Haiti Laid Bare: Fragility, Sovereignty, and Delusional Recovery
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I. Introduction: Analytic Framework and Organization of the Paper

This political economy analysis of Haiti adopts the approach suggested by the TOR for the SDV position papers to be examined here, wherein such analyses are basically *"concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time."* In keeping with the intent of this pilot study which is focused on societal dynamics, fragility and resilience, distinctly *social* and *cultural* processes will be placed squarely at the heart of our own analysis. And since Haiti's distinctive character as a modern nation-state has quite obviously been shaped by a unique history as much as by natural disasters such as the unprecedented one of cataclysmic proportions from which the country is now reeling, we will also touch directly on the complex role that the country's historical legacy and recent events are likely to continue to play in the evolution of the country's societal dynamics, fragility and resilience going forward.

It is also worth noting at the outset that the overarching hypothesis of the background papers commissioned by the World Bank assumes that societal fragility and societal resilience are determined by processes preponderantly *internal* to a given society (with the exception of some forms of international development assistance), which either weaken its institutional stability and are deleterious to its members' well-being or, conversely, contribute to resilience and the decreased fragility of any given society and its members. How *external* dynamics, like regional politics and political economy, and the circulation of forces shaped by the Diaspora, among other processes, affect both societal fragility and resilience – in complex and sometimes mutually contradictory ways – remain unexplored. This case study, then, will rely upon a broader thesis that seeks to combine these perspectives in the Political Economy Analysis of societal fragility and resilience in Haiti. This approach is particularly apt in the case of Haiti, which is nothing if it is not wholly a "creature" – literally, the *creation,* an *emanation* – of the world beyond its borders, as we will explore in more detail below.

Furthermore, this document shall place a duly appropriate emphasis on the recent earthquake as a threshold event that simultaneously revealed Haiti's fundamental fragility and transformed it. Clearly, the disaster and its unfolding aftermath will also impact the potential for the emergence of effective forms of social resilience in Haiti for generations to come. Therefore, our analysis will examine how Haiti's current predicament: (1) exacerbates the cumulative institutional and organizational crises that have afflicted Haiti over the course of its history and affects Haitian society's relationship to the State (section II); and (2) threatens to undermine the already fragile horizontal connections within and between communities, leading to increased personal insecurity and social fragility. We conclude the text with some recommendations and hypotheses for future investigations.

II. Haiti: An Analytic Overview from the Perspective of a Political Economy Analysis

1. Haiti laid bare: a revelatory disaster

On January 12, 2010, at 4:53 p.m. local time, the earth trembled under Haiti's most densely populated region for what seemed like an interminably long 35 seconds. Thirty-five seconds that took more than 300,000 lives (Crane 2010, 19), maimed and injured scores of thousand others, caused billions in property damage, and swept away a vast portion of the nation's existing physical infrastructure and considerable cultural patrimony, including historical architecture and the plastic arts. After a relatively brief period of initial panic and shock, an estimated 1.5 million people rendered homeless by the quake, joined by those

simply seeking refuge outdoors, away from falling debris, rapidly began congregating in virtually all available open spaces, public and private, and set up makeshift shelters in what have today become Haiti's approximately 1,300 "temporary" – and largely still unmanaged – camps for Internally Displaced People or IDPs (*camps de fortune*). Others took to the roads, by foot, to return to their homes or relatives in communities beyond the affected areas, sometimes trekking all night and into the next day over mountainous terrain literally torn asunder by the initial tremor and its aftershocks.

At the time of this writing, more than one year after the cataclysm, not much has substantially changed on the ground. The terrifying sound of the trembling itself – *goudougoudou*, as Haitians have come to describe it – still reverberates on the tongues, in the ears, and indeed deep in the souls of virtually everyone who experienced it firsthand. The white dust that rose over the city like a mushroom cloud has settled, to be sure, but only to reveal a stark landscape that, chillingly, remains almost identical to that which the quake left in its immediate wake, with the exception of the now vast expanses of bright blue tarpaulins, peppered here and there with improvised or distributed tents, that continue to inadequately shelter the homeless. We would do well at this opening phase of our argument to briefly ponder what *goudougoudou* and its sequelae have already *exposed* to us concerning Haiti and her endemic fragility:

- The sheer scale of the death toll itself representing the tragic culmination of a half-century of unrestrained in-migration to an urban center sorrowfully ill-equipped to absorb the refugees of the precipitous collapse of a rural economy that was systematically neglected for more than a century;
- The compounding dynamics of excessive concentration and fragmentation of power, politics and institutional infrastructures in Port-au-Prince;
- The ubiquitous physical destruction providing irrefutable testimony to a long-standing anarchic pattern of settlement and construction, unplanned land use, with no regard to regulatory codes or sanctions;
- The countless unanesthetized amputations by hacksaw or cruder implements, with little or no post-"operative" care, speaking volumes not only to the enormity of the crisis and of the individual heroism of both its victims and their caregivers, but also highlighting the pusillanimity of Haiti's institutional capacity to respond to even the most basic needs of her population in terms of essential services;
- The unsustainable dependency of local communities on NGO's resulting from the retreat of the state from social service provision.

And to this day –with only an estimated 5% of the 3.3 million cubic yards of rubble created by the quake having been cleared (2%:8 months::100%:33.3 *years*!); and 810,000 people (OCHA 2011) still living under infra-human conditions, with inadequate shelter, security and basic services – one can only ask what 24 years of intense and costly international attention to Haiti's so-called democratic transition have wrought? And this final question must perforce be posed not only with respect to the presumptive benefits derived by the Haitian people from the largess of international donors, but also in terms of the actual impact of decades of hundreds of presumably well-designed, well-intentioned and well-funded programs explicitly targeting the reinforcement of State capacity, institution-building, political stability and economic growth. Finally, one is left with another critical conundrum: Has the international community learned anything –after a century of far-from-benign neglect, followed by a century of constructive (if often albeit self-interested) involvement – about how to *engage* Haiti effectively… and will it ever?

Almost like an MRI scan, then, *goudougoudou* is in the process of revealing far more about Haiti than the naked eye could ever hope to detect – both to Haitians themselves, from all walks of life, and to those who hail from beyond Haiti's borders and fancy themselves capable of contributing to its "recovery." Moreover, just as it exposed the woeful inadequacy of the wrought iron re-bar that was putatively deployed to support and to sustain Haiti's now largely crumbled homes and public edifices, the

earthquake will ultimately teach the international community much about the weaknesses of its own strategies to reinforce Haiti's strengths and mitigate its frailties.

Nonetheless, it behooves us at this point to revert to a consideration of *pre*-earthquake Haiti, in an effort to understand the historical antecedents and the sociocultural precedents that have conditioned the current circumstances, and will continue to impact on all efforts to salvage Haiti's intrinsic resilience in the face of the manifold challenges to come.

2. An extreme case of chronic social fragility in the Western Hemisphere

a. Haiti in the New World

Sindney Mintz (1995:73), a long time student of Haiti, suggests that while every nation is unique, Haiti is in a class by itself: "no other nation in world history has ever been created by slaves." Paradoxically, however, the revolution from slavery to freedom has resulted in what Fick (1990) called an "unbridgeable gap" between the State and its organization on one hand and the Nation and its configuration on the other hand (also Trouillot 1990). Precisely because of this feature, the historical experience of Haitian society has carried with it unsettled social and political issues that underlie Haiti's fragility until today. Like all the countries of the Western Hemisphere, Haiti is fully part of the aptly named "*New* World." While it is often masked to the outside observer struck most forcefully by its grinding poverty, unyielding underdevelopment and distinctive culture, Haiti's **modernity** is thus one of its quintessential characteristics: Haitian society and culture are young, not old; dynamic, not stagnant; individualized not collective; and unfinished rather than ossified. It is truly a work-in-progress, whose future is neither bound nor ensured by either the ancientness or the solidity of any of its so-called "traditions." Haiti's internal "frontier," for example, was not definitively closed until the middle of the 20th century, some 50 years after the U.S. had tamed what remained of its own theretofore uninhabited wilderness. Haitian population, although overwhelmingly native-born, includes no indigenous peoples. And its culture – although drawing heavily on elements from both Western European and sub-Saharan African traditions that date back thousands of years – is, like all "Creole cultures," fundamentally nascent and aggressively creative (Chamoiseau & Confiant 1999); indeed, almost *voracious* in its appetite for virtually anything "new."

We do well to remember at the outset, then, that as a society and a culture, today's Haiti is scarcely more than 300 years old; as a polity, only a few years beyond its bicentennial. And as we turn to a consideration of what makes Haiti such an extreme case in the heart of the New World, it must also be noted that the country bears all of the classic hallmarks of the West: here, individualism consistently trumps communality, value is measured almost exclusively in monetary terms; and private property is the overwhelmingly predominant mode of ownership. Moreover, this has *always* been the case, at least since the first major slave importations by the French – who formally gained control over the Western third of Hispaniola under the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 – created a new model of society and economy upon the *tabula rasa* of an empty landscape whose indigenous population had been extirpated almost a century earlier, a model based: on the commoditization of human beings themselves, as a factor of production; on the deliberate dissolution, isolation and segregation of families and language groups as an instrument of control; and on the untrammeled pursuit of sheer wealth, whatever its costs (Fick 1990; James 1983; Moreau de Saint-Méry 1958; Stinchombe 1995).

Certain aspects of Haiti's distinctiveness in the heart of the Americas today are often rehearsed in the literature. The bad news is very bad: Haiti is, by all measures, the poorest, most corrupt and most fragile nation in the hemisphere; its most recent human development index ranks it 149th amongst 182 countries so ranked, peerless amongst its hemispheric neighbors, whose next lowest ranking country is Guatemala, at 122nd (UNDP 2009). The corruption perception index developed by Transparency International ranked

Haiti No. 168 out of 180 countries and the Fund for Peace ranked Haiti No. 12 in its Failed State Index, which ranks 177 countries starting with the worst case, Somalia (Transparency International 2009; Fund for Peace 2010). The good news is often forgotten: Haiti was the first free nation of free people in the history of the modern world. It has materially and intellectually abetted independence movements on three continents, starting with the United States, then Latin America in the 18th and 19th centuries, and then Africa in the 20th. Haiti's sons and daughters participated significantly in the development of the newly independent states of West Africa, from the 1960s onward. And its aesthetic contributions to the world at large are notable not only for their irrepressible creative effervescence and cultural distinctiveness, but also for their liberating and universalist spirit.

What is even less remarked upon, much less analyzed, in the standard corpus on Haiti, are the underlying societal dynamics that have made – and continue to make – Haiti what it is today: an extreme case of social fragility, still for all intents and purposes *in extremis*. This being the explicit purpose of the current analysis, it is meant to begin by limning those overarching themes that run through Haitian history and have shaped its present. Haiti's brief but tumultuous past has been marked by three determinant factors: (1) endemic **violence** in the sociopolitical sphere (Fatton 2002; Dubois 2004; Dupuy 1989; Hurbon 1987; Heinl and Heinl 1978; Trouillot 1990); (2) relative **isolation** from the economically and socially modernizing currents of the past 200 years (Dupuy 1997; Lundahl 1979; Trouillot 1990); and, somewhat paradoxically, (3) an intensity and continuity of direct **foreign involvement** in its internal affairs and development that stretches back for almost a full century by even the most conservative analytic standards and, indeed, also lies at the genesis of the country itself (James 1983; Dupuy 1997; Fatton 2006; Goodman 2004; Trouillot 1990).

The remaining sub-sections of this part of the analysis will examine these assertions in some detail, principally in the light of Haitian history, before turning to a more meticulous analysis of contemporary Haiti's societal fragility and resilience in response to the hypotheses of the SDV Flagship Background Papers. (For the moment, the readers' forbearance is requested. In Haiti, history truly has mattered, and without understanding it, at least in its broadest contours, it will remain impossible for those interested to penetrate the persistent enigma of this deeply troubled nation.)

b. Violence and trauma: the crucible of Haitian social formation

Haiti's history has been described by one historian as "written in blood" (Heinl and Heinl 1978). And so it has been, from the very outset. While this lamentable fact should never be permitted to become the sole focus of our attention in attempting to understand Haiti, it must be taken into account in any serious effort to grasp today's societal and political dynamics that drives Haiti's chronic fragility.

The virtually genocidal extermination of the indigenous Amerindian population of the island of Hispaniola –representing three distinct linguistic and cultural groups and that might have numbered up to 1 million souls –within 50 years of Columbus's first landfall at Mole St. Nicolas in northern Hispaniola in December, 1492, literally set (or, better, *cleared*) the stage for what was to become Europe's boldest and most successful adventure in slave-based, industrialized agricultural production. Some modern demographers estimate that the pre-Columbian population of the island of Hispaniola was 7 or 8 million, perhaps as high as 14 million, and definitely no lower than 4 million (Cook and Borah 1971). Reduction was startlingly sudden: enslavement (for work in the gold mines on the eastern end of the island), disruption of agriculture, European diseases, and outright slaughter had reduced the population to some 700,000 by 1501; to 28,000 by 1512; and to extinction by 1535 (Cook and Borah 1971). Only a few remnants of Indian culture survive today in Haiti. Importation of African slaves was begun in order to fill the labor void, first in the gold mines, and later in the sugar plantations. Even though it took more than two centuries for France to wrest control of what was to become Haiti from the Spanish, by 1790, on the eve of Haiti's Revolution, close to one million slaves had been imported from West and Central Africa in

just under 100 years, and St. Domingue, as it was then known, had become the richest European colony in the world in the 18th century, producing and exporting more wealth in tropical commodities (40% of the world's total sugar production, 50% of its coffee, and the majority of its indigo) to Europe than any other colony before or since. As the 18th century drew to a close, the colony's exports comprised fully 40% of France's total foreign trade. (Debien 1962; Moreau de Saint-Méry 1958; Mintz 1974)

Yet all this was clearly predicated on a regime whose very essence was necessarily grounded in brutality. The prosperity of Saint-Domingue was exacted at the price of tremendous human sacrifice. Slaves were brought from Africa and worked under such difficult conditions that the slaves had to be constantly replaced by new imports from Africa. The American historians Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese who made those observations commented that the slaves' situation in Saint-Domingue was so bad "few slaves in Mississippi, however oppressed they had reason to feel, would have wanted to trade places with the slaves who labored under the draconian regime in Saint-Domingue" (Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983, p. 405). Just as Saint-Domingue's success as a colony was unprecedented in scale, so was the depravity of the system of social control that undergirded it (Dayan 1995; Dubois 2004). With an estimated ratio of 100 slaves per master or foreman on a typical sugar plantation, the dangers implicit in the circumstances must have been frighteningly salient to those whose coercive powers were virtually the only thing that stood between them and the ever-present threat of open rebellion by an understandably restive population. Authority, therefore needed to be constantly *asserted* to forestall this eventuality, and any signs of discontent, disobedience or malfeasance were routinely punished by corporal exactions whose ingenious horrors have been sufficiently well-documented that they need not be rehearsed here (Dayan 1995). The point was that *examples* had to be made of those who dared to cross the line – examples compelling enough to keep the rest of the enslaved population *in* line. After all, even from a purely economic standpoint, it was clearly not in the slaveholders' interest to be forced to punish too many slaves in this fashion, since the standard torture, maiming or killing of offenders was also tantamount, from this perspective, to damaging or destroying one's own property. Thus, authority in pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue was consistently asserted arbitrarily, through physical violence that was consistently – and calculatedly – incommensurate with the gravity of the offense. This, indeed, was the hallmark, the sine qua non, of the status and power of the "master," as well as the guarantor, for almost 100 years, of their successful control over what was intrinsically a profoundly volatile socio-demographic configuration.

This is one cultural legacy of the plantation regime that was neither overthrown by the Revolution, nor overcome in subsequent years (Fatton 2006; Hurbon 1987; Marcelin 2010). Today, the atavistic assertion of personal dominance through the arbitrary exercise of power – whether through physical exactions or other forms of violence – remains an integral part of Haitian societal and political dynamics at many levels, from the family to the State. And even where control has already been effectively assured through coercion, as a practical matter, this particular pathology shapes what Fatton (2002; 2006) rightly called "authoritarian habitus" not only at the institutional level but also at a personal level as an act of self-assertion, a way of acceding to the status of "master" – rather than being relegated to that of the "slave" – in any given social context. As Haitians often put it, it is better to be feared than to be respected.

In the violence of the Revolutionary period (1791-1804), the arbitrary brutality of the plantation regime was visited, in kind, upon those who had for so-long perpetrated it, including non-combatants. All sides, each for their own reasons, succumbed to this impulse far more frequently than they resisted it – although there were notable exceptions, if only to prove the rule – thereby indelibly branding the modern world's first revolution waged in the name of universal freedom with the mark of Cain, as it were.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the extreme asymmetrical violence of the colonial period and the ubiquitous, traumatizing violence of the struggle for freedom and independence retreated from society at-large – and vice-versa – as the vast majority of the newly free sought solitude, refuge and security as

small-scale, free-holding horticulturalists in the hillsides and mountains of the country, far from the rigors of plantation slavery and war. As the peasantry formed itself beyond the reach of these ills, and comfortably removed from provincial towns and urban centers, violence retrenched in the political sphere, amongst those whose aspirations drove them to pursue power and wealth at the regional or national levels (Moral 1978; Lundahl 1979).

Indeed, during the 111 years that separated the Declaration of Independence in 1804 from the first American Occupation (1915-1934), Haiti knew 26 official heads-of-state (with two serving simultaneously between 1807 and 1820 when the North was independently governed by Henri Christophe). And while the resulting average of just more than 4 years per tenure is not necessarily surprising for a nation in its formative years and without a single, fixed constitution during the period, what *is* remarkable is that fully 18, or 70%, of these leaders were violently overthrown, while only 2 served their full terms as set when they assumed office. (The remaining six having had the relatively good fortune, one must conclude, to die peacefully while still in office.)

That long century of acute internecine violence in the political sphere did not draw much attention from the outside world – save the occasional intervention on behalf of one or another foreign national whose commercial interests were being compromised by either local partners, competitors, or the government itself; not, that is, until Haiti became an object of potential geopolitical importance with the onset of World War I in Europe. The Germans, with a number of their nationals carrying out commercial activities in Haiti during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, had engaged in this form of gunboat diplomacy before, and so the threat of their seizing Haiti in order to establish a coaling station in the Western Hemisphere and gain control of the strategic Windward Passage separating Cuba from Haiti and commanding maritime access to the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico was real. Haiti's chronic political instability at the time provided all the pretext that was required. Thus it was that in July, 1915 – on the same day that the sitting president, having been seized from the French embassy where he had sought refuge, was torn to shreds in the streets of Port-au-Prince by an angry mob – US Marines pre-empted Germany and came ashore in Haiti to take over the country in what would become the longest military occupation in American history from 1915 to 1934 (Heinl and Heinl 1978; Gaillard 1984).

The US Occupation effectively put an end to Haiti's era of regional warlords and their incessant military campaigns to capture the capital and the presidency. And despite their own military operations to quell resistance, particularly during the Occupation's earliest years, the Marines actually introduced a new variant of violence to Haiti: *latent* violence, or the ever-present threat that coercive measures might be applied at any time to enforce the occupying power's will. In a country that had thrown off the twin yokes of slavery and colonialism little more than 100 years earlier, the Occupation was of course traumatizing to the national psyche. Given that history, there could be no question – as there is *none* today – of the putative "legitimacy" of the occupying forces, even amongst those who readily collaborated with them and benefitted directly from their presence. Yet the potential coercive force that might be brought to bear by the foreign military presence at any time did command a begrudging "respect," even if such respect was always colored with the ironical overtones of the Haitian proverb that advises that one may "hate the dog, but [must] admit that its teeth are white!" (Gaillard 1984; Heinl and Heinl 1978)

The Occupation not only brought an imposed stability to Haitian national politics, but literally changed its coloration, through the unabashed application of more simplistic American racial prejudices to the Haitian case. In all, four mulatto presidents served their full terms of office during the period, at the behest of the occupying power. If the 19th century had been that of the predominantly black warlords, the 20th century seemed to be announcing itself, under the Americans at least, as the age of a basically technocratic mulatto elite finally coming into its own. Yet both the first mulatto president who came to power following the withdrawal of the American troops and the black reformists who followed him, were

overthrown by a military junta. Ironically, the still predominantly black military establishment (by then known as the *Forces Armees d'Haiti*, or Fad'H), having putatively been "modernized" during the Occupation, had apparently not yet learned to restrain itself from direct involvement in Haitian politics, and dominated the latter part of the 23-year interregnum that separated the withdrawal of the US from the advent of Duvalierism in 1957, albeit using the newly introduced model of latent violence rather than the application of actual military force to impose their will.

In fact, in the months preceding Duvalier's election on September 22, 1957, open violence resurfaced as a leitmotif in Haitian politics not as a result of military interference in the affairs of State, but more as an artifact of the vicious struggle that ensued amongst competing civilian contenders for the presidency of all colors and ideologies during the collapse of the military government (Delince 1979; Moïse 1988). Unbeknownst at the time, Duvalier's victory in 1957 was to usher in a new age of violence in modern Haitian society and politics – one that explicitly hearkened back to the pre-Revolutionary pattern of the application of arbitrary brutality and the coercive power of "examples" to establish and maintain totalitarian control. Having successfully neutralized the power of the Fad'H by the creation of a nationwide paramilitary force officially known as the Volunteers for National Security (VSN), Duvalier proceeded, in the early '60s, to extirpate all actual and perceived political opposition through the systematic physical elimination of "enemies of the State." Using the VSN (who earned the popular sobriquet "*Tontons macoutes*," or bogey men for their role in this connection), he proceeded not only to exterminate those who actually had the temerity to oppose him, but their families as well. Thousands disappeared into the bowels of the infamous Fort Dimanche during the 1960's – men, women and children alike – never to be heard of again. He even went so far as to attack broad segments of what remained of the elite of provincial towns that he believed to be potential centers of opposition to his personal hegemony. Sheer terror, once again, stalked the land; and proved as effective as it had been two centuries earlier in suppressing even the mere expression of discontent (Diederich 2005; 2009).

After the period of relative calm engendered by this repression, which he literally bequeathed to his son on the eve of his impending demise in 1971, Haiti finally entered its current period – that of the so-called "democratic transition" – following the deposition of Jean-Claude Duvalier in February, 1986. The role, and transmogrification, of social and political violence in this contemporary period will be returned to in some detail in a later section of this analysis. For the moment, suffice it to say that the thread of violence that runs through Haitian social history has yet to be broken, and that the traumatizing "lessons" of the past have yet to be *un*learned. Far from it, in fact, as violence continues to shape Haitian societal dynamics and distort Haitian political evolution to this day (Diederich 2009).

Metaphorically, then, Haiti was thus conceived in an apotheosis of what is arguably one of the most brutal socioeconomic regimes the world has ever known, plantation slavery. The country wrenched itself forcibly from this inhospitable womb and came into the world bloodied and unwanted, baptized in fire. It has developed, through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in a state of unruly turbulence; only to settle under the stern control of a powerful neighbor, during the American Occupation. Emerging from this experience, Haiti emulated it in its formative years, producing a repressive familial dynasty, under Duvalierism, which sought to consolidate the architecture of control bequeathed by Occupation, and to more finely hone its instruments of extraction and repression, all presumably in the interest of social "stability." As the country entered in a democratic transition, it has seemingly reverted to the turbulence of its formative years, not only reproducing the excesses of its past, but intensifying them in many respects. And, through it all, the cancer of violence has metastasized, even as the self-destructive masochism that led its leaders to neglect the most basic natural and human resources threatens to consume what little was left of its salubrity.

c. An arrested development: a severely truncated process of social formation and its implications

While to suggest that the Haitian Revolution was "premature" for the estimated 450,000 slaves whose liberation was its ultimate object and achievement would be callous, to ignore the *cost* of the Revolution and its long-term effects would be to turn a blind eye to the source of much of what continues to ail Haiti today. In effect, Haiti's *disengagement* – its simultaneous isolation and withdrawal from the world at the dawn of the 19th century – came far too early from the point of view of its social and political development, and severely retarded its development as a nation-state and constrained its potential for social resilience over the course of the next two centuries.

The Revolution's successful challenge to the hegemony of the slave-based plantation regime in the New World, upon which the emerging Western industrial economy was dependent for the bulk of its capital, threatened to set a precedent that might have undermined the very foundations of what has come to be known as the "modern world system." Moreover, the visceral fear inspired in the hearts and minds of slaveholders elsewhere in the hemisphere by the events in Saint Domingue should not be underestimated. A price needed to be exacted for such impudence and, indeed, it was (Dubois 2004; James 1983). (Some, in fact, would argue that that price is still being paid by Haiti today, in many respects.)

This price came in many forms. First, the fledgling nation was forced to remain in a costly state of war-readiness for decades after Independence – properly fearing attempts at re-conquest not only by France, but by any number of other colonial powers, including most notably Britain and Spain. Second, the steep indemnity literally extorted by France in 1825 in exchange for diplomatic recognition, ostensibly as compensation for the slaveholders' loss of land and other "property" as a result of Independence, immediately bankrupted Haiti and put a lien on its economy that was not to be fully acquitted until 1947.

Far more importantly, however, was the stunting effect of Haiti's continued sociopolitical and economic isolation over the full course of the 19th century, when the effects of the Enlightenment and a tide of relative liberalism that swept over Europe and her colonies ultimately put a considerably more salutary – albeit less glorious – end to slavery throughout the hemisphere, and actually eased the transition from slavery to freedom for all those who, unlike the Haitians, had not had the audacity to seize freedom by their own hand (Lundahl 1983). The very evolution of slavery itself, as well as the social contexts in which it existed over the course of the decades preceding its abolition at different times elsewhere, actually paved the way – with greater or lesser degrees of success, obviously – for the eventual incorporation of former slaves and their descendants into those wider societies, even if on terms that were inevitably marked by a disadvantaged status of one kind or another. The Apprenticeship System that followed Emancipation in the British West Indies (1834-1840); the early Reconstruction period following the Civil War in the United States (1865-1877); and even the eventual incorporation of the former slave colonies of France as *Départements d'Outre-Mer* in 1946 – despite each having major shortcomings – all conferred advantages on former slaves, their descendants, *and* the societies in which they were to evolve to which Haiti never had the opportunity to accede.

And although it does great violence to any nuanced understanding of the full course of Haitian history since the Revolution, it might in fact reasonably be argued that in some fundamental ways the hapless nation was catapulted almost directly from the depredations of its slave past to the dysfunctionality of its troubled present with little or no intervening opportunities to benefit either materially or intellectually from the sweeping changes going on in the world beyond its borders. Indeed, the legacies of slavery are manifold in today's Haiti. They include:

- The virtually unreconstructed "master-slave" mentality that permeates asymmetrical social and political relations at all levels of society, as has previously been noted (Hurbon 1987; Mintz 1995; Marcelin 2010);

- The structure of economic and social exclusion and exploitation akin to apartheid, which though based today principally on class, color and social geography, nonetheless hearkens back to the rigid and stringent demarcation of slave and freeman during the plantation regime, in spite of the mitigating gradationsof status that characterize both past and present social systems erected on this fundamental divide (Dupuy 1997; Fatton 2002; Trouillot 1990; Trouillot L. 2002);
- The preferential and privileged status still accorded to the material and cultural accoutrements of the colonial power (the prestige of things "foreign," the insidious ascendancy of the French language, and the tenacious denigration of Creole and peasant culture immediately come to mind as examples) which is an enduring heritage of the colonial period that is far from being definitively overcome (Mintz 1995; Trouillot L 2002).
- Haiti's epic struggle for Independence was certainly inspired by the examples of both the American and French Revolutions. Events in France, particularly, in its immediate post-Revolutionary period, played a significant role in shaping the course of that struggle and the forging of the ultimately victorious, if short-lived, alliance between slaves and mulatto slaveholders that brought it to a successful close (Buck-Morss 2009). Equally noteworthy, however, is the vast lacuna that separates that historical moment from Haiti's next determinant national encounter with the external world, during the first American Occupation.
- It is to that encounter, and to those subsequent to it over the course of the 20th century and through to the present day, that our analysis turns its attention in the following section, to consider some of the impacts of the almost continuous foreign involvement in Haiti's political economy during that period in shaping its current societal dynamics and persistent fragility

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d. The influence of external forces

The distinctiveness of Haiti's origins at the beginning of the 18th century, as the radical imposition of a dominant external world upon a literally empty social landscape – unfettered by even the mere presence, let alone the resistance, of an indigenous population; and consciously designed as a tightly controlled social and economic construct with the preeminent and express purpose of generating wealth with little or no regard to the human costs of such a project – is something it shares with much of the rest of the non-Hispanic Caribbean. On the other hand, Haiti's effective withdrawal and isolation from the potentially more positive influences of that same world over the course of the 19th century were essentially *sui generis* consequences of its unique Revolution, and have been discussed above. The lengthy US Occupation of Haiti at the beginning of the 20th century only served to reinforce the country's uniqueness, in ways whose eventual implications were quite probably largely unforeseen by those who devised and implemented the external interventions of that period.

The first American military intervention in Haiti led to, at least, four unintended consequences that eventually proved to be either negative or perverse for Haiti's future societal dynamics. These were: (1) an intensive centralization of the state, political power in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, including formal institutions and public services (Anglade 1982; Trouillot 1990; Marcelin 1990); (2) an absolute concentration of economic activities in Port-au-Prince and its surroundings; (3) the creation of an "efficient" (and relatively well-equipped) unitary military force (Delince 1979); and, (4) the exacerbation of both nationalism and color-coded class antagonisms in the political sphere (Labelle 1979; Paquin; Nicholls 1996; Trouillot 1990). Since each of these outcomes continues to be a significant determinant of Haiti's political economy to this day (for example, even in its absence, the Haitian military – both in principle and in practice – continues to be a palpable factor in the country's politics), we will explore each briefly before returning to the question of the contemporary influence of external factors in Haiti's societal dynamics.

In response to the chronic political instability that had plagued Haiti through most of the 19th century and into the first decade and a half of the 20th – which found its leitmotif in the machinations of regional warlords whose exploits were financed by local commercial and customs revenues – the Occupation's architects were determined to diminish the financial and fiscal autonomy of Haiti's provincial cities and towns; and to eliminate any remaining potential armed threats not only to their own presence but, more importantly, in some respects, to future national governments (Anglade 1982; Trouillot 1990). This task did not prove particularly difficult. Within six weeks of the incursion, all of Haiti's customs houses (including those of provincial towns) were in the hands of the Marines, as were the gold reserves of the Haitian Treasury itself, subsequently transferred to Washington for 19 years of "safekeeping."[1] The Americans then undertook a major infrastructure project by building Haiti's first major, all-weather road arteries linking Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haïtien, in the North, and Les Cayes in the South. Henceforth, the overland shipment of export commodities to the central customs house in the capital city, and likewise of imported goods for onward distribution, became the most secure and least expensive means of commercial transport. Of course, the progressive centralization of international trade and of the accumulation and control of customs revenues followed. Within a few years of the invasion, then, the path towards centralization had literally been paved, whether or not with the noblest of intentions. Some 23 years after the departure of the US forces, and in spite of the fact that the American's roads had already deteriorated significantly (they were not to be rebuilt until the late 1970's), François Duvalier tore this particular page from the playbook of the Marines by simply closing all provincial ports to import-export, consolidating customs in the capital, thereby strangling the provincial economies of Haiti permanently. (The complementary violence with which he directly attacked any perceived provincial pockets of political resistance to his regime is legendary, as has been noted in a previous section of this analysis (Abbott 1988).

The administrative centralization and the restructuration of Haitian infrastructure toward the consolidation of Port-au-Prince have led ultimately to the current concentration of Haiti's public services and institutions. In 1950, already 60% of public institutions were concentrated in Port-au-Prince. By 1968, more than 90% of all essential public services, except for secondary schools, were located in port-au-Prince. Concentration found its paroxysm under the Duvalier regime: Port-au-Prince was to be called "The Republic of Port-au-Prince" not just because of centralization but also the excessive concentration of services, institutions power and wealth (Anglade 1982). It was not surprising that all major institutions private or public, because of access, had to be located in Port-au-Prince. Thus, not surprisingly, when the earthquake hit Port-au-Prince in January 12, 2010, it was Haiti's nervous system that was hit. Eighty five percent of all government buildings were destroyed. Close to 90% of Haiti's higher education institutions were literally destroyed and in many cases with much of the remaining brainpower of the country along with them (INURED, 2010).

Within a year of the invasion, the *Gendarmerie d'Haïti* (later to be known as the *Garde d'Haïti*, and then, in 1947, transformed into the *Forces Armées d'Haïti* (FAd'H) had been organized by the Marines (Delince 1993; Moise 1988). This constabulary force was designed to assist the Marines in the "pacification" and control of the country and – after participating in quashing several instances of armed resistance to the Occupation itself, principally during the early period of the American presence – it also conveniently served to give a Haitian face to the US-controlled law enforcement apparatus. Of course, it also extended unified command and control of a unitary armed force throughout the country (Delince 1993). And though the Marine training of the *Garde* had stressed the principles of a "modern" constabulary in regard to their direct involvement in politics, it was only twelve years after their departure

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[1] These actions were principally taken to guarantee that Haiti resumed and continued servicing its foreign debt, including the 1825 indemnity to France and, to be sure, U.S. private banks and other investors, who were by this time Haiti's principal creditors. Debts owed to other foreign creditors were also serviced by the Americans, in order to forestall any further pretext for direct intervention by, for example, the Germans. Their unintended consequence, which is what concerns us here, however, was to dampen the vigor of the provincial towns' direct maritime trade with Europe and depress their local, independent economies.

that the *Garde* toppled the legitimate government of the mulatto, Elie Lescot (1941-46), and, four years later (following its re-baptism as the FAd'H by the selfsame victim of this next political intercession) that of Dumarsais Estimé (1946-1950), a black reformer from outside the political establishment. Both were permanently exiled (Moise 1988). After the military directly controlled a 7 year interregnum that eventually brought the elder Duvalier to power, the latter again demonstrated his political sagacity by counterbalancing the power of the military in the nation's political affairs by the creation of his paramilitary force, as previously discussed.

Thereafter, the army including the national police force attached to it – although also an effective instrument of Duvalier's administrative control and repression of the countryside alongside the VSN – ceased to be *the* dominant force in Haitian politics, at least until the tumultuous fall of Duvalier the younger ("Baby Doc") apparently prompted the international community to elevate a FAd'H-controlled Council of State, led by General Henri Namphy, to power, ostensibly to restore order and lead the country toward its first fully democratic elections (Delince 1993). The FAd'H's subsequent direct political interventions in national affairs include (1) violently sabotaging those very elections of 1987 (Fatton 2002); (2) toppling Haiti's first democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991(Fatton 2002; Goodman 2004); and, (3) instituting a three year vendetta (1991-1994) against all organized elements of his supporters – principally among the urban and rural poor – that left more than 300,000 persons internally displaced, thousands in political asylum and informal refuge abroad, and tens of thousands more physically and mentally traumatized, permanently disabled or dead (Goodman 2004).

In considering the impact of the Occupation on Haitian nationalism and race/class relations, it is well to begin with an empathetic attempt to grasp what the institutionalized presence of foreign troops on Haitian soil for the first time since the end of the Revolution in 1804 must have meant symbolically and spiritually to the Haitian people as a whole. The worst fears of the immediate post-Revolutionary period, albeit long-deferred, had finally been realized. *Les blancs débarquent!* (The foreigners are coming!) was the hue and cry at the time. Given Haiti's unique history, their arrival must have been a truly traumatic event, at least at the outset. Little wonder, then, that the Occupation initially heightened a sense of national unity that crossed many of the socioeconomic and cultural cleavages that characterized Haiti at the time. This reaction was surely reinforced by the tenor of North American racism at the time, so fundamentally different from that of Haiti. For the white Americans who both directed and implemented the Occupation, *all* Haitians, no matter what their attainments or complexions, were, quite simply, "niggers." [2] On the other hand, for Haitians, particularly but not exclusively the elite, of course, these brash, unlettered and largely unwashed invaders must have seemed much like the barbarian hordes that descended upon ancient Rome.[3]

Yet, as the Occupation proceeded, and the preference of the dominant power for lighter-skinned and sometimes better-educated collaborators in the consolidation of their control over the country – as evidenced most palpably in the occupiers' choice of four successive mulatto heads-of-state over their 19-year tenure – the unity of this initial closing of the ranks against the foreigner quickly gave way to class- and color-based antagonisms that were to poison Haitian nationalism and political discourse for decades to come (Moise 1988; Paquin 1983). Nationalism and, soon thereafter, the color-coded demagoguery and populism that came to accompany it, were appropriated by the so-called *noiriste* politicians, who have

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[2] General Littleton Waller, the second commanding general of the Occupation put it unabashedly: "These people are niggers in spite of the thin varnish of education and refinement. Down in their hearts they are just the same happy, idle, irresponsible people we know of." (as cited in Johnson, 2008). William Jennings Bryan, the American Secretary of State at the time, was no less indelicate in his mode of expression, but leavened his disdain with bemusement when he reportedly remarked "Dear me, think of it! Niggers speaking French," in what has become the most infamous quotable quote of the period.

[3] An appropriate riposte to Bryan, from the Haitian side, of course, might well have been: "Look, white people who don't even know how to speak French!" Indeed, the inability of many non-francophone foreigners to master either of Haiti's official languages is still an object of derision amongst Haitians from all walks of life to this day and, not incidentally, also confers an invaluable tactical advantage to them in their dealings with the outsider on their home turf.

thenceforth defined the terms and determined the outcome of the political debate through their effective exploitation of this invidious exacerbation of deep-seated – but by no means necessarily intractable, under different circumstances – class and color antagonisms. Not only François Duvalier, but Jean-Bertrand Aristide, as well, both came to power and maintained it for as long as they did by catching and riding this treacherous wave. And in spite of the presumed ideological differences that appear to separate the two, both did so to the profound detriment of the salubrity of the political process and the potential resilience of Haiti's societal dynamics.

Thus, among the unintended and ultimately perverse consequences of this extremely limited survey of one particular international intervention in Haiti at the beginning of the twentieth century, which began with the intentional centralization and concentration of economic activity and political power in the capital, and ended with the consolidation of military power throughout the country, polarizing the society along the way, one might reasonably attribute the following effects, at least in part:
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- The morbidity of provincial economic and cultural development;
- The direct implication of the Haitian military in national political affairs over the past fifty years, if to varying degrees and effect;
- The hardening of color- and class-based antagonisms in the Haitian polity;
- The rise of the Duvalierist regime;
- The creation and subsequent depredations of the VSN itself, as a countermeasure to this state of affairs;
- The seemingly never-ending difficulties, including much of the violence and demagoguery, that have plagued the as-yet-to-be-achieved "democratic transition";
- The dismantling of the country's broadest, best organized and most thoughtful national coalitions uniting the leadership cadres of the poor, known in Haiti as the "Popular Movement";
- Increasing fragmentation of civil society;
- The violent traumatization of hundreds of thousands, and the deaths of thousands, at the hands of the military and its minions;
- The ascendance of Aristide's particularly virulent brand of populism, especially after his return from his first exile;
- The transformation of metropolitan Port-au-Prince from a bucolic capital city of an estimated 144,000 people in 1950, to the teeming urban ecological disaster engulfing almost 3,000,000 that it had become well before the tragic events of January 12, 2010;
- The collapse of what remained as public institutions and the proliferation of NGOs as substitute for the state and community-based organizations (Zanotti 2010).
- And, last but not least, the enduring tenor of the relationship that continues to lock the foreigner and the Haitian in what is at best a clumsy pas-de-deux, characterized not only by the inevitable misunderstanding on either side but, far more tellingly, by the often merciless manipulation of the supposedly stronger partner by the weaker, who long ago mastered the game.

Quite irrespective of the fact that there have obviously been many other intervening variables and contributory factors at play in each of these developments – the most important of which have or will be touched upon elsewhere in the course of this analysis – this is surely part of a *cautionary* tale of some portent as the international community turns to face one of its most daunting global challenges today in Haiti, more than one year after the earthquake, and over the long term; a tale to whose lessons we will most certainly have good reason to return as we consider the future of external involvement and its influence on Haiti in the latter portion of our exposition.

III. Fragility and resilience: societal dynamics in Haiti

1. Identity, social justice and citizenship

The above sections have identified the societal fragility of Haiti in its chronic character and as a result of specific factors which intervene and interact at the international, national, and local levels and have generated and reinforced a series of cleavages, fault lines, and domains of disunity, or even conflicts. They take their origin in the failure to imagine and to put in place – either at the time of independence or in later periods – a social contract based on a foundation of *common* identity, endowed with *legitimacy*, and built upon a society-wide *consensus* concerning the appropriate balance between coercion and consent in organizing and managing the nascent polity and ensuring acceptable distributional outcomes.

a. Oppositional identities and inequitable outcomes

All contemporary notions of citizenship within a modern nation-state are based on the dual assumptions that there exists, within any given polity, both (1) the broad recognition of a shared *national identity* (binding people both to each other and to the State), and, at least, (2) the tacit acknowledgment of the fundamental concept of *"the common good."* In Haiti, these critical features have been mediated by the unbridgeable gap between a predatory state controlled by opposing factions of the elites and a fragmented nation trapped by many layers of sociocultural hierarchy and situations of vulnerability (Dupuy 1997; Fick 1990; Fatton 2002 ; Marcelin 2010; Trouillot 1990). While there are no ethnic divisions in Haiti, Haitians from different classes have consistently defined their core identities without reference to either the nation or the state, and in stark opposition to each other. These competing identities are closely tied to issues of social and economic status, both as determinants and outcomes – lie at the very heart of the tensions and conflicts that continue to undermine social cohesion and produce and reproduce societal fragility in Haiti.

Simply put, Haiti is and has always been a country of "haves" and "have-nots," with the gulf separating them socioeconomically and culturally virtually unfathomable – and unbridgeable – in every sense of both those terms. This, in fact, is perhaps the exclusive core inter-subjective meanings upon which all Haitians actually agree, both with respect to each of their respective and fundamentally oppositional identities, and in regard to the chronic dysfunctionality of their shared polity. Of course, one might reasonably add to this common understanding about how the country is organized its direct corollary: the mutual contempt in which these two demonstrably schizmogenetic components of Haitian society hold each other. [4]

What is perhaps most interesting about this major fault line running through Haitian identity, from a comparative perspective, is that it most decidedly does not have its genesis in the effect of inequitable distributional outcomes, over time, affecting *pre-existing* social or cultural categories, such as ethnic groups, for example. Rather, it has been the endemic material inequities of the society as it was *established* that have produced this bipolar, wildly asymmetrical social formation in the first place. In effect, then, Haitians were nothing, and no one, really, *before*; not until they had rapidly sorted themselves out into "haves" and "have-nots," that is. Not only did this process not take long, but it has unfortunately proven profoundly "resilient," in the sense of being intractable and resistant to mitigation or amelioration over time.

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[4] The salience of the so-called middle class, in accordance with its relatively small numbers, has never been great in the national consciousness; and this in spite of the fact that it is constantly referred to as "growing." This is also perhaps attributable to the fact that the bulk of the middle class in Haiti does not actually aspire to that status, but seeks to accede to being full-blown "haves," even though they most commonly fall short of being able to assume that mantle for either socioeconomic or cultural reasons, or some combination thereof. From the other side of the great divide, the salience of the intermediate class is also muted by the fact that the "have-nots" quite readily lump the middle group together with the "haves" as soon as they appear to have even ever so partially escaped the dynamic that keeps the majority of the population at the very bottom of society.

Finally, in this connection, it must therefore be noted that the majority of Haitians have no real recourse to a concrete, objectively verifiable, living, redemptive identity that pre-dates their effective exclusion and subsequent impoverishment, unless it is with respect either to (1) their collective consciousness of a pre-slave (and thus, obviously, pre-Haitian) past, memorialized in vodoun rituals and the ancestor cult; or, (2) the rapidly fading memory of a Golden Age lived by their grandparents and great-grandparents sometime before the mid-20th century, during which the productivity of non-mechanized horticulture using simple hand tools and only a minimum of animal traction had yet to collapse under the combined weight of demographic pressure and environmental degradation. In sum, the majority of Haitians have been defined, objectively by the competing elite rulers who control the State, and define themselves, inter-subjectively, not so much in terms of where they have come from (although it is part of their self definition), or who they were or are in essence, but in terms of what has been taken *from* them, over time, and by whom (Laguerre 1993; Lowenthal 1987; Lundahl 1979; Moral 1978). Conversely, that minority which has amassed wealth in the process principally defines itself in terms of these very material attainments and, quite literally, the escape they afford, both at home and abroad, from the rigors of the existence they have effectively inflicted upon their countrymen (Abbott 1988; Fatton 2002; Marcelin 2005; Trouillot 1990).

b. Sociocultural fault-lines

Coincident with this core outcome in terms of a caste-like class structure and resultant identities, Haitian society understandably remains profoundly divided by invidious distinctions based on three interrelated, overlapping and mutually reinforcing factors: geography, occupation, and culture. The notion of there being *two* Haitis, rather than one nation, has its roots in a marked divergence of livelihoods from early on in the process of social formation. As the vast majority of the population of former slaves were physically forced to remove themselves from the fertile and arable plains where plantation agriculture had flourished, to take up residence in the surrounding mountains, where they reinvented themselves as independent, free-holding and fiercely self-reliant horticulturalists; the minority of those who emerged from the revolutionary period with some means, including the State itself, rapidly saw their hopes of reestablishing Haiti's prosperity, based on large-scale agricultural production, evaporate in the absence of a critical factor of production – labor. The latter re-tooled themselves as well, then, abandoning their initial aspirations of re-attaining the nation's grandeur through agriculture in order to establish themselves as urban-based traders in export commodities produced by the emergent peasantry and imported goods consumed by them. (Fick 1990; Lundhal 1979; Lowenthal 1987; Mintz 1974; Moral 1978). [5] While the hallmark – and bulwark – of the peasantry has always been what might be thought of as "the dignity of honest toil," the still largely commercial elite generally eschews all forms of physical labor as, quite explicitly, below *their* dignity.

This divide, historically grounded in the landscape and rooted firmly in basic economics, also has its cultural correlates. Everything, from food to dress to language to social mores to religion serves to demarcate the two Haitis, in spite of the fact that there are no classic "ethnic" divisions involved here. The powerful minority (originally known as *bord de mer* ["seaside," or "coastal"] because of its outward orientation in all things), prefers French (and today sometimes American) cuisine; consumes imported luxury goods and clothing; is bilingual in French and Creole (again, with today's increasingly common addition of English, or even its substitution for French); and is denominationally Catholic or establishment Protestant in faith. The poor majority (*moun andeyo,* whose first signification was "people from the countryside," but whose meaning subsequently expanded to aptly capture the exclusionary nature of their status as "people from *outside*" [of the cities, that is, and, by extension, of the society itself]), eats less expensive, and lesser quantities of, foods derived principally from West African or creole

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[5] Subsistence agriculture not applicable. Peasants have always sold most of what they produced, and purchased most of what they consume…. Terms of exchange ensure extraction of surplus value of non-wage labor.

culture; consumes imported *necessities*, rather than luxury goods; has, until relatively recently clothed itself with locally made garments; is monolingual in Haitian Creole; and practices *vodou*, or voodoo. They are still commonly referred to disparagingly by the others as *bosal* (the colonial period's designation for "salt-water negroes,") with the further connotation of "wild," "untamed" or "unacculturated" in today's Creole; a recent and increasingly widespread and broadly applied riposte is to use the epithet *grand mangeurs,* or "gluttons" when making reference to the rapacious privileged class. The poor majority has also taken to referring to itself, quite simply as *pep la*, or "the people;" while their opposite numbers unabashedly self-describe as *la société*, or "[high] society (Barthélemy 1989; Hurbon 1987; Labelle 1979; Marcelin 2005; 2006; Mintz 1995; Nicholls 1996).

While cross-cutting distinctions and intervening factors of all kinds have served to complicate these broad generalizations significantly over time,[6] there is insufficient space to treat of them here. Suffice it to say in defence of the general argument made here, however, that until as recently as 1991, when the official administrative practice was abolished in the first months of Aristide's first term, the Haitian civil registry had been issuing two distinct birth certificates for almost 200 years: one bore the designation (*paysan*), or peasant, the other (*citadin*), or city-dweller/urbanite.

When the process of centralization that resulted in the concentration of power and population in Port-au-Prince discussed previously in this paper were more-or-less completed, by the mid-1980s let us say, two things had happened that served to harden the basic contours of this system of opposing or competitive core identities, and also to demonstrate its underlying resilience even in the face of major changes to the contexts in which it was applied. First, the originally somewhat more organic arrangements that had previously linked provincial towns to their "own" rural outlying areas, on a relatively small scale, had given way to the emergence of the sprawling "Republic of Port-au-Prince," as it is still known, surrounded and confronted by a vast and increasingly barren hinterland, stripped of its former productivity, wholly isolated from any form of urbanity, and bereft of services beyond those available in the still often distant capital itself.

More tellingly in a variety of ways – some of which surely still remain to discover as time goes on – the *pays en dehors* had effectively "come home to roost." The rural population whose agricultural output and consumption of imported necessities had been the primordial source of the commercial prosperity of the country for more than a century fled a precipitously collapsing system of production and flocked to the capital in search of education and jobs – at the same time as they were being sloughed off by a failed rural economy that could no longer support them. They found precious little of either, unfortunately, except for that decade prior to the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier when *maquiladora*-like assembly industries, relying for their profitability on cheap and abundant labor, flourished under a series of international development initiatives encouraging significant foreign and local investments in the sector. Not surprisingly, the growth of these industries further swelling the ranks of migrants from rural areas.

The rural-urban divide that had more or less neatly glossed the bipolar identity of Haiti for so long had been definitively breached. And yet the core identities themselves had not changed, even as millions of *paysans* and their offspring made the city their home and the diaspora their hope. They are still "peasants" and *bosal*s to those who are not, of course – and this no matter what the designation assigned to them on their birth certificates – but, far more importantly for our understanding of Haitian societal dynamics as they pertain to identity today, they are still among the "have-nots" and will, for all intents and purposes, remain in that station until something much more fundamental changes in Haiti than their place of residence. "The rock in the water does not know the pain of the rock in the sun," another Haitian

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[6] Note here on incursion and virtual takeover of commercial activities by ethnically distinct immigrants from Europe and the Levant at the turn of the century; on the significant inroads and generally pernicious (social) influence of Protestant proselytizing sects; and on the role of American and international influences in today's sociocultural complex.

adage reminds us – and it turns out not to have mattered much at all whether that sun was beating down on an eroded hillside being worked by a peasant or on the tin roof of a cardboard-covered hovel in a Port-au-Prince slum. Underneath it all – but no less exposed, no less explicit, no less salient for all of that – those core identities persist.

For in the end it is *mostly* about class, and always has been, no matter what the trope; and another Haitian aphorism eloquently affirms this, if with some oversimplification: "A poor mulatto is a black man," it observes, while "a rich black man is a mulatto," effectively demolishing yet another particularly pernicious gloss on Haiti's class conflict – one that insidiously couches it in terms of physiognomy and color. Before turning our attention to related issues of social justice, then, let us just briefly observe that arguably the most pernicious manipulation of Haiti's dual core identities has been at the hands of politicians. That perniciousness is demonstrable in the obviously visceral reactions that the "question of color" inspires in Haitians of *all* colors to this day, and is clearly *abetted* by the fact that (perceived) color and related physiognomic features (e.g., hair texture, facial structure, etc.) are susceptible neither to simulation nor to *dis*simulation– quite unlike the other markers that shadow Haiti's core dual identities, such as wealth, mores and cultural features. "Color," then, marks indelibly, and simultaneously effaces the possibility of any meaningful and nuanced understanding as amongst individuals or groups, intentions or ideologies.

Using the symbolism of skin color, Haitian political actors have consistently – both in the past and present – immeasurably enflamed the antagonism between the two classes we have been discussing here. On the one side, *noiriste* politicians have frequently sought to accede to and maintain power on a wave of popular resentment that can most readily be summoned up by alluding to the haves and have-nots in terms of their putative difference in color – mulatto vs. black (Labelle 1979; Nicholls 1996). The two most notorious, and successful, recent examples being, of course, François Duvalier and Jean-Bertrand Aristide. On the other hand, there has also always been an implicit assumption on the part of the haves– if less publicly proclaimed most of the time – that competence and skin color do, in "fact," go hand in hand (Goodman 2004). Hence the slogan of the predominantly mulatto Liberal Party that emerged around the turn of the 20th century: "Power to the most capable."

We have already seen how the first US Occupation exacerbated these tensions by consistently favoring the lighter-skinned elite in its years of manipulation of Haitian national politics, which it controlled almost absolutely. The demonstrated incompetence of those they placed in the presidency during that period is the stuff of history. Yet the *noiriste* backlash that this blatant favoritism inspired is something that Haiti is unfortunately suffering under to this day, in an era whose initial promise has been dashed against the hard realities of irresponsible populism since the democratic transition began.

c. Citizenship, social contract and civic engagement

What is key to understanding the fragility of Haiti's social contract is that the pursuit of what rapidly became diametrically opposed objectives on the part of the two intertwined geographically-based social worlds – rural-based peasant horticulturalists and urban-based commercial traders – has been maintained in spirit as between the haves and have-nots, even as the country has evolved and become more complex socioeconomically, socio-geographically and socio-culturally. Today, the haves and the have-nots are certainly more diverse in these terms, as we have seen, though they are, paradoxically perhaps, even more starkly demarcated from each other today than ever before; and intermediate groups such as the rural and urban middle-classes, intellectual and technocratic sectors, and ethnically distinct private-sector operators have developed over time.

Nonetheless, what has consistently failed to emerge is a *concrete* and, simultaneously *perceptible*, *convergence* of interests as among these groups, around which to build a shared ethos of the common

good and a common national project and destiny (Moïse 2000; Charles 1994). Indeed, the frequently cited role of intermediate groups in mitigating direct conflict between the extremes of the class hierarchy in other countries has been definitively curtailed in Haiti as a result of both the persistent objective constraints to social mobility intrinsic to Haiti's socioeconomic structure and underdevelopment, and the driving aspiration of the individual members of such intermediate groups to accede to the wealth and status of the highest class, as has been noted. The hardening of conflicting interests into cultural narratives of identity and divergent inter-subjective meanings has only exacerbated the problem, as might well be expected.

Lyonel Trouillot, an author and political commentator, has eloquently analyzed this state of mind in contemporary Haiti in a recent essay, with specific regard to its implicit rejection of any possibility of real social mobility, particularly for the lowest echelons of society, and its insistence on the maintenance of a strict demarcation of groups and individuals based on socioeconomic status and cultural factors.

> No equality among citizens. Either in civic or in political life. No ethics, no logic of the whole. […] the politics of hatred and that of exclusion, the politics of contempt and that of revenge.
> […]
> Haitian society is marked by the refusal of the groups that constitute it (as they were at the beginning and as history keeps modifying them) to assimilate to each other."
> […]
> The truth is that none of the actors […] *conceive* of the other as a citizen, none draw a distinction between the public and private [sphere], none are bound to each other or to the space they inhabit in a positive relationship. None recognize the *principle* of citizenship. I can do anything, whenever it is convenient for *Me*.[7] (Trouillot, L., 2002: 17-18 & 62; emphases added, throughout; trans. by the authors.)

The result is what Trouillot refers to as a *déficit de citoyenneté* ("deficit of citizenship") – of the sense of belonging to something larger that is coextensive with the nation itself – which is clearly a direct consequence, an inverted mirror image, in effect, of the apparent impossibility, thus far at least, of this society to articulate, to elaborate and to act in concert in accordance with a unifying social contract focused upon the commonweal, whether implicitly or explicitly. It is clear from our analysis that the potential for conflicts across these competitive identity groups in Haiti is inherently embedded into the structural frame that entertains the identified fault lines, preventing civic participation. As Trouillot (2002:11) puts it: "If citizenship is, at its base, the exercise of a '*right* to citizenship,' a right to be, and to live, in a *positive* relationship with a community, are we yet citizens? And have we ever been?" (emphasis added; trans. by the authors)[8]

The second axis of this deficit of citizenship has to do with the substance and tenor of the relationship that (ultimately fails) to link the citizen to the State in any positive or meaningful way. The State is consistently described in the literature as "predatory" or extractive from the point of view of resources (Fatton 2002; Crane 2010); and, simultaneously, absent, or in default, from the point of view of services (Holly forthcoming). The net outflow and its direction is evident – and this not only to the analyst, but to

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[7] *…la formation sociale haïtienne est marquée du refus de la part des groupes qui la constituent (tels qu'ils furent à l'origine et comme l'histoire ne cesse de les modifier) de s'assimiler aux autres.*
Pas d'égalité citoyenne. Dans la vie civile comme en politique. Pas d'éthique, de logique d'ensemble. […] la politique de la haine et celle de l'exclusion, la politique du mépris et celle de la vengeance.
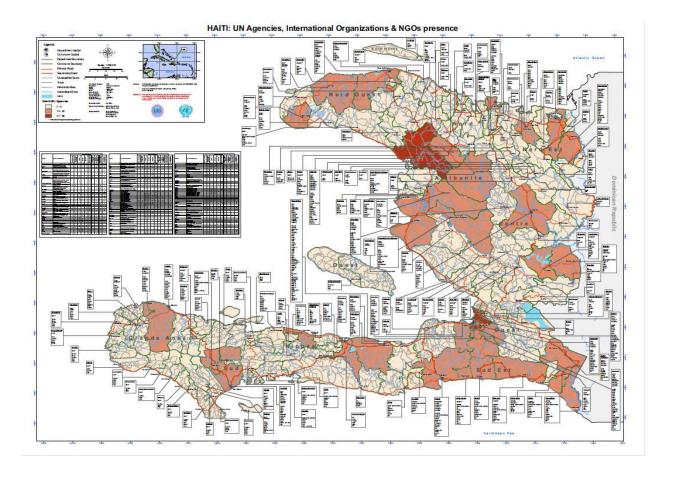*La vérité est qu'aucun des acteurs ne conçoit l'autre comme citoyen, aucun ne fait la différence entre le public et le prive, l'exclusion et la différence. Aucun n'est lié à l'autre, à l'espace habité dans une relation positive. Aucun ne reconnait le principe de la citoyenneté. Tout me deviens possible à partir du moment où cela Me convient.*
[8] *Si la citoyenneté est, au départ, l'exercice d'un « droit de cité, » un permis d'être et « d'habiter » dans une relation positive avec une communauté, somme-nous encore des citoyens? Et ne l'avons-nous jamais été?*

the population as well. A Creole adage sums it up quite succinctly, in fact: *Lajan al lavil, li pa tounnen.* ["Money goes to the city, it doesn't come back."]

Under such circumstances, in which the nation finds itself literally beset upon by a State which has historically offered nothing in return, it is hardly surprising that a modern sense of citizenship has failed to emerge within any group or class, let alone in the collectivity as a whole (Trouillot 1990). The rhetoric of the 1987 Constitution in this connection, which has it that "National sovereignty is vested in the totality of all citizens," still rings hollow today – like much of that document – as an aspiration devoutly to be wished, rather than an actuality.

It may reasonably be argued, in fact, that Haiti's deficit of citizenship, and the frailty of its social contract, have opened the way to a marked diminution in national sovereignty itself over time, given the omnipresence of the international community – in its various manifestations, including international agencies, international financial institutions, bilateral donors and the ubiquitous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – since the early '50s, and the multiple roles it has been called upon to play with respect to both the well-being and security of Haiti's population and the stability of her fragile State. It is common currency among students of Haitian State and civil society to describe the country today as "the NGO Republic," referring to both Haitian and international NGOs and allies (Fatton 2002; Zanotti 2010). Clearly, as the State became increasingly unable and unwilling to act on behalf of the nation, local, national and international organizations quite understandably, given their missions, moved in to fill the void, albeit chaotically. At the same time, this development has served to *enable* a more-or-less continuing process of State withdrawal from direct responsibility for service delivery in any sector, and the further withering of its very capacity to do so. Even the coordination function presumably to be fulfilled by the government under existing law has never been robustly exercised (Zan0tti 2010). Nonetheless, these dynamics can be capitalized into opportunities to generate civic engagement, if not nationally, at least in local communities.

HAITI: UN Agencies, International Organizations & NGOs presence

2. Social organizations and institutions

a. A deficit of legitimacy in formal institutions

The severe deficit of legitimacy of national-level public institutions, particularly those of governance, has already been discussed *in extenso* in previous sections of this analysis. The stance of most Haitians vis-à-vis formal institutions of any kind, whatever the sector or domain in question, is one of almost instinctual mistrust, skepticism, avoidance and defensiveness. Average citizens from all walks of life are more likely to seek to *protect* themselves from such institutions, rather than to approach them either as putative service providers or good-faith arbiters in everyday affairs. A Haitian peasant once lumped together "functionaries of the State (*leta*), doctors, lawyers, priests, pastors, *oungans* (vodou priests), notaries, surveyors and the justice of the peace," categorizing them all, and without reservation, as *volè*, or "thieves." He was giving voice here to a widely held sentiment; and, given the role these actors and the institutions they represent have and continue to play in what is essentially an extractive process, and the widespread existence of corruption and chicanery across the board, that sentiment is not only understandable, it may well be a matter of survival. And, in most rural and depressed urban settings, all of these actors usually have shared another common feature: they are essentially *outsiders* or, at best, local proxies for outside, almost *alien*, institutions and interests ultimately ill-served by the advancement of the poor majority.

Add to this that the only more-or-less formal representatives of State institutions invariably present throughout the countryside had for generations been the "section chief," attached to the Army as an instrument of control and surveillance; the local VSN, who in effect "counterbalanced" the absolute

authority of the section chief, as both sought to use their actual and *de facto* powers locally to extort money and other resources from the peasants under their jurisdiction; and the *percepteur*, or "tax-collector," who levied and collected the market tax for Haiti's equivalent of the Internal Revenue Service until that tax was abolished under Jean-Claude Duvalier. Aside from the occasional agronomist or health agent representing their respective ministries, this *was* "*leta*" as far as most were concerned. The private sector, in its turn, was represented principally by *spekilatè*, or "speculators," who worked for the import-export houses purchasing peasant produce at the "best" prices they could get away with for their patrons.

Today, with the section chief and the VSN having been replaced by local elected officials and the presumed "representatives" of the people at various levels, things are generally better, although the resources available to these lowest echelon agents of decentralization are usually either too paltry to make any significant difference in anyone's lives, or are purloined for other purposes than might have originally been intended. Also, new political structures ostensibly intended to channel local participation have in many instances instead replicated old patterns of top-down authority and, ultimately, urban hegemony. (The "decentralization of corruption and control" is one way that this circumstance is commonly characterized, in fact.) The woefully thin coverage of rural areas by the HNP (Haitian National Police), as well as in many parts of major cities, is just another indication to the average citizen that the neglect of their felt needs by formal institutions has continued apace in the extended period of the still-ongoing democratic transition.

Thus, while the authority of formal institutions has rarely been questioned – quite to the contrary, in fact – their power, and how they deploy it locally, is more something to be evaded and feared, except when unavoidable, than respected; their deficit of legitimacy virtually absolute.

b. Vertical dyads and horizontal small groups

Turning our attention to informal institutions and networks in the Haitian context, it must be noted at the outset that Haitians, by and large, do not even live in recognizable local *"communities," per se.* These archetypal residential agglomerations – common in even some of the most remote rural areas worldwide, and coincident with some form of shared access to basic resources and services (even if self-provisioned), the structures to manage and maintain them, and a consequent sense of shared identity and interest beyond the household and the family – simply never developed in much of the countryside, as the determinedly self-reliant peasantry "(re)constituted" itself after Independence. Neither, of course, is there an indigenous or even emergent "traditional" kinship system that might have led to the formation of "corporate groups" based on lineage managing collectively held resources. Haiti's kinship system is bilateral and, for all intents and purposes, quite "shallow," not lending itself to kinship-based group formation of this kind, even over time.

A widely dispersed settlement pattern remains the norm in rural Haiti today, and whatever there is of a collective life is lived, first and foremost, within the limits of the house-yard compound known as the *lakou*, which today most commonly houses only a single family of procreation and orientation; and in relationship to literally far-flung family, friends and "neighbors." In urban areas, the migrants who fill the slums begin from pretty much the same social base when it comes to informal institutions that extend beyond the household, with ties to family remaining in the countryside, or resident elsewhere in the city, most commonly representing stronger bonds than those that may link neighbor to neighbor, even in the cramped quarters of the *bidonvilles*.

In this meager social substrate, shared by the majority of the population, it is not surprising that – at least until quite recently – informal institutions of only limited depth and scope had developed. The informal institutionalization of vertical ties has principally taken the form of dyadic relationships of patron-

clientage, grounded either in fictive kinship (god-parenthood)[9] or in mutually beneficial productive or commercial arrangements, such as those that bind local landowners to their sharecroppers or renters, or the local coffee speculator to his producers/suppliers, and even the long-distance trader (*madanm sara* to her regular clients (*pratik*). While these sorts of relationships are critically useful to both parties – not only in terms of regularizing certain forms of reciprocity and economic transactions, as well as in serving as a "store of value" for the client against future assistance or forbearance from the patron in times of need – they clearly do not provide a sound basis for the articulation of broader groups. On the contrary, they may well serve to suppress the formation of such groups precisely by providing alternative, non-collective avenues for ensuring individual and familial survival when the inevitable difficulties associated with life crises and the sheer precariousness of existence amongst the poor arise. Questions of authority and legitimacy do not have much salience in this context, since the asymmetrical nature of the dyads is given at the outset and, even when they are conducted to the mutual satisfaction of both parties over the course of a lifetime, as they often are, this aspect of the relationship is rarely subject to challenge or change.

On the other hand, horizontal informal institutions – that go beyond dyadic relationships to group formation – have emerged as part of Haiti's social traditions; however, these have most commonly been limited to very small-scale associations amongst relatives and neighbors for the purposes of pooling agricultural labor, accumulating meager savings (on a short-term, rotational basis), and providing mutual aid for life crisis events. Moreover, in their traditional forms, the groups themselves do not normally establish or maintain horizontal relations with each other; some, such as rotating labor squads that work not only each other's fields but also hire out their labor to others, may even be in competition with other groups of the same kind in the same locality. Here, the model is almost purely consensual and egalitarian; and issues of authority and legitimacy seldom arise, except in cases of internal conflict, when the group, acting in concert, usually prevails over the disgruntled individual member.[10]

It is well worth noting that this consensual, egalitarian model has been built upon with significant success as a socio-culturally appropriate template for creating sustainable small groups (*gwoupman*) involved in both pre-cooperative productive activities in common, among men, and revolving credit fund management, among women. The first to develop this methodology were local practitioners in agronomy and peasant organization in the late 1970's; it was later adopted and adapted by several international organizations. As described in White and Smucker (1997), the *gwoupman* methodology is "firmly rooted in horizontal relations among peers, direct participation by all members, and small face-to-face groupings. There is strong evidence that retaining such traditional forms greatly enhances the success of grass-roots development efforts." White and Smucker go on to say that is because "these organizations are self-formed and governed, this is where rural Haitians gain first-hand experience in building trust beyond the family, collectively monitoring and sanctioning behavior, resolving conflict according to agreed upon rules, and [developing] leadership to serve mutual interest[s] – the basic building blocks of […] social resilience." Indeed, according to the authors, outreach strategies that work in Haiti "have built on the following practices, which emulate traditional forms: (a) small-group formats based on self-selected, face-to-face participation by all group members; (b) member access to group benefits on the basis of reciprocity or rotation; (c) concrete activities and tangible benefits; (d) equal distribution of risk among all members; [and,] (e) direct financial investment of all members as stakeholders."

Indeed, one of their principal recommendations at the time was that international organizations interested in economic and political development in Haiti

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[9] On some opting for "horizontal" choices in their selection of co-parents, usually reinforcing pre-existing ties of family or friendship.
[10] For a more detailed account of these traditional, localized, horizontal informal institutions, see (Bastien 1985; Comhaire-Sylvain 1961; Courlander 1960; D'Ans 1987; Herskovits 1971; Lowenthal 1987; Marcelin 1988; Métraux 1951; Mintz 1961; 1974; Murray 1977; Price-Mars 1928; SACAD and FAMV 1993; Woodson 1990; White & Smucker 1997).

[m]ainstream program approaches that encourage the formation and consolidation of reciprocity-based organizations and the active participation of local organizations … Past efforts to strengthen farmer organizations and [urban] neighborhood committees point to the positive results of this approach in attaining both development and governance goals. When feasible, these organizations should be the active executors of their own projects, rather than passive receivers of requested assistance.   Local organizations, and those emerging on regional and national-levels, should be directly incorporated in efforts to diagnose problems and design policies and projects. Although this participatory approach can be time consuming and require additional technical assistance, it is the *only* path to an informed and capable civil society. (White & Smucker 1997: 3-4 & 13-14; emphases added throughout.)

c. Sources of divisiveness and cohesion in traditional socio-cultural dynamics

In a social formation the bulk of whose members currently live *in extremis*, in material terms at least, it is hardly surprising that the principal source of intra-familial, intra-group and cross-group conflict is competition over increasingly scarce resources.

➢ Land, quite understandably in an agrarian society, is a major source of often deadly conflict both within and between families. *Apantè se ti frè lamò*, as the Creole adage would have it ("the surveyor is the little brother of death").

➢ Capturing access to the agricultural labor of men, in rural areas, and to their earnings, primarily in the informal sector, in urban settings, is also a potent and culturally deeply-rooted source of conflict amongst women, often waged on the battlefields of gossip, sexuality and procreation.

Theft, or accusations of theft – particularly in the case of praedial larceny, endemic in rural areas – is another "traditional" source of conflict with often deadly consequences for the perpetrators, particularly in the absence of legitimate and efficacious institutional recourse.

➢ Access to the largesse of patrons in the dyadic vertical relationships discussed previously in this section is another source of intense competition and conflict in both rural and urban settings. (After all, a powerful patron may seek to maintain dozens, even hundreds, of such ties simultaneously, and cannot service them all equally, by any means).

➢ Finally, access to "outside" resources, including credit, employment in "modern" sectors, and the individual or institutional patronage of "outsiders," be they Haitian or foreign, is also fiercely contested and jealously guarded (cf. Delva op cit.).

(To this latter instance may be attributed the failure of scores of developmental and other organizational interventions – most notably classic "cooperatives" – wherein the vertical dimension of not fully legitimized leadership, often introduced and supported by outsiders on the basis of purely operational considerations, frequently leads to the transformation of such structures into vehicles for the accumulation of putatively collective capital, both material and social. Capital which remain collective *only* until such time as the imposed or at least insufficiently vetted "leadership" cadres can succeed in appropriating it for their own purposes, usually precipitating the collapse of the common enterprise and the irreparable loss of rank-and-file members' assets and trust, no matter how painstakingly these had been nurtured. This is yet another instance of unintended consequences that merits further detailed examination as such "models" continue to be applied in a context that is clearly inhospitable to their sustainable success.)

Counterbalancing such centrifugal forces in traditional social dynamics, one important mediating "institution" did emerge in traditional society, although its influence has been steadily waning under the combined pressures of increasing impoverishment, the disarticulation of the family, and urbanization.

This institution is referred to in the literature by the term applied to its unique embodiment in most communities: the *notab* (lit. "notable," or *saj* ["wise person"]). Within extended families, and within areas of residential propinquity that might elsewhere be more properly referred to as "communities" (see above), there have always been individuals whose wisdom, in the traditional sense of that term, is collectively recognized, and to whom disputants may agree to turn for purely informal mediation of their conflicts, whatever they may be. (This, clearly, has always also been an important mechanism for avoiding the highly undesirable contact with formal, outside institutions that irresolvable conflict and/or resultant violent confrontations otherwise inevitably bring.)

The *notab*'s position in society is based on primordial notions of *respect, dignity, personal integrity* and *honor* that, in this case, inhere specifically to older people, particularly those well-versed in and still practicing traditional norms and knowledge – carriers and guardians of tradition, as it were. These characteristics remain the ideal, in some important sense, even as the world around has become increasingly difficult to navigate, and in spite of the fact that most people are painfully aware that many of their peers, and they themselves, may no longer adhere to them consistently, for a wide variety of reasons that often combine volition and necessity. Nonetheless, they are essentially the foundational source of personal worth and legitimacy in the eyes of others within and throughout traditional society, in whatever forms it continues to exist, in both rural and urban settings.[11]

Thus, this most venerable institution of traditional society actually reveals something about the existence and potential for social resilience in Haiti that reaches well beyond the limited scope of punctual local conflict resolution. Respect shown is reciprocated with respect. Dignity, or self-respect, is the personal precipitate of this cost-free social reciprocity. Personal integrity is, above all, what merits respect and underpins dignity. And the distinction of honor is the *sine qua non* of the entire dynamic, to which most Haitians, from all walks of life, continue to aspire. The particular cultural roots of this ennobling set of inter-subjective meanings in the historical experience of slavery, freedom and independence need not detain us here. That most Haitians still agree upon these meanings – at least symbolically, if not necessarily consistently in practice, in the conduct of their day-to-day affairs – is actually an oft-overlooked and potentially extremely rich source for the reestablishment of social trust, cohesion and solidarity in a country currently suffering from aggravated anomie – within communities of interest, and even across class lines.

For in another, far more positive sense, today's Haiti is *also* divided by a comprehensively cross-cutting, traditional social distinction that separates those with *lizay* (brought up properly, with a sense of tradition, custom, and how to deal with others), from those without it ("*san lizay*"). Commonly, this is fully congruous with the distinction between those with a sense of shame (*wont*), and those who are *mal pou wont* ("do not [feel] shame readily"), or simply *san wont!* ("shameless!"), the latter being one of the most potent and definitive reproaches in all of Haitian Creole – a language far from lacking in such judgmental epithets. Men and women of honor, then, conversant with the traditional forms for its expression, and endowed with the relational dispositions that confer respect, engender dignity and value integrity, are recognized to hail from all walks of life. Such interlocutors are particularly prized, in turn, by those from whose tradition these culturally specific inter-subjective meanings originally derive – the poor majority. And therein lays a not insignificant opening for inter-class dialogue and collaboration that may well hold the critical key to Haiti's future, as we will argue below.[12]

d. Religion, social solidarity and conflict

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[11] On vodoun sanctioning an unacceptable degree of departure from these norms, even today, through illness episodes attributed to the *lwa*, and their direct counsel to offenders through possession.

[12] On this complex of traditional inter-subjective meanings also having acted as a significant brake on both impersonal and inter-class violence over the years.

The religion of Haiti's majority, *vodoun*, is based on the belief that it is *not* based on belief. In other words, the spirits served in vodoun – which is a configuration of West African cosmologies and rituals, syncretized with a strong overlay of Catholicism and incorporating additional cultural references from both the Amerindian past of Quisqueya and the slave experience of St. Domingue – are not the object of faith on the part of the practitioner. Rather, they are part of an objective reality that exists independent of one's belief in it. The spirits of vodoun, known as *lwa,* are organically and genealogically linked to all Haitians, at birth, and are passed in blood lines from one generation to the next. One may choose to "serve" the family's spirits – usually with animal sacrifice and other offerings – or not; but, their existence not being a matter of faith, neither can it be renounced or negated as a matter of conviction or competing religious affiliation, whatever that may be. For our purposes here, it will suffice to make the additional following points, without delving into the *esoterica* of vodoun theology:

Vodoun is principally a religion focused on healing, and well-being, through the worship of spirits/deities (*lwa*) and the spirits of ancestors (*mò yo* [the dead]).[13]

- ➢ Vodoun worship, in its fullest form, requires (1) the material participation of extended bilateral kinship groups (known, in the context of vodoun, as an *eritaj*, or "group of common heirs") whose members trace descent from a common apical ancestor, usually three to five generations distant from living practitioners; and, (2) the active attendance and participation of both these kinsmen and their spouses, friends and neighbors in ritual events themselves. It does *not* require an officiant from outside the *eritaj*, except under extreme and unusual circumstances.
- ➢ Vodoun rituals are thus the occasion for the largest collective undertakings known in Haiti, sometimes involving upwards of 500 – 1,000 participants over periods that may extend from several days to several weeks, depending on the ritual obligations to be discharged.
- ➢ In spite of their ephemerality as events, vodoun services on this scale, which may occur in particular families only once every generation, also represent the only instances of long-term achievement of the joint management of a collective resource in Haiti – albeit symbolic, rather than material – by large numbers of people in horizontal, consensual and essentially egalitarian relationship with each other.
- ➢ And, in spite of that fundamental egalitarianism, vodoun also distinguishes and honors the specialized skills of those individuals who are adept at certain key aspects of ritual observance, including musical and dance performance, the proper preparation of sacrifices, food and other offerings to the gods, and the ability and disposition to serve as vehicles for spirit possession, during which they are transformed into gods, themselves, and worshippers come into direct, personal contact with divinity through them.
- ➢ Finally, in addition to the ceremonial service of inherited familial spirits, vodoun includes an ancestral "cult" in which the dead of the *eritaj* are worshiped through annual food offerings. In addition to easing individual bereavement in specific cases and in the early years of loss, the belief that the dead continue to play an active role in the affairs of the living also links Haitians, ritually and spiritually, to a *pre*-slave past, before their forced transport from Africa; and places significant emphasis, in turn, on progeneration for both men and women, in order to keep those redemptive ties "alive" in the future. This, in turn, has implications for the social construction of gender in Haiti, and the comparative equality of men and women in traditional Haitian society, relative, at least, to that obtaining in most other developing nations.[14]

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[13] On the misunderstanding of vodou as incorporating or being focused on the arts of "black magic" and evil-doing, pointing out that whatever negative magic is practiced in Haiti is a separate tradition, definitively traceable to two works written in the late 12th century and published in the mid-17th century in France, attributed to Albertus Magnus, a Dominican cleric and alchemist who was later famously beatified by the Catholic Church. They are known as Le Grand Albert and Le Petit Albert. Were Haiti not a country of rebellious former slaves of African ancestry, one might in fact reasonably speculate that vodou would have more properly been classed among the various "folk" Catholicisms that developed wherever the Catholic Church proselytized during the period of Western expansion, such as those of neighboring Mesoamerica and South America.

[14] These observations on vodoun are drawn from Cosentino 2005; Herkovitz 2007; Lowenthal 1987; Marcelin 1961; Métraux 1959.

It is obvious, on the face of it, that this particular form of social capital in Haitian tradition has regrettably been largely ignored by analysts and development practitioners alike in their attempts to penetrate and engage the enigma that is Haiti today. Even if only as didactic metaphor, the "uses" of vodoun in these terms by those seeking to increase Haiti's social resilience – and the public recognition of this religion as a key social *and* cultural achievement of Haiti's traditional majority culture – could go a long way towards validating the enormous contribution of the poor majority to the distinctive character of the country, laying the groundwork for at least symbolic reconciliation across class and color lines, and contribute to the elaboration of organizational methodologies and training that build upon what is best and most positive in Haiti's tattered patchwork of traditional informal institutions that might still serve as a local (as opposed to "foreign") model for social cohesion.

Alongside vodoun – although not always in a relationship of peaceful coexistence – two major world religious traditions are represented in Haiti. The Catholic Church has been present since Columbus's first landfall, when he brought the religion with him under the terms of his mandate from Spain. It has variously been a force for good and ill in the intervening centuries – first prompting the approval of the papacy for the enslavement of Africans due to the "unsuitability" of the Amerindian population to captivity and forced labor; then ministering, at times, to the slaves as well as to their masters, finally becoming the re-established church in Haiti following years of absence during the 19th century. In the 20th century, François Duvalier (the father of Jean-Claude Duvalier) successfully pressured the Vatican into the nationalization of the church hierarchy in Haiti, personally selecting members of the national Church hierarchy and, subsequently, closely supervising the work of the *Conférence Episcopale* (Council of Bishops) in service, naturally, to the totalitarian State.

The Church reclaimed a great deal of its secular moral authority in the national arena when it first helped spark and then openly supported the protest movement that ultimately toppled Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986. Its radio station, *Radio Soleil* ("Sun Radio"), was among the first major national media outlets to carry listeners' call-in complaints about abuse suffered at the hands of various agents and functionaries of the younger Duvalier's regime which, if not as openly abusive as his father's in the political sphere, nonetheless continued to give the Army, its attached police force, the VSN and section chiefs more or less free reign to collect "rents" to supplement their meager paychecks drawn from the public payroll; bureaucrats and public "servants" at all levels were still at the trough, as well.[15]

During the course of the democratic transition that followed, the Church played various roles, and its position was certainly complicated by the ascendance of a member of the priesthood to the presidency. Aristide's ideological position within the Church, aligned with liberation theology and the TKL (*Ti Kominote Legliz* ["small church communities"]) movement which embodied its philosophy on the ground, made him as controversial within the Church as he was beyond it, and contributed to the factionalization of the Church within the priesthood into two groups, those that were sympathetic to the progressive grassroots movement based on liberation theology (many of whom had also been active in the *gwoupman* pre-cooperative movement described previously), and those more conservative elements who did not accept an overtly political role either for a priest, or for the Church as an institution. While this division generally mirrored the difference between those members of the priesthood already working at the grassroots and the established Church hierarchy, there were prominent bishops and other well-known higher-echelon clerics that championed Aristide and the ideals of inclusion and participation of the poor

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[15] Indeed, Cité Soleil, the nation's largest slum, and one of the largest in the hemisphere, was re-christened with that name after the regime fell, in homage to the radio station and what was thought of as the time as Haiti's modern liberation. The shanty town's original name, Cite Simone, was eponymous with Francois Duvalier's wife ["Mama Simone," in the street vernacular], whose husband's VSN had forcibly transported many of its first residents from the countryside to participate in political rallies, or witness public executions of his enemies, by the truckload; yet neglecting to make any provision for their return home, thereby contributing to the wave of rural-urban migration that first began in earnest during the decade of the sixties.

that the Lavalas movement embodied at its outset, and they remain active within that hierarchy. Throughout the difficult years of the transition, particularly during moments of political and national crisis, the voice of the Episcopal Conference of bishops has consistently been raised in concern, most commonly seeking to mediate the extreme conflicting positions that typically characterize such moments and intervening actively in attempts to broker resolutions based on compromise. Indeed, non-violence and compromise have been the hallmark of their position throughout. Today, they remain an active and credible force in civil society at the national level, and grassroots clerics remain active around the country promoting economic and social development at the base.[16]

The Protestant Church is widely present throughout Haiti as well, although its ancience does not compare with that of the Catholics. It is divided as a community, too, into two distinct currents: the mainline denominational churches such as the Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, etc., on the one hand, and the proselytizing evangelical sects (known officially in Haiti as *cultes*, or "cults" which, tellingly, remain subject to regulation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [and Cults].) Also like the Catholic Church, the Protestants have always been actively engaged in education in Haiti, where denominational and private educational institutions overwhelmingly predominate at all levels, with the exception of higher education.

It is specifically a different kind of "education" – the aggressive proselytizing practiced by hundreds of home-grown and foreign-introduced sects – however, that is of concern in this analysis of social fragility and resilience. Unlike the Catholic Church and the mainline Protestant denominations, the evangelical current of Protestantism in Haiti has made no progressive accommodation to the majority religion, vodoun. On the contrary, its highly successful evangelism is squarely predicated on an uncompromising rejection and demonization of the traditional religion and its practitioners. While evangelical Protantism appeals to many Haitians (estimates of converts are hotly contested, but hover around 20% of the population) – particularly insofar as many sects represent an alternative healing option when resort to traditional vodoun practices fail; and incorporate song, dance and altered states of consciousness in their own rites – the social "price" of conversion is high. Most sects require of their adherents an aggressive, vociferous rejection of vodoun and all that it represents, as well as the renunciation of those who practice it. Naturally, this often includes household and family members (parents, siblings, cousins, etc.) in a country where vodoun is the "dominant" belief system, at least demographically. The socially disruptive, divisive and disarticulating effects of this phenomenon have been widely noted informally, although current empirical studies focusing on the issue are lacking and suggest the need for further research. On the other hand, as has been noted of Protestantism's effects elsewhere, conversion, with its attendant rejection of a whole matrix of familial and community obligation on theological grounds (in this case justified by animus towards vodoun), has an individualizing impact that also frees up available economic resources to be redirected towards personal accumulation and advancement (Hurbon 2007).

3. Resilience, trauma and violence

While disasters such as the January 12 earthquake that superimpose extensive mortality upon expansive devastation are atypical (Shultz, Marcelin et al. 2010), they are inscribed, however, in a continuum of human-made disasters extending from political calamities to predictable catastrophes that occurred during the last 30 years in Haiti. In other words, the "psychological footprint" of this disaster highlights the compounding effect of chronic societal fragility and the continuum of vulnerabilities that undermine urban and rural communities. This section situates the challenges of collective and individual trauma faced by Haitians within a larger structural context of production of violence in its many forms and

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[16] On the fact that the average parishioner, particularly in rural areas, the majority of whom are not involved in such programs, remain highly skeptical of the priesthood in general, and of the priesthood's widely recognized violation of certain vows, particularly that of celibacy, in the relatively unsupervised context that much of the countryside still represents.

community resilience mechanisms prior to the earthquake. It embraces an integrative approach to violence, resiliency, and trauma whereby interrelations between the three categories are emphasized and specificities associated with each of them are restituted within a "larger spectrum of situations" (Pouligny 2010). Ultimately, we argue, the permanence of acute internecine violence in the sociopolitical sphere combine with impunity and the absence of the rule of law to increase fragility and generate new modalities of coping strategy that perversely reproduce and endure compounding forms of violence, victimization, and trauma in Haitian society. Furthermore, this combination has profoundly affected Haitian society's relationship to the State, and undermines the already feeble horizontal connections within and between communities; it also transforms the violence ethos, leading to increasing personal insecurity.

a. Impersonal random acts of violence: a new tear in the Haitian social fabric

The metastasis of politically motivated and State-sanctioned violence throughout the body politic, which we had occasion to allude to briefly in an earlier section, is perhaps the single most traumatizing societal trend to emerge since the opening of the democratic transition in early 1986[17].

Aspects of the violent *dechoukaj* ("uprooting") of functionaries and agents of the Duvalier regime that immediately followed the departure of the younger Duvalier appeared to portend an expansion of more generalized, vengeance-driven violence during the period; but the *dechoukeurs* in fact remained remarkably tightly targeted and almost "surgical" in their interventions, singling out for action only those most notoriously associated with Duvalierist repression and only rarely permitting their actions to spill over even as far as the next-door neighbor's yard, let alone to a broader cross-section of the privileged class. Also worthy of note is the fact that *dechoukaj* principally targeted property (ill-gotten gains), rather than persons, and that the majority of publicly recognized Duvalierists managed either to flee the country to self-imposed exile abroad, or remained in the country, albeit with considerably lower profiles than theretofore.

Both the Army's anti-democratic violence in the ensuing interregnum, and the infamous "necklacings" and other usually lethal attacks perpetrated primarily against lower-echelon thugs of the Duvalierist period by Aristide's supporters during the seven-months of his presidency that preceded his first ouster can readily be assimilated to "traditional" forms of State-sanctioned, -perpetrated, or, at least "-inspired" political violence, as we have seen; likewise the Army's second round of brutal repression of the poor during the de facto period. It is worthy of note, as well, that Aristide's triumphal return in 1994 did not immediately spark a significant wave of retaliatory violence against the rank-and-file of the military and their *attachés*; rather, only the property of the highest-level leadership of the Army and FRAPH (the best organized and most lethal element amongst the attachés) were targeted for a second round of *dechoukaj* at this point.

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[17] The formulation with which this phrase opens is not intended to suggest that "politically motivated" and "State-sanctioned" violence are synonymous or coterminous in Haiti. It refers to *both* kinds of violence, which are overlapping but not wholly congruous. In fact, organized violence directed against the State re-emerged in its classic 19th century form at the end of Aristide's second presidency, when a renegade group of armed men crossed the border from the Dominican Republic in the north and began their march on the capital to oust him. (While this development may have precipitated both the international community's determination to intervene at this particular moment in what was an ongoing political crisis, and surely contributed to Aristide's compliance when, as has been reported elsewhere, he was requested to submit his resignation by the Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy, it should be noted in any discussion of this decisive moment in recent Haitian political history – particularly one that ultimately seeks sources of resilience within Haitian society – that that crisis was in fact the culmination of more than a year of intense civil society mobilization that had succeeded in uniting Haitians across class and color lines for the first time in many years, in order to struggle against the atavistic dictatorship that had evolved since Aristide's return, and *for* the explicit articulation of a "New Social Contract" for Haiti.) Politically motivated violence and threats of violence perpetrated by elements of the opposition against the State, either as terror or in organized armed movements has indeed long been part of Haiti's political scene, and although to a somewhat more limited extent, remains so today.

And although gang violence related to both drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, and turf battles, had been part of the "scene" in the capital's *bidonvilles* (slums) and in some of the larger provincial towns for some time, it was not until these youth gangs had begun to be openly sanctioned, publicly embraced and, allegedly, heavily armed following Aristide's return – by government itself, at first, and later (again, allegedly) by Aristide during Préval's first term – (see box #1); that the stage was being set for the generalization of impersonal criminal violence that today so indelibly marks the national psyche.[18] From the late 1990's to 2007, muggings, carjackings, ambushes, home invasions, kidnappings and other forms of criminal mayhem, including rape, had become sufficiently widespread to affect the everyday lives of *all* citizens, particularly those residing in the greater metropolitan area. A new and sinister demon was stalking the land, and still is; understanding the terror and revulsion it inspires may hold one important key to seeing our way forward in Haiti towards increased social solidarity and resilience.

To understand this phenomenon one must begin by hearkening back to the Haiti of the pre-transition period where, in spite of the relatively high incidence of politically motivated violence during various periods that have been discussed previously here, *im*personal violence motivated by criminal intentions did not reach this level of visibility. In the old Haiti, brothers fought brothers over land, to be sure, men and women were known to fight each other over paramours, and both rape and incest were, unfortunately, not unknown within the family and community. What had emerged during the last 25 years did not exist to any significant degree was criminal violence perpetrated by perfect strangers, against perfect strangers – which always increased during high political dispute or electoral periods. In other words, there has been a transformation in the violence ethos in today's Haiti where the familiar modes of operation with its predictability become completely unfamiliar and unpredictable. *The transformation of the violence ethos comes not only with new modes of operation, making the risks of being victimized and the perpetrators multiplied ad infinitum, but also with a metamorphosis of community relations where, in some instances perpetrators are neighbors who become strangers!* Today in Haiti, such situations are so commonplace that it is often remarked that *no* family in the capital has failed to be touched in one way or another, directly or indirectly, by this essentially new phenomenon. Everyone, it is said, has a cousin, or a friend, or an employer or employee, who has fallen prey to one form or another of this criminality. Not a week seems to go by without another sensational and often tragic tale of murder, kidnapping or home invasion having

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[18] On informal testimony from participants still emerging; on the assassination of the policewoman who spoke out against Aristide's embrace of the Red Army; on elements of the HNP's involvement in gang and criminal activities during this period, either in concert or in competition with the gangs themselves.

to be told. And the incidence of the events seems to respect none of the boundaries of class, color and status that divide the country. If there is money involved – no matter how little, it seems – one must literally be prepared to die for it, or face the loss or traumatization of a loved one because of it.

Leaving aside the question of the direct victims, the psychologically traumatizing effects of this situation on the *general* population are evident everywhere. Coping mechanisms vary from urban to rural contexts or from inner cities to upscale communities.

- People have changed their habits and daily routines. Decisions about where to walk, where to drive, when to leave home and when to return, and, certainly, where to bank, to take one obvious example, are all affected by the omnipresent threat – day and night, in public or private venues – of being preyed upon, by someone you've never seen before.
- In a country where virtually no one uses a seat belt, it is now essentially the universal norm to lock car doors and roll up windows the moment one starts a vehicle.
- Schemes to use the GPS capabilities of the major cell-phone service providers are being floated to assist the police in thwarting kidnappings, whose ravishers commonly use the phones of their captives to make their ransom demands.
- Women overly affected by the violence after earthquake, including sexual violence, rapes and assaults are mostly quiet and do not talk about their experiences (reports from Human Rights Watch and Refugees International, March 2010).
- Victimized young girls are sent to rural area due to broken family network after the earthquake.
- Vulnerable groups, mostly women's reliance on religious network to cope with trauma (see religion above).
- Reliance on local community-based organizations for public security (night brigades).
- Other responses have been identified, such as: acquiring weapons; the use of witchcraft to settle disputes; or even using "extra-legal justice," such as hit men or even lynching. (Marcelin 2010).

The seeming randomness, the arbitrariness, of the incidence of such crimes only adds to the haunting sense of uncertainty that has invaded Haitian consciousness, in a way that is without precedent in the country's past, in spite of the significant role that violence has played in its political history. More importantly, Haitians of all sorts of creed and political affiliation agree on one constant fact: ***impunity is the most important drivers of violence and trauma***.

Box #2: On Impunity in Haiti

*After his return to power with the help of the United States Armed Forces, President Aristide signed a decree creating a National Truth and Justice Commission in December 1994. It was tasked "to globally establish the truth concerning the most serious human rights violations perpetrated between September 29, 1991 and October 15, 1994, inside and outside the country and to help in the reconciliation of all Haitians without any prejudice against seeking legal action based on these violations." It was originally set up to do its report in seven months. It took ten months to do so and the President of the Commission delivered the report to President Aristide on February 5, 1996. Aristide's decree provided that the report of the Commission should be submitted to himself as President, the Commission had no choice but to submit what many came to consider an unfinished report. (Quinn 2007) By then, it is also indicated that Aristide had been distancing himself from his own Commission, especially once it appeared that atrocities committed by Aristide supporters would have to be reported as well. In this respect, a story in the French magazine, **Le Monde Diplomatique**, was very telling:*
To the great disappointment of all, this report […] was for some strange reason hidden in the files of the minister of justice, M. Pierre-Max Antoine, for many months. After many protests, only small parts of this report were published. The public and its many victims still wait for its publication in Creole. The majority of the final recommendations were never enacted. Former perpetrators occupied positions in the new national police or as prison guards: one of them was even in the security guard of the national palace even though his name appeared in Appendix 4 of the final CNVJ report (Page 1-b) […] Nothing has been done; paralysis, inertia, and inactivity reign. (Ball and Spirer 2000).

b. Impunity and the rule-of-law: *L'enquête se poursuit…*["The investigation continues…"][19]

Neither, apparently, is it a crime, judging from the overwhelming number of actionable cases of corruption that have been committed over the last half-century, have never been pursued in a court of law, and likely never will be. As we turn our attention to a consideration of impunity and the rule-of-law in this section, it will be with an eye to understanding, in a broader sense, what such a failure of justice in this and other domains means for Haiti's societal dynamics and how they may impact upon fragility and resilience.

In essence, impunity is defined by the absence of the rule-of-law, wherein the attribution of criminal responsibility, as well as the application of civil, administrative or disciplinary penalties, against the perpetrators of criminal acts is lacking, allowing individuals to escape all investigation that would lead to their indictment, arrest, and judgment, and/or in cases where individuals are recognized as guilty, the rendering of sentences that are inappropriate in comparison to the injuries suffered by their victims.[20]

This definition is sufficiently generic to apply broadly to many of the crimes we have previously discussed in the course of this analysis, particularly the human rights abuses and corruption that were discussed immediately above. It also applies to those many instances of common criminality that go unpunished, which in some ways today represent what might be thought of as the metastasis of Haiti's long ethos of political violence into the social fabric in general. It is even arguable that, beyond the purview of "criminality" *per se,* a lack of accountability by the State to its citizens – particularly when electoral processes are only weakly institutionalized and subject to manipulation by the selfsame State – also represent a form of social and political impunity that is applicable to the third area of glaring social injustice discussed above, the gross and persistent inequity of distributional outcomes.

In light of the definition and these considerations, it is the case that impunity remains the *norm* in Haiti today, as it has been throughout much of Haitian history. Indeed, given the exacerbation of socioeconomic inequality and the sharp rise of criminality of all sorts that the country has experienced over the last half-century or so, impunity – if even only by default in the face of these trends – has clearly become an even more telling factor in intensifying Haiti's fragility and undermining its resilience during that period. Moreover, to speak of impunity as the "norm" in Haiti is to utilize that word in both of its principal meanings: not only is the absence of accountability for, and prosecution or redress of these injustices and crimes the overwhelming *statistical* norm, it has also become socially *normative*, in the sense of being an accepted and expected standard, significantly influencing behavior on the part of both perpetrators and victims, not to mention those mandated to enforce and uphold the law.

Clearly, a society in which impunity reigns has at its roots a fundamental social inequality that consistently privileges the powerful over the powerless, and disdains the weak, here expressed in the chronic inability of victims, even across classes, to find redress of their grievances, no matter what their nature, through the intercession of the State's security, justice and political apparatus. In Haiti, then, inequity and iniquity have openly joined forces in service to each other – they are the Janus-faced, and heretofore impenetrable, nexus of injustice that lies at the very heart of Haiti's societal dynamics and generates its social fragility.

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[19] This is the universally utilized sardonic gloss that all Haitians understand in common, after generations of unfinished business in the justice sector have left them accustomed to the recalcitrant impunity that continues to surround and threaten them.
[20] Based on the definition of impunity with specific respect to human rights abuses as it is elaborated in United Nations' conventions and documents concerning this matter.

IV. Conclusions: Testable Hypotheses and Recommendations

1. Violence, predatory rules and the shaping of identities

In the course of this analysis, we have retraced the social history of the chronic disjuncture that resulted from the opposition between state and nation in Haiti, which ultimately has fostered fragility at all institutional levels in society. Of equal importance with this core outcome are a caste-like class structure and its resultant identities that drive profound division in Haitian society invidious distinctions based on geography, occupation, and culture. These complex dynamics compounded by factional polarizations, constant international interferences, and unbridled violence reached their peak during the last thirty years. The result is that, amid much change, there has been a preservation of the principle of violence and predation, exemplified institutionally in the technologies of repression and social exclusion, and legitimated through ideologies of socioracial differences (Fatton; 2002; Marcelin 2006; Trouillot 1990).

As we have seen in this analysis, core identities among Haitians from different social backgrounds are defined in stark opposition to each other and without reference to either the nation or the state. **We contain that these oppositional identities lie at the very heart of the tensions and conflicts that continue to undermine social cohesion and produce and reproduce societal fragility in Haiti.** In responding to challenges of societal fragility in Haiti one has to insist on the importance of this legacy of accumulated obfuscations throughout history, their cultural syntax, and their tenors, ultimately, in understanding what ails the country and how to address it effectively in the interest of increased social resilience going forward.

A key thesis that emerged from this analysis, worthwhile exploring by international and national actors in Haiti, is that **for democracy to succeed, there needs to create, in one hand, institutional bridges between these oppositional identities and, in the other, a balance of power between fundamentally the two competing classes, particularly through the creation of pathways for the integration of Haiti's peasantry and the urban poor into the nation's political, sociocultural and economic life**. In this sense, the recent cataclysm as a potential source for *increased* social resilience, contingent upon a) the evolving reactions of different groups and factions in Haitian society, b) a meaningful understanding and acknowledgment of these dynamics by the international community, c) a serious transformation of the state as institution oriented toward addressing these pressing crises and, d) a committed effort to create venues for community participation in governance and development by acknowledging the salience of informal institutions where it reinforces resiliency and stability in Haiti while facilitating access to formal institutions (like judiciary, financial, security, education, health and other public institutions) to the chronically excluded.

Further studies are critically needed, among others: how to develop mechanisms for sustained democratization process that are opened to civic participation in such an environment shaped by fragmented social identities deep-seated in class hostilities, disrupted lives in poor communities and complex traumatic experiences? In the aftermath of the cataclysmic earthquake that crumbled Haiti, other fundamental research questions remain to be explored: what is the future of politics and civic engagement in Haiti in a time of recovery under intervention of international politics? How can the internationalization of Haiti's politic bring to bear a rupture of the cycle of social injustice and inequities that crippled Haiti's capacity to be reborn?

2. Informal and formal institutions

This PE analysis has also highlighted the importance of informal institutions in the lives of the majority of the population, in a context where formal institutions like the judiciary, security, financial and other public institutions are in many instances absent. As shown in section III, the informal social structures that govern rural and infra-urban life are mostly based on a **strategy of avoidance** of formal institutions that emanate from the state. These institutions regiment different domains of community life, particularly work and labor and mutual aid associations (*sori, eskwad*), forms of sociability and entertainment (*rara*), saving and credit exchange (*sòl*, or *sang*); justice and power (*notab, bizango, champwel, vlenn bendeng*). These traditional institutions, well-characterized by ethnographers (see note 10), are in principle egalitarian, horizontal and governed by the rule of reciprocity. Other informal institutions identified in Section III have been induced by external actors, particularly NGOs, they include grass-roots rural associations (*gwoupman*), urban youth associations (*komite katye*) or religious induced civic organization (*ti kominote legliz*). The analysis has also highlight the importance of religion in Haiti, the three great traditions (Section III). It bears noting that while it is currently the case that the leadership, congregations and institutions of all three major religious tendencies in Haiti (Vodounism, Catholicism, and Protestantism) have been and will continue to be used as "portals" for access to significant segments of the population for educational, public health, social marketing, organizational and other development-oriented initiatives, their broader actual and potential roles in the dynamics of social fragility and resilience in Haiti merit both further empirical study and strategic reflection.

This analysis therefore suggests capitalizing on these modes of connectivity to develop outreach strategies, community development and local civic engagement. Indeed, **we argue that a valorization of traditional informal institutions and a calibration of the latter with formal institutions may lead to strengthening civil society and communities, thereby mitigating state and societal fragility.** This endeavor will potentially create path for citizenship, participation as well as institutional legitimation. Future studies shall unveil these potentials by exploring whether or not the mushrooming of NGOs in local communities constitutes also a pre-existing condition for civic participation in local communities.

3. Violence, Disaster, and Trauma.

While disasters such as the January 12 earthquake that superimpose extensive mortality upon expansive devastation are atypical (Shultz, Marcelin et al. 2010), they are inscribed, however, in a continuum of human-made disasters extending from political calamities to predictable catastrophes that occurred during the last 30 years in Haiti. In other words, the "psychological footprint" of this disaster highlights the compounding effect of chronic societal fragility and the continuum of vulnerabilities that undermine urban and rural communities. In this analysis, we have situated the challenges of collective and individual trauma faced by Haitians after the earthquake within a larger structural context of production of violence in its many forms and community resilience mechanisms prior to the earthquake. **We argue that ultimately the permanence of acute internecine violence in the sociopolitical sphere combine with impunity and the absence of the rule of law to increase fragility and generate new modalities of coping strategy that perversely reproduce and endure compounding forms of violence, victimization, and trauma in Haitian society.** Furthermore, this combination has profoundly affected Haitian society's relationship to the State, and undermines the already feeble

horizontal connections within and between communities; it also transforms the violence ethos, leading to increasing personal insecurity. The violence has further exacerbated oppositional identities, perception of differences between groups, classes and groups in Haiti as well as the fragility of vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls.

Very little empirical data on the relationship between violence, trauma, and resilience are available in Haiti. Studies must bring light on how impunity exacerbates the erosion of resiliency, aggravates the traumatic events and fosters counterproductive coping mechanisms that ultimately undermine violence reduction. Conversely, studies on the potentially positive effects of shared trauma in building social solidarity and increasing social resilience, nonetheless, may bring to light mechanisms of resilience that may later help to strengthen communities and reverse the course of fragmented responses to violence.

4. Youth and gender
As reported in many studies (Fafo Institute 2009; World Bank 2006; Willman and Marcelin 2010), Haiti is a youthful society with 36 percent of the population younger than 15 years of age. The progressive destruction of rural economy (Lundhal 1979; 1983; 1993), absence of public educational institutions combine with extreme poverty have driven most families – and the youth in particular – from rural to urban areas and beyond. The migration from rural into the urban shanties has led to severe family disruption, weakening of kinship ties, undermining parental authorities and transformation in the socialization of young people.

 Despite these circumstances, during the last two decades, young people have played important roles in movements for creative and positive social change. As reported in Willman and Marcelin (2010) historically, the youth of Haiti have been actively involved in local associations, student associations and youth clubs to work for social transformation in Haiti… Political movements extending to the recent upheaval after the 2010 elections had been mostly dominated by young people. The majority of these young people however are concentrated in the urban shanties, living in vulnerable conditions. Many studies have shown how the vulnerability of these young people can be manipulated for political or criminal gains (Willman and Marcelin 2010; Marcelin 2010). Based on previous studies, it has become clear that idle young people were more vulnerable to serve as "conduit" if not "source" of insecurity. Gang violence, accordingly, constitutes the most 'serious source of violence that destroys property, lives and civility within the neighborhoods of the shanties (INURED 2010; Willman and Marcelin 2010). The breakdown of common cultural norms and values consequent to socio-economic privation coupled with the absence of any viable institutions for security or protection from predation inevitably lead to a kind of anarchy, a vacuum in which power goes to the strongest. For these youths, the collapse of Port-au-Prince and Haiti's public institutions as well as the social breakdown that has resulted cannot be countered with more violence (social indifference, exclusion, neglect and repression) it can only be addressed through replacing what is missing: the basic components of any society: economic possibility, social recognition, participation and respect. Nonetheless, **young people are the most important human asset Haiti has. Investing in youth and capacity building will have direct impact on violence reduction, civic engagement and community participation.** Further studies must highlight the pathways for such investments and how the latter could strengthen resiliency and mitigate societal fragility.

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