommendations of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC). Established in March 2010, the IHRC, co-chaired by former U.S. President Bill Clinton and Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive, emerged from the January 2010 Haiti Action Plan for Strategic Development (*Construire Haiti Plan Stratégique de Sauvetage National* /CHPSSN). It was clear, as Dupuy (2014) remarks, that "the IHRC placed the Haitian government under the tutelage of a decision-making body conceived and imposed on Haiti by foreign powers" (p. 116). In effect, the international community rendered President Préval politically impotent by upending the presidential election to usher in their favored candidate, Michel Martelly. Martelly, a right-wing sympathizer, subserviently accepted neoliberal policies, and, in return, was assured that his corruptions would proceed unchecked.

Health-Related Vulnerabilities, COVID-19, and Natural Disasters

In just a few months—for some countries, a few weeks—the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) caused a paralysis of global functioning by placing large metropolises under confinement and exposing the vulnerabilities of healthcare systems throughout the world. Countries with robust nationalized healthcare systems that prioritize human lives, like Rwanda, New Zealand, Cuba, Madagascar, Vietnam, Norway, and South Korea, are faring much better than liberal, capitalist countries that prioritize material wealth, like the United States, England, Italy, and Spain, which have registered the greatest number of infections and fatalities. The present pandemic reminds us that vulnerability increases proportionally to a country's economic power and social safety nets. Colonial legacies of forced migration become an important underlying factor, as health and environment are interlinked. Dr. Joseph F. Bentivegna (2010) demonstrates this through his discussion of tuberculosis:

> Blacks, unlike whites, have poor natural resistance to tuberculosis. Whites have lived with this disease for millennia and a strong immunity has evolved. Blacks, on the other hand, first encountered tuberculosis when they were enslaved five hundred years ago. Untreated chronic tuberculosis may fester in a white [person] for years, even decades, but it kills a black in a matter of months (p. 71).

Dr. Bentivegna's statement amplifies the need not only for knowing one's natural environment, but also the history of the human in relation to it. Measles, typhoid, yellow fever, and smallpox are also epidemic diseases that Europeans brought to the Caribbean which are still ravaging the poor in Haiti and other countries. If there are risks, how would they be mitigated?

In a state of active urban interaction, with legacies of migration, the history of diseases becomes quintessential knowledge for discovering quality solutions. Pandemics and epidemics provoke extensive social as well as medical effects among the populations who experienced them. And nowhere was the cholera outbreak worse than the Central Plateau and the northern parts of Haiti, where roughly 10,000 were killed and where living conditions were (are) precarious. By 2013, the country had experienced over 600,000 reported cases of infection and 330,000 hospitalizations. Fear of cholera spread to Port-au-Prince, where shabby neighborhoods and portside slums would have been perfect vectors for the deadly bacterial disease. All applied problems or challenges that affect the vulnerability of the human (a nation) require the examination of the total environment. This is why contact tracing in cases of disease transmission is so essential. Health-related vulnerability concerns cities of all sizes, particularly those with widespread urbanization and inadequate public healthcare systems. Were it not for the determined investigative work of scientists such as Piarroux and the United Nations, conservative members of the world scientific community would have continued to blame poor Haitians for their unsanitary living conditions, misfortunes, and environment (as Professor David Sack of Johns Hopkins did). Some would have outright lied about dates and other facts, like Rita Colwell—former president of the National Science Foundation and distinguished professor at Johns Hopkins—did in 2014 when the Préval government asked her to investigate the epidemic, even though French epidemiologist Renaud Piarroux and his team had already identified the *Vibrio cholerae* genome as deriving from a Nepalese cholera strain (Frerichs, 2016, p. 252). When the genesis of the cholera was clearly linked to a United Nations' Nepalese Base in Mirebalais, the Martelly government refused to blame the United Nations or seek damages for the families who had lost multiple members to cholera, despite the fact that a legal claim by the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti was filed in February 2013 against the United Nations.

Much more disheartening were the efforts of President Martelly, Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, and skeptical international stakeholders who did not provide support to Renauld Piarroux and his colleagues, even though they had put together a 10-year plan to stop the spread of the bacterium. Piarroux had discovered that the "the Haitian environment with its own microbial flora seemed to provide some ecological protection against colonization of deadly toxin-producing strains" (Frerichs, 2016, p. 232). Unlike Colwell's and Sack's theories that the Haitian environment had produced or awakened the dormant strains, Piarroux proved the opposite. Yet, by the end of 2012, the "fight against cholera remained deadlocked" (p. 233).

Fortunately, and ironically, it was the French team led by Piarroux and funded by a public-private hospital in Marseille that provided the financial support to enable Piarroux and his colleagues (along with the reluctant new Health Minister of Haiti, Florence Guillaume) to "build treatment centers, integrate management of cholera cases into routine hospital activity, and organize vaccination campaigns" (Frerichs, p. 234). As Ralph Frerichs indicates, the UN had built a "monolithic wall… around determining the origin of the cholera in Haiti" (p. 198). However, the French team was determined to break through and provide answers, which they did.

In the end, Renaud Piarroux, with the collaboration of the Chilean UN diplomat, Pedro Medrano Rojas, agreed with Piarroux's 10-year plan in mid-2013 to improve water and sanitation, as well as eliminate cholera. By 2014, Medrano Rojas had not accepted Piarroux's finding that cholera was introduced in Haiti by United Nations forces from Nepal. However, according to Ralph R. Frerichs:

Piarroux and Medrano Rojas were in agreement that the UN had made efforts to clean up the mess once it was made, providing numerous on-the-ground support activities, including new treatment centers; family hygiene kits with soap, water purification tablets and oral rehydration salts; safe drinking water; and logistic and security assistance (2016, p.245).

Sadly, it took another foreign physician to intervene on behalf of neglected Haitians who were vulnerable to all sorts of foreign pathogens and will be further victimized by the absence or the complicity of the Haitian government to uphold and defend their fundamental human rights.

In a country like Haiti where the government has been both absent and discredited by the vast majority of the population, one exists in a chaotic and flammable micro-world. In 2020, it is COVID-19 that tests the resolve of the Haitian government and the "luck" of the Haitian people where healthcare is privatized and/or provided by international organizations. Writing for NACLA, Jane Regan (2020) claims that the:

lack of, and fear of, testing mean that thousands go undiagnosed and that hundreds, or perhaps even more, have died—untested and uncounted—due to a combination of factors that are as much political and economic as they are related to the weak public health system.

That said, even smaller cities or those located in less-developed countries have heightened exposure to this health crisis that further exposes the fundamental problem of what Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2001) refers to as "urban microcephalia" (p. 117)—where inbuilt socioeconomic disadvantages are aggravated by the advent of pandemics and diseases. As Paul Farmer (2005) qualitatively deduces, "both violence and disease have always appeared as pathologies of power" (p. xxviii). In Haiti, COVID-19 is particularly worrisome due the history of governmental ineptitude, neglect, and corruption. Haitians "also do not trust international humanitarian actors, whose repeated promises in the wake of 2010 earthquake did not deliver the promised Haiti 'built back better'" (Regan, 2020). In a country where hustling and bustling, particularly in the acephalous republic of Port-au-Prince, are part of daily existence, the immediate adaptation of new forms of social life required by the distrusted government of Jovenel Moïse was beyond challenging. Again, Regan reports that President "Moïse's pandemic decree also set a curfew which said people are not allowed to meet in groups of more than five. Many, including the director of the Haitian Platform of Human Rights Organizations, said the Moïse government took advantage of the virus to quell dissent and mobilization." Just like in the United States, healthcare rights in the time of coronavirus are very much related to national politics and an administration's willingness to politicize the pandemic. Many people applauded the Haitian government's March launch of a permanent information center on COVID-19 that intends to help coordinate all public awareness-raising actions/campaigns. A month later, the government distributed masks and soap in care packages that contained relevant information about COVID-19. Yet, despite the informative public infomercials, the government lacks the capacity to have a nationally coherent, synergistic, and standardized response to COVID-19.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the vulnerability of the global system as a whole and how deeply interconnected we are. However, COVID-19 also fundamentally exposes a country's policy of indifference toward certain segments of its population, or the lack of health rights afforded to a portion of the population deemed expandable. Since the establishment of the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Deschapelles, Haiti, in 1956, the Haitian government has essentially turned its back from providing quality healthcare, and has simply allowed foreign

doctors, missionaries, and others to care for its destitute population. As such, albeit deservingly, people like Dr. Paul Farmer have become adopted national heroes for not "giving up on the public system and seeking to rebuild it" (Farmer, 2011, p. 71). Meanwhile, in other cases, all sorts of experiments are carried out on Haitians by foreigners who see themselves as do-gooders and saviors. It is very telling that Dr. Bentivegna (2010) informs his readers on the issue of birth control that:

> I spoke with one missionary, a nurse, who implanted IUD's (intrauterine device) as a method of birth control and felt this was the wave of the future in Haiti, since no patient participation was required…. Once considered an effective method of birth control, IUD's have fallen into disrepute in the United States because they can cause permanent sterilization from an associated pelvic infection which is invariably followed by a million-dollar lawsuit (Bentivegna, p. 131).

In Haiti, what lawsuit? What are laws? What are rights and consent? These women are poor, black, peasant, or phantomatic urban dwellers who lack the representation of a legitimate government. In Port-au-Prince, in the San Fil area, Dr. Bentivegna encountered a patient who had an IUD implanted in her that later caused pelvic inflammatory disease, or perhaps "her IUD had perforated the uterine wall causing peritonitis" (p. 132). Although he recommended immediate surgery, the staff at the Hôpital Général refused to admit the woman. She languished in pain and eventually died a few weeks later. Dr. Bentivegna was forced "to wonder whether it was fair to put these things in people when they did not have access to the medical care to treat complications" (p. 132). No, it is not a question of fairness; it is rather one of legality, and it is a further violation of human rights by foreign missionaries who are deepening the level of structural vulnerabilities that Haitians are facing.

Conclusion

It seems there is also a sense of insensitivity to human suffering, quotidian tragedies, or collective accidents that reveals fragility in the face of highly disturbing events but does not call into question the ethical aspects in responding and preparing for disasters within an urban setting, or in the country as a whole. It is after a crisis that a regime's crisis-handlers proceed from handling the "exceptional event," as we have observed during episodal floods, storms, earthquakes, and even a pandemic in regions where they are common, such as Haiti. In the years since the 2010 earthquake, bridges, houses, crops, and villages have been destroyed by hurricane-strength winds and flooding. For example, the 2016, category-4 Hurricane Matthew destroyed several southern towns and killed nearly 600 people. The damage to property alone was estimated at $2.6 billion dollars. Ill-prepared and with a depleted national treasury, the Haitian government relied on non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as foreign donors, to alleviate these costs. Floods are much more frequent than earthquakes in Haiti and are the most common form of natural destruction. Floods affect vast areas that are critical in the context of minimally existing infrastructure. They are difficult to contain and result in catastrophic destruction, disrupting commerce, schooling, and daily activities. Floods represent a consequential threat to lives and property.

In 1991, former President Aristide wrote an op-ed for the New York Times in which he correctly argued that the "army's role should be limited to areas in which prompt and disciplined intervention is necessary: prevention of national disasters, search and rescue operations, assistance in the development of deprived areas, building and maintaining highway systems and

patrolling our border and coastline" (Oct. 27, 1991). Instead, the military has served as the unequivocal guardian of the possessing class and against the nation's future as a sovereign and viable republic.

If we want to lay foundations for sustainable development in a geographically high-risk country like Haiti, the government and the private sector must develop and implement risk and disaster management policies. The exasperation of the chasm between the accumulation of wealth by the microscopic possessing class and the monstrous spread of poverty contributes to producing numerous urban and rural dysfunctions that are expressed on sociopolitical and ecological terrains. The constant physical confrontations between the population, and/or between the population and the authorities who have historically acted as the defenders of the elites as well as their own interests, are getting much more violent and frequent. Manigat (1997) incisively conceives that the "political situation in Haiti to a large extent reflects the condescending vision of the modern and technocratic sectors: they are unwilling to pay the price for change; that is, they are unwilling to share power and privileges with other sectors of society" (p. 120). Haitians are questing a proper and impartial rule of law that would provide security and the assurance of promulgating a just society. Unfortunately, the state lacks the capacity to produce a large and efficient managerial cadre that would enhance social service capabilities and vigorous administrative responses to enable the government to meet and cope with a population that is above 11 million. For now, we go on existing, being, living with the dream of a better tomorrow, and hope that the country will be spared future calamities, including foreign aggressions and dehumanizing exploitation.

Haiti's colossal losses and structural vulnerabilities stem from the neglect of public risk and disaster management policies that would allow the state to mitigate disaster and reduce damage. This neglect weakens the development of sustainable actions that could be carried out with a view to transform the condition of human life in social, economic and environmental terms. In this sense, all investment projects relating to sustainable development that are carried out without taking into account the environmental and social risks to which Haiti is exposed inevitably lead to a sustainability of underdevelopment.

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What Difference has the Government of Haiti Made for Tourism Development?

Ludmilla M. Anglade

This research examines the actions that the Haitian government has taken to develop and sustain tourism within their borders. My premise is that governments, through state institutions and policies, can implement branding strategies that impact and change existing country image perceptions. Expanding on the determinants of tourism demand literature, I present a theoretical framework for how government institutions collaborate to create a favorable country brand by investing in the development of functional benefits {public safety and infrastructure quality}. The functional benefits are then supplied to the mass tourist market, who demands them in order to visit, lodge and spend money in the country. The findings of this study confirm that a causal relationship exists between a country's level of stability and tourism arrivals and receipts, further establishing this study's theory that high levels of investment in infrastructure quality and nation branding can positively influence country image perception to generate arrivals and receipts. Surprise outcomes regarding crime's impact on arrivals and receipts present future opportunities to advance the literature.

Introduction

For many low-income developing countries like Haiti, with limited natural resources to competitively trade globally, tourism can serve as a vital economic driver. To that end, it is in the best interest of governments to make attempts to attract private sector investment, to generate tourist arrivals and travel receipts, with the hopes that an abundance of tourism development will create linkages with other sectors to produce growth in their economy. The reliance on this industry is paradoxical, as governments of many poor nations habitually underestimate their role as the key stakeholder in determining the acute strategies which will attract, grow, and retain tourism demand. Furthermore, government leaders of developing countries may desire to generate economic growth through tourism channels; however, they fail to consider that tourism is as particularly sensitive to political factors as it is to economic and environmental ones. Moreover, governments must understand that their country projects an image that potential investors and tourists may perceive as feasible for investment and travel. The global perception of a country is partially exogenous and beyond a government's control. However, there are preemptive measures that governments can take to attract tourism and to contribute to a positive perception of their country as a viable travel destination. Governments in developing countries, who are successful at generating a thriving tourism sector, work to create safe and stable political environments, invest a tremendous amount of state capital in tourism sustainability, hire destination managers, execute sound tourism public policies, and consult with public relation firms to assist in the process. Conversely, governments, who fail at fostering a sustainable tourism industry and remain in economic jeopardy, can attribute as reasons political instability, insufficient security policies, and deficient tourism promotion strategies, along with a lack of capital expenditure investment in developing quality infrastructure.