



Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Master's Thesis 2023 30 ECTS
Faculty of Landscape and Society

Who owns Haiti? Dilemmas and Ambiguities in Haitian Sovereignty

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Declaration

I, Amalie E. S. Berger, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....*Amalie Berger*

Date.....*14 05 23*

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been a long and difficult process. It started off as something entirely different which eventually changed last minute. The idea of Haiti came after a course I had in autumn 2022 which opened my eyes to Latin America and the Caribbean. I had a presentation on Dependency theory and World System Theory where we used Haiti as an example. I was shocked by what I learned and wanted to explore the topic more through my thesis.

I want to thank my supervisor John Andrew McNeish for agreeing to advise me last minute. Your understanding, insight, and knowledge has helped tremendously in shaping my thesis and getting me to the finish line. I also want to thank my peers for insightful feedback and enthusiasm during the seminar sessions at NMBU.

A big thank you to my family, my friends, and my boyfriend for being patient and supportive during these months.

Abstract

This thesis uses a historical lens to examine events related to dependency, colonialism, and sovereignty in order to answer the question “*Is the international community responsible for Haiti’s “failure” as a state?*”.

Since the Slave Revolution of 1804, Haiti has never been free from international interference. There is a long history of other countries and actors meddling in politics, economy, culture, and society, and there are numerous cases of international interference, involvement, and occupation whose effects are still present in Haitian society today. I use Haiti as the case in a case study to provide contextual examples and proof of why the International Community is responsible for how Haiti has become. I go through theories of development, international relations, failed state, and sovereignty, as well as look at how sovereignty is being contested by numerous actors in Haiti. From there comes a debate about ownership and international exclusion.

The aim of the thesis is to provide a solid and thorough explanation as to why international interference has been detrimental to Haitian society, and how it became as bad as it is today.

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1.0 Introduction

Haiti is a country Europeans hear very little about unless it has been subjugated to a natural disaster or a military coup. We hear about it when people are dying, there is a cholera outbreak, or when it's about gang violence, immigration, or foreign aid. Issues which concern the US or other actors. We might even hear about Haiti from our local non-governmental organization, trying to raise money for aid to countries in need. But why do we only hear about the atrocities in Haiti? Why does it need help?

What we never hear about, is the backstory of why Haiti is the way it is. We don't hear about the slave rebellion of 1804, France imposing an impossible debt for selfish reasons, or that the US is constantly meddling and intervening with Haitian democracy. Haiti is framed in a way in the media which makes it look like all the horrors in Haiti are due to its unfortunate placement on the map. That it's poor because that's just how it is. That it's a failed state, with a failed democracy, and failed infrastructure.

In this thesis I aim to review the history of Haitian sovereignty, considering the manifestation of major historical events and their impact on Haitian society throughout history. I will investigate which actors have played a part in making Haiti what it is today, and for which reasons. Constant dependency since its independence, the formation of gangs and gang-violence, and the "NGO-ization" of Haiti are topics I consider before returning to the question of who owns/runs the country. The goal of the thesis is to explore the relationship between Haiti and the International community, and how this relationship has shaped Haitian society, using theories and concepts from both International Relations and Development Studies. I will also attempt to prove that most of the issues present in Haiti are not simply due to their leaders' poor decision making, corruption, or greed, but also due to how the international community have systematically excluded and deliberately shunned Haiti from the global sphere for decades. A move which has created crises only the international community can "fix".

As such, the main research question guiding my analysis is: “*Is the international community responsible for Haiti’s “failure” as a state?*”. Here I write the word “failure” with quotation marks, as the term has been heavily debated. We will discuss this in chapter 2.

1.1 Relevancy and existing literature

The relevancy of this topic in connection with both International Relations and Development studies comes from the very nature of it. The discussion I want to bring forth is one of blame, but also of accountability for historical greed, racism, and colonialism. The story of Haiti is the story of a nation which has, since the arrival of Europeans, been weakened by outsiders. Outsiders who laid claims to land, resources, and people which did not belong to them. Due to this, history and historical events are very important for this thesis.

In relation to IR, history can be used in several ways, such as understanding change. Especially important for this thesis, is how history can be used in IR to reveal possible links which could have been buried or missed. History can be used to explore the bigger picture, and string together details (Yetiv, 2011, p. 95). History and political sciences go hand in hand. Historians reveal “the pieces of the puzzle”, which political scientists can use to investigate. And while IR tends to be fixed on the notion that international relations are cyclical and repetitive, historians are less likely to see historical events in the grand scheme of world affairs. Even if there are some differences, the connection between history and IR is generally seen as positive. Qualitative work becomes more valuable, which means that it is easier to draw on historical events when we discuss IR (Yetiv, 2011, p. 97-98).

History can be used to understand the connection of events, and to understand the dependency between the past and the present. Had we skipped history entirely, we

would not have been able to see how one event leads to another, and we would lack the deep contextualization which shows us these very connections (Yetiv, 2011, p. 104). Without history, I would not have been able to understand why Haiti is the way it is.

Existing literature on this topic shares similar views of postcolonialism and accountability. There are many scholars such as Robert Fatton, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Mark Schuller, and Jeb Sprague, who I have used throughout this thesis, which have aided in my understanding and ability to comprehend the vast range of issues which are related to Haiti. Most come to the same conclusion, that international dependency and intervention has led to Haiti's "failure". My contribution to this discussion is to give a concise and thorough analysis of why this has happened, and who exactly is to blame. I will use existing literature to determine these factors, and attempt to showcase which historical events have shaped Haiti.

1.2 Thesis outline

The thesis is split into 7 chapters, each related to its own distinct topic. Chapter 2.0 is the theoretical framework, where I will outline three main theories which I have found to relate closely with Haiti. The first is state failure, a concept we find as early as the very title of this paper. I will investigate the issues with the concept using Charles T. Call's book *The Fallacy of the "Failed State"* in which he discusses the use of the concept, its impacts on global politics, and what other classifications we should use instead. Then I move on to dependency theory, which in this case relates closely to Robert Fatton's idea of the outer periphery in which he places Haiti. Finally, for chapter 2.0, we investigate sovereignty using a few different authors. Where the idea of sovereignty comes from, and how sovereignty is contested in relations to IR.

Chapter 3.0 is the methodology chapter, in which I go through the approach I am using, and what kind of research I will look at. I will, for instance, only use secondary research, which will be explained further in this chapter.

Chapter 4.0 sets the stage for the case study. In this chapter I go through the history of Haiti and highlight the most influential and important historical events. The chapter uses a few different authors, such as Michel-Rolph Trouillot. I have decided to split the chapter into quite a few sections, since it is a long story. I have undoubtedly had to exclude a lot of information, but I believe the major historical events are present. This includes the Slave Revolution, the French debt, U.S. occupation, Duvalier dictatorship, and the period after, which I have referred to as “Democratic transition”.

In chapter 5.0 I return to the concept of sovereignty. I discuss what sovereignty looks like in Haiti, and what different types are present. I have chosen to focus on the types I have found to be the most influential, such as religious sovereignty, gang sovereignty, and NGO sovereignty. These groups all fight for control of Haiti, including the state, and sovereignty is a major issue in both historical and current discourses related to Haiti.

Chapter 6.0, “Who owns Haiti?”, a phrase borrowed from the book by the same name by Robert Maguire and Scott Freeman, will use the previous knowledge to determine who has ownership and who has sovereignty in Haiti. It will also look at what the future of Haiti might look like, and what needs to change. This chapter comes before the conclusion, which will look back at the research question stated in the introduction and attempt to answer it.

2.0 Theoretical Framework: State failure, Dependency, and Sovereignty in the Global Order

In this chapter, I will look at three different theoretical ideas. I have decided to look at state failure, dependency theory, and sovereignty to shape my thesis. I have found these theories to capture the essence of Haiti quite good, and to fit well with both IR and development theories.

2.1 State failure

The concept of state failure did not emerge until the early 1990s. In its earliest examples, state failure was seen as “states that are simply unable to function as independent entities”, according to a 1993 article (Call, 2008, p. 1492). The article included examples such as Haiti, but also Yugoslavia, Cambodia, USSR, and Sudan. Another article called “collapsed states” from 1995, defined state failure as when “the basic functions of the state are no longer performed”. The U.S. started exploring issues of state failure in 1994 with a CIA research project called “The State Failure Task Force” (Call, 2008, p. 1492). The issue of state failure became a bigger priority in the US after 9/11, due to Afghanistan's lack of control and failure at locating al-Qaeda. Because of this, Afghanistan became the poster child for state failure in the U.S. and failed states were seen as breeding grounds for terrorists (Call, 2008, p. 1493).

By 2006, the notion of state failure had shaped international development and diplomacy. During the 1990s, international development organizations and financial institutions began including state institutions on their agenda. “Governance” and “state building” were seen as important links to development, as well as *quality* of governance. Issues such as transparency, corruption, and accountability also became of importance, especially in terms of developmental funding and crisis relief or aid (Call, 2008, p. 1493).

According to Charles T. Call, there are six reasons why the use of the term “failed state” is wrong and should be something we refrain from using. The first issue is that it groups together states which are very different. The term “failed state” causes problems of definition, as all the states which are deemed “failed” have, in actuality, very different issues and problems (Call, 2008, p. 1495). Academic Robert Rotberg created a list of indicators of state failure. This list includes, but is not limited to: Loss of legitimacy, corruption, civil war, growth in criminal violence (gangs, drug trafficking etc.), declining GDP, loss of territorial control, and disharmony amongst communities. It is not clear whether a state must possess all these qualities to be a failing state, or simply some. But

a declining GDP per capita might not be comparable to civil war, which is what makes this grouping problematic (Call, 2008, p. 1495).

Rotberg (2003) grouped together countries such as Colombia, North Korea, and Iraq. The grouping of these countries according to shared traits creates a misleading image. It would be strange to compare Colombia and North Korea, as they differ on almost all levels. It would be impossible and pointless to implement the same reforms or development programs in these two countries (Call, 2008, p. 1495-1496). Call notes that creating a “cookie-cutter” remedy to fix all “failed” state institutions would be amusing if it were not so dangerous. These ideas led to standardized neoliberal structural adjustment packages being implemented in poorer nations during the 1990s. These proved to counteract peace processes in countries such as Cambodia, and directly contributed to warfare in Central Africa and Bosnia (Call, 2008, p. 1496).

The second reason is the standardized view on what a “strong state” is. Order and stability are the main goals, even if the order might not be just. This focus on order and stability is concerned with international insecurities which could affect other countries, even western ones. This can be terrorism, drug trafficking, and other types of armed conflicts. Due to this, the individual context and problems of each failed state can be lost or forgotten. One of the suggested treatments of a “failed state” is to focus on the building of state institutions, particularly five core institutions: military, police, civil service, justice system, and leadership (Call, 2008, p. 1496). At least three of these core institutions are related to security and are framed as the solution for all failed states. For example, having stronger police is not a sure way of improving human rights, improving ethnic equality, or lessening corruption. Especially when institutions such as the police or military tend to be the actors and beneficiaries of violence, oppression, corruption, or discrimination (Call, 2008, p. 1497).

Third, the focus on institutions takes away the focus on democratization. If order is the primary concern, regime and democracy matters less. As does transparency, accountability, and representation. In the 1990s, there were attempts at establishing

democracies in countries such as Haiti, Kosovo, Cambodia, and Liberia. These attempts eventually failed, which meant that democratization was not as easy as international actors and NGOs first had assumed. Therefore, success in the process of building state institutions, an area which did not need democracy, was deemed more important as it gave actual results (Call, 2008, p. 1497). The strengthening of a state without taking into consideration society and their reaction, is dangerous. This can apply for countries with different ethnic groups who have different societal statuses, or unfair economic and political power. Countries where one ethnic group exploits the other (Call, 2008, p. 1498).

The fourth issue is the merger of state and peace. Peacebuilding and state building have become synonyms for international organizations and NGOs. However, state building can stand in the way of the process of peacebuilding. NGOs and others can give aid and funding to corrupt governments to strengthen their institutions, in the name of peacebuilding. This only strengthens said corrupt government, which can lead to violence, resentment, and resistance, threatening peace (Call, 2008, p. 1498-1499). To achieve actual peacebuilding, it may be required to stop state building for some time, as enhancing the state can cause more insecurity and instability (Call, 2008, p. 1499).

Fifth, the issues of assumptions and bias. The idea of a “successful state” is based on characteristics we find in leading Western states. In Western literature, a “failed state” is a state who has failed a test created by an external source. A country's population might even be better off by losing their sovereignty to an international actor or regional actor who takes partial or temporary control. Other alternatives are forgotten, such as implementing other forms of authority who are not on the state level. This could for instance be transnational authority agreements or sub-state authority arrangements (Call, 2008, p. 1499). There is also the assumption from Rotberg that all states who are now “failed”, once held some form of success. However, there are states with populations who have never experienced having a reliable and secure state and have then found authority and protection elsewhere. This can for example be through tribes, regional authorities, gangs, or local strongmen. If the history and context of a state is not

taken into consideration, there is a risk of implementing “solutions” which do not fit with the society (Call, 2008, p. 1499-1500).

Finally, the sixth issue is the unclarity of the West's role in “failure”. Calling a state “failed” often forgets the colonial and imperial history of exploitation and poor societal governance, a history which many “failed” states share. European nations e.g., Spain, Portugal, the UK, and France, extracted resources, created state borders, held slaves, and halted the creation of civic society. All these acts made settled states weak, poor, and put them in a state of constant conflict (Call, 2008, p. 1500). Some domestic groups such as societal elites have some responsibility, but we must not forget the impacts of Western colonialism, as well as NGOs and international financial institutions (Call, 2008, p. 1500).

What is, then, appropriate, and which alternative concepts one can use? Are “fragile” or “troubled” states any better? According to Call, they are not. There have been attempts from the CIA, USAID, and others to make their terminology clearer and more precise, but there is no one correct terminology. Call himself proposes a list of “categories” in which one can place a state (Call, 2008, p. 1500-1501). There is the “*collapsed state*”, in which a country's government has been nonexistent for a period, a complete collapse of a state, and include countries such as Somalia (1990-2004), Yugoslavia (1991), USSR (1991), and potentially Afghanistan (1992-1995). The second category is “*weak states*”, which are states where informal networks and alternatives to statehood hold as much power and importance as the actual state. This is often attributed to colonial history, but also corruption and incompetence of the state. The next category is “*war-torn states*”, a state where war and conflict are extensive and poses a threat to peace- and state building. State building during a civil war, for instance, will make it impossible to remain neutral, because supporting the state means supporting a side. Then we have “*authoritarian states/regimes*”, which include countries such as Cuba during Castro, Libya during Gaddafi, and North Korea under the Kims’. These are regimes who have gained power through violence and have absolute control through repression. These

states do not have weak institutions, which means that state building is relatively useless without a change of regime (Call, 2008, p. 1500-1504).

What is clear from what Call is writing, is that using the term “failed state” overly generalizes the issues inherent in each individual society, and it uses Western assumptions and biases of being better at statehood than others. He states that his proposed list is not perfect in any way, but it contributes to the contextualization of each state, rather than grouping them all together when their issues are very different.

Haiti can arguably fall into all the previously mentioned categories. However currently, it fits with the “weak state” and the “war-torn state”. It is weak because NGOs control more of the country than the state can. It is not at war, but it is war-torn in the form of a constant conflict which makes peace-building difficult. It was an “authoritarian state” under Duvalier (and others) but is no longer. And it was a “collapsed state” right after the final Duvalier left office but is no longer. It can potentially become collapsed once more in the future, if things move in the same direction as when in January 2023, the ten remaining senators of Haiti's parliament left office, which left Haiti without a single democratically elected government official (Taylor, 2023).

This debate has also been present in International Relations. Iver Neumann states that if “failed” means non-sovereign, and if the international community dictates what “failed” means, states need to be weary. If failure is in the eye of the beholder, no state is safe, and if the international community decides which states are allowed to be sovereign, it could lead to a major change of the entire study of International Relations (Neumann, 2019, p. 151).

The reason I chose to use “failed” in my title, is precisely because this term relates so heavily with international relations and the issue of Haiti. Through a quick Google-search, we can see there are thousands of articles calling Haiti a “failed state”. This notion of state failure is still widespread and continues to be used in international media all over the world, and most people know Haiti as a “failed state”. One of the goals of this

thesis is to change the notion of Haiti as “failed”, to the notion of Haiti as a country which have been used, abused, and tricked into becoming a “collapsed”, “war-torn”, “weak” state. This is precisely why I believe this chapter was important to include.

2.2 Setting the stage for international dependency.

To make sense of how the history of Haiti has shaped the nation, I wanted to look to critical approaches to development. These are development theories inspired by Marxism and its critique of political economy. Furthermore, they argue that differences between countries and social groups, such as men - women, whites - racial minorities, and straight people - the LGBTQ+ community, are an expression of power structures which have been constructed throughout history shaped by capitalist social relations (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 61). According to these groups, capitalism is a system which focuses on production for profit over human needs (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 61). These types of theories will help us understand how global inequalities are related to capitalist development, and its systematic oppression, such as racism, patriarchy, and colonialism (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 61), which is closely related to Haiti.

Critical political economy theories change the focus of poverty away from the poor and to the issues of excessive wealth and privileges. They want to shine light on how wealth is created, accumulated, and distributed both globally and domestically (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 61). Before we go into the critical approaches to development, we need to first understand just what exactly colonialism entails and what it looked like in the Caribbean.

Colonialism is the practice of “domain and control by one nation over another” (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 66), and is justified by imperialism; the idea of formal control over another nation's politics and economy. It is said that imperialism is the theory, and colonialism is the practice (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 66). Capitalism and colonialism are related in how one makes the other possible. Industrial capitalism was made

possible by the violent processes of theft and extraction from a colonized nation to the colonizer (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 66). Examples of this is the slave trade from around 1500 to 1896, which caused the death of around 20 million Africans, and led to displacement of over 100 million (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 66). Another example is the theft of riches such as gold from the Americas, which resulted in the death of 50-100 million people from the effects of disease, war, torture, economic ruin, displacement etc. (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 66).

European colonialism to the Americas and Caribbean dates to the 15th century, but people have lived on islands like Hispaniola, where Haiti is located, since around 6000 B.P.¹ The first groups of people left very little traces of permanent settlements, as they were hunters, gatherers, and fishermen who lived along the coast. They moved frequently, following food sources (Higman, 2011, p. 18). The use of fire to clear forest began around 5400 B.P., with the intent of hunting wild animals, but also to plant fruit trees, and implement agricultural practices. Many animals went extinct due to this practice, such as large sloths weighing as much as 250 kg (Higman, 2011, p. 18). In the early part of the 15th century, before the Europeans came, it is estimated that around half of the people who lived in the Caribbean, around 1-2 million people (Higman, 2011, p. 50), lived on Hispaniola in complex societies known as Taíno. The Taíno people would call the island Haiti or Quisqueya. Haiti meaning “Land of the mountains”, and Quisqueya meaning “Mother of all lands” (Higman, 2011, p. 33).

Columbus and his crew arrived in the Caribbean in 1492, and unlike earlier colonization of the Caribbean, this new group of colonizers were invasive. As the islands were small and already occupied, the Europeans resulted to murdering, displacing, or enslaving the Taínos (Higman, 2011, p. 53). The Europeans also brought with them new plants and animals which drastically affected the biodiversity of the Caribbean islands. To succeed with the introduction of domesticated large mammals, and their wide variety of grass,

¹ B.P.= before the present. A.D. 1950 is used as reference. 2000 B.P. = 50 B.C.

trees, and other plants, they had to burn down forests, and they did so at a scale never seen before (Higman, 2011, p. 53).

Furthermore, the new colonizers brought with them both new ways of government, as well as new ways of viewing human beings. They established a capitalist economic system, which was based on exporting wealth and resources to Europe. Imperial, ultimate authoritarian rule was the main political form, which was categorized by its immense social inequality. The Taíno people were viewed as heathens, pagans, and brutes compared to the Europeans (Higman, 2011, p. 53-54). The Caribbean islands became, in the 15th century, predecessors of modern globalization, as the Europeans brought with them people from both Africa and Asia. Languages, people, and cultures thus emerged which were a hybrid of both the Caribbean and the international (Higman, 2011, p. 54), a legacy which is visible in the Caribbean today.

At the beginning of the 17th century, the Caribbean islands had been stripped, and the civilizations which flourished on the islands before Columbus were virtually gone after decades of regime change, displacement, sickness, slavery, and murder (Higman, 2011, p. 97-98). Trees and plants had reclaimed land which was once cultivated, and rainforests flourished. The period before had largely been shaped by contestation and fighting amongst the Spanish, French, English, and the Dutch, who all wanted a piece of the Caribbean (Higman, 2011, p. 97-98). Finally, after years of attempting to grow different crops, and attempts at understanding the resources of the islands, the colonizers turned to sugar, which instigated “the sugar revolution”. The sugar revolution was responsible for transforming all aspects of society, economy, and government in the Caribbean. It was this revolution which made the shift from small-scale to large-scale agriculture, from low value to high value production, and from free labor to slavery (Higman, 2011, p. 98).

Sugar plantations required large areas of land, a large workforce working exclusively for the plantation, as well as a hierarchical system of management (Higman, 2011, p. 99).

Thus, sugar plantations became dependent on African-born slaves and their children. In the beginning, slavery existed alongside free wage labor, but by 1770, slavery was the major form of “employment” in the Caribbean. African slaves were seen as superior, since they were owned for life, and their children became slaves at birth. A slave was seen as a property and not an employee, so they were favored over white European workers. They were also seen as stronger, more resilient, and more suited for tropical climates (Higman, 2011, p. 123-124). Slaves were often divided into different groups and one of these groups were the “house slaves”, those who cooked for and cleaned the houses of the plantation owners. These slaves were often “colored”, meaning they had white fathers (Higman, 2011, p. 127). This is an early example of the interracial discrimination and color bias which has followed Haiti throughout its history, where the lighter population are given advantages over the black population. This will be discussed further in later chapters.

For plantations in the Caribbean to be fully operational they needed a constant influx of slaves. This was because the work slaves did was highly dangerous and deadly, and deaths outnumbered births. It is estimated that 12 million people were forced on ships bound for America, with around 10 million surviving the trip. Around 60% of these people were sent to the Caribbean (Higman, 2011, p. 132). Due to this influx of people, the population in the Caribbean grew from about 100.000 people in 1600, to 1.4 million people in 1770 (Higman, 2011, p. 130). St. Domingue (Haiti) was the largest sugar colony, with around 790.000 slaves being sent there (Higman, 2011, p. 132).

Looking back to critical political economy, I wanted to bring in the theory of dependency. This theory is one of the most popular bodies of critical development theories, and it attempts to understand how colonialism and imperialism has shaped the world. Dependency theory is not one simple theory, but several different ideas which emerged in the Global south during the 1960s and 70s as a critique of modernization theory (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 69). Dependency theory reached popularity due to its apparent description of inequalities amongst nations which were emerging globally in the mid 20th century. It was further popularized as it was the first major theory to originate

from philosophers and thinkers from developing countries (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 69).

The school of Dependency is often split into two. On one hand you have theorists such as Samir Amin, André Gunder Frank, and Raúl Prebisch. They argue that the world system is split into two groups: the core and the periphery. These two groups have different development opportunities, as it is agreed that exchange amongst these two groups only benefits countries situated in the core (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 69). Raúl Prebisch created the concept of *unequal exchange* in the 1950s to explain how international trade is concealed as exploitation between the core and periphery. Prebisch noticed that there was a clear distinction in which countries were producers of manufactured goods such as steel, paper, textiles, and chemicals, and which countries were producers of primary commodities such as oil, wheat, coffee beans, cotton, rough diamonds, and coal (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 69).

Frank and Amin are more famous for their radical approaches to underdevelopment. Frank suggested that the core deliberately keep the periphery underdeveloped. Amin used Prebisch's idea of unequal exchange to explain transfer of wealth from periphery to core. Since labor differs in price from the core to the periphery, countries will have unequal gains from trade, thus having unequal abilities to develop (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 69). They both called for socialist revolution and a removal from the world economy as the preferred way in which countries could escape the underdevelopment trap (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 69).

Going beyond these foundations of dependency theory, Immanuel Wallerstein developed what is commonly termed "world system theory". World system theory is based on a three-part system, where you have the core, periphery, and the semi-periphery which is located between them. This group is often categorized as countries which have been newly industrialized. They have a better chance at development than periphery countries, but are still limited (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 69). Other world

system scholars such as Peter Evans argued that a capitalist world system has some form of influence on states political choices. The political choices are often historically linked with external influence (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 70). These scholars also agree that some form of economic development is possible, but only in the context of dependency to other states, and only for the wealthy part of the population (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 70).

Economists inspired by dependency theory argued that import substitution industrialization (ISI) would be the solution for less developed countries to break away from the unequal terms of international trade (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 70). The goal of ISI is to substitute imports domestically. To do this, states must protect domestic industries and exclude foreign competition. This would ideally increase profit which can be invested in new technologies and industries. Investment would gradually create an industrial economy with higher value-added, than an economy based on unprocessed commodities and raw materials (Heidrich, 2021, p. 50). ISI was promoted by Raúl Prebisch during the United Nation (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America, using his previously mentioned arguments of unequal exchange, where the world economy leaves behind developing nations. ISI was unfortunately at a disadvantage where it would require foreign investment and contribution. The opportunity to create profit was also limited, as domestically created products tended to be of low quality, as they had no competition. Latin American countries who implemented ISI could therefore not export their goods. These issues lead to countries such as Mexico and Brazil, who had attempted ISI, racking up massive amounts of foreign debt in an attempt to finance their industrial development. By the 1980s a financial crisis hit the world, and ISI could no longer be financed as the IMF and World Bank changed their loan conditions (Heidrich, 2021, p. 51).

As important as dependency theory has been for Latin America and other states in the Global South, the dependency tradition had a large decline after three major historical events. The first was the proof of failure of the dualist approach (core and periphery) due to an increase in newly industrialized countries. The second was the rise of

neoliberalism. And the third was the fall of the Soviet Union (Spronk & Anderson, 2021, p. 70). Dependency theory has in recent times however, had a revival thanks to Robert Fatton Jr.

2.2.1 The Outer Periphery

According to Robert Fatton Jr., Wallerstein's traditional world system theory lacks a fourth economic zone. This group he calls "*the outer periphery*". It is distinct from the other three zones and is recognizable by extreme poverty as a result of war, natural disaster, foreign occupation, or regime change. Other features include nonexistent sovereignty, extreme inequalities within society, politics, and economy, and is globally referred to as a "failed" state (Fatton, 2017, p.29).

Fatton criticizes neoliberalism, failed-state theorists, and economic institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. He states that these organizations have deliberately inflicted austerity measures on poor nations to make them unable to provide the bare minimum for their citizens. A state like this will have an increase in drug-trafficking, increased levels of insecurity, no social or civil responsibility, and a decay of government and politics. This makes them more dependent on non-governmental organizations (Fatton, 2017, p.31). According to Fatton, Haiti's position as a "failed" state can be in some parts found in domestic issues, but in no way can we comprehend its collapse without looking at how it has been treated by the world system and the international community (Fatton, 2017, p. 31). This is similar to the arguments of Charles T. Call, which we discussed in the previous chapter. Calling a state "failed" causes misconceptions, generalization, and it stems from a Western bias.

Haiti's constant imperial interventions, as will be discussed throughout this paper, shows us how the country has turned into what Fatton calls a "trusteeship" (Fatton, p.31). We saw this clearly with the creation of The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission after the earthquake in 2010. The commission was created by the U.S. and implemented in Haiti

without warning. This meant that aid, reconstruction, and recovery was under foreign control. This shows us how fragmented and limited Haitian sovereignty is (Fatton, 2017, p.31).

According to Fatton, Haiti is on the very edge of the global production process, as it has been lacking in foreign investors, while engaging in extremely cheap labor for exported materials. Haiti is trapped in the outer periphery, under the control of others (Fatton, 2019, p. 32). This is especially clear in terms of non-governmental organization and with for-profit contractors, also known as FPCs. FPCs attempt to privatize development projects in poor countries such as Haiti, which threaten local governments. After the 2010 earthquake, FPC Chemonics was the main receiver of US funding for earthquake relief (Fatton, 2017, p. 32). These organizations have contributed to a privatization of the public sector, which makes the Haitian state unable to provide basic services to its population. Due to this, Haiti was used as a “laboratory”, a place of experimenting in terms of humanitarian assistance and charity. These experiments can be traced back to hundreds of years of interventions by other nations and organizations (Fatton, p. 32). Fatton states that “*the most significant moments in the last thirty years of Haiti's history would not have occurred had it not been for some form of imperial meddling in its internal affairs*” (Fatton, 2017, p. 32). However, I would argue that external meddling in Haiti's internal affairs has been going on ever since its very independence in 1804. This will be discussed in further chapters.

Going back to the issue of state failure. Calling Haiti a “failed state” portrays the situation as if colonialism and imperialism had nothing to do with its “failure”. The measurement of state failure has traditionally used categories which concern the internal affairs of a country. Examples of this are economic decline, social conflicts, political instability, and corruption (Fatton, 2017, p. 33). The reality of the situation in Haiti is that we need to investigate the relationship between domestic forces and imperial forces in order to understand what is wrong. This includes dependency, military coups, state disintegration, and agricultural collapse, which we can only understand if we look at the

shared interest of both the domestic and the international. This is what puts Haiti in the outer periphery (Fatton, 2017, p. 33).

Haiti is on the absolute lowest level of the production process. Wages in Haiti are hardly livable, and unemployment is unusually high. Around 75% of people in Haiti lived on less than \$2 a day, this number was increased to about \$5 a day in 2014, but documents which came out in 2011 showed how the US state attempted to block an increase in minimum wage in 2008 and 2009 (Coughlin & Ives, 08.06.2011). Wikileaks documents showed how in 2009, factory owners refused to pay workers \$5 a day, a refusal which was backed by USAID and the U.S. embassy. U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission David E. Lindwall stated that a \$5 minimum “*did not take economic reality into account*” and that it was simply an attempt to appeal to the “*underpaid and unemployed masses*” (Coughlin & Ives, 08.06.2011). However, advocates for the minimum wage increase argue that it was necessary due to inflation and increased cost of living. For reference, in 2008 a working-class family in Haiti needed at least \$13.75 to meet daily needs (Coughlin & Ives, 08.06.2011).

Further, Haiti's political system is but a cheap imitation of a democracy. Elections are fraudulent and financed by outsiders. This reliance on foreign institutions for funding and financing of its own electoral process shows us how the Haitian state is incapable of exercising its own sovereignty (Fatton, 2017, p. 33). Due to this serious lack of independence, Haiti has become subservient to even its neighbor, The Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic benefited from the 2010 earthquake which devastated Haiti. Dominican land was used as the main channel for disaster relief and aid which was destined for Haiti. There were also many Dominican firms and businesses who took direct part in reconstruction efforts in Haiti. It is estimated that about 2% of the Dominican GDP increase in 2010 was due to their involvement after the earthquake (Fatton, 2017, p. 34).

However, Haitian dependency on The Dominican Republic is simply one of many aspects which puts Haiti in the outer periphery. A bigger issue is the sheer lack of governance. This absence of governance in Haiti is in some way the responsibility of the Haitian elite, but it is even more the responsibility of neoliberalism (Fatton, 2017, p. 35). As mentioned above, major financial institutions have deliberately ignored the state and instead chosen to give aid and assistance to NGOs or other similar organizations, a move which has significantly weakened the Haitian government. We know that after the earthquake, the Haitian government was unable to perform any form of disaster relief or reconstruction due to it not receiving any international funding. This pattern has continued after the earthquake, which has further contributed to the incapability of the state (Fatton, 2017, p. 35). In the 2011 report from the Office of the Special Envoy for Haiti, Paul Farmer stated that:

“With over 99% of relief funding circumventing Haitian public institutions, the already challenging task of moving from relief to recovery - which requires governmental leadership, above all - becomes almost impossible” (Fatton, 2017, p. 35).

After the 2010 earthquake, a mere \$25 million out of \$2.43 billions of humanitarian funding was given to the Haitian government. Even less were given to Haitian NGOs, which have been even more excluded than the government. Two Haitian NGOs received a total of \$800,000. It has also been proven that funds and donor money stay in the donor country. Around 75% of the funding USAID received for Haiti went to private contractors in Washington D.C. (Fatton, 2017, p. 35-36).

It is clear then, that the lack of governance and incapacity of the state is a direct result of the interference of foreigners which has been present all throughout Haiti's history. The major issues in Haiti are not a simple reflection of their domestic issues. Fatton argues that if Haiti is a failed state, it is so due to the failure of the world economy. The Martelly government in power during the earthquake framed an infamous slogan which demonstrates the failure of the world economy. *“Haiti is open for business”*, they said. An ironic statement, as factors such as political instability and a lack of infrastructure has

deterred foreign investment (Fatton, 2017, p. 36). For reference, foreign investment in Haiti in 2011 reached \$181 million. In the Dominican Republic, the number was \$2.371 billion (Fatton, 2017, p. 36). Privatization, state withdrawal, and market rationality has made Haiti even more fragile. Capital “skips” Haiti, as Haiti is not a preferred part of the worldwide movement of capital. And capital does not want to make its way to Haiti either, as it has made the country a place which is occupied by failure (Fatton, 2017, p. 37).

Therefore, Haiti is not only trapped in the outer periphery, but also in what Fatton calls the “assemblage of occupation”. Haitian economic decisions and societal rulings are decided in the offices of international institutions. The same is true for politics, as elections and laws are funded and promoted by foreign powers. Powers which limit political choice, and powers which carefully protect and enforce these limitations (Fatton, 2017, p. 37).

2.3 Sovereignty

Sovereignty, a word religious in its nature, was acquired by political thinkers of Europe after the Reformation. The word was used to distinguish a person as head of state, a person who it was believed had inherited their powers from God, meaning they were only accountable to God. As the church was heavily influential during this period, the word and its meaning was shaped largely by them (McNeish, 2021, p. 50-51). When we talk about sovereignty, there is one specific event which often comes to mind. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This peace led to the creation of many independent states in Europe in which rulers were no longer accountable to the Holy Roman Empire. The most important rule to come from the peace was that no other states were allowed to interfere with the affairs of other states (McNeish, 2021, p. 51). The issue with using the Peace of Westphalia as the shift in sovereignty, is that it gives credit to one specific event for something which took decades to form. IR scholar Iver Neumann suggests looking at sovereignty as an emerging concept which frames international relations as

different in different periods. There are many historical events which can be attributed to the “beginning” of sovereignty, but they are all important in their own regard (Neumann, 2019, p. 150).

What categorized early European sovereignty, was the right to exclusive jurisdiction, territorial integrity, and that no other state would intervene in domestic affairs. It is, however, also related to colonialism. The mid 1600s was a period of imperialism and colonialism for many European nations. Therefore, some suggest that sovereignty came out of the need to regulate conquest, control settlements, and to gather lands in which the “uncivilized” resided (McNeish, 2021, p. 51-52). With this newly expanded European power, so came the development of concepts such as citizenship, civilization, individuality, and humanism. These came out of the necessity of establishing differences and distinctions between the civilized and the uncivilized, citizen and subject (McNeish, 2021, p. 52).

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, the idea of sovereignty changed once again. European colonial rule was starting to crumble, and more independent states were to emerge. These liberal movements in Europe would inspire freedom fighters all over the world (McNeish, 2021, p. 53). It was the French revolution which inspired the Haitian slave revolution at the turn of the century (Trouillot, 1990, p. 42), an event we will discuss later. The American Declaration of Independence from 1776 also contributed to the idea of post-colonialism for many states. The declaration was so influential, it was banned in many Spanish-American countries. It was however, against the leader's best efforts, translated and spread in countries such as Colombia, Venezuela, Chile, Mexico, and Ecuador, and liberal ideas began to spring up in these countries. This led to the formation of many new declarations of independence in the Americas from 1811 to 1849 (McNeish, 2021, p. 53).

The American Declaration of Independence created an idea of sovereignty as a “democratic determination of independence”, which became the norm after its creation (McNeish, 2021, p. 53). However, whilst stating that “all men are created equal”, early

American presidents - even the declaration's own author Thomas Jefferson - advocated for the removal of Native Americans. Thus, men, who were allegedly “created equal”, were not so equal after all. Jefferson continued his fight against the Native Americans and attempted various strategies to rid them of their homeland. He wanted to establish trading posts on native land, which would put the Natives into debt, forcing them to sell their land to pay off their debt. The result of this was a total loss of 200,000 square miles of native land spread across nine states in the US (McNeish, 2021, p. 53).

It was clear that the American Declaration of Independence was used to assert dominance over others, rather than to simply gain independence. This is what happened in Latin America as well. Indigenous populations in Latin America would be subjugated to genocide, oppression, exclusion, and marginalization. Latin American countries subscribed to the idea of equality when they attempted their independence, but as with the U.S., there were limits to this equality (McNeish, 2021, p. 54). Infamous Latin American freedom fighter Simon Bolivar once stated that inclusion of the non-white population would “lead to Colombia's ruin”. Indigenous and poor people were excluded in other ways as well, such as with a literacy requirement which was present in Colombia and Brazil during the 20th century (McNeish, 2021, p. 54).

French philosopher Michel Foucault referred to sovereignty as a game. He stated that those who play the game of sovereignty are not considered free in the sense that they are able to completely think outside of the limits of truth in a society (Neumann, 2019, p. 147). IR scholar Jens Bartelson further expanded on Foucault's idea, and stated that sovereignty is what frames politics, it is what makes politics differ from other issues. In modern times, sovereignty is framed as a state being able to operate without anyone from the outside dictating what goes on within it (Neumann, 2019, p. 149). Bartelson also stated that sovereignty forms a crucial link between international anarchy and domestic hierarchy (Neumann, 2019, p. 150).

Furthermore, Cambridge historian Harry Hinsley described the concept of sovereignty as *“the idea that there is a final and absolute political authority in the political community*

and... no final and absolute authority exists elsewhere". In this description, we can see the distinct difference of the "inside" and the "outside" of a state (Neumann, 2019, p. 150).

In chapter 5.0 we will investigate different types of sovereignty in Haiti, and how various actors have made claims of Haitian territory. This chapter will include both domestic and international actors, such as gangs, NGOs, and other countries, which have all in some shape or form contested the state's sovereignty.

3.0 Methodology

This chapter will look at the methods I have used to gather information and analyze my topic. I will first look at the case study approach and how I have used this approach in relations to Haiti. Then I will go through my use of sources, which are mostly secondary, and how I analyze them using content analysis. Finally, I will look at the ethical considerations related to using a country and its citizens as a subject of analysis.

3.1 Case study approach

For this thesis, I have decided to utilize a case study, which involves a detailed analysis of a single case. A case study is often a community, organization, or an event, but I have chosen the country of Haiti as my case. The goal of a case study is to investigate the complex nature of a case (Clark, Foster, Sloan, Bryman, 2021, p. 59). My reasoning for choosing a whole country, and not a community or organization, is that I think there are so many events and so much history which all plays an important part in answering the research question. Since the topic I have chosen is broad, it would be wrong to simply focus on one aspect of it. Pepinsky (2019) argues that using a country as a case in which to study is possible, but the units of analysis vary and produce multiple observations. In my case, I have structured my analysis to follow history, and I have split

the history into three parts: post-colonial Haiti, dictatorship and democratic transition, and contested sovereignty.

In a case study, the case is an object of interest, and the author attempts to examine and explain it, and a unique feature of a case study is that the researcher attempts to unveil the uniqueness of the case (Clark et.al, 2021, p. 60). For my thesis, I want to emphasize the uniqueness of Haiti, and how its issues are distinct and exclusive for Haiti. There are undoubtedly nations with a *similar* history, but grouping them together, as we learned in chapter 2.1, can be dangerous and misleading, and showcase our Western bias.

The reliability, replicability, and validity of a case study has long been discussed. One common argument is that a single case cannot be a good representation or generalization which can be applied to other cases. However, others argue that the goal of a case study is not to be general or applicable for other cases. Therefore, findings are not limited (Clark et.al, 2021, p. 61). My case study is about Haiti and its relations to other countries, as well as how other countries have treated Haiti throughout history. I do believe this kind of case study can be applied to any country, but results will undoubtedly vary.

3.2 Secondary research

There are multiple advantages of conducting a secondary analysis, some of these are high data-quality, lower cost and less time, new analyzing opportunities, and the possibility of discovering new interpretations or viewpoints (Clark et.al, 2021, p. 295). Much of the data I have used comes from reputable and knowledgeable authors, many having deep personal relationships with Haiti. The author I use the most is Michel-Rolph Trouillot, who was from Haiti. His knowledge is based on both personal experience and research, which makes his data extremely valuable. Using these types of literature will allow me to conduct a precise and data-rich analysis. If I were to conduct this research

myself, it would have taken me much more time and money. It would also be dangerous for me to travel to Haiti due to its current state, and there is no major Haitian community close to where I live. I hope my thesis will contribute to new analyzing opportunities, interpretations, and viewpoints, but I do acknowledge I could not have done any form of analysis had it not been for the quality of data I have been so lucky to explore and investigate.

However, there are also some limitations; lack of familiarity, lack of control, and lack of complexity (Clark et.al, 2021, p. 298). I have attempted to familiarize myself as much as I can with Haiti, but the reality is that I have not been in Haiti, and I have not spoken to anyone from Haiti. My sources are all secondary, so there will be some lack of familiarity. There is also a lack of control with my sources, as it can be difficult at times to find the exact source I would be looking for. This can mean that I could have had to change my focus to something which would be less desirable in the context. A lack of complexity will also be present since many of the authors I use will have used the same sources. I think this is due to Haiti not being a commonly researched country, and a lot due to the work of authors, such as Trouillot, being so valuable and important to the topic.

3.3 Content analysis

When analyzing documents, a qualitative content analysis is the most standard approach. It is a flexible method, which reduces data, and it is relatively systematic. Flexibility comes from its ability to be both inductive and deductive. It reduces data, because it takes large amounts of data and compromises it, identifying core patterns and meanings. It is systematic because it follows transparent methods of categorizing data (Clark et.al, 2021, p. 516). A qualitative content analysis uses themes and examples from documents, such as news articles or official government documents (Clark et.al, 2021, p. 516).

The analytical lens of which I am conducting my analysis is historical, and I use content analysis to extract data from my sources. The historical lens is split into two. For the first one, the goal is to use earlier experiences to give us a sense of the new experience. Using analogies based on the past (American Historical Association, 2023). However, using an historical lens can also mean that we try to gain knowledge of the actual event or issue which we study, not simply using analogies, thus we come to the second part. *“What are the concerns of the people, the values of the cultures, the goals of leaders, the economic conditions of the area? How have these and other factors shaped the situation and defined the range of possible options for solutions?”* (American Historical Association, 2023). The second part of using a historical lens is to provide a more realistic and comprehensive understanding of an event, rather than simply “reacting to analogies based on the past” (American Historical Association, 2023).

I have attempted to apply this historical lens to my content analysis, in which I attempt to understand how historical events have shaped Haiti as a nation. How dependency, occupation, racism, democracy, dictatorship, religious exclusion, gang violence, etc., much of which has been present in Haiti ever since its formation, has impacted Haitian state, life, and culture.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Since the thesis will be heavily based on previous knowledge and already existing literature, there are some challenges surrounding the thesis. There will be a lack of both fieldwork and interviews, which I hope will not cause too much of a knowledge gap in this thesis. I will do my best to find just, clear, and relevant sources which will make the thesis as good as possible, but I do acknowledge that some things will be missing from it. Haiti is not a country which is currently safe to visit, and I think the instability in the country would have prevented me from doing any meaningful fieldwork even if I had tried.

Another issue is that the official spoken language is Haitian Creole, a version of French. I do not speak Creole or French, so I will have to rely on translated sources. I have luckily come to find that there are numerous Haitian authors who have published books in English, and Haitian news sites also tend to publish their articles both in Creole and English, which make these translations more trustworthy. I have also decided to use authors which are highly knowledgeable on Haitian history, politics, and economy, and which I know respect the Haitian citizen.

Something to consider when it comes to ethics, is that this thesis will largely be about the people of Haiti which are living through immense difficulties and hardships. I will do my best to give a fair and just representation of their situation, and not sugarcoat any historical events or horrible situations which they have gone through. A theme present in this thesis is Haiti's own "fault" in terms of how the country has progressed, developed, and become. By referring to "Haiti" what I mean is the Haitian elite, those in charge who, as we will come to learn, at most times take only their own selfish interest into consideration. The regular Haitian have had little to no say in how their country has progressed, and they are put in a horrific position of atrocities which cannot be blamed on them. Democracy has been lacking ever since its formation as a state, and it is still lacking today.

4.0 Historical context

This part of the thesis is split into historical periods, each marked by large historical events which have shaped Haitian society and contributed to what it is today. First, I will look at post-colonial Haiti, the debt to France, and the U.S. military occupation. Then I will move over to the section I have chosen to name "democracy", mostly because it was shaped by the sheer lack of democracy, until we in the 1990s saw a shift in democracy. When we have discussed the historical aspects, I will go further into the issue of sovereignty, which I started discussing in chapter 2.3. In this section I will look at

different types of sovereignty which can be found in Haiti in modern times. I will also discuss how these different types of sovereignty coexist.

Finally, we will go back to the question of the case: “Who owns Haiti?”. We will use all the historical knowledge gathered throughout the case study, as well as the theoretical knowledge of sovereignty, state failure, and dependency to investigate ownership over a country, and what this ownership looks like. Is someone else allowed to own another country? Where do we draw the limit of modern colonization? Can Haiti survive on its own?

4.1 Post-colonial Haiti

In chapter 2.0 I outlined what Haiti and the isle of Hispaniola looked like before and during its colonization. Now, we will be investigating what Haiti looked like during and after the slave revolution of 1804 and up until the first part of the 20th century. This is a period filled with horrific events, most of them out of Haitian control, which continue to shape the country to this day. I go through the initial period after their independence, when France put them into debt, and they were largely excluded from global society. Then we come to the 20th century, which was another period of social and political unrest, as well as military coups, occupations, and dictators. I will finish up with the 1990s and into modern times, where we can clearly see how earlier events have shaped Haitian society, economy, and politics. This entire section will showcase how external interference, racism, and greed have held Haitian society back and out of the global eye.

4.1.1 1804-1825 Historical dependency

Haiti was first recognized as a French colony by the Spanish crown in 1697. The colony was named *Saint-Domingue*, and the island was shared with the Spanish colony *Santo Domingo* (Trouillot, 1990, p. 36). Coffee was the most grown crop on the island from the late 1760s, and by 1789, the colony produced over 60% of the coffee sold in the Western world (Trouillot, 1990, p. 37). Saint-Domingue became the most profitable

colony in the world due to its coffee and sugar production, and because of this, peasant type work became normal for most of the population. Increasing amounts of land was used for crops which led to the creation of an elite class (Trouillot, 1990, p. 36). A class which is still present in Haiti today.

Saint-Domingue was largely categorized by four pillars: Plantation regime, slavery, dependency, and commodity production for export (Trouillot, 1990, p. 40). Racism was embedded in Saint-Domingue life, which increased tension amongst the majority. But tension also arose within the elite. Saint-Domingue was a fragmented place, split into the North, the West, and the South, which were separate administrative units (Trouillot, 1990, p. 40-41). The elite was also split into three groups. 1. *Grand blancs*. The inner circle, which was the most powerful whites, such as high officials and rich planters. 2. *Petits blancs*. A larger circle, also of whites, which included people such as owners of small farms, and artisans. 3. *Gens de couleur*. An even wider circle which included free-born mulattoes, their light-skinned descendants, and a small number of black freemen (Trouillot, 1990, p. 40).

Since Saint-Domingue was so fragmented, these three groups tended to challenge each other. The *Petits blancs* and *Gens de couleur* would often go against the *Grand blancs*, who would operate as a unified unit. They disagreed on many topics, such as the integration of Black freemen. Local ideologies often triumphed over colony-wide policies, which jeopardized loyalty amongst the three groups (Trouillot, 1990, p. 42). By summer 1791, the three groups had begun increasingly opposing each other, and violent conflicts often arose. Inspired by the ongoing French revolution, the groups began demanding change. *Gens de couleur* demanded more political equality. Others demanded more autonomy, and some white colonists opposed the revolution's metropolitan ideas of "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*", which translates to "Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood" (Trouillot, 1990, p. 42). In August 1791, slaves in the northern region burned down rich plantations, thus entering the Haitian revolution (Trouillot, 1990, p. 42).

It took a while for the frontrunners of the Haitian revolution to organize. There was an initial period of uncertainty, but within two years a revolutionary vanguard emerged which was led by Toussaint Louverture. In 1793, they started their militant campaign with the goal of unconditional freedom for all slaves (Trouillot, 1990, p. 43). Louverture achieved many great things over the next few years. He became general-in-chief after four years, which was reluctantly accepted by France. In 1799, he made the *Gens de couleur* power obsolete. And in 1801, after continuously pitting Spain, France, and England against each other, he conquered a Spanish colony east of the island, a move which resulted in him being made governor for life (Trouillot, 1990, p. 43).

A major failure of the Haitian revolution was that its leaders wanted to keep the plantation system. A system which contradicted their goal of unconditional freedom for all. Until 1802, the revolutionaries encouraged plantation work to continue, imposing a repressive labor system on the population (Trouillot, 1990, p. 43). This system was very similar to that of pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue. Slavery was supposed to be abolished, but this *caproalisme agraire*, “militarized agriculture”, looked a lot like it (Trouillot, 1990, p. 43). The early leaders of Haiti wanted to continue the wealth from the colonial period, without the use of slavery. The problem is that as soon as slavery is out of the picture, people will not work as hard, they will require breaks, food, humane working hours, days off, etc. which, if we look at it from a purely economic point of view, is bad for business. Human rights are bad for business. Had they placed their focus on self-sustainability and rebuilding within, they could have been better off, even if they were seen as poor or less wealthy by the rest of the world. It is estimated that sugar production declined from 47.6 million pounds in 1804, to 2.020 pounds in 1825 (Trouillot, 1990, p. 50).

In January 1802 Louverture was kidnapped and exiled to France by Napoleon's troops as they arrived on the island. Former slave and Louverture-follower Jean-Jacques Dessalines, black free-born Henry Christophe, and mulatto Alexandre Pétion took control of the revolution (Trouillot, 1990, p. 43-44). They set a new goal for it, which was to eliminate all white presence. In 1804 Haiti was proclaimed independent and was the

first independent nation in the Americas (Trouillot, 1990, p. 44). This undoubtedly caused problems with the predominantly racist rulers of Western Europe and the U.S. People of African heritage were still seen as slaves in large parts of the world, which led to nations such as the U.S. and large parts of Europe to impose blockades on Haiti. Even so, Haiti was prosperous, and merchants from Britain, France and Germany traded with them as long as the benefit was on their behalf (Trouillot, 1990, p. 50).

A big issue both before and after the liberation in 1804, was the definition of the idea of liberty within the state, and within the nation. The only common goal the revolutionaries had, was the abolishment of slavery. Differences in the population created contrasting perspectives on freedom and liberty. When Louverture increased the involvement of *Gens de couleur* and whites in his administration after 1799, it increased tension amongst the population (Trouillot, 1990, p. 44). Louverture's state defended the plantation system, which was a far reach from what the previous slave population was willing to accept. Louverture's party wanted to export crops, a plan which included creating a country with hundreds of plantations spread all over the country. There was a general agreement on the need for cash crops, but those who would be the ones growing and cultivating these crops, did not want to do so under the control of others (Trouillot, 1990, p. 44). Further tension and inequality increased with the political gap between the leaders and the producers. There was a divide between *anciens libres* and *nouveaux libres*, those who were free before the revolution and those who became free as a result from it. *Anciens libres* consisted mostly of *Gens de couleur*, meanwhile *nouveaux libres* were mostly black (Trouillot, 1990, p. 45).

In 1804, Haiti appointed its first chief of state, Jean-Jacques Dessalines. He would later proclaim himself as emperor. In 1804, Dessalines ordered the massacre of the previous French masters, as well as seizure of all property. He wanted the state to be the prominent owner of cultivated land (Trouillot, 1990, p. 45). During Dessalines reign, tension grew rapidly between the *anciens libres* and the *nouveaux libres*, with the issue of color being at the center. Dessalines tried to reduce tension through a few acts: He added a paragraph in the Haitian constitution which stated that all Haitians were to be

called “black”, and he forbade his staff to discuss the topic of skin color (Trouillot, 1990, p. 45-46).

Most *anciens libres* were against Dessalines, as they resented his power and economic policies (Trouillot, 1990, p. 45). As a former slave, many *anciens libres* viewed him as “uncivilized” and “barbaric” since they were more used to western customs. This is ironic, as Dessalines politics included freedom of religion, marriage- and divorce laws in favor of women, and equal rights for children born outside of marriage (Trouillot, 1990, p. 46), which have historically, and in modern times, been seen as progressive and normal political ideas and values to have in a society. Many *anciens libres* also condemned him for the 1804 massacre of the final remaining whites in Haiti (Trouillot, 1990, p. 46).

Dessalines was killed in an ambush in October 1806, after pursuing policies which hurt *anciens libres*. Mere two years after its liberation, Haiti was once again in a chaotic state (Trouillot, 1990, p. 47). The period which followed saw many different leaders before the country was split into two. Henry Christophe ruled the north as a self-proclaimed king with a mainly dark-skinned court, and Alexandre Pétion ruled *anciens libres* in the south (Trouillot, 1990, p. 47). The Kingdom of the North flourished due to Christophe imposing militarized agriculture. This was not an option in the southern Republic, as the *anciens libres* and Pétion could not afford to lose their legitimacy by implementing such a tyrannical way of life on the majority of the *nouveaux libres* (Trouillot, 1990, p. 47). Because of this, the Republic had to accommodate the masses, which involved a land distribution program. This made Pétion a very popular leader, and he was given the name “*Papa bon kè*”, “Father with a good heart” (Trouillot, 1990, p. 48). He also attempted to negotiate with France in order to get Haiti's independence recognized (NAARC, 2022).

Christophe, with his provoking economic policies, killed himself during an uprising against his kingdom (Trouillot, 1990, p. 48). Once both Christophe and Pétion had passed in 1818 and 1820 respectively, Jean-Pierre Boyer, Pétions friend and former general, was able to reunify the country. He continued the freedom-negotiations with

France which Pétion had started. The French king, Charles X, first refused Boyer's negotiations in 1824, but later changed his mind in April of 1825. He would be willing to recognize Haitian independence, but only at the sum of 150 million francs². This sum was meant as compensation for loss of colony, and loss of revenues from slavery (NAARC, 2022). Boyer was not given much of a choice, as those sent to deliver the offer, also brought with them 14 warships, carrying more than 500 cannons (NAARC, 2022). He had to accept the offer, or there would be war. On July 11th, 1825, Jean-Pierre Boyer signed the document which stated: “*The present inhabitants of the French part of St. Domingue shall pay ... in five equal installments ... the sum of 150,000,000 francs, destined to indemnify the former colonists.*” (NAARC, 2022).

4.1.2 1825-1915 Debt to France

As previously stated, France recognized Haiti's independence in 1825 but it came at an extremely high cost. According to newspapers from the time, it was well known in France that the Haitian government would be unable to pay this large sum. In fact, it was well known around the world as a British paper from 1825 noted that the sum was so high that “*not even European nations could have paid it*” (NAARC, 2022). Not only was the French convoy who landed in Haiti in April 1825 with the “offer” supposed to gain money out of the independence, they were also there to ensure Haiti would take up loans from French banks. This would secure their own economic future, and the scheme became known as Haiti's “double debt” (Porter, Méheut, Apuzzo & Gebrekidan, 2022).

Haiti borrowed 30 million francs from French banks and defaulted on their ability to pay thereafter. The deal was revised in 1838, and the outstanding amount was lowered to 60 million francs. Although a decrease, it was still a massive sum. To put it in perspective, 90 million francs were *five times* France's annual budget. Haiti was once again forced to take up loans (NAARC, 2022). Internally in Haiti, the population suffered heavy

² According to historicalstatistics.org, 150,000,000 French franc [1795-1960] in year 1825 could buy the same amount of consumer goods and services in Sweden as 1,187,575,125.436725 US dollar could buy in Sweden in year 2015.

consequences of this debt. Boyer imposed strict taxes, and projects, such as the development of a national school system, had to be put on hold (NAARC, 2022). Haiti's double debt crippled the country for over the next 100 years, as most of the country's revenue went to paying France.

In 1874, Haiti's debt was down to the last 12 million francs, and the government decided to take up two more loans. A loan taken in 1875 saw 40% disappear to French bankers and investors. Some went to paying other debts, but a large amount of this loan went directly into the pockets of corrupted Haitian officials, money which could have been spent on infrastructure and development (Porter et.al. 2022). While other American countries were investing in massive development programs such as public health, Haiti was stuck. Port-au-Prince was in the late 1870s described as "*the most foul smelling, dirty and consequently fever-stricken city in the world,*" by a British diplomat. The diplomat also noted that human waste collected in the streets since there was no sewage system (Porter et.al. 2022). Furthermore, in 1877, with the attempt of establishing a public works department, Haiti had only six engineers and two architects in the entire country (Porter et.al. 2022).

Even though the last official payment to former colonizers were paid off in 1888, the loans Haiti had taken up over the years made sure the debt was far from finished. By 1911, out of every \$3 Haiti got from coffee taxes, \$2.53 went to paying foreign debt (Porter et.al. 2022). All loans and their interests were paid off in 1947. During this time, Haiti had paid over twice the amount of the colonist's original claim (NAARC, 2022).

According to a New York Times article from 2022, if the money paid to France had stayed in Haiti, growing its economy over two decades, an estimate of \$21 billion could have been added to Haiti over time. This money could have been used to build sewers and water pipes, shops, schools, medical institutions, and created business. The money could have boosted Haiti's economy over time, and Haiti could have been growing at the same rate as other Caribbean and American countries (Porter et.al. 2022).

4.2.3 US military occupation

In the midst of Haiti's debt problems with France, another nation was growing ever so interested in the Caribbean Island. According to the U.S. government history office, the U.S. had its eyes on Haiti for decades before the occupation happened. The island was seen as a potential naval base for U.S. operations, but its instability was concerning, and U.S. officials feared a foreign invasion might happen (U.S. Department of State, 2023). In 1868 U.S. President Andrew Johnson had proposed an annexation of Hispaniola based on U.S. defense, which was eventually unsuccessful. In 1910 under President Taft, the U.S. gave Haiti a large loan to pay off foreign debt, with hopes of lessening foreign influence. However, the debt was still much larger than the loan, and the domestic instability made the loan insignificant (U.S. Department of State, 2023).

The U.S. were primarily concerned with German activity in Haiti. During the start of the 20th century, German merchants had established trading posts in Haiti which dominated local business. As the 1804 constitutions stated no foreigners were allowed to own land, German men married Haitian women to get around these laws (U.S. Department of State, 2023). The German elite had over time established ties with Haiti's elite, and the German crown prince visited Port-au-Prince in 1883. German merchants also financed Haitian political groups (Trouillot, 1990, p. 100). As Germany was increasing its presence in Haiti, and the U.S. feared German control of Haiti would make them too powerful in the Caribbean.

To further put pressure on Haitian society, between 1911 and 1915, seven presidents were overthrown or assassinated. These events made the U.S. even more fearful of foreign invasion. So, in an attempt to deter foreign invasion, *the U.S. invaded Haiti*. In December 1914, the U.S. took control over Haitian banks, removing \$500,000 from the Haitian National Bank and transporting it to New York for "safe keeping" (U.S. Department of State, 2023). In July 1915, Haitian president Jean Vilburn Guillaume Sam was assassinated. This led to U.S. president Wilson sending 330 U.S. marines to Haiti the very same day, taking control over the country for the next 19 years (Trouillot, 1990,

p.99-100). According to the U.S. Government History Office President Wilson sent marines under the disguise of preventing anarchy. However, troops were in fact sent to protect U.S. assets in Haiti, as well as making sure the Germans could not invade (U.S. Department of State, 2023).

In August 1915 the U.S. forced the election of pro-American puppet president Philippe Sudré Dartiguenave at the dismay of the Haitian population (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Dartiguenave was elected under the watch of 100 armed marines (Trouillot, 1990, 101). The Haitian American treaty was created that same year. The treaty led to the creation of a U.S. marine controlled Haitian military force consisting of both Americans and Haitians. The U.S. was also in full control of Haitian finances, and the treaty gave the U.S. full freedom to invade Haiti whenever they saw fit. In 1917, the U.S. attempted to adopt a new pro-American constitution which allowed foreign ownership of land. Haiti's legislature rejected the offer and attempted to create a new anti-American constitution instead. This led to the U.S.-backed president dissolving the legislature for the next 12 years (U.S. Department of State, 2023).

The newly formed Haitian military force called the *gendarmérie* was extremely unpopular. They enforced policies such as forced labor, censorship of the press, and promoted racial segregation. These policies led to a peasant revolt from 1919 to 1920. It is estimated that around 15,000 people joined the revolt (Trouillot, 1990, p. 102). The U.S. got involved afterwards to investigate claims of abuse. It is unclear what this investigation found, but it did make the U.S. reorganize and centralize power within Haiti. Haiti remained relatively stable for the next 8-9 years. Some economic growth was to be found, but only for a very small percentage of the population (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Revolts began once more in 1929, which instigated U.S. withdrawal from Haiti. By 1930, the U.S. were training Haitian officials to take over the government, and in 1934, 19 years after the occupation began, the U.S. officially withdrew from Haiti (U.S. Department of State, 2023).

It is generally agreed that the achievements of the occupation were minor in comparison to the amount of damage it inflicted. Some positives were that the occupation reduced administrative corruption and stabilized the currency. This led to the reduction of foreign debt, but at the cost of depriving the country of its capital (Trouillot, 1990, 102). The debt the country was trapped in was given absolute priority, which starved Haiti of its badly needed development funds. Nevertheless, Haiti was one of the few countries with an excess of liabilities during the Great Depression. This however, primarily benefited U.S. creditors (Trouillot, 1990, p. 102). The final positive of the occupation was that the presence of U.S. marines stopped the military coups which had been frequent since the early 19th century. Beyond this, the effects of the occupation were mainly damaging for Haiti. It worsened socioeconomic issues by doing exactly what it set out to avoid. The occupation increased foreign dependency due to the enlarged role of coffee exportation, and increased injustices related to the taxation system with the increase of state shares on imports and exports through custom duties (Trouillot, 1990, p. 103).

From 1921 and until 1932, coffee export had increased from 67% to 78%. This meant that the dependency on one specific commodity also increased, and very few plantations for the cultivation of crops other than coffee were created. This caused a trade deficit in which the US was the main benefiter. The US was the main importer of goods to Haiti, but sixth in buyer of Haitian exports (Trouillot, 1990, p. 103). In 1932 import duties had increased to 47% of the value of merchandise. Export duties were at 28%. Custom duties stood for around 80% of government revenue, which was an immense tax burden on Haitian peasants and the lower classes. It also led to increased costs of common household articles (Trouillot, 1990, p. 103). The occupation which set out to reduce dependency and deter foreign invasion, turned out to instead reinforce the major problems Haiti had since its independence: foreign dependency, and the extraction of wealth (Trouillot, 1990, p. 103).

The previously mentioned centralization of government within Port-au-Prince led to the end of regional economies. This reduced corruption, but it also gave the capital an advantage and increased its role within the country's economy. Merchants and political

parties accumulated in the capital, which increased its power (Trouillot, 1990, p. 104). The U.S. further increased its power over Haiti when they made Haiti declare war on Germany in 1918. German merchants were imprisoned, and their land confiscated. This gave the U.S. complete commercial control (Trouillot, 1990, p.104).

With the centralization of the economy, centralization of administration and military came also. Scholars are unsure of which made the most harm on Haitian society, but some have put the newly balanced power of the military as one of the occupation's most important and most harmful consequences (Trouillot, 1990, p. 104). As stated earlier, the goal of the occupation was to end anarchy and establish democracy, keeping away foreign invaders. However, the achievements of the occupation only showed the elites that power comes "*out of the barrel of a gun*" (Trouillot, 1990, p. 104). Acts of former Haitian leaders which had previously been criticized and shunned were suddenly practiced and legitimized by the U.S. Some examples of these practices are: The imposition of martial law in 1915, the use of military tribunals on civilians, threats of illegal imprisonment for journalists, the dismissal of Haiti's legislature, random killings of Haitian peasants, and an excessive number of military personnel in high positions in the civil administration (Trouillot, 1990, p. 105).

As mentioned, the U.S. marines created the Haitian gendarmerie, the forerunner of the Haitian military. The group functioned as both police and army and controlled the country from the capitol. The Haitian gendarmerie were responsible for strengthening the rural police, disable the peasantry, and centralizing military forces (Trouillot, 1990, 105). These acts resulted in political power becoming concentrated in the capital of Port-au-Prince. U.S. marines also stalled the development of other regional forces. Because of this, those with political power within the capital were able to control the whole country more effectively than they ever had before (Trouillot, 1990, 105). This was a dangerous development for Haiti, as the men in power had a very limited idea of what Haiti was like as a nation.

The new Haitian military was not like the military which was created in Haiti after their independence in 1804. The first military was a product of the people, fighting *against foreign invasion*, and defenders of the nation's people. The new army, the gendarmerie, was created to fight *against the Haitian people* (Trouillot, 1990, 106). One of the gendarmeries' acts was their participation in the war against the peasant nationalists, together with U.S. marines. They killed over 6000 people. The gendarmerie also created forced labor camps for the U.S., where over 5500 peasants died. (Trouillot, 1990, 106). In 1930 the U.S. reopened the Haitian military school, which played a big role in shaping Haitian politics in the decades to come. The education at this school was very much based in violence and violent methods of executing politics and crowd control (Trouillot, 1990, 106).

Another major flaw of the occupation was its aggravation of social issues, mainly racism and color prejudice. It is often believed that many of the U.S. citizens which came to Haiti, came from the south, which is an area closely related with racism. This has been debated, but the Americans who came, undoubtedly had behavior which reinforced the color prejudice which was already present in Haiti (Trouillot, 1990, 106). As we have seen examples of previously, color prejudice can be found in Haiti all the way back to the 1700s when lighter slaves were given better and safer roles than darker slaves. Color prejudice had ingrained itself in Haitian society, and it was a common belief amongst mulattoes, even before the 1915 occupation, that they were superior to blacks (Trouillot, 1990, 107). The US marines showed clear preference of light-skinned politicians, and helped put in place three mulatto presidents who were closely associated with the *mulâtre* elite (Trouillot, 1990, 107).

All presidents during the occupation had been elected with the influence of U.S. marines, but Sténio Vincent stood out. Charismatic and populist, he was elected in 1930 without any interference from the marines. Vincent made the withdrawal of the U.S. his top priority, which he started negotiating as soon as he came to office. Quite similar to Boyer negotiating freedom from France in 1825. The U.S. were growing tired of the occupation as well, not remembering why they were there in the first place. Some even

deemed it a failed occupation (Trouillot, 1990, 107). Black Americans who had originally agreed with the occupation started to turn away from it, and protests led by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People intensified. Ministries were returned to Haiti in 1931, and U.S. President Roosevelt led the withdrawal from Haiti which ended in 1934 (Trouillot, 1990, 108).

4.2 Dictatorship and democratic transition

The period between 1934 and the 1950s was troublesome for Haiti. In 1937, just three years after the U.S. left Haiti, what was to be known as the Parsley massacre occurred. The massacre happened on the Haiti-Dominican Republic border at the orders of Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. It is estimated that around 9.000 to 20.000 Haitians were killed, their bodies being dumped in rivers (Davis, 2012). The massacre mostly affected Haitian migrants who worked on Dominican sugar plantations. During the great depression, the Dominican economy started to collapse, and Haitian immigrants got the blame. The reason for the name "Parsley massacre" is assumed to be because Dominican soldiers would carry a sprig of parsley with them to ask people how they pronounced it. The Spanish word "*perejil*" would be difficult for a Haitian creole speaker, and they would pronounce it wrong, leading to their inevitable death (Davis, 2012).

Previously elected President Sténio Vincent became less popular amongst the elite due to his populist ideology, and Elie Lescot was elected President in 1941. During Lescot's presidential period, color prejudice and light-skinned favoritism reached its height. Lescot was not popular among the poor and middle classes, and in 1946 students and intellectuals took to the streets, demonstrating Lescot's regime (Trouillot, 1990, p. 108). They wanted greater civil liberties, new legislative elections, and were outraged over the social injustices which plagued Haitian society. Lescot was forced to resign, and the country was taken over by a military junta led by Paul Magloire. This military junta gave the people what they wanted and held organized legislative elections. The winner was

Dumarsais Estimé, a middle-class politician for the *noiriste* movement, a black nationalist party (Trouillot, 1990, p. 108).

4.2.1 The creation of a totalitarian regime

After WW2, Haiti saw an increase in foreign aid and international projects led by NGOs or other governments. It began in 1946 with organizations such as the UN, WHO, and U.S.-led programs. The next 10 years saw a massive increase in missionaries as well (Trouillot, 1990, p. 140). With the arrival of NGOs, so came signs of progress such as the opening of a flour mill, a cement factory, mining operations, and the opening of hospitals. Even though things seemed hopeful for Haiti, leaders at the time did not use money on important matters such as developmental projects. Trouillot calls this period the “*decade of government display*”. Presidents Estimé and his successor Magloire both set up picture-postcard projects for the international eye (Trouillot, 1990, p.141). Estimé reconstructed the business district, and both he and Magloire built some housing for the underprivileged. However nice this looked from the outside, Haiti was experiencing very little developmental growth from 1946-56. Agriculture represented around 80% of the national economy, but its productivity was on a decline, and exports were low. Haitian agriculture was still similar to that of the 19th century and did not fit with the growing population (Trouillot, 1990, p. 141). A growth in population also meant that more people flooded to the capital Port-au-Prince, which led to overcrowding. In 1953, coffee harvests were poor, and by 1954, Haiti was on the brink of collapse (Trouillot, 1990, 142-143).

In 1954, Haiti was hit by hurricane Hazel which destroyed around 40% of coffee crops, and 50% of cocoa crops. This loss was detrimental for Haiti, as they could no longer keep up with, or benefit from, the international coffee market. President Magloire responded to the coffee crisis by implementing coffee taxes. From before 1953, to 1956, government share on coffee prices rose from 16% to 27%. Public debt reached \$61 million in 1957 (Trouillot, 1990 p. 143).

As the country was in a state of chaos, politician Daniel Figdolé, who was popular amongst the poorest in Port-au-Prince, was elected provisional president in May 1957. Figdolé unfortunately did not last long, and after some 19 days in office, the Haitian armed forces broke into the presidential palace and forced the president to resign. They did so with the approval of the U.S. embassy. Figdolé was held at gunpoint and eventually exiled (Sprague, 2012, p. 28). The coup was not taken lightly by his supporters in Port-au-Prince, and tens of thousands took to the streets in protest. Many people were killed by the Haitian military, most of them coming from slum neighborhoods (Sprague, 2012, p. 28).

The next few months were filled with violence and totalitarianism. Those fighting for power exploited the military as their own instruments of violence in order to gain political control. Fundamental human rights, such as civil justice and freedom of speech were being compromised by the army. Haitian journalists wrote on August 30th, 1957; "*Haitian democracy has died almost without having lived*" (Trouillot, 1990, p. 151-152). The man who won the violence-race, on the 22nd of September 1957, was François Duvalier.

4.2.2 Duvalier dictatorship, Papa Doc & Baby Doc

According to Trouillot, Duvalier's political aim was to get "power for power's sake" (Trouillot, 1990, p. 159). Duvalier started off his presidency with rebuilding and restructuring the military. When he won in September 1957, the military was split into four. The largest part stood behind Duvalier, and the three other groups stood behind the other presidential candidates, including Figdolé who, as previously mentioned, was exiled (Sprague, 2012, p. 28-29). Haiti received financial aid from the U.S. which Duvalier used to finance his military. The goal was to establish a military so strong it could crush any form of anti-regime protests or guerrilla group (Sprague, 2012, p. 29). From the beginning of his presidency, Duvalier started to weed out what was left of

independence within the press. Haitian journalists were silenced, jailed, and tortured, a systematic persecution which lasted until the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship in 1986.

The Catholic church was also hit by Duvalier, as he removed numerous important catholic leaders which created a religious vacuum during the 1960s. There were also attacks on the Haitian legislature and the judiciary, as well as on teachers and students during the early 1960s (Trouillot, 1990, p. 159-160). The vacuums were, however, not left open. Duvalier filled them with new personnel, institutions, or organizations. It was, for instance, not enough to simply silence the press, Duvalier proceeded with establishing his own media. In terms of education, Duvalier centralized the university system in 1960 (Trouillot, 1990, p. 160). Duvalier also had somewhat of a cooperation with Trujillo against the Cuban socialist regime, as they both had right-wing regimes. With the U.S. Marines backing him, Duvalier justified his military expansion as a response to the socialist threat looming in their backyard (Sprague, 2012, p. 29).

In 1958³, Duvalier created his own paramilitary organization. The official name was the *Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale*, but they became known as the *Tonton Macoutes* (Sprague, 2012, p. 29) The group acted as both a secret police and as public executioners, striking down on those who criticized Duvaliers government. A characteristic of the Tonton Macoutes was how they would perform gruesome acts of torture, rape, and murder. They were known for leaving bodies hanging in public places as a clear warning to those who would oppose the government. Their victims tended to be pro-democracy activists, leftists, or socialists. They were seen as an anti-communist insurgency group and were therefore backed by the U.S. (Sprague, 2012, p. 29). The group was also backed by the Haitian elite, as they were vital in upholding the inequality and class-privileges which benefited them (Sprague, 2012, p. 29).

In 1964, after successfully manipulating all levels of the Haitian state, Duvalier declared himself *President-for-life* (Trouillot, 1990, p. 160). Trouillot notes an interesting

³ I have found different dates for the formation of the Tonton Macoutes. Sprague says 1958, Wikipedia says 1959, Trouillot says 1962.

characteristic of Duvalier. He had the ability to create norms out of something unusual. He writes that:

“The Haitian state had always revolved around the Executive; with François Duvalier, the Executive became the state. The Haitian state had always helped to enrich its rulers. With François Duvalier, the enrichment of these rulers became the very principle of governmental accounting. The Haitian state had always been violent. With François Duvalier, the legitimacy of violence became the very principle of governing the relations between state and nation.”
(Trouillot, 1990, p. 161).

It was this normalization of Duvalierist values which made the creation of a hereditary republic possible, as well as his role as President-for-life. It is important to note that authoritarianism and absolute power was the traditional form of government in Haiti ever since its independence. Haiti has known nothing but dictators, so how did Duvalier stand out and become a synonym for Dictator? (Trouillot, 1990, p. 164). Trouillot writes that the exercise of any state power is always violent, it is simply limited by law. Due to this, we cannot simply attribute Duvalier's regime to his use of violence, but we must look at *how* he used violence and what *new ways* violence was utilized (Trouillot, 1990, p. 166). Trouillot highlights four non-traditional uses of violence Duvalier's regime carried out:

1. Duvalier's state utilized violence to far more people than what was “acceptable”. No one was safe, not even children or the elderly. Entire families could be targeted if one was suspected to be anti-government.
2. Duvalier's state disregarded the historical gender distinction regarding violence. Historically, women had been protected by the state against violence. This time, women were treated similarly, or worse than men. Torture-rape, acquaintance-rape, and forced marriages became common.
3. Duvalier's state also targeted those in higher societal positions. This was especially prevalent with members of institutions such as schools or churches. Historically, people with higher ranks in civil society had been left alone. If you were powerful enough, you would be considered out of reach. With Duvalier, this

respect for social status was removed, and judges, physicians, writers, village elders, clergymen, and others all had to participate in the state violence.

4. Duvalier's state used violence at random. It could be an entire community, an unrelated group who shared a surname, a town, or a sports team. There are examples of Duvalier ordering executions and torture of entire towns, due to one small groups attempt at guerilla warfare. As well as examples of him ordering a slaughter of an entire family, as he simply suspected one person from this family as being responsible for a murder attempt on his son.

(Trouillot, 1990, p. 167-168)

Duvalier made his violence appear as though it had no limits. Trouillot argues that although limitless, it was not irrational. The logic of the violence was that it seemed to be limitless, and this limitless violence would deter people from demonstrating, thus protecting the state. Duvalier created a climate of terror, in which violence could come to any person at any time, regardless of status, age, or gender (Trouillot, 1990, p.169).

Another issue which categorized the Duvalier state was its sheer magnitude of corruption. A job in the government tended to be a double favor. You would have your regular salary, but you would also have the opportunity to collect money elsewhere (Trouillot, 1990, p. 175). In the past, government spending on civil society was always seen as a surprise, but the desire to appear efficient was important for many leaders such as Estimé and Magloire. If the state appeared efficient, people would complain less. Duvalier on the other hand, removed the entire idea of efficiency. Duvalier remained in power not thanks to the use of state funding on projects which had very little importance for him. Violence and centralization made him powerful, and there was no reason for the government to pretend to serve the people's interest (Trouillot, 1990, p. 176).

Jean-Claude, François Duvalier's son, ascended the throne after his fathers death in 1971. He did so after an "election" which supposedly saw him win with 2,391,916 votes

versus zero (Amnesty International, 2014). He assumed the role of “President for life” at the blessing of the U.S., who “*patrolled the sea around Haiti to ensure that the inauguration proceeded undisturbed*” (Trouillot, 1990, p. 204). Jean-Claude, also nicknamed “Baby Doc”, made some attempts at reformation and modernization of the country which ultimately failed. Poverty and political unrest continued to plague Haiti during his reign (BBC, 2014). Between 1971 and 1986 there were thousands of reports of death, torture, arrest, and enforced disappearances coming out of Haiti. This was especially common amongst journalists, political leaders, and those who were assumed to be anti-government. Baby Doc took full advantage of his father's special forces, the Tonton Macoutes, who were executioners of horrific atrocities during his regime (Amnesty International, 2014).

Baby Doc fled Haiti in 1986 on a self-imposed exile to France. His exile came after a period of disgruntlement with increased prices of housing, food, and fuel. The first mass-demonstration against the Duvalier regime happened in 1984. Protesters attacked warehouses of NGOs where food was reported to be stored. The early slogan of “*Aba lamizè!*” (“Down with poverty!”), eventually got replaced with “*Aba Duvalier!*”, as Haitians had grown more aware of the corruption and fault of the government, and its responsibility for the population's poverty (Trouillot, 1990, p. 217). While the majority of the population were living in extreme conditions, Baby Doc and his wife Michèle Bennet lived a life of luxury. It was reported that in 1985, Michèle returned to Haiti from a shopping spree in Paris where she is alleged to have spent \$1.7 million in the span of two weeks. This rumor reached a wide audience, and caused immense anger amongst the masses (Trouillot, 1990, p. 218).

Protests continued during 1985, and the U.S. attempted to distance itself from the Dictator. It was clear that Baby Doc was getting desperate and in early 1985, the government began allowing other political parties and began releasing political prisoners. Then on November 27th, 1985, four school-children were shot by the army. An act which aggravated protest. The government detained, killed, and beat protesters, but they continued to grow despite the violence (Trouillot, 1990, p. 220-221). On New

Year's Eve 1985 Baby Doc announced a 10% decrease in the price of basic commodities such as flour, fuel, and cooking oil, but to no avail. Demonstrations continued. In early 1986, he attempted to dissolve the Tonton Macoute, but it was too late. The next day, demonstrators in Cap Haïtien reached a staggering number of 40.000 (out of a population of 65.000) (Trouillot, 1990, p. 221). A few days later The U.S. announced that Baby Doc had fled the country, and Haiti now looked like what Call categorized as a “collapsed state” in chapter 2.1.

Baby Doc returned to Haiti in 2011, and the country reopened a criminal case against him, which included crimes against humanity and human rights violations (Amnesty International, 2014). Baby Doc denied all charges and managed to stall his trial. He was able to live freely in Port-au-Prince until he eventually died of a heart attack in 2014 (BBC, 2014). The Duvalier regimes left behind a legacy which is like no other. It is estimated that between 20.000-30.000 people were killed during the regime (BBC, 2014),

After the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship, Haiti was \$844 million in debt to international financial institutions. The money had *not* been used on Haiti's people, infrastructure, or development. It had been spent by the Duvaliers on their personal lifestyle, making the Duvalier state a kleptocracy (Schuller, 2012, p. 21).

After the Duvaliers, the government was replaced by a National Council of Government, which was a military-led council. The U.S. stated that this council would lead Haiti on its path to democracy, with U.S. president Ronald Reagan promising his increased support. The new government imposed neoliberal measures which led to currency and tariffs losing value, destroying the peasant economy (Schuller, 2012, p. 21). The military regime promised that Duvalierism was no more but refused to investigate those who performed human rights abuses under the Duvaliers (Sprague, 2012, p. 44). Staged elections were held in 1987, which ended in violence and terror. 200 people were murdered on the election day, many for simply standing in line to vote. The failure of this election led to the U.S. halting their military assistance (Sprague, 2012, p. 45-46).

From this came the movement of anti-Duvalierism which sprung up in small Haitian churches. The best-known promoter of this idea was Jean-Bertrand Aristide, whose sermons were taped and distributed to illegal radio stations all over Haiti (Sprague, 2012, p. 46). Aristide was so influential that the military government attempted to have him assassinated in 1988. He escaped with his life, but thirteen of his supporters were murdered. This was widely unpopular in Haiti, and three of the perpetrators were killed in revenge the following weeks (Sprague, 2012, p. 47). Pro-democracy movements were shut down all over the country in 1988, and many were killed for speaking out. After a long period of fighting, pressure grew both domestically and internationally, and the military government could no longer stay in power. This transition to democracy was to be overseen by the international community, and there would be new elections (Sprague, 2012, p. 50).

4.2.3 Democratic transition

In March 1990, Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, Haiti's first and only female president, was given the position of provincial president. Her job would be to organize elections. Both pro-Duvalier and anti-Duvalier parties put forward candidates for the 1990 election, one of these being Aristide. He won 67% of the votes (Sprague, 2012, p. 53).

Aristide won the presidential election under what was called the "*Lavalas movement*". This movement was based on neoliberalism, transparency, and participation (Schuller, 2012, p. 22). When Aristide was elected, he rejected his salary of \$10,000 a month, he called for the military to serve the people, and enforced civilian authority over the military (Sprague, 2012, p. 55). Aristide frequently angered the bourgeoisie. He for instance invited hundreds of homeless people to eat breakfast with him the morning after his inauguration, saying: "*If there's enough for the rich, then there must be enough for the poor, too. If the National Palace was formerly for the rich, today it's for the poor.*" (Sprague, 2012, p.55-56). Aristide launched his anti-corruption campaign and enforced

taxes for the first time in a very long time. These moves led to the Haitian elite plotting against Aristides' government. Furthermore, Aristide was known for hiring activists and administrators which had proved themselves in the political movement, instead of giving jobs to elites and other career politicians (Sprague, 2012, p. 56-57).

Aristides' government, quickly after gaining office, presented their policy objectives. These objectives included the right to eat, the right to work, and the right of the public to demand what is owed. Aristide promoted agrarian reform, participatory democracy, participatory economics, and a reorganization of government (Sprague, 2012, p. 57). Haiti attempted the growth-with-equity model, which emerged as an alternative to a free market approach, in the Caribbean during the 70s and 80s. The goal of the growth-with-equity model was to maintain the private sector as stakeholders in the economy, but to make key enterprises state-owned. This would allow for the regulation and redistribution of resources, which could satisfy the basic needs of the poor (Sprague, 2012, p. 57). The growth-with-equity model is, however, dependent on capitalism, which makes it contradictory in nature. It also went against the bourgeoisie's interests, such as tax evasion and getting governmental benefits (Sprague, 2012, p. 57-58).

Aristides' government implemented many programs which would benefit the poor majority. An adult literacy program was created, improvement of workers rights, an increase of minimum wage, the creation of jobs, improvement of infrastructure, public-health interventions, and a reform of public-education (Sprague, 2012, p. 58). Aristide, with human rights groups, also criticized the Dominican Republic for their treatment of Haitian migrant workers making him the first Haitian president to stand up for this group (Sprague, 2012, p. 58-59).

Although Aristides' government was popular amongst the masses, he was making powerful enemies in the process. USAID began criticizing Aristides' government when they wanted to increase the minimum wage. USAID actively went against it, such as funding political oppositions, disguised as "democratization" (Schuller, 2012, p. 60). Both the Haitian and the Dominican military felt threatened by the new government's stance

on human rights abuses. Both militaries had been beneficiaries of narco- and human trafficking, which was threatened by Aristides' new reforms (Schuller, 2012, p. 60). Aristides' government lacked support from not only his military and Haitian elites, but also on the international arena. Both Washington and the Vatican openly spoke against Aristides' government (Schuller, 2012, p. 22), and the Dominican Republic did not support him after his previous call-out. Due to this, the government could only rely on the support of the poor majority of Haiti, *"the heirs of all of those who had resisted oppression from the time of the slave and indigenous peoples"* (Schuller, 2012, p. 61).

Aristide advocated for peace and urged the public to turn over criminals to the police rather than seeking revenge. Aristide commended rule of law and was firmly against Duvalierism. Elites and military interpreted this as if he was condoning violence and vigilante behavior as a form of self-defense, which led to the justification of a military coup against him (Schuller, 2012, p. 61).

Eight months into his presidency, in September 1991, Aristide was removed from office. The coup was led by Raoul Cedras with the paramilitary organization FRAPH, and was backed by Haitian elites, the International Republican Institute, and the CIA (Schuller, 2012, p.22). This new government was harsh, and killed thousands of politicians and governmental members, as well as regular people who were assumed supporters of Aristide (Schuller, 2012, p. 22). The U.S. supporting a military coup against a democratically elected government shows their clear contradiction and inconsistency in their claims of being for democratic development in Haiti.

Aristide was returned to power in 1994 to finish his presidential term, after yet another U.S.-backed invasion (Schuller, 2012, p. 22). This 1994 intervention was ironically named *"Operation Uphold Democracy"* and was initiated by the Clinton administration. Clinton said in a speech from September 17th, 1994, that any attempt at diplomacy with the military government had failed:

“The dictators rejected all of our efforts, and their reign of terror, a campaign of murder, rape, and mutilation, gets worse with every passing day. Now we must act.” (Bunyan, 2019).

The military government believed they were immune to U.S. consequences, because at least one main member of the military government was on CIA payroll. This was confirmed by Washington in 1994 (Bunyan, 2019). The 1994 intervention was seen as a success, as the military government backed down without a fight. However, what was intended to restore democracy in Haiti arguably made the situation even more complicated. James Dobbins, former U.S. special envoy stated that the intervention in Haiti produced only short-term success, and that democracy is not achieved overnight (Bunyan, 2019). Robert Fatton was even more critical, and deemed the intervention a major failure;

“If anything, the situation now is probably more catastrophic than it was in the mid-1990s... It was a euphoric moment, which ended in disaster.” (Bunyan, 2019).

The 1994 invasion is seen as the cause of and key contributor to many of the problems Haiti faces today. The U.S. support of Aristide came at a price: the opening of Haiti's market to foreign trade. This led to Haiti having to import most of their food, and the Haitian elite continued to rule the Haitian economy. This also meant that reforms and development programs which Aristide had planned fell through (Bunyan, 2019). There are clear lessons which can be learned from the failure of Operation Uphold Democracy. One must be aware of the limitations and lower expectations in terms of what one wants to achieve. A true transformation takes a long time and is not done overnight. Calling the operation a success is also problematic because *who* was it a success for? The U.S. or Haiti? Robert Fatton argues that it was viewed as a success due to there being no American lives lost (Bunyan, 2019). But calling it a success undermines the reality of Haiti being constantly referred to as the poorest country in the world, a “failed state”, or an NGO-nation.

After Aristide, Haiti elected President Préval who was closely related to Aristide as his previous Prime Minister. Therefore, many of the same policies continued. In 2000,

Aristide announced he was running for president once more. This announcement was celebrated by those who had been victimized by earlier military governments. Aristide's return symbolized a return to progressive politics (Sprague, 2012, p. 101-102). Aristide won 80% of the votes due to his opposition boycotting the election. Both domestic and international observers criticized the win, and many refused to recognize Aristide as winner (BBC, 2011), calling it a fraudulent election (Padgett, 2011). Aristide began organizing and arming youth gangs from the slums to protect him. They were not as violent as the Tonton Macoutes, but they terrorized Haitians through arson and murder. They allegedly threatened *"to turn the skulls of Aristide rivals "into inkwells" shouting, "Rat pa kaka!" (Not even rats sh*t here without our permission!)"* (Padgett, 2011). Anti-government protests became frequent after the 2000 election, and in 2001 there was a coup attempt against Aristide. Protests escalated towards the end of 2003 and became more violent than before (BBC, 2011).

In 2004, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was once again removed from office during his second term as president. Armed gangs overran rural police stations in Northern Haiti, and slowly made their way towards the capital. By February 2004, Aristide was forced to flee the country (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 67). His opposition was mainly backed by the Haitian elite, but it was also backed by the Republican party in the U.S. who had grown tired of Aristide after his second election to the point where they suspended most of the aid which was being sent to Haiti after 2000 (Pierre-Louis Jr., 2017, p. 55). After Aristide was exiled, the "Council of Wise Men" was created in order to name a new government. This was led by former UN official Gérard Latortue and head of Haiti's Supreme Court Boniface Alexandre. Latortue called on the UN Security Council for aid, realizing he could not govern Haiti without international help. Thus came the creation of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, also known as MINUSTAH. This mission will be discussed further in chapter 4.3.2, but its goal was to facilitate democratic transition in Haiti (Pierre-Louis Jr., 2017, p. 55-56).

After Aristide was exiled, Préval was once again elected as President of Haiti. He became the first Haitian president to serve two full terms. Préval was largely elected

due to people assuming he could get Aristide back to Haiti, which was not the case. According to the Haitian Times, Préval promised nothing, and delivered few achievements (Pierre-Pierre, 2023). During his presidency came the infamous earthquake which killed more than 230.000 people, including civil servants, weakening an already weak government. Préval is known for making bad decisions after the disaster, such as relying on networks in order to “solve” issues related to the crisis. This caused immense corruption amongst food and shelter distributors. His flaws as a leader led to the presidential election in 2010 which was supposed to be postponed due to the tragedy. Donors and political parties reversed their position, stating that there was a clear need for a new leader (Pierre-Louis Jr., 2017, p. 61).

Michel Martelly, which Pierre-Pierre (2023) calls “the worst president in Haiti’s modern time”, assumed the presidency in 2011. Martelly was a popular Haitian musician, but also a supporter of previous autocratic regimes. The 2010 election was boycotted by many candidates due to “massive irregularities”, and only 23% of those eligible to vote did so. Despite this, the UN and the Provisional Electoral Council deemed the election to be fair (Pierre-Louis Jr., 2017, p. 61).

International involvement in the election grew, and after Préval’s candidate seemed to win the election, protesters took to the street to demand Martelly become a candidate once more. This led to the U.S. embassy rejecting Préval’s candidate as winner, and UN secretary general's special representative in Haiti, Edmond Mullet, applied pressure on Préval to leave office, and to leave the country. The U.S. state department was eventually allowed to recount the ballots, a move which resulted in Préval’s candidate being removed. In March 2011, Martelly was declared the winner and was now the new President of Haiti (Pierre-Louis Jr., 2017, p. 61-62). The international community, including the U.S., the UN, and the Organization of American States (OAS) stood behind the results, even if other Haitian politicians protested it. This intervention from especially the U.S. showed the world that they will not hesitate to involve themselves in Haitian politics to assist those who can serve their best interest. Martelly welcomed the backing

of the U.S. after years of Préval stalling post-disaster plans, as well as his attempt at manipulating the electoral process of Haiti (Pierre-Louis Jr., 2017, p. 62).

Martelly quickly showed his authoritarian tendencies. He demanded the arrest of a member of parliament who had criticized him. Haitian parliamentarians have immunity from political prosecution, so the arrest was a clear breach of the country's constitution, and it was concluded that Martelly had abused his power (Pierre-Louis Jr., 2017, p.63). Martelly created other crises as well, such as halting parliamentary elections, which meant that many governmental offices were left vacant. Martelly then elected people close to him, very similar to what the Duvaliers were doing. New presidential elections in 2015 were also halted due to his inability in organizing new elections (Pierre-Louis Jr., 2017, p.63).

In January 2017, 14 months after the election had begun, Jovenel Moïse won the presidency. Moïse was a wealthy businessman and fruit exporter known as “Banana Man” and was from the same party as Martelly. The initial election began in October 2015, but was postponed due to opposition groups and human rights activists claiming it was fraudulent and rigged. The process was delayed many times after this due to fear of violent protest (Domonoske, 2017). Moïse was a corrupt leader who picked fights, which led to his assassination in July 2021 (Pierre-Pierre, 2023).

Haiti is currently still left without a leader. Prime minister Ariel Henry, who was technically never sworn in, has served as de facto leader ever since. The Haitian Senate, and its lower legislative chamber, which should have 30 and 119 seats respectively, have no representatives left (Sullivan, 2023). This has left Haiti in a state of turmoil, with gangs fighting for control. More than 150.000 people have been displaced from their homes, and a cholera outbreak has infected over 25.000 Haitians (Sullivan, 2023). The increase of gang violence in Haiti has caused famine, forced hospitals to close, and led to NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders having to close facilities (Sullivan, 2023). A record 4.7 million people are facing acute hunger with 1.8 million of these at a critical level of malnutrition. In October 2022 The World Food Programme

raised its hunger alert in Haiti to level 5, this is the highest category which is often reserved for famine related to war (Taylor, 2023).

5.0 Contested sovereignty

Sovereignty has so far been a major red thread throughout this paper. I have investigated the beginning of sovereignty and its various meanings through history. I have discussed the limits of sovereignty in Haiti according to Robert Fatton. I have gone through Haiti's history which has been filled with contested claims of sovereignty, foreign occupation, dictatorship, racism, and exclusion. I will now look at the issues of sovereignty which are currently present in Haiti, and I have chosen four categories of sovereignty to focus on. Religion (who have contested the state's sovereignty since its creation), International actors (other countries who have justified intervention or otherwise exploited Haiti), NGOs within Haiti (who deal with foreign aid and development), and Haitian gangs (who claim their own type of sovereignty).

5.1 Religious sovereignty

After Haiti gained independence in 1804, Haiti remained a catholic state similar to what it had been under France since 1697. French priests fled the country, so Haitians took control over the church themselves. Haiti was excluded from the international arena by the U.S. and the Vatican until 1860. Authority over the church in Haiti was returned to the Vatican after 1860, a move which "*invited recolonization by France, Germany, and the U.S.*" by the "Francophile", mulatto elite of Haiti (Richman, 2017, p. 107). This return of foreign authority also gave French priests authority over Haitian schools since they were church run (Richman, 2017, p. 107).

The U.S. occupation, which we discussed in chapter 4.2.3, reduced the authority of the French Catholic Church for a while, but when the occupation finished, the Catholic

Church returned. After the occupation, in 1941, the Catholic Church launched a campaign to rid Haiti of “superstition”, what the Church called “*a collection of religious beliefs and practices which came from Africa*”. It is worth noting that much of this “collection” came from Europe but stating it as African served a better purpose for the Catholic Church (Richman, 2017, p. 107). The campaign was not received positively, and the Catholic Church’s colonial policies provoked the nation. Prominent late 19th century Haitian writer and diplomat Louis-Joseph Janvier called for a religion which would “*respect sovereignty of the state and whose clergy would defer to the state*” (Richman, 2017, p. 109). He wrote from a period in which the nationalist movement was allied with Protestantism. Janvier wrote in 1883, that:

“Protestant is thrifty and self-reliant, he does not waste his money on carnivals and other frivolities. Protestantism permits free discussion and encourages private initiative... The Protestant is almost always a more practical worker and a better citizen than the Catholic” (Richman, 2017, p. 109).

However much he promoted Protestantism, he also promoted that Haiti should mirror Africa, as Protestantism could be used to civilize the “primitive” Africans to Western culture. Janvier did, however, not believe that Protestantism in Haiti would ever be possible. A statement which was prophetic (Richman, 2017, p. 109).

After the U.S. occupation, the presidential term of pro-catholic president Lescot, and the Catholic campaigns to rid Haiti of “superstition” was what was needed for Janvier’s ideas of an alternative narrative of religious identity to come true. Peasant religions and folklore were used to create this identity and from it came the birth of *Vodou* (Richman, 2017, p. 110). The name *Vodou* refers to “*a genre of ritual music and dance performed in honor of a particular category of spirit*” in Creole, but the word itself comes from the Fongbe language. This was a language spoken by many slaves who were sent to Haiti, and in Fongbe *Vodou* means *spirit* (Richman, 2017, p. 110).

In *Vodouism*, one worships different spirits called *lwa*. *Lwa* are human-like spirits which are inherited through family lines. Many of the *lwa* have African names, as it is said they

come from there. The *lwa* are often compared to nature. For example, *Ogoun*'s anger is often compared to thunder, and *Danbala Wedo*'s energy is often compared to that of a water snake. These comparisons are symbolic representations, and it is not believed that *Ogoun* controls the weather, or that *Danbala Wedo* is an actual snake. They are not, contrary to popular beliefs, nature gods (Richman, 2017, p. 119). The *lwa* are limited in what they can control as they can only involve themselves in humans' personal affairs. They can protect someone's health, or sometimes delegate power to others. Their religious leader's primary job is to help with healing, empower the afflicted, and influence threatening spirits to let go of the human they possess (Richman, 2017, p. 120).

The issue of viewing Vodou as a nature religion caused problems for Haiti during the 20th century, as Vodou became popular with the election of Francois Duvalier. He viewed Janvier as his ideological mentor, and he participated in the writing of studies based on folk religion in Haiti. Due to this, Duvalier gained the reputation of practicing Vodou, which he exploited in his politics. This gave him the nickname "Vodou President". Duvalier is said to have slept at the tomb of revolutionary hero Jean-Jacques Dessalines in order to communicate with his ghost. He once ordered the head of a rival to be cut off, and to have it brought to him so that he could talk with his spirit (Williams, 1986). Duvalier was once quoted saying "*only the gods can take power from me*", and Duvalier successfully created a narrative of him being so powerful that he could *always* know what his enemies were doing (Williams, 1986).

However connected Duvalier appeared to Vodou, he was even more concerned with Protestantism. He used this religion as a tool to challenge his main opponent, which was the Catholic Church. This was a period where Duvalier was attempting to exclude foreign governments and organizations, but he decided to invite Protestants from the U.S. This led to people converting to Protestantism, which in turn caused conflict between the two churches. Now, they were fighting against each other, and not the state (Richman, 2017, p. 111). However, as much as it was a simple tool for Duvalier, Protestantism grew large in Haiti. So large in fact, that the Catholic Pope took a trip to

Haiti in 1983. He did this to promote Catholicism, and to halt the advancement of a religion which he said was lacking the “true gospel” and which did not “respect religious liberty” (Richman, 2017, p. 114). This did however not have its desired effect, and in 1985 Protestantism received official recognition as a national religion. Vodou was acknowledged a few decades later as the third (Richman, 2017, p. 114).

After the end of the Duvaliers, the protestant agenda extended to foreign aid. The state, which was seen as corrupt and inadequate, was ignored in terms of development assistance. Private organizations were favored, and an NGOs credibility was based on their Christian morality. Duvalier did, by accident, contribute to the formation of a “NGO-nation” in Haiti (Richman, 2017, p. 112). However, after the horrific 2010 earthquake, Protestants which had thrived alongside Vodou practice, were quick to state that devil worship was the reason for the catastrophe. Pat Robertson, a television evangelist, stated that the earthquake was a “*divine punishment because the slaves had sworn a pact with the devil to free themselves and found an independent republic*”. This was not a new narrative by any means, as it has followed Haiti for decades (Richman, 2017, p. 114-115).

The story goes that there was a Vodou ceremony in 1791 in Bois Caïman, in which the slaves swore a pact with the devil. It is said that they would serve him if he set them free, and ever since then Haitians have been “cursed” (Richman, 2017, p. 114-115). This is a myth which is combined with both fact and fiction, which increased in popularity during the 1950s, to prove that Haiti was born out of Vodou. This narrative was changed by the Protestants, who made the claim that Haiti was born out of satanist worship instead, so therefore, the catastrophes which kept on hitting the nation were their own fault. The framing of Vodou as devil worship also contributed to giving Vodou the image that it was a “demonic infestation on the land” (Richman, 2017, p. 118).

A popular narrative after the earthquake was that the Haitian people were allegedly converting to Protestantism. The story was that the Haitian faith had been tested as their Vodou gods had failed them. People were also drawn to Protestantism due to heavy

promotion and aid from Christian NGOs (Richman, 2017, p. 119). However, as mentioned earlier, Vodou is not a nature religion, and the lwa does not control anything even if they often are compared to nature. They are but a symbolic representation, and Haitians did not reject their spirits for not preventing something they had no control over (Richman, 2017, p. 119-120).

As we can see, religion in Haiti has become merged with the idea of Haitian sovereignty. The Catholic Church, which was a serious challenger of sovereignty, held a tight grip until the 20th century, before Protestantism rose to power thanks to Duvalier. The Pope's visit to Haiti showed us just how important religious sovereignty has been in Haiti, and how the fight between two religious groups let a Dictator off the hook. Even if Vodou has become nationally practiced, accepted, and celebrated, Protestant part in development and foreign aid continue to dictate the nation, and religious contests will undoubtedly continue (Richman, 2012, p. 121).

5.2 International actors

There are *many* international actors which have been mentioned, discussed, and explored, and there are more to come. France, the U.S., Germany, the Vatican, the UN, IMF, The World Bank, USAID, as well as other NGOs and FPCs. NGOs will be discussed more in the next chapter, but I wanted to delve a little bit deeper into two nations which have involved themselves quite a bit in Haiti as well. The first one is the Dominican Republic, the better-off neighbor. The other is Brazil, which took control in 2004 after another coup.

The Dominican Republic

The relationship between Haiti and The Dominican Republic has been mentioned a few times so far. However, I think it deserves a little more context. Dominican economic interference in Haiti has been present since the early 1990s. It kicked off when the

international community imposed an economic embargo on then-leader General Raoul Cedras, and since then, Dominican involvement has become more and more significant (Fatton, 2017, p. 33). The Haitian-Dominican trade only goes one way, with Haiti importing around 30% of goods from The Dominican Republic, and Haiti depends on them for 10% of their gross national product. In 2012, Dominican exports to Haiti were estimated at around \$2 billion (Fatton, 2017, p. 34).

The Dominican Republic also takes advantage of the low work wage present in Haiti. As previously mentioned, minimum wage in Haiti is around \$5 a day. The Dominican Republic has been exploiting Haitian workers for over 70 years. In chapter 4.3 I mentioned the Parsley massacre, which mainly affected Haitian migrants in The Dominican Republic. This massacre came down to the idea of “*antihaitianismo*”, which are anti-Haitian beliefs prevalent in The Dominican Republic. This ideology is based on racist belief, which rejects blackness, and promotes white or Hispanic heritage (Fatton, 2017, p. 34). The idea of *antihaitianismo* became prevalent in 2013 when the Constitutional Court of The Dominican Republic made citizenships for migrants born between 1929 and 2010 invalid. This ruling affected over 200.000 Dominicans with Haitian descent. The ruling made these people stateless, as they were to be returned to a country which they had never set foot in (Fatton, 2017, p. 35).

The ruling was unsurprisingly unpopular worldwide and it received international condemnation. Haitian politicians and others also condemned the ruling. In a response, the Dominican Republic announced a “Neutralization Law” which would allegedly fix the issue of statelessness (Fatton, 2017, p. 35). This new law would apparently only reinstate citizenship to those who were born between 1929 and 2007, but they had to have been registered with the government, which many were not. Due to this, only around 20.000 people got their citizenship back, with 180.000 people remaining stateless. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights deemed the law as “out of season, biased, and inappropriate”, but this was the only change the Dominican Republic was willing to compromise on (Fatton, 2017, p. 35).

According to a 2023 article from The Washington Post, the Dominican Republic is building a “13-foot fence along nearly half of the 250-mile border”. This has led to the deportation of thousands of Haitians, including pregnant women, and children. In 2022, the Dominican Republic deported 170.000 people, double the amount as in 2021 (Mérancourt & Coletta, 2023). These actions are praised in the Dominican Republic, but others criticize the racist policy. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called out for the deportation to stop, but Dominican President Luis Abinader said that “*not only would they continue, they will increase*” (Mérancourt & Coletta, 2023).

Brazil

When the 2004 military coup in Haiti was at its early stages, the Rio Group, consisting of Latin American and Caribbean countries, publicly displayed their intent of stopping it from escalating. The group's intent is to coordinate responses to issues of shared interest. In this case, it was the abandonment of Jean Bertrand Aristide by France and the U.S. in a period of crisis. The group showed support for Aristides government and condemned the acts of violence associated with the coup. The support was, however, in vain as Aristide was exiled in 2004 and the coup was completed (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 67).

This became an opportunity for Brazil to enter the stage as a leader. The UN was to form a multilateral force which was to be sent to Haiti, the MINUSTAH. French President Jacques stated that Brazilian cooperation would be fundamental, and it was extremely important for Brazil to take control of the operation. Brazil was honored by the proposal and was ready to send 1,100 military forces to Haiti. This was new for Brazil, as they had historically advocated for the principle of non-intervention (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 68)

This involvement of Brazil, but also of other Latin American countries, came as countries portrayed a desire to participate more actively in the resolution of conflicts. Latin American states also share solidarity with Haiti, drawing on history as far back as the Haitian revolution, which contributed to freedom fighting all over the American continent

(Seitenfus, 2017, p. 69) Countries such as Brazil and Argentina increased focus on Haiti after the coup in 1991, as well as in 1994. Latin American governments also had the belief that to achieve peace, one must consider the origins of instability, not just the results. This approach led to the development of UN peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, the approach builds on the idea that *“one of the greatest challenges in international relations has to do with the ineffectiveness of the international system for preventing and resolving conflicts”* (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 69). The use of military force to solve crises was seen as ineffective due to its damaging impact on social- and economic development. This led to the rise of “solidarity diplomacy”, which calls for international collective action which is not shaped by the bias of its own national interest (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 70).

When Brazil decided to intervene in 2004, they did so on the basis of solidarity diplomacy. Brazil's foreign minister stated that they were “committed to Haiti, politically and emotionally, in the long run”, meaning that their intervention was based on solidarity rather than national interest (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 70). Brazil argued that the intervention was to help Haiti achieve security, foster political dialogue, reinforce their economy, and fix its serious social problems. However, it was also based on Brazilian hope that active participation in Haiti would lead to Brazil gaining a permanent membership at the UN Security Council (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 71), a motivation which sounds a lot like national interest.

Brazil's role in the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti was special for three reasons. The first was that it was the largest military delegation it had deployed since the end of WW2. Secondly, for the first time, Brazil was the leader. And third, Brazil wanted the intervention to also guarantee freedom of expression, and for the Haitians to be able to democratically elect their own leaders (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 71). Brazil had changed their stance from non-intervention to non-indifference. President Lula argued for non-indifference, stating that *“we will not be wealthy if we have impoverished countries behind us where hunger, unemployment, and misery persist”* (Seitenfus, 2017, p. 72).

According to Reliefweb, MINUSTAH contributed to *“save thousands of lives, and help the country rebuild...”* and *“the mission has provided technical and security support to electoral processes since 2004. Haiti returned to full constitutional order following parliamentary elections in 2016 and the appointment of a president”* (Reliefweb, 2017). In April 2017, MINUSTAH was decided to be replaced for a smaller *“follow-up peacekeeping mission that would focus on helping to strengthen the rule of law in Haiti”* (Reliefweb, 2017). However, in 2022, as Brazil's Lula was to become president once more, his foreign policy advisor Celso Amorim said that Brazil's military participation in MINUSTAH *“was widely unpopular at home and that Haiti's security situation was worse after the mission than before.”* (Paraguassu & Ellsworth, 2022).

The MINUSTAH project has furthermore had its fair share of horrific sexual abuse allegations. According to an Associated Press (AP) investigation from 2017, *“nearly 2,000 allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers and other personnel around the world”* was found during the 12 years prior. It also found out that *“at least 134 Sri Lankan peacekeepers exploited nine children in a sex ring from 2004 to 2007”* (Dodds, 2017). Here are a few of the cases AP found in Haiti:

“A teenage boy said he was gang-raped in 2011 by Uruguayan peacekeepers who filmed the alleged assault on a cellphone.”

“In July 2011, four Uruguayan peacekeepers and their commanding officer allegedly gang-raped a Haitian teenager. The men also filmed the alleged attack on their phones, which went viral on the internet.”

“Janila Jean said she was a 16-year-old virgin when a Brazilian peacekeeper lured her to a U.N. compound three years ago with a smear of peanut butter on bread, raped her at gunpoint and left her pregnant.”

“Dozens of Haitian women also say they were raped, and dozens more had what is euphemistically called “survival sex” in a country where most people live on less than \$2.50 a day.”

(Dodds, 2017)

The Brazil-led mission has been controversial. Some praise it for contributing to stability in Haiti, saving lives, and preventing violence. While others have to suffer the consequences and trauma of an international force which ultimately let their troops do whatever they wanted, which ruined the lives of hundreds of people. Melinda Joseph, a 21-year-old Haitian rape victim, said to AP that “*As far as the UN goes, they came here to protect us, but all they’ve brought is destruction*” (Dodds, 2017).

5.3 NGO-Nation

The term “NGO-Nation” has frequently been used throughout this thesis. This is because there are many different factors which have led to NGOs taking control in Haiti, especially after the Duvalier dictatorship. I will include some historical examples, but as to not repeat myself too much I would like to explore how the people of Haiti feel about NGOs, and if NGOs in Haiti are doing what they are supposed to.

NGOs have heavily involved themselves with Haitian politics historically, such as *supporting opposition* for Aristide when he was re-elected in 2000. USAID and the EU both funded NGOs which *directly opposed* Aristides presidency, as well as groups which represented the interests of the bourgeoisie, pro-business groups, and right-wing families and groups (Schuller, 2012, p. 23).

From 1995 to 1999, \$1.8 billion of international aid streamed into Haiti, mostly through NGOs which had started to appear more and more in the country. Some Haitian scholars viewed this as a different type of invasion (Schuller, 2012, p. 22). But why would the government accept an invasion? The simple answer is that Haiti was broke. In 1997, the world bank refused new loans to Haiti. In 1995, the U.S. stopped funding Haiti in favor of NGOs. And in 2001, IMF imposed austerity measures on Haiti, due to the

government lacking international reserves, as well as having an import-export imbalance (Schuller, 2012, p. 23), which as presented in earlier chapters, began during the U.S. occupation from 1915-1934. This meant that international aid was ever so important for Haiti. Unfortunately, as NGOs got most of said aid, Haiti turned into a place with two types of government: the regular one, and a “non-governmental government” (Schuller, 2012, p.23). U.S.-backed NGOs crafted development policies which triumphed those of the Haitian government. They promoted U.S.-style agriculture, which undermined local production. They chose to fund private schools over public schools, and removed adult literacy programs. In addition to this, NGOs aided in the destruction of documents which linked the CIA to far-right militia group FRAPH (Schuller, 2012, p.23), which removed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the military coup of 1991 (Schuller, 2012, p. 22).

In 2010, when Haiti was hit by the massive 7.0 earthquake which turned most of the capitol's neighborhoods into rubble, killed 230,000 people, and displaced over 1.5 million, NGOs swarmed to the island nation. NGOs were not new to Haiti, as they had been present since the 1950s, when hurricane Hazel hit the island (Schwartz, 2015). However, since the mid 90s, donors started a habit of giving aid to NGOs, rather than the Haitian government, weakening the state immensely. At the time of the earthquake, only 1% of aid was given to the government. Due to this, the state was unable to do any form of disaster relief (Schuller, 2012, p. 6).

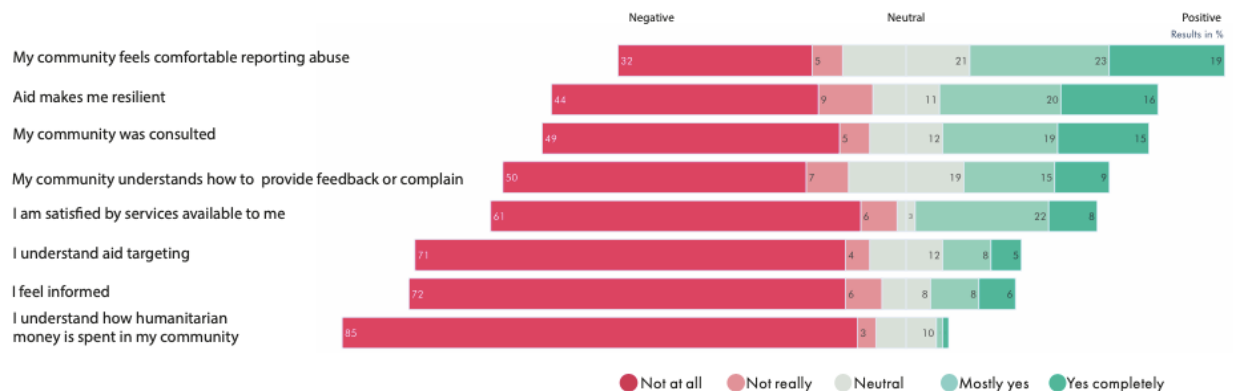
NGOs and FPCs are responsible for almost 4/5 of social services (Fatton, p. 32). It has also been estimated that NGOs or other private entities run about 90% of schools and 80% of health clinics in Haiti (Schuller, 2012, p.6). Large NGOs have even been known to claim territory, which questions the sovereignty of these areas (Schuller, 2012, p.6).

As stated, NGOs take up a lot of space in Haiti, and we can begin to wonder if the NGOs are helping to rebuild the country, or if they are making it worse. *Killing with kindness*, as they say. Ground Truth Solutions, an NGO which “*speak to people response-wide and find out what they think about how the response is being implemented, and to what extent it is working for them.*” (Ground Truth Solutions, 2023), published in April 2022 a

report which investigates the perceptions of aid in Haiti after a 2021 earthquake. The report states as following:

1. Aid in Haiti falls short of expectations and does not help achieve long-term solutions. Aid is seen as only addressing short-term needs, which limits its usefulness to simply the immediate aftermath of disaster.
2. There is a lack of transparency in the information related to aid, and the population is left out of decision-making and limited to the role as passive receivers of aid. Aid is viewed as unfair and dehumanizing, as they want to participate, but are not allowed to.
3. Due to said exclusion, Haitians generally do not trust NGOs and aid providers. The Haitian people want aid to be distributed by actors they trust, who will collaborate with communities.

The organization surveyed 1251 people who were affected by the earthquake. 61% say they were not at all satisfied with the services available to them. 71% say they did “not at all” understand aid targeting, and 72% did “not at all” feel informed. 85% answered “not at all” to the question of if they understood how humanitarian money was spent in their community (Ground Truth Solutions, 2022).



This bar graph illustrates people’s responses to questions on a Likert scale (1 to 5). Each bar shows the breakdown in responses in percentages, utilising a scale of colours from red to green. The red denotes negative responses (1/2), while the green vindicates positive responses (4/5).

Figure 1: Ground Truth Solution, 2022

Furthermore, the organization discovered that people generally felt that it was preferable to receive no aid, rather than aid which did not meet basic standards. Another common complaint was that aid providers do not visit the communities they “help”. Decisions related to aid are also inaccessible to the Haitian people, as one man stated he should have the right to make aid providers leave his community. Aid lacks diversity and local ownership, and the people who receive it are not included in the process (Ground Truth Solutions, 2022).

There is a common idea that NGOs in Haiti are preventing the country from developing. The fact that NGOs are responsible for 80-90% of social services creates a parallel system of governance. The NGO-government is, however, lacking in their understanding of local culture, and they lack accountability to the people. Even though these aspects are missing, they are able to exercise influence over Haiti (Borgen Magazine, 2020). NGOs face criticism due to mismanagement of funds, waste of donations, heiring of overpriced staff, and due to their lack of Haitians in their ranks (Borgen Magazine, 2020). CEO NGO Hope for Haiti, which has a predominantly Haitian staff, said: *“Make sure that whatever you’re trying to do within a country, that you’re empowering people”*. Short-term solutions for Haiti are not sustainable and is in no way a good substitute for development. It is clear that in order to create actual development, there is a need to empower the local population trough training, education, and healthcare (Borgen Magazine, 2020).

5.4 Gang sovereignty

There are multiple theories on why gangs emerge. Some argue that they emerge as a replacement for dysfunctional institutions, some say they emerge as resistance groups, some say they are created out of poverty, and some argue that they are essentially illegal businesses (Rodgers, 2006, p.282). It can be difficult to put it into a specific category, since gang members and gangs can have different motivations and

experiences which can lead to the formation or joining of a gang (Rodgers, 2006, p.282).

In Central America, gangs have become a normal part of life. In Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, the gangs, also called *mara*, MS-13 and Barrio 18 are the two biggest rival gangs (Viswanathan, 2018). These two gangs have their origin from Los Angeles, USA in the 1980s, but have always been tied to Central America. Millions of people fled to the U.S. illegally during a period of civil war and social unrest, and many of these people lived in poor and unfavorable conditions, which led to young men joining criminal gangs (Viswanathan, 2018). During the 90s, many Central Americans were deported. Some of these people were brought up or born in the U.S., which made it difficult for them to adapt to Central American life. Because of this, gang culture continued and bloomed in countries where the justice- and law systems were weak (Viswanathan, 2018).

On a local level, non-state security or insecurity providers can look like many different things. It can be private security companies, indigenous organizations, rebel groups, or criminal networks such as gangs. These non-state groups can be a good alternative where a state fails to provide security, but they can also be a bad alternative causing more harm than good, while adding to already existing local issues (ICT4COP, 2020). When the gangs started appearing in Central America, they did so out of the need for protection. Gangs were formed as self-defense groups to create some form of stability and order for themselves and their communities. Because of this, many communities embraced the gangs as they were the only reliable and stable form of authority in their country (Rodgers & Muggah, 2009).

We can find traces of gang activity in Haiti all the way back to the 1950s. It was then-president François Duvalier who in 1958 created his own private militia, after an unsuccessful military coup against him. He used this militia group to suppress those who opposed his power using brutal violence (Global Initiative, 2022, p. 5). The use of militia and gangs did not stop when the Duvalier family lost power in 1986, it has continued

ever since, with political parties and leaders using armed groups to intimidate their opposition. These armed groups have also been used to perform political assassinations, massacres, and to strike down on demonstrations or uprisings (Global Initiative, 2022, p.5).

Since 1986, any attempt at dismembering armed groups has been unsuccessful. As we learned previously, in 1994, the Haitian government under Aristide disbanded both armed groups and the Haitian military. Attempts at addressing the important issues of re-training of former armed soldiers, military pension, or even disarmament of illegal armed groups or soldiers failed to take hold. Due to this, new armed groups emerged, many of them involved with anti-Aristide insurgency (Global Initiative, 2022, p.5). Those who supported Aristide had to protect themselves from these gangs and created their own self-defense groups called Baz. The Baz slowly fused with the Haitian state police and became a group which acted on behalf of Aristide and his political party. The Baz-State police group performed military actions and took control over many communities in Haiti's capital. The gangs eventually became independent of Aristides political party and formed their own authority in the poorest areas of the capital (Global Initiative, 2022, p.6). Since the infamous earthquake of 2010, many of these former Baz-groups have evolved into established gangs which involve themselves in gang warfare and other gang-related activities such as raids and turf-wars (Global Initiative, 2022, p.6).

Gangs in Haiti today are less politically involved or motivated, even though its history lies with their usage for political purposes. Modern gangs are driven by control, power, and money. They are also an organization or community for young people (Global Initiative, 2022, p.6). In October 2022, there was an estimate of 200 gangs in operation in Haiti. Violent crime, such as rape, kidnapping, and murder, are on the rise. NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders have withdrawn from the country after armed gangs infiltrated their facility and executed a patient which was receiving treatment (Crisis24, 2023).

Kidnapping is not limited to Haitian citizens, and foreigners are urged not to travel to the country because of it. In January, gangs hijacked a Dominican bus and kidnapped 28

passengers (Crisis24, 2023). According to Helen La Lime, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Haiti, more than 2100 murders and around 1300 kidnappings were reported in Haiti in 2022. She said that “*This violence is part of well-defined strategies designed to subjugate populations and expand territorial control*” (UN, 2023). Rape is being used as a fear tactic, affecting women and children as young as 10 years old (UN, 2023). Gangs are also intentionally blocking access to food, water, and health services, which affects those who live in extreme poverty and are on the brink of acute hunger (UN, 2023).

In addition to this, fuel shortage has swept the nation. Gangs have blocked the Varreux Terminal since September 2022, which is the main entry point for fuel in the country. This meant that health centers and hospitals have had to shut down. Without fuel, there is a lack of clean water available, which is extra detrimental during the current cholera outbreak in Haiti (WHO, 2022). According to the Pan American Health Organization, as of February 5th, 2023, Haiti has almost 29,000 suspected cases of cholera (PAHO, 2023). Limited access to fuel, economic instability, and high levels of insecurity are the major issues when responding to the outbreak. Not only does it hinder the distribution of water and medicine, but it also disrupts sanitation services such as garbage collection which keep conditions unhygienic and harmful (PAHO, 2023).

Furthermore, gangs have started targeting their attacks towards schools, which largely jeopardize Haitian children's safety. In February 2023, 30 schools were closed after the increase of violence in urban areas. There have been reports of schools set ablaze, and kidnappings of teaching staff (UN, 2023). Schools are targeted for food, such as rice and maize, but also for equipment such as computers, batteries, solar panels, and furniture. Since October 2022, around 72 schools have been targeted by gangs (UN, 2023). Looting schools have become more lucrative than other forms of crime, since they are viewed as easy targets (UN, 2023).

What's noticeable in the case of Haiti, is that the gang activity has largely moved away from the self-protection and political motivation of the Baz. Modern gangs do not remind

us of the early Central American gangs, or the original Haitian Baz. Gangs in Haiti today are a source of insecurity and instability. They no longer protect themselves or their neighborhoods, but rather utilize extreme criminal activity to gain power and profits. Therefore, it would be dangerous to view them as an alternative to statehood, or protectors of communities.

6.0 Who owns Haiti? Dilemmas and Ambiguities in Haitian Sovereignty.

After these chapters, we might start to wonder who, if anyone, is in control of Haiti? Since 1804, the country has been independent, which should mean that it is a free and autonomous country. However, there are a lot of different types of sovereignty in Haiti, which makes the answering of this question extremely difficult. We have the Haitian state, but we also have the NGOs and the gangs, and the Catholic Church, and Brazil, and the U.S., and so on. All fighting for sovereignty within Haiti. What we have seen throughout history and into present time, is that there have been constant challenges and contestation to Haitian independence (Maguire & Freeman, 2017, p. 166).

Haitian independence in 1804 was not welcomed with open arms. It was not only contested by both France and the U.S., but other international actors as well, which attempted to suffocate the new-born nation (Maguire & Freeman, 2017, p. 166). In the beginning, the U.S. and the Vatican were the two international powers who did the most to isolate Haiti from the rest of the world. This “campaign” lasted up until the second half of the 19th century (Trouillot, 1990, p. 51). The Vatican refused to establish a diocese in Haiti, which was a predominantly catholic country. Religious orders were often the backbone of education, and since they refused, it wiped out Haiti's chances of establishing a solid school system (Trouillot, 1990, p. 51). As a nation of slaves, education was hard to come by and those few who had an education were educated in Europe. Therefore, missionaries and monasteries could have helped close the gap in education. It was not until 1860, when the Vatican formally recognized Haiti as a state, that church schools were created. However, during the reign of Pétion and Christophe,

schools were created for the elite, which meant that the education system of Haiti had already been tuned to serve only the wealthy (Trouillot, 1990, p. 51).

Another disadvantage of the Vatican's refusal to recognize Haiti, is that it further reinforces racist ideologies the white world had against Haiti. The Pope's refusal to associate himself with Haitian rulers, validated their view of Haitians as being savages. This refusal also manifested itself in Haiti's integration into Latin America (Trouillot, 1990, p.51). As the U.S. was against Haitian recognition, only the support from the Vatican could have aided Haiti in the recognition by Latin American countries who were predominantly Catholic (Trouillot, 1990, p.51). Pétion had aided the leader of the independence movement in Latin America, Simón Bolívar. During the Congress of Panama in 1825, Colombia raised the issue of Haiti's inclusion among the American states. The U.S. disapproved, and Bolívar refused to invite Haiti as he wanted to please the U.S. government. This set the stage of Haitian feelings of rejection, frustration, and isolation as a nation in the Americas, until their eventual inclusion in 1899 (Trouillot, 1990, p. 52-53).

The U.S. had formally recognized all American countries who had liberated themselves from Spain in 1822, but they refused to do so with Haiti. This came after freemen from Haiti had fought for U.S. independence against the UK, and after Haiti under Louverture had openly traded with U.S. merchants. The U.S. made the decision to forget these friendly encounters due to their racist ideologies and the importance of slavery for their economy (Trouillot, 1990, p. 52). It was not until 1862 that the U.S. established formal diplomatic ties with Haiti and recognized it as a state. This came during the Civil War and movement against slavery in the U.S. (Trouillot, 1990, p. 53).

Even if the U.S. did not officially recognize Haiti as an independent state until 1862, U.S. merchants had been heavily profiting off of Haitian trade, even if the state publicly ostracized it. In 1821, The U.S. were responsible for 45% of Haiti's imports, and 25% of Haitian exports (Trouillot, 1990, p. 53). After the recognition, The U.S.' advantage over other trading partners continued, supplying meat, dairy, bread, fish, wood, soap, and

tobacco. By the 1890s, Haiti's trade with the U.S. accounted for $\frac{2}{3}$ of their imports (Trouillot, 1990, p. 53-54).

Haiti has never since its independence been free from international interference and intervention (Maguire & Freeman, 2017, p. 166). An interventionism which has manifested itself in everything from foreign economic sanctions, military occupation, coup-support, and humanitarianism. It has also manifested itself into politics, as the interest of other nations such as the U.S. have been reflected in elections and policy makings. Aristides reinstatement in 1994, and his abrupt removal in 2004 would have been impossible without the involvement of the U.S., France, and Canada (Fatton, 2017, p. 32-33). Further, when Michael Martelly was elected as president in 2010, this too was due to the controversial intervention of the foreign community, known as *l'international* in Haiti. The election and removal of Haitian presidents have for a long time been dependent on external forces (Fatton, 2017, p. 33).

Robert Fatton states that, while the issues in Haiti can oftentimes be blamed on its own domestic processes, it is also the product of the history of its incorporation into the world economy in a subordinate position (Fatton, 2017, p. 37). It is a historical interaction between *l'international* and Haitian leaders which has created Haitian dependency. The dependency present in Haiti is, however, not putting Haiti in a position of absolute subservience. Haitian leaders have throughout history managed to keep *some* autonomy and resources from *l'international* (Fatton, 2017, p. 37). We can then begin to investigate to what extent the issue of dominance and dependency goes. Haiti must conform to the "logic of discipline", which is the idea that all nations must create policies and institutions which protect the interest of the global capital system from democracy. A logic which is rooted in the thought that conventional methods of democratic governance lacks quality, because it sabotages the freedom of capital and hinders the spread of the globalized market (Fatton, 2017, p. 37-38).

So, Haitian leaders are not helpless. They have the ability to exploit and influence the domestic political environment. We saw an example of this in the period between 2006

to 2008, where the US opposed Haitian relations with Cuba and Venezuela. Haiti and Venezuela were to sign the Petrocaribe agreement, which would save Haiti millions of dollars per year (Fatton, 2017, p. 38). The U.S. made it clear that a deal with Venezuela would cause issues for their relationship. Haiti under Préval decided to go ahead with the agreement, and they also finalized a trilateral assistance agreement which included Haiti, Venezuela, and Cuba. These two agreements were attempts at losing some of the dependency they had on the US, because Venezuela would for instance support the Haitian state with foreign assistance, instead of sending it to NGOs. This determination to defend Haitian interest undoubtedly caused a rift in U.S.-Haiti relations (Fatton, 2017, p. 38-39)

But this demonstration of clear motivation to detach itself from the grip of the United States, shows us that Haiti is tired of their lack of independence. Haitians have realized that NGOs and other organizations contribute very little to Haitian society, and they want to change course. This is further backed up by the report presented in chapter 5.3, where Haitians are proved to be distrusting of NGOs and dissatisfied with how foreign aid is being spent. Ricardo Seitenfus, former special representative of the Organization of American States in Haiti, said it best:

“We have hundreds of millions of dollars in the hands of NGOs without any sort of societal control, without any transparency, or government management. And we are accusing the government of Haiti of being corrupt when the government of Haiti doesn't even have money in their hands to be corrupt with! We cannot demand from Haiti what we do not demand for ourselves ... All projects that come in to Haiti that weakens even more the weak Haitian state, should be discarded... We cannot make of Haiti a “Disneyland” of the NGOs.” (Fatton, 2017, p. 39).

What we see from all the examples presented throughout this thesis is that state sovereignty in Haiti has constantly been challenged throughout history, this is especially true due to the increased influence of external actors and NGOs. Groups who come to Haiti, claiming to develop it. We saw from chapter 5.4 that this interference from the

outside has existed next to domestic issues as well. However, domestic issues have been shown to have direct linkages to international interference. Haiti has never been free of international meddling (Maguire & Freeman, 2017, p. 167), and economic and development policies have been created in a way which exclude the participation of Haiti. But Haitians have shown resistance in terms of urban solidarity, and with the continuation of tradition such as the practice of Vodou (Maguire & Freeman, 2017, p. 167).

The international community, mainly the U.S. and UN, have been responsible for giving power to various leaders, no matter their popularity in Haiti, such as Martelly. What is clear with the “cooperation” between Haiti and the international community, is that the interests of the elite have constantly been prioritized over the poor majority. Haiti works only for a small percentage of the population, and there is a clear lack of respect present in relationships across all levels (Maguire & Freeman, 2017, p. 169).

7.0 Conclusion

Finally, I attempt to answer the research question: “*Is the international community responsible for Haiti’s “failure” as a state?*”. What I have attempted to showcase throughout this thesis is that constant interference, meddling, intrusion, and trespassing into the Haitian sphere has caused a majority of Haitian issues. The international community, especially the U.S., France, the UN, and The Vatican, have throughout history attempted to rip all forms of autonomy, resources, power, and sovereignty from the Haitian people for various reasons. At the beginning it was mostly due to racism and othering, but it slowly moved to be about greed and national interest. Due to this, I would argue that the answer to the question leads towards a “yes”.

France was wrong to impose an unpayable debt on Haiti. The U.S. was wrong to impose an occupation on the country for 19 years. The Dominican Republic are wrong to view Haiti as less. The Vatican was wrong in excluding Haiti from the religious arena. There

are so many wrongdoings which have been done to Haiti, and it seems much of them were done deliberately, and due to greed, self-interest, and selfishness.

The question of ownership and sovereignty is a difficult one, because sovereignty exists on many different levels in Haiti. Many different groups want to rule, and the Haitian state, who is supposed to rule, has little to no sovereignty. At this time, it can appear when viewing the news that gangs have more sovereignty than the government does, especially in Port-au-Prince. Had the international community not created a clear dependency on NGOs and donors, the Haitian state could have been better off. As Ricardo Seitenfus said, how can we accuse the Haitian government of being corrupt when they do not even have resources to be corrupt with. The Haitian government has nothing, and rules over no one. On May 3rd, 2023, the UN high Commissioner of Human Rights called Haiti a “human rights emergency”, while urging immediate action (Al Jazeera, 2023). Commissioner Volker Turk said that:

“There is an immediate need to support Haiti’s institutions by deploying a time-bound, specialized and human rights-compliant support force, with a comprehensive action plan” (Al Jazeera, 2023).

Furthermore, the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti stated in the week prior, that 1,674 homicides, rapes, kidnappings, and lynchings were reported in the first quarter of 2023 (Al Jazeera, 2023). Other organizations have also followed, stating that Haiti is on the brink of collapse. However, we also see that the Haitian people are fighting back, turning to vigilante behavior. Recently, 13 suspected gang members were lynched by a mob, and a few days later, 5 more men were killed and set fire to by another mob (Al Jazeera, 2023).

In October of last year, de facto president Ariel Henry called on the international community to aid in the current crisis after gangs took control of the main gas terminal in Port-au-Prince. Henry said in a televised address:

"We want potable water and medicine to reach sick people when cholera starts to return, for factories that produce potable water to start working again. We need doctors and nurses ... to reach the hospitals." and "I am asking the entire international community, all countries that are friends of Haiti, to stand with us and help us fight this humanitarian crisis" (Reuters, 2022).

This call for aid came at the dismay of Haitian civil rights groups, who said an international force would simply repeat history, which has proven to bring more problems than solutions (Al Jazeera, 2023). So far, no international force has been made.

It is difficult to say what will happen in Haiti. It seems like, due to past experiences, international actors are wary of involving themselves in Haiti. However, something needs to be done. Should we respect someone's sovereignty simply on the basis of respect? Should we allow what is happening in Haiti to continue? Is it morally right to leave it alone, is it morally right to intervene? Should we trust that the Haitian people are able to pull through, be able to democratically elect a just government, and that the crisis will come to pass? There are many questions which come from what I have discussed throughout this thesis. At this point, one can simply speculate as the events are happening before our very eyes. I would like to finish with an argument from English philosopher John Stuart Mill from his 1859 essay "*A few words on non-intervention*":

"Democracy cannot be imposed by an intervention from without, it has to come from within" (Neumann, 2019, p. 157).

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