

**MODIFYING HAITIAN IMAGES IN THE MIAMI MEDIA  
FROM 1979 THROUGH 2010 IN ADVENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

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**MODIFYING HAITIAN IMAGES IN THE MIAMI MEDIA  
FROM 1979 THROUGH 2010 IN ADVENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Yven Destin, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2016

This study analyzes the *racialization* of the immigrant *Other* in the American media by exploring the images of Haitians deployed in three different newspapers—*Miami Herald*, *Miami Times*, and *Haiti-Observateur*—that are directed to racially/ethnically distinct readers. I examine the positive and negative images of Haitians in these papers and trace their development over time. Specifically, I examine the reportage of Haitians over three events: the boatlift crisis of 1979, the AIDS epidemic crisis of 1983, and the earthquake of 2010. This study asks, is there an existing hegemonic view of Haitians in which race is a primary signifier in the American media?

My study applies the concept of controlling images, the idea that racialized images are commonly deployed in the American media, to shed light on the production and reproduction of racism toward Haitians. This dissertation therefore sets out to investigate the presence, absence, and degree of racialized illustrations of Haitians among three newspapers in a city where many Haitian immigrants reside.

My analysis reveals that before the 2010 earthquake, the controlling images of Haitians changed from negative to positive. Furthermore, the newspapers constructed and modified the controlling images according to racialized and political journalistic practices, especially after the earthquake because of social media. During the 1979 boatlift crisis and the 1983 AIDS epidemic, the mainstream newspaper, the *Herald*, offered more negative images of Haitians than the black newspaper, the *Times*, and the Haitian newspaper, *Observateur*. However, the *Observateur* mostly

operated outside the racial framework of the American newspapers during these periods preceding the earthquake.

After the 2010 earthquake, in an era of social media, the *Herald* changed its images of Haitians. The mainstream newspaper offered more positive images of this group than the other newspapers. During this time, the black newspaper reflected a reduced interest in race in the coverage of the Haiti disaster when compared to coverage of earlier crises. The Haitian newspaper was more closely engaged with the earthquake disaster, more than its coverage of the previous crises, though less engaged than the American newspapers.

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## PREFACE

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICA**

Haitian people on the homeland experience a complex set of factors pushing them towards voluntary out-migration, such as the pressure to overcome poverty or political persecution. As they struggle to settle in the United States, Haitians often seek support from their kin and group networks. They have so far failed, however, to unite as ethnic enclaves in the U.S. due to language and social class differences between Kréyol-speaking Haitian peasants and French-speaking Haitian elites. Their traditional language-class structure is reproduced often in the kind of networks they join in Haitian-U.S. communities. Haitians depend on these language-class based networks to access support and care in times of need, but there are limits since some are illegal immigrants and fear deportation, while others want to hide their Haitian heritage to escape the stigma of poverty and HIV/AIDS associated with the homeland. Second generation Haitian immigrant youths born in the U.S. tend to be especially deeply affected by these stigmas, compared to first generation Haitians who are more positive about their heritage.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Zephir (2001: 6-7) explains the complexity of establishing a taxonomy for the second generation population and its several distinct sub-classifications: “(1) the American-born and-raised... (2) the Haitian-born but American raised, known as the 1.5 generation (see Portes and Zhou 1993 on this use); (3) the American-born but Haitian-raised; (4) Haitian-born and –raised; and (5) the Haitian/foreign-born and foreign-raised.

The United States has, for the most part, treated Haitian immigrants poorly. For example, although the U.S. government pledged relief funds toward the 2010 earthquake survivors, Haitian refugees seeking asylum afterward faced interdiction at sea and detention, in some cases indefinitely, at a remote facility. Haitians who managed to enter the U.S., especially during crises of political persecution and natural disasters in their homeland, received an unwelcome reception. Represented in the American media as a downtrodden people, Haitian newcomers often confronted people in the U.S. who viewed them as impoverished and disease-ridden refugees. Haitians have struggled with these stereotyped views; they are also constrained by their social class position.

In the U.S., Haitians represent a black immigrant group that suffers from what Bryce-Laporte (1972) terms a triple minority status, in race, history, and language. Haitians are: (1) the embodiment of a black-white racial divide, (2) a minority within a historically disenfranchised African-American group, and (3) a minority in a largely Anglophone society as Kréyol speakers—their native tongue, which is a mixture of French, West African, and Taino (Amerindian) dialects. As such, the U.S. government finds Haitian immigrants undesirable and whose poor education contributes little to the labor market (LeMay 2004:8-9).

In recent years, there has been debate about the extensive media coverage about Haitians. Some suggest that the American media is obsessed with exoticizing the plight of the Haitian people—from gross misrepresentations of the localized political instability in Haiti (contributing to their total victimization) to stylized images of their emaciated bodies amid abject poverty (Bonhomme 2010, Dayan 2010). Critics debate whether descriptions of Haitians “having no other recourse but to ‘steal’ food” or as “looting” in the aftermath of the earthquake evoke racist innuendos and create a double standard treatment toward this black group (Murphy 2010: n.p.). Such media descriptions have generated complaints among ardent supporters of the Haitians,

including African-Americans. African-Americans have protested against the exoticization and racism of U.S. media coverage as early as the 1830s, in the antebellum *Freedom's Journal*—the first African-American newspaper. By the early 20th century, African-Americans became actively engaged in challenging the mischaracterizations of Haitians during the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915 - 1934). At that time, James Weldon Johnson and others of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) countered the American mainstream media and its sensational accounts of “rebellious” Haitians by relentlessly reporting on the effects of the American racist presence in Haiti.

African-Americans further sought to humanize Haitians’ self-image through black-owned media and the Congressional Black Caucus formed in the 1970s. The Congressional Black Caucus Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm especially and other public officials fought for Haitians’ civil and international liberties, during the mass surge of Haitian refugees to South Florida in 1979, as well as during the HIV/AIDS epidemic in 1983 when the United States Food and Drug Agency (USFDA) erroneously casted Haitians as risk factors for the deadly disease. Not long after that, African-Americans were again the unfailing supporters of Haitians, writing and protesting against images of Haitians as malnourished refugees during the 1990s and the racialization of pity that followed the tragic earthquake in 2010 (Balaji 2011). African-American support against Haitian discrimination was instrumental in addressing and raising awareness of the U.S. racist policies on the mainland and abroad.

The American (“white”) mainstream media have fallen short in mitigating the Haitians’ ordeals. Few mainstream presses covered the efforts of the African-American-Haitian coalition to counter stereotyped images of Haitians until the 1980s. This was long after the Black media had protested the images of Haitians and succeeded in overturning the biased refugee policy of the

U.S. State department in 1981 and removing Haitians from the CDC high-risk HIV/AIDS list in 1985. Only after this point did mainstream journalists acknowledge the unfair stigmatizations of Haitians, despite the white media's wholesale participation in initially mischaracterizing these immigrants and the wider Haitian-American community.

U.S. coverage on Haiti and the Haitian people have not always focused on negative events. In 1955, American President Dwight D. Eisenhower invited Haitian President Paul E. Magloire for a three-day state visit to the United States. Magloire's subsequent two week tour around the U.S. was received with exceptional pomp and publicity. Magloire was feted especially for his thoughts on the race problem happening in America, on which he commented as that of a fading "bad dream" (Destin 2014a: 201-202). He delighted in the royal treatment of the American statesmen and notable African-American elites in various American cities. As the face of the seemingly booming black republic, Magloire's abroad travel changed the international image of Haiti for the better, or so it seemed by the close of the 1950s, until a widely publicized scandal of corruption in Haiti eventually ousted the famed president.

Haiti also enjoyed favorable American publicity in another time. During the Haitian presidential bid of candidate Jean-Bertrand Aristide, both mainstream and African-American media offered praise for the country's first free and fair elections. Reportage of the successful election seemed to mark the precipice of a new democratic era, one that might lift the dark veil of Haiti's dysfunctional political system. However, a sudden coup d'état forced the president-elect into exile, and the American media reverted to writing self-fulfilling prophecies of a state takeover.

While the American mainstream and African-American media made the most of coverage of Haiti's progressive efforts (i.e., Magloire's visit and Aristide's election), they differed in their portrayals of Haitian migrants, i.e., fleeing poverty and harboring diseases such as swine flu,

tuberculosis, or HIV/AIDS. Every time Haitians were involved in a crisis involving the U.S., whether over threats of public health concerns or national security in the Caribbean, disparate portrayals of Haitians' self-image ensued across racial lines. The "mainstream" (white) media depicted events one way and African-American media depicted the same events another way.

There are many reasons for why these media produced different portrayals of Haitians. The simplest reason for the disparate coverage is that both newspapers abided by their respective standards of journalism: mainstream newspapers tend to cover news as impartially as possible; the black newspapers openly avow to cover news from a "black" point of view. A more sociological reason is these news organs foster an imaginative history about Haiti, which bifurcates across racial lines. In reporting about Haiti, both mainstream and African-American media craft an account of Haitian history and, by extension, the Haitian identity in a flat homogeneous racial view—not in a multidimensional way. In this sense, stereotyped descriptions of Haitian people are influenced largely by newsworthy historical events. Racial descriptions, written as news, gain wide publicity and become legitimate viewpoints for the consumer of news in times of crisis in U.S.-Haiti relations.

A third reason for the split racial portrayals of Haitians between mainstream and African American media is the advent of the 24-hour cable news platform in the late twentieth century (Herring 2011). Advancements in mass communication and the fast movement of information, especially since the introduction of cable news in the 1980s, gave rise to a culture of stereotyped responses for the sake of profit, stakeholders, and special interests groups. In this context, the black media competes with the 24-hour mainstream platform, in which case both organizations financially depend on their respective readership of disparate racial characteristics.

In this mediated (commercial, profit-making) culture, white and black media hegemonies in both presses support their respective stakeholders. In this case, mass media “is seen as justifying the rule of dominant groups by supporting their claims of superiority” (Harris 2007: n.p.). The complexity of a newsworthy event is then “hidden” by the apparent hegemonic messages disseminated by the newspapers (Harris 2007: n.p.). More than that, media hegemony has a greater and more insidious effect on consumers of news. Media hegemony can greatly influence the public sphere—a crucial space of social life in which people debate and deliberate common affairs. This medium of talk or discourse in everyday life is then further maintained by communication media (Jacobs 1996: 1238-39).

We might then imagine the “white” media as having the ability to frame hegemonic discourse from the sphere of an *I* consciousness, while the black media write (or struggle to write) against or within the sphere of the *Other* consciousness. In this case, society is thought to comprise of multiple public spheres (Fraser 1990: 62-70). Any one of them can and has overshadowed others with discourse of difference and inequality—in which spheres have the ability to frame discourse into an *I* versus *Other* dialectic, which in turns upholds imperial and racial practices. The resulting effect is that the dominated group or Other becomes voiceless in mediated discourse (Balaji 2011: 66). Thus, what may seem as journalistic reporting in the media about Haiti and the Haitian people may in fact be discourse that does nothing more than subjugate them through words that keep them colonial dominated and racially different (see Spivak 1988 on the notions of a *subaltern*).

Institutions that disseminate hegemonic discourse through public spheres in this context do not only compel uninformed persons to act according to these practices; they (white or black media) directly or indirectly foster ignorance among observers of Haiti who credulously believe in the “horrible self-image” or “folk models” of Haitians (Lawless 1992: xv). In that context,

people who believe in myths that describe Haitians as zombies and/or witch doctors are apt to transmit such lore to other people.

People with these notions do not make Haitian immigrants feel that they belong to their host community (Celeste 2005: 42-6). Although many immigrants have acquired legal citizenship in the U.S., Haitians still feel alienated from their neighbors who are influenced by stereotyped representations of Haitians in the American press. This prejudice is fostered further by the segregated immigrant communities where Haitians struggle to redefine their culture (Destin, 2014b, Stepick 1998, Zephir 2001, Desir 2006, Stafford 1987, Laguerre 1984, Woldemikael 1989, Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001).

America's racial structure, imaginative literature, media hegemony, and multiple public spheres of discourse about Haiti and the Haitian people that are maintained by the communication media have thus been inherent in, if not at the center of, the racially-disparate coverage of the mainstream and African-American media.

However, same research on Haitians in American media finds that both the American mainstream and black media, to some extent, have historically offered same similar sets of stereotyped representation of Haiti and/or dark people of Haitian descent as incompetent, ignorant, degraded, sacrilege, a people living in squalor (Baroco 2011), and more recently, as an AIDS stricken ethnic group, cannibals and zombies, the indolent native, people from the land of voodoo, a people without a language, the hated immigrant (Lawless 1992), as well as having character weakness, poor, victimized, a troubled nation, and a primitive Other (Celeste 2005). In the last decade, especially since the 2004 coup d'état and 2010 earthquake, Haiti has been portrayed as a

place of violent and political unrest, endemic poverty, rampant illicit drug trafficking, (Potter 2011, Herring 2011), and a dysfunctional dark world (Balaji 2011).<sup>2</sup>

While scholars have mostly attributed these negative images to racial framing and the way Haiti has come to be viewed in the American media from a western lens, few scholars have explored the sociological implications of the different controlling nature of these images in American media targeting white and black audiences. Given these perceptions and misperceptions of Haitians and Haitian Americans in the American public sphere, it is important to examine broader sociological questions regarding the troubled images of immigrants reproduced in the media and their effects on the racialization of people in diaspora communities. These issues lie at the heart of my inquiry.

## **1.2 THREE PIVOTAL EVENTS IN CONTEMPORARY HAITIAN HISTORY— HAITIAN BOAT CRISIS, AIDS EPIDEMIC, AND HAITI EARTHQUAKE**

A study of key historical events can shed light on the process of racialization in which a group of people is ascribed an ethnic or racial identity (and does not identify as such) because of a stigmatizing historical event.

I have chosen three historical events to examine the media coverage of Haitians and Haitian Americans: (a) the Haitian boatlift crisis, (b) AIDS epidemic, and (c) the earthquake in Haiti. These events are of special significance to the Haitian diaspora in post-segregation, post-civil rights

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<sup>2</sup> The various methodologies of scholars also affirm the consequent: that Haiti in the American imagination is mired in an impenetrable stigma of exclusion (Dash 1997, Walker 1993, Rendon and Nicolas 2012, Brown 2012, etc.).

America, because each were visible moments in which Haitians were thrust into the limelight of the media. These events generated a large number of images about Haitians in American society. I therefore selected these events to investigate the American media's characterization of Haitian characteristics and its ramifications.

My investigation offers an opportunity to examine the different Haitian images in times of crisis and the extent to which differences can be explained by those images. Furthermore, my investigation of these events allows me to trace the development of these images and racialization process over time.

### **1.2.1 The Haitian Boatlift Crisis, 1979**

In 1972, Haitian boat people fleeing Papa Doc's Haiti (soon after the installation of Baby Doc) began arriving on the shores of Miami, Florida,<sup>3</sup> the port of entry for many who then migrated further to other gateway metropolitans as Boston, Massachusetts, and Brooklyn, New York. If apprehended by law enforcement, a sponsor, family relative, or friend initially would have to claim Haitians detained at a detention center in Miami (Nachman 1993). A rapid increase in Haitian refugees entering South Florida, however, led to irregular immigrant deportation (Kyle and Scarcelli 2009).

Over a period of nine years, the constant influx of Haitian boat people in greater numbers gradually prompted increased media attention in the U.S. In 1980, however, the simultaneous mass arrivals of Cuban and Haitian refugees generated concerns in the U.S. over the contrasting

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<sup>3</sup> The first Haitian refugees fleeing for political purposes were in 1963 on the shores of the Bahamas before arriving in the United States. "Their request for asylum was denied and they were deported" (Charles 2006: 202). See also *New York Times*, 1972 on Haitians deciding to flee to the Bahamas after being turned away from Cuba.

treatment of both groups. Cuban entrants who Cuban dictator Fidel Castro suddenly released at the behest of disaffected and protesting Cuban immigrants in the U.S., were immediately welcomed with open arms by the U.S. government. Haitian entrants, who had been for years petitioning for U.S. asylum, were denied.

Just one year prior, in May 9, 1979, the Haitian Refugee Center along with other Haitian individuals and on behalf of 4000 Haitians sued the American government over the continued bias in U.S. policies toward Haitian refugees (Zucker and Zucker 1996: 64-80). After the Carter Administration's swift admission of Cuban entrants, the lawsuit, along with Haitian protests, began receiving national publicity, eventually landing on the front page of the *New York Times* (June 12, 1980). (Figure 1). Within a week, the media pressured the Carter administration to explain its reasoning and policy regarding refugee entrants. U.S. State Department officials argued that in the Haitians' case, the court would decide the fate of illegal immigrants since most of them fled their homeland for economic reasons and were already under due process. In contrast, Cubans fled for political reasons and had "a well-founded fear" for their life if they returned, so should be given asylum in the United States (Zacaire 2010: 125).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "The 1951 Refugee Convention of the Status of Refugees (henceforth 1951CSR) defines a refugee as one who: '...owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'" (Zacaire 2010: 125).



Associated Press

A refugee suffering from heat exhaustion lay on the beach after a boatload of Haitians landed near Miami Beach. The man was treated at the scene by medics. The refugees were told by local police to remain aboard the vessel.

## *Ruling Nears in Haitians' Lawsuit Alleging U.S. Bias*

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

MIAMI, June 11 — A major legal controversy over how the Government has treated thousands of Haitian refugees, which could affect whether they remain in this country or are sent home, is drawing to a close in a Federal courtroom here.

Lawyers for the Haitians contend that there is a pattern of harassment and discrimination. But the Government says that this is not the case and that it has

merely attempted to carry out the law. At the trial, which began last year, lawyers representing the Haitians produced what they said was evidence of "a continuing pattern of illegal and discriminatory conduct" by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in its efforts to send Haitians back to their Caribbean home.

The details of the service's "expedited processing" of Haitians in 1978 and 1979,

Marilyn — the first 25 are the hardest. Love and kisses.  
Sandy. — ADVT

which the lawyers say violated many of the rights conferred on aliens by immigration laws and internal immigration service regulations, were assembled in the course of the class action suit brought against the Justice Department.

Before the deportation of Haitians from the United States was halted temporarily a year ago on the order of Federal District Judge James L. King, 179 had been returned home. Judge King's ruling in

Continued on Page D18, Column 1

Figure 1. Screenshot of *New York Times* front-page story of the Haitian lawsuit against the U.S. Government,

1980<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Crewdson 1980, front-page.

In fact, the reverse was true. Cuban refugees were granted asylum in the U.S. because, as LeMay (2004: 8-10) pointed out, their island homeland was “ruled” by a Communist-regime, so they were considered political refugees. On the other hand, Haitians whose homeland was not ruled by a Communist regime were considered economic refugees and denied asylum despite the political climate in Haiti. Indeed, by the time the Mariel boatlift had ended, as Zucker and Zucker (1996: 6) noted:

It had become clear...that, although Cubans, by virtue of coming from a communist country, had always been considered political refugees, not every Cuban who came during the boatlift had a well-founded fear of persecution. Consequently, State Department pronouncements aside, it was also clear that many of the Haitians who arrived during the same period did have such a fear.

President Carter, realizing that “both the numbers and the cost of refugees as too high,” was faced with changing America’s refugee policy that had been largely determined by foreign policy since the end of World War II and the start of the Cold War (Zucker and Zucker 1996: 6). Finally, on May 14, 1980, Carter offered a five-point refugee plan to interdict both Haitian and Cuban entrants at sea, apparently settling the controversy. In July 1980, the U.S. District Supreme Court ruled that the U.S. government was indeed politically biased against Haitian refugees, but the ruling did not generate any meaningful discussion in the U.S. media on the discriminatory policies of the U.S. government. Instead, U.S. media coverage focused on the Carter administration’s efforts to create refugee screenings in detention centers in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to deal with the refugee problem.

### **1.2.2 The AIDS Epidemic, 1983**

This crisis was precipitated when the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) listed Haitians as a risk group for AIDS in 1983. Today, scientists believe that Human

Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV and the symptoms known as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS was most likely transmitted to humans who hunted chimpanzees for meat and were exposed to their infected blood (CDCP 2015). However, in 1983, this disease had no known causes.

AIDS first became known in the United States in the mid- to late 1970s, as a rare form of cancer, pneumonia, and other illnesses. According to the CDCP (then known by its original acronym the CDC) stated that doctors in Los Angeles and New York began reporting such cases among male patients who had sex with other men. By the beginning of the next decade, these cases started to show up in drug users in addition to homosexuals at an increasing rate, and with mass hysteria—not to mention that these groups were America’s most deviant at the time. In 1982, doctors began using the term AIDS to describe medical occurrences that resulted in a complete destruction of the human immune system. By 1983, doctors had discovered the virus that caused AIDS. In the public report, scientists at the CDC stated that

persons who may be considered at increased risk of AIDS include those with symptoms and signs suggestive of AIDS; sexual partners of AIDS patients; sexually active homosexual or bisexual men with multiple partners; Haitian entrants to the United States; present or past abusers of IV drugs; patients with hemophilia; and sexual partners of individuals at increased risk for AIDS.

The pronouncement would be known as the “‘Four H’ group of risk factors for AIDS—homosexuals, heroin users, hemophiliacs, and Haitians” (Bazell 2007: n.p., on *Remembering the Four Hs*). Media frenzy ensued (Figure 2). By order of the Red Cross, these groups were then not allowed to donate blood and panic spread throughout gateway metropolitans (chief immigrant-receiving cities) with large Haitian communities. Before the AIDS risks pronouncements, these communities had provided Haitian newcomers with the necessary resources for social mobility. Now, Haitians began to find social support and their livelihood hampered by the AIDS

classification. News publications reported on Haitians feeling alienated from society since they had been likened to drug users, homosexuals, and hemophiliacs. In reality, less than 4 percent of the Haitian community was infected. Haitians nevertheless feared that the AIDS stigma would negatively affect their livelihoods (*Miami Times*, August 11, 1983).

# Doc: Haitians get bum rap over AIDS



**MUST JESUS BEAR THE CROSS ALONE?** Sherwood W. Byrd ponders his "expulsion" from the Mother A.M.E. Zion Church in Harlem for "sowing discord." Byrd and two other members criticized church sponsorship of a raffle and requested an audit of church books.

By PETER NOEL  
 Monitors of the outbreak of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) said this week that "premature medical conclusions" suggesting that Haitians may be one source of the fatal disease have had a devastating social and economic impact on the more than 400,000 Haitians living in the New York area.

The Haitian community, already facing high unemployment and other problems, has been victimized because of premature medical conclusions blaming them as the cause," said Dr. Jean-Claude DesGranges, a member of the research committee of the New York Chapter of the Haitian Medical Association.

Dr. DesGranges, working with the Haitian Community Center in Brooklyn, has been studying epidemiological facets of AIDS among local Haitian immigrants since returning from a three-day symposium in Haiti.

"We have had no help from the federal and local government in our battle to find the causes of the disease here," DesGranges said. "Meanwhile, Haitians can't find

work and the general public don't want to identify with them."

AIDS, according to medical authorities, is a disorder that weakens the body's natural defenses, leaving its victims vulnerable to diseases they could normally fight off, including a rare cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma.

The cause of AIDS is not known  
 (Continued on page 30)

## Leaders ok Black prez concept

A group of Black civil rights and political leaders voted Tuesday to approve the concept of a Black candidate's seeking the Democratic Presidential nomination.

Before making its decision, the group met with the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who has been traveling throughout the country to test support for a campaign on his part. But it stopped short of endorsing Mr. Jackson and in a "unanimous decision" agreed not to

Figure 2. Screenshot of *New York Amsterdam News* front-page story of the CDC's Haitian-AIDS allegation, 1983<sup>6</sup>

The newly formed AIDS Discrimination Unit of the New York City Commission on Human Rights soon reported instances of Haitian children beaten up and in one case, shot in

<sup>6</sup> Noel 1983, front-page.

school; Haitian store owners went bankrupt as businesses failed; and Haitian families evicted from their homes—all because of the AIDS classification (Farmer 2006: 214). Haitian advocate and physician Paul Farmer (2006: 214) noted that walls on the margins of a predominantly Caribbean neighborhood in New York were sprayed with “Haitians = Niggers with AIDS.”

The social and medical implications of the AIDS classification prompted supporters to urge the medical community to discover the cause of the disease (Zucker 1983). Haitian supporters like Miami City Manager Howard V. Gary argued that the National CDC centers must take Haitians off the AIDS list (*Miami Herald*, October 9, 1983). Perhaps in response to the public outcry, the CDC clarified its ruling by stating that only Haitians who arrived in the U.S. after 1977 posed a health risk.

One of the worst things that resulted from the Haitian AIDS stigma was when Republican Tom Woodruff of St. Petersburg, Florida, said that he would jail any one of the Four Hs, especially Haitians, if they were to donate blood against the CDC’s approval (*Miami Herald*, February 2, 1984). His recommendations did not receive full support of the greater Florida community, but Haitians continued to suffer from limited access to health services and cultural insensitive healthcare and a language barrier impaired access to health services for them. When AIDS test screenings became available, some Haitian communities joined gay rights activists in a call to ban special tests as unreliable.

Then in April 10, 1985, the CDC, without apology, removed Haitians from the AIDS risk group list, stating that “in light of information that suggested both heterosexual contact and exposure to contaminated needles played a role in transmission” (CDC 1985: n.p.). The CDC however still discouraged Haitians from donating blood for another five years and Haitians continued to suffer under the AIDS-stigma during that time.

### **1.2.3 The Earthquake in Haiti, 2010**

On January 12, 2010, a seismic 7.0 earthquake struck 16 miles west of the capital of Haiti, Port au Prince, with a population of 900,000. The quake lasted for nearly 40 seconds and was followed by several aftershock tremors and local tsunami waves. Some 15 areas were devastated with at least 70% of buildings destroyed in the aftermath (Whitelaw 2010). The overpopulation of the island's capital (consisting one-fifth of the overall population of the island) resulted in an estimated death toll of over 300,000 people with over a million people displaced (Figure 3). The extent of the devastation was due in large part to the many urban poor who had built makeshift houses on top of one another which made for fragile and dangerous living conditions made fatal by the sudden earthquake. Another contributing factor to the destruction was the fact that the Haitian government was unprepared to handle such a major disaster, which resulted in a poor response time to the catastrophe (Coughlin 2011).

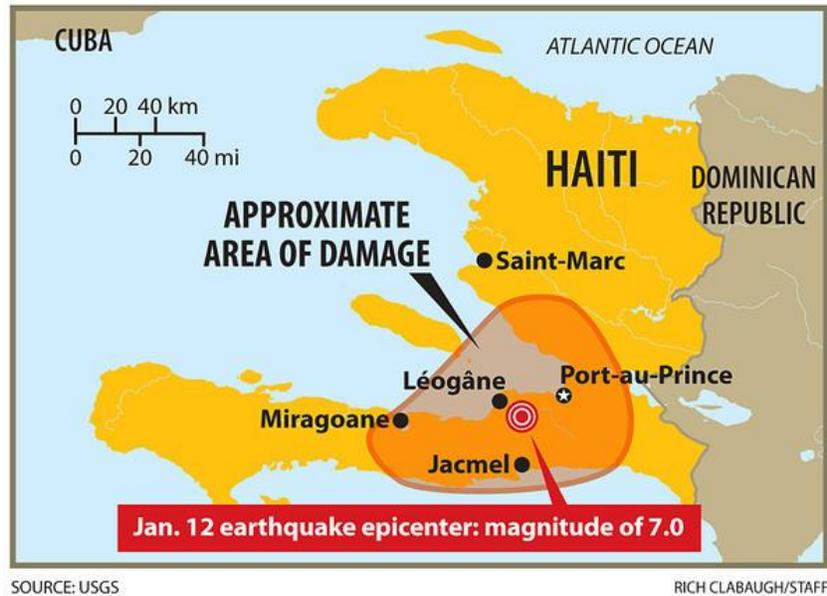


Figure 3. Screenshot of Map: Earthquake epicenter near Port-au-Prince, Haiti<sup>7</sup>

Within a day, the destruction in Haiti was met with an unprecedented Pan-American relief effort, involving the military and medical assistance from countries like Argentina, Peru, Cuba, Brazil, Canada, and the United States. The initially unorganized international coalition assisted in the rescue efforts, established hospitals and displacement camps, and organized food programs; while the various militaries eventually assisted with the organization, traffic, and delivery of this aid. The all-out humanitarian effort faced a grim challenge to tackle what would become known as the fifth deadliest earthquake in world history. On January 23, 2010, the Haitian government ended all search and rescue efforts for survivors of the earthquake. In the end, the aid and military organizations, in conjunction with the Haitian government, managed to save 132 people during the 11-day grace period of life. The Haitian government then began its next phase, the rebuilding process.

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<sup>7</sup> Clabaugh 2010, graphic.

From the start, the American media was saturated immediately with news of the sudden earthquake in Haiti (Figure 4.). All the major news organs and newspapers provided around-the-clock coverage of the relief efforts. Some notable news anchors and journalists, claiming compassion for the Haitian people, participated in the medical and rescue activities, which made for an interactive and dramatic journalism. Some reporters assured their audiences of their relentless pursuit to keep reporting on Haiti, which harkened to a sense of a bygone era when Haiti was seen as failed state responsible for its own tragedies.



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## From the Archives: Catastrophe: Haiti hit with 7.0 earthquake

By Bill Forry  
Jan. 12, 2010



Scene in Port-au-Prince: By Carel Pedre.

*On the anniversary of the Jan. 12, 2010 earthquake, the Reporter goes back into its archives for a look at how we covered those first hours. Below is a record of that coverage, starting just minutes after word reached Boston.*

Tuesday, Jan. 12

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**Figure 4. Screenshot of *Boston Haitian Reporter* front-page online story of the earthquake in Haiti, 2010<sup>8</sup>**

These three events that span a period of thirty years are especially appropriate for this study because they offer opportunities to examine the way Haitians are: (a) compared to Cuban refugees, (b) overtly singled out as a polluted people, and (c) portrayed sympathetically for their resilient spirit in the aftermath of the earthquake. Has there been any change in the racialized portrayal of Haitians throughout this span of time, and if so what were they? The answer may be found in the

<sup>8</sup> Forry 2010, front-page online. Also, see Denison's (2010) piece on Bill Forry's experience covering the earthquake as managing editor of the *Boston Haitian Reporter*.

media coverage of such events where the best and worst American characterizations of Haiti and the Haitian people are revealed.

### **1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study explores the notion that American society deploys controlling images to normalize oppression of minorities. The thesis suggests that the “white” media in particular tends to use negative images of strangers who stand at the margins of society and threaten the moral and social order of the community, and serve to delineate and control the boundaries of “us” versus “them,” and maintain a racial hierarchy of belonging. I suggest that this racialization is significant in reproducing racism. In this section, I outline the conceptual framework and research questions of this study based on the literature on the mass media and on controlling images.

#### **1.3.1 Controlling Images**

A *controlling image* denotes the constant production of a given image used to subjugate Black American women, according to Patricia Hill Collins. She suggests: “[h]istorically U.S. Black women have been dominated by ideological justifications for their existence...” Furthermore, “[s]tereotypical images of women are used to objectify, hide their exploitation, and mask social relations that affect all women” (2008: 79). For Collins, the subjugation of U.S. black women and their ideas must be investigated and liberated through an interpretive framework she terms controlling images.

Collins contends that African-American women encounter different sets of controlling images—such as the *Mammy*; its counterpart, the *Matriarch*; the *Welfare Queen*, among others—each of which have historical significance and contemporary implications.<sup>9</sup> Her framework assumes the existence of a dominant white racial structure that reflects a pattern of suppressed black women’s knowledge, as evidenced, for instance, in the omission of U.S. black women’s ideas in academic scholarship. Controlling images rely on and reproduce that structure by providing the ideological justification for black women. This dominant white racial structure is supported by an American *culture industry* that promotes ideologically subjugated images of Black American women, in which a uniform system of American “schools, media, and government agencies constitute important sites for reproducing these controlling images” (Collins 2008: 93).

This system of American cultural production (or culture industry), based in profit-driven institutions, concentrates power in the owners of the means of American cultural production. Production of ideological cultural objects (like the American film industry’s production of a subjugated controlling image of Black American women—Figure 5) are then inauthentic representations of reality intended to serve the economic and political interests of the ruling class.

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<sup>9</sup> See Haxton’s (2011) montage of stereotypes of Black women as mammies in films.



**Figure 5. Screenshot scenes from the motion picture *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *Tom and Jerry*’ “Old Rockin’ Chair Tom” (1948), featuring Hattie McDaniels, as the archetype Black mammy-maid, “Mammy Two Shoes”<sup>10</sup>**

In recent years, the American media has been spotlighted as a site for promoting subjugated controlling images. Collins (2008: 93) explains that “the growing influence of television, radio, movies, videos, CDs, and the Internet [on behalf of large corporations] constitute new ways of circulating images.” Within the American culture industry, the American news media adopt practices that appear to represent a seamless reality, while completely avoiding issues that stem from crisis in America.

Building on this idea, I contend that the American culture industry subjugates the Haitian people through enduring controlling images, some of which tend to negatively portray them as impoverished, disease-stricken, slave/cheap laborer, and members of an unsuccessful ethnic enclave among others. Like U.S. Black women, Haitians in America encounter different sets of controlling images, all of which are derived from a culture industry based on a dominant (broader)

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<sup>10</sup> Fleming 1939; Hanna and Barbera 1948.

European and American white racial structure at work, producing a seamless pattern of Haitian suppression. The pattern of Haitian suppression has been linked to the marginalization in their resettlement (Zucker and Zucker 1996), employment (Portes, Kyle, and Eaton 1992), healthcare (Rahill and Rice 2010), marriage (Stafford 1984), and education in various host societies (Portes and MacLeod 1996; Zacaïr 2010).

While Collins' interpretative framework explains the importance of media images for Black women, it is not uncommon to see her concept used to examine the experience of other groups as well. For example, Le Espiritu (2007) used the concept to examine the popular stereotypes of Asian American men in addition to women. Differently, Frank Rudy Cooper (2005) used the concept of controlling images to examine Black Americans of both genders, as a general strategy to disrupt the structure of gendered oppressions, the hierarchy of gender specific oppressions that sustains itself. Cooper recognizes that such an inclusive concept of both genders does risk creating a false sense that Black men are just as oppressed as Black women by race, gender, and class.<sup>11</sup> Cooper suggests that to avoid this false sense of gender-equal oppression, we must recognize the shared interest of Black men and women to defeat such hierarchies. Haitian American men and women have a shared interest (as a black American sub group) in defeating the oppressive controlling images of Haitians that circulate in American media and society.

Patricia Hill Collins' (2003) notion of controlling images is useful in my study because it explains the relationships of domination and subjugation that are sustained by a continual reproduction of images that denigrate the Other as the weaker, feeble reference group. I posit that negative controlling images have been used to describe Haitian immigrants in the American mass

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<sup>11</sup> However, Cooper (2005: 855-856) uses the terms "singly subordinated" and "multi-subordinated" to distinguish the different ways American Black men (who are subordinated singly along one major axis of identity) and Black women (who are multi-subordinated by a system of oppression).

media, which has become a primary source of socialization in late modernity (Laz re 1987: 6; Enzensberger 1974, in Edles 2002: 64). In the culture industry of modern society, the media consciously administers “a nonspontaneous [hegemonic], reified, phony culture rather than the real thing” and this is also found in the case of Haitians (Jay 1973: 216 in Edles 2002: 64; Adorno and Horkheimer [1947] 1981, 2007).

This research project primarily asks three questions. First, how are Haitians depicted in Miami where a large Haitian diaspora exists within complex race relations? Is the process of racialization of the Other evident in the print media, and to what degree, and how has this process changed over time? Second, do media coverage of Haitians vary among newspapers targeted to a predominantly mainstream audience or a mostly black audience? Third, what are the images of Haitians constructed in the Miami newspapers, and what accounts for their formation?

The research questions build on the work of Celeste (2005) and Baroco (2011) who found an operating hegemonic view of Haitians, where race was a primary signifier in the coverage of this group in the American media. I hypothesize that three descriptive elements discussed below—*black fear* (of their primitiveness), *poverty*, and *pollution*—comprise the controlling images of Haitians in the American media, and that these elements are present regardless of whether the newspaper is targeted to a mainstream readership or a black readership. I expect that the pervasive, hegemonic reproduction of these images is likely to vary between white mainstream or black newspapers, with more negative portrayals found in mainstream newspapers. My conceptualization of these images are discussed below, with primitive and poverty being historical images emerging shortly after the 1804 Haitian Revolution, and pollution added after the 1970s and 1980s boatlift and AID crises. I also discuss counter hegemonic images that better illustrate the multidimensional lives of Haitians in the United States.

### 1.3.1.1 “The Primitive” (Black Fear)

Throughout most of Haitian history, foreigners have stigmatized the Haitian people as primitive—a downtrodden and bewitched group. Take the sentiments of anthropologist Goldberg (1983: 490) who noted that

[m]ost foreigners see Haiti with a stereotypic view derived from mass media and the folk knowledge of Europe and North America. According to this view Haiti is a land of exotic mystery and backwards peasants who practiced sorcery, and a mysterious, African-seeming form of witchcraft.

People holding such views foster a sort of Haitian exceptionalism in which Haitians are viewed as qualitatively different from other people (Trouillot 1990b). Some of the more classic cases of foreigners espousing these views in text include St. John’s (1889) *Hayti or the Republic*, Seabrook’s (1929) *The Magic Island*, Loederer’s (1935) *Voodoo Fire in Haiti*, and Dubois’s (1971) *Lust Thighs of Dambella* (referenced in Goldberg 1983: 490). These writers promoted lurid and sensational accounts of the Haitian people, often as possessed beings. Spenser St. John (1889, 208-27), for one, went so far as to condemn Haitians as barbaric cannibals. Such attitudes spread with more stories that characterize Haitians as devil worshipping in their religious practice of voodoo;<sup>12</sup> primitive; uncivilized; and African in nature.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic, its contiguous neighbor, were originally “discovered” by Christopher Columbus in 1492. The Italian seaman claimed the indigenous Indian-inhabited island under the authority of Spain, naming it Hispaniola (Spanish translation for *Spain*), the nation that sponsored his voyage. With the importation of slaves shortly thereafter, the formidable

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<sup>12</sup> A variant of Catholicism mixed with Amerindian ‘Tainos’ and West African beliefs.

Spaniards lost the west portion of the island to the French in the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. The French colonists endowed West Hispaniola (renamed Saint Domingue) with slave plantations—becoming the provider and center for the world’s sugar and coffee industry.

Over the next century, the success of Saint Domingue generated a complex group of social classes.<sup>13</sup> Vibrant animosity within and between different races emerged, along with frequent intermingling of French-Spaniard border crossers. Frenchmen and slaves notoriously intermixed,<sup>14</sup> and interracial relationships were very common. As a result, a growing mixed race group emerged—known as mulattoes. They were mostly the illegitimate children of white-Frenchmen and black female slaves. Free blacks (affranchis) who bought their own freedom and own property also existed, as did, maroons (runaway slaves), those who escaped bondage and lived in the woods and mountains.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The financial success of Saint Domingue can be attributed to French colonists who were unremorseful in working slaves to death and replacing them upon a new shipment of slaves. It is estimated that, at the height of the French colony, a slave had a life span of three years before he/she died and was replaced (Geggus 2001). Another reason for Saint Domingue’s success is that France moved to buying only male slaves from a certain African region. Geggus (2001: 122) shows us that slaves were being brought first from the Bight of Benin, West Africa, and later Melambo after news of their labor-intensive nature. This eventually became a movement among slave traders to amass northwestern Africans. Slave traders knew they could get more for their money at Saint Domingue for such a catch. A third reason for the colony’s success is that Saint Domingue received the best slaves by virtue of receiving the first shipment and buying the best slaves, whereas the neighboring colonies received poorer quality slaves and resorted to getting mostly women and children. Geggus (2001) suspects that with women and children populating the surrounding islands and males populating the thriving colonies (Saint Domingue, especially) had an impact on the overall cultural composition of the Caribbean. Given France’s shift to acquiring only male slaves, it is safe to assume that women were brought (bought) regularly in Saint Domingue until the success of the French colony demanded more purchase of male slaves.

This point is also crucial to the origins of Haiti’s so-called color caste class structure (Leyburn 1966) between Haitian blacks and their mulatto counterparts. As groups of African male slaves of different sets of tribes populated the French-controlled (white-dominated), south Saint Domingue, which generated a mulatto group early on, the newer shipments of West African males of a different set of tribes populated the (slave-dominated) northern part of the island, which generated African cultural community. The difference in the tenancy of French colonists in both regions split Saint Domingue across two color constituents—blacks mostly in north and mulatto mostly in the south. It also created divides by language between black African induced Kréyol language in the north and mulatto European induced French speakers in the south.

<sup>14</sup> Hall (1971) does a thorough analysis on the interracial composition.

<sup>15</sup> There were several attempts to reclaim, or hunt for them (Hall 1971: 66; Geggus 2001).

The white French colonists were largely split between grand blancs and petit blancs. The grand blancs were of higher social status and largely represented civil and military functionaries, the wealthy planters and slave owners. The petit blancs were of lower status and largely represented merchants, mechanics, storekeepers, and adventurers (entrepreneurs) in a quest for success (Leger 1907: 36).

It was in this tense racial environment between blacks, mulattoes, and whites that ex-slaves Boukman (a vodou priest) and Toussaint L'Ouverture emerged as leaders of the first Saint Domingue slave revolt. The slaves' insurgency took fourteen violent years (1791-1804) to claim independence through burning of plantations, collapsed negotiations, and a failed invasion by Napoleon's army in 1802. Despite France's attempts to pacify the impending revolution, the ex-slaves persisted and in January 1, 1804, they declared Saint Domingue an independent nation, and renamed her Haiti.<sup>16</sup> Haiti represented the first and the only successful slave revolt in world history.

However, the revolt turned into mass genocide of all white inhabitants remaining on the island, just as American President Thomas Jefferson had feared (Scherr 2011). By order of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Haiti's first chief of state, black Haitians massacred entire white families of all ages and gender—about 5000 people in all (Girand 2011: 319-322). The killings were so violent that observers of the massacre likened the genocide to cannibalism, based on the various legends of flesh-eating people that circulated the Lesser Antilles.

Fears of more slave revolts to come, some based on wild tales of slaves possessed by a supernatural force, sparked a panic in other slave holding nations. The slave-holding world powers (France, Britain, Spain and U.S.) isolated Haiti for fear of exporting her revolution. Observers of

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<sup>16</sup> Or "Ayiti," the original name of the island given by the indigenous Taino and Arawak people.

Haiti began casting Haitians as a bloodthirsty people given the rage and violence of the revolt. These sentiments worked to embargo Haiti from the world socially, economically, and politically, to prevent other successful and violent revolutions from emerging.

Negative ascriptions of Haitians by U.S. media and citizens were therefore largely a result of the Haitian independence from French colonization in 1804. Such views initially provided people (still today, see remarks by Pat Robertson, 2010) with an explanation for what has been thought as the awkward success of Haitian slaves in gaining independence. However, the anomaly of the Haitians' success took a frightening turn in the imaginations of many observers when news arrived to the 19<sup>th</sup> century U.S. that black Haitians had revolted and butchered all the white inhabitants of Haiti (*Aurora General Advertiser*, March 8, 1804).<sup>17</sup> After that, American slaveholder and President Thomas Jefferson famously described Haitians as “cannibals of the terrible republic,” a reference to their alleged primitive and violent natures (Scherr 2011: 253). This so-called Black Fear, the fear that violent slave revolts and eventual revolution in Haiti would influence uprisings and mass genocide in other slave holding nations, shaped racist attitudes toward both the black republic of Haiti and the people of that island.

The Black Fear of Haitians' alleged primitive and violent natures was furthered by a series of developments, from Napoleon's sudden underselling of the Haitian-inhabited Louisiana territory to U.S. President Thomas Jefferson in 1803 (Morales 2000: 8-9) to the U.S. tightening of slave codes during the American slave revolt led by Nat Turner (Camacho 2011: 48-9), the ongoing

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<sup>17</sup> Philadelphia's *Aurora General Advertiser*, a mainstream paper, reported that a number of armed Negroes and mulattoes had murdered two Americans, among other white inhabitants, after pillaging their homes. The Advertiser “supposed that the Negroes will ultimately butcher all the French whites within their power...and that the blacks had massacred all the white inhabitants...and that the Negroes have substituted for St. Domingue, Hayti, the name which the island originally bore” (March 8, 1804). Two years later, Haitians would be back in American publicity when Emperor Jean- Jacques Dessalines, the first chief of state and who was exceptionally known for his “butchering” of white inhabitants, was assassinated by his inner circle. (In fact, Haitians precisely killed him because of his murderous ways).

Cuban sugar plantation that took on a panoptic architecture, similar to a prison structure to safeguard slave insurrections (Gates 2011), the *Back to Africa* movement to Liberia at the height of American abolitionism amid several Haitian induced slave insurrections (Fanning 2007: 66); and redefined Haitian nationalism in the 1950s which brought about the Noiriste movement in Haiti, an ideology focusing on the African aspects of Haitian culture (Smith 2009: 57-8).

However, the primitive image of Haiti did not fully develop until 1864, amid the *Bizoton Affair* regarding the child murder and cannibalism of Claircine in Haiti. A British diplomat in Haiti, Sir Spenser St. John, reported on the trial and execution of eight Haitian devotees found guilty of murder and cannibalism of the 12-year girl (*Harper's Weekly* 1864 in Dash 2013). In his controversial book *Hayti, or, The Black Republic*, St. John detailed a lurid account of the “strangled, flayed, decapitated, and dismembered” body of Claircine, whose body parts were then “cooked, and blood caught and kept in a jar” (Dash 2013: n.p.). The Haitian president at the time Fabre Nicolas Geffrard, a staunch catholic, went forward with a public trial, in an anxious attempt to curb the vodou religion, which seemed to contribute to a public image of Haiti as “backwards” and an “uncivilized” land (Destin 2014a: 197).<sup>18</sup>

Although the ritual sacrifice had been an isolated incident, St. John alleged, that “cannibalism was a normal feature of life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Haiti” (Dash 2013: n.p.). His observations had a profound influence on white Europeans and Americans. According to Dash (2013: n.p.), other writers with unsupported claims followed St. John’s allegations, which “included the charge that ‘people are killed and their flesh sold at the market’ in Haiti”. “Writing in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* in 1909, John T. Driscoll charged—without providing details—that ‘authentic

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<sup>18</sup> The Bizoton Affair would lead President Geffrard to reestablish relations with the Vatican and establish Roman Catholicism as the official religion of Haiti (Destin 2014a: 197).

records are procurable of midnight meetings held in Hayti, as late as 1888, at which human beings, especially children, were killed and eaten at the secret feasts” (Dash 2013: n.p.). However, those records, according to Dash, were unreliable and unfortunately widely disseminated.

Similarly,

In 1891, observes Dubois, “one writer admitted that he had never actually seen a Vodou ritual, be he nevertheless described in vivid detail—complete with practitioners ‘throwing themselves on the victims, tearing them apart with their teeth and avidly sucking the blood that boils from their veins.’ Each day, he wrote, forty Haitians were eaten, and almost every citizen of the country had tasted human flesh” (Dubois 2001, in Dash 2013: n.p.).

Such allegations cast Haitians as a primitive and a danger to world order. This primitive image of Haitians was used subsequently to justify American desires for military occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934, including the U.S. occupation of Haiti as a strategic military post in the event that World War I moved into the Caribbean (Baroco 2011). The primitive image of Haitians was later used to justify American foreign policy in Haiti by painting it as a primitive nation that could not defend itself from the influences of communism in 1960s or from radical left dictatorships in the 1990s.

### **1.3.1.2 “The Poor”**

A second image of Haitians is as poor. With the advancement of farming technology in the mid-19th century, the prestige of manual labor no longer characterized the industrious Haitian slave. The destruction of the plantation system during the revolution and subsequent international economic embargos on Haiti left the Haitian people dependent on a subsistence economy that provided insufficient work to escape poverty and furthered their image as non-working poor. Haitians sojourning to neighboring islands in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1960s thus confronted stigma based on their low economic status. This image continues today as Haitians are viewed as a

backward people who make a livelihood by cane cutting and menial labor. Haitians are widely considered to have the lowest social status in the Caribbean.

The stigma developed into a full-blown ideology in the neighboring nation of the Dominican Republic where it was a crucial element in the nation building and nationalism of the Dominican state (Turits 2002; Derby 1994; Hidalgo 2007; Tavernier 2008). In the late 1930s, Dominican President Rafael Trujillo made it part of his national agenda to blame the backwardness of Haitians and Haitian border-crossers for Dominicans' economic problems. He ordered the expulsion of all Haitian immigrants from the Dominican nation. Trujillo's project eventually "created a national identity that defined Dominicans as white, Catholic, and culturally Hispanic, in stark contrast to Haitians, whom they characterized as being black, vodou practitioners, and culturally African" (Ságas 2000 in Tavernier 2008: 98). His call for Haitian expulsion led to the infamous state sanctioned massacre of over 40,000 Haitians in 1937.

In Cuba, nationalism led to the forced removal of Haitian braceros (migrant laborer) in the 1930s (McLeod 1998). According to McLeod (1998: 613), the Cuban authorities reported that

'it is a well-known fact that of the West Indian immigrants the only one that is reconciled to cutting cane is the Haitian'...[and that] the deportation drive to attack 'Haitians only, on whose repatriation the [Cuban] Government were determined on account of their low economic and cultural standards.'

McLeod explained how the combination of economic decline and nationalism, along with an anti-Haitian ideology in Cuba, led to repatriation of nearly 38,000 Haitians.

By 1934, the Dominican tragedy and Cuban deportation, followed by the departure of the U.S. Marines after a nearly twenty-year occupation of Haiti, reinvigorated Haitian nationalism, an ideology not felt since the revolution in 1791 (Pamphile 2001: 102). The impetus of ethnic pride, however, was the dictatorship of a tyrannical black fundamentalist known as Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier in 1957. A staunch vodou advocate, Duvalier embraced the stigma and persona of a

Haitian witch doctor, hence the nickname ‘Papa Doc.’ He radically declared that the Haitian republic should embrace its African roots and Creole pidgin language, much to the dissatisfaction of the islands’ French-speaking mulatto populace. Duvalier eventually drove tens of thousands mulattos out of the country, most of whom were middle class and destabilized the Haitian economy, leaving only his elite backers, who profited from his power, and the peasantry, whom he could exploit. Duvalier employed a secret police known as the “ton ton macoutes” or “uncle bogey men” to terrorize the people through unofficial executions, extortions, and rapes, among other abuses.

The Haitian economy fell further into instability when Duvalier’s son Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier inherited the presidential mantle in 1971. Baby Doc’s bad international trade deals ultimately collapsed Haiti’s agricultural market. That event, along with the constant violence, triggered a mass exodus of rural Haitians of low class status (under educated and under skilled) from the island during the 1970s and 1980s.

Immigrant-receiving societies like the Bahamas confronted Haitian refugees with hostile sentiments. The Bahama islands were the second major recipient of Haitians. Between 1963 and 2000, Haitians accounted for a population increase in the Bahamas from 3.2% to 7.1%, making up the largest ethnic group residing in this British Commonwealth (Fielding 2008: 45).<sup>19</sup> This large influx of Haitian migrants, dubbed the “Haitian boat people”, re-invigorated Bahamians’ stigma against Haitians as persons of poverty, illegal status, and poor education. More Haitians arriving on the shores of the Bahamas soon prompted the government to sanction deportation to prevent a financial burden for the already-struggling Bahamian tourism-based economy. With no legal

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<sup>19</sup> Though population estimates appear in this writing, Smith (2010) is correct in noting that “[c]ounting illegal residents is a notoriously unreliable exercise,...of which many are just passing through to a third country (like the US) or returning home to Haiti.”

status, Haitians could do little to mobilize to act against the discrimination they faced (Belton 2010: 949).

### **1.3.1.3 “The Polluted”**

A third stereotype of Haitians is of being polluted. With the arrival of the Haitian boat people to other Caribbean islands and the U.S. in the 1970s, Haitians were stigmatized as carriers of communicable disease. According to Stepick (1998: 34), recently arrived Haitians faced prejudice and discrimination, which created barriers to finding employment. When they did find work in the restaurant industry, a rumor of endemic tuberculosis (TB) emerged, which led to the firing of Haitian employees and further discrimination. In 1982, an outbreak of swine flu in Haiti seemed to affirm the rumor that Haitian migrants might carry communicable diseases. A year later, HIV/AIDS would replace TB as a way to keep employers from hiring Haitians. Haitians were believed to have the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), joining the other groups thought to carry the new virus, such as hemophiliacs, homosexuals, and drug users. When news of the virus coincided with the arrival of several infected Haitians in the U.S., a media frenzy ensued.<sup>20</sup> The heightened U.S. media attention resulted from the fact that HIV/AIDS-infected Haitians did not exhibit hemophilia, homosexuality, or drug use. This paradox led many health professionals at the U.S. Food and Drug Agency (USFDA) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to conclude that being Haitian was itself a risk factor for the HIV/AIDS virus, that Haitians had or would eventually spread the disease and that HIV originated in Haiti (Pamphile 2001:182).

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<sup>20</sup> Goffman (1963: 9) refers to stigmatized individuals prone to victimization as prey to opportunists who capitalize on their victimhood. Media that gain profits by covering the plight of Haitians may be considered among the several ways of capitalizing on Haitian victimhood.

These speculations impacted Haitians' livelihood in the U.S. during which time one Brooklyn physician reported that on several occasions "we [sic] received phone calls from prospective employers of Haitians asking if it was safe to employ them" (Farmer 2006: 214). Social-service organizations in South Florida were "suddenly unable to find placement for the majority of its [Haitian] clientele" (Farmer 2006: 214). One such organization "received hate mail which conveyed such slogans as 'Hire a Haitian—Help Spread AIDS,' and 'There were [sic] no AIDS in the USA until the illegal criminal Haitian dogs came'" (Farmer 2006:114). Employers began receiving anonymous letters urging them to fire Haitian workers. "One letter," Farmer (2006: 114) found, "postmarked July 15, 1983, had the following warning:

On Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup> we are mailing 6,000 of the below notices to all hotels, motels, and restaurants in South Florida. 'Tourists and businesspeople are avoiding the South Florida area because of the plague of AIDS, hepatitis and TB spread by the criminal illegal aliens of Haitian origin. If you employ a Haitian, discharge him as soon as you received this letter. Help South Florida.'

Haitians continued to suffer under the pollution stigma of the AIDS label for the next eight years as the CDC banned them from donating blood. From then on, Haitian immigrants and refugees were cast as likely victims of the deadly virus. Ideas of Haitians as potential carriers of the HIV/AIDS virus joined the primitive and poverty stigma to form a racist discourse and further Haitian marginalization in the U.S. throughout the 1980s and early 1990s.

The racial dimension of these three images—dangerous primitive, poverty, and pollution—can be explored more discursively. Using Hall's work, I argue that the three images in media reflect a "less overt" system of racial exclusions (Hall 1990: 12-13, in Edles 2002: 117). Hall identifies inferential racism as "those apparently naturalized representations of events and

situations about race, whether ‘factual’ or fictional,’ which have racist premises and propositions inscribed in them as a set of unquestioned assumptions” (1990: 12-13). Overt racism or obvious bigotry is politically dangerous, but inferential racism, given its invisibility even to those who daily formulate it, is more widespread, as when “good and honest” journalist unconsciously use racist rhetoric based on “the unstated and unrecognized assumption that blacks are the source of the problem” (Hall 1990: 12-13, in Edles 2002: 118).

I posit that inferential racism is relevant in the illustration of Haitian immigrants in the media, and explains the production of ideological discourse. As Hall explains, producers of discourse always “encode specific meanings into a text” and imply “certain ideas as to what they want the text to say, and they try to make their meaning understood” (Edles 2002: 74). These meanings in text are then constrained by the formal rules of language, which are open to interpretation. As the audience decodes the information, hidden interpretation is brought to bear onto their psyche. Inferential racism is thus produced by encoders and consumed by decoders even when overt racism in the media is not obvious.

The presence of images of black fear (primitive), poverty and pollution in the media illuminates the racial views and imperial practices of “cultural actors [of a hegemonic system] that help to produce the symbols and ideas that serve as the ‘context’ for people’s actions” (Schudson 2003: 24, 182; Hall 1977; Kellner 1995, in Landriscina 2012: 274).

#### **1.3.1.4 Other Images**

In contrast to the negative images of Haitians in the U.S. media and popular discourse, there are images represented in Haitian media that depict their multi-dimensional lives in the United States. Among the most prevalent are the following images:

*Prideful.* Haitians are depicted as having pride for their homeland, in spite of its prevalent poverty. Haitians believe that they are more than their imputed poverty. In the U.S., this conviction results in their sense of social distinction and superiority over African-Americans—generally among the most stigmatized of American minorities (Waters 1999; Doucet and Suarez-Orozco 2006). Haitian immigrants living in Haitian communities in the U.S. also feel superior to other Haitian Americans who they regard as more American (or less Haitian), and therefore racially, socially or economically inferior.

*Inferiority complex.* This image represents Haitians' lack of self-worth due to stigma and discrimination and the disconnection of the Haitian community in the U.S. from people in Haiti. Haitian immigrants may differentiate themselves from other Haitians by stressing the French aspects of Haitian culture (in spite of their African heritage) or by identifying with another ethnic identity for social advancement and distancing (or disassociating) themselves from Haitian newcomers.

*Liberators.* This image is based on Haitian's contribution to world history as liberators of other nations. Histories of Haiti in the Haitian media often include specific mention of Haitian involvement in the development of other nations. Some of these contributions include Haitian's involvement in the American Revolution where they fought alongside American colonists to defeat the British in the Siege of Savannah, Georgia, in 1779 and their defeat of Napoleon's troops in Haiti in 1802, which allowed for America's Louisiana Purchase from France, tripling the landmass of the United States. Haitians have made similar contributions to the development of Venezuela, Bolivia, and Peru (Destin 2014a: 195). Histories that emphasize Haitians as liberators (a people having also liberated themselves from their French colonists) are often put forward to specifically combat stereotypes in the American media regarding Haiti as a failed state. These histories have

also been offered to inform the American public of the often-times unaccredited common revolutionary heritage of both Haiti and the United States (Pamphile 2001).

*Conflicted.* This image is based on the contradictory emotions of Haitians who say they love their country, but decided to resettle in the U.S. The dilemma results in their suffering, alienation, and estrangement as a people “without a voice, place, or recognition in the new country” (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 1990: 338). Haitians are represented as having low self-esteem about having to resort to desperate measures to financially support their family in the hostland and extended family in the homeland.

*Diaspora.*<sup>21</sup> This image is based on the “idea of building a [Haitian] community in the United States that would embrace and include Haiti” (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 1990: 341). In the mid-1980s, Haitians began using the term *diaspora* to describe the Haitian community that now preferred to remain in the U.S. even after Duvalier was ousted in 1986. However, this community would remain ethnically attached to Haiti. As Glick-Schiller and Fouron (1990: 341) described, the Haitian diaspora represented a community that “rather than see themselves as immigrants who had become an ethnic group in a new homeland or as nationalists who would return home to ‘till the land’...began to see themselves as transnational, as people with two homelands”. *Diaspora* became the default term since Haitian leaders were largely divided on whether to organize their community by bringing together all black people (in which case “Haitians should not see themselves as different or divided from either African-Americans or people from the rest of the Caribbean”), or focusing attention on the plight of Haitian immigrants in Haiti (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 1990: 340).

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<sup>21</sup> French spelling of “diaspora.”

## 1.4 THE DISSERTATION AND OUTLINE

While the 2010 earthquake disaster generated academic interests in the plight of Haitian people, scholarship on Haitian immigrants is relatively small when compared to studies of other ethnic groups residing in the United States. Studies on the Haitians Diaspora are nevertheless quite broad, covering anthropological research, language studies, public health, international law studies, and sociological as well as historical data (foreign and domestic scholarship) on the scale, and scope of the Haitian immigrant experience. However, there is little research on the role that media plays in the Haitian experiences of exclusion in the U.S. host society.

The few studies on the stereotyped media images of Haitian people have largely focused on how they have been portrayed during a major crisis. These studies show that the American mainstream and Black media have largely depicted Haitians in ways that fulfill the media's organizational agendas. Even as American coverage of Haitians has crossed over from newspaper to the cable TV platform, images of Haitians continue to exhibit a racist logic, depicting them as largely inferior. However, there is evidence of less-stereotyped images when news stories focus on Haitians as agents of change rather than victims of tragedy, such as stories about first-generation Haitians hoping to return home or second generation Haitians identifying as Americans for social and economic advancement.

What is not known from prior studies is the sociological implications of the differing controlling nature of images that are found in American media targeting mainstream and black audiences, how these exist in the regional media where many in the Haitian Diaspora reside, if these are condoned or resisted, and how these images have changed over time. To investigate this, I examine the portrayals of Haitians across three major events in three different newspapers.

My dissertation contributes to the study of the Haitian Diaspora by specifically examining the consequences of Haitian immigration. I ask how Haitian immigrants are situated in media ideologies of the hostland, and investigate if, and how, this group is portrayed as strangers to the community; victims of American racism; and/or political pawns to illustrate the extent of Haiti state repression. However, unlike previous studies, I show how these media ideologies can and have been modified and disrupted by historical developments and the emergence of social media.

My project is significant since stereotyped images have negatively impacted Haitians' job prospects, immigration resettlement, and healthcare delivery in the U.S. Haitians view their negative portrayal in the American media as the largest contributor to their discrimination and isolation in the hostland. Negative media perceptions of this group, furthermore, make assimilation, a melting away of their ethnic identity, necessary for social mobility in the United States.

Research indicates that less assimilated immigrants who take pride in their ethnic identity move up the social ladder in the U.S. because of the relative distance it provides them from African-Americans—generally among the most stigmatized of minorities (Waters 1999, Doucet and Suarez-Orozco 2006). However, Haitian immigrants generally don't achieve this level of ethnic pride. Instead, prejudice and stereotypes that are mass-produced in the media and stigmatize Haitians as impoverished and disease-stricken immigrants often lead them to downward mobility and social exclusion. This dissertation is an attempt to address the process by which Haitians arrive at such an outcome.

In the next chapter, I review the literature on the American media. I discuss instances when Haitians have garnered positive and negative images in American media. I explore the parallel discourses of mainstream and African-American media in the history of Haitians. I also discuss

research findings on Haitians self-perceptions in the United States and Haiti, in contrast to American perceptions. This literature review offers the empirical background to this study.

In chapter Three, I outline my method of data collection and sampling of Miami newspapers. I also describe a small-scale pretest of New York newspapers, which preceded the Miami study. I discuss the different demographics and migration patterns between the Haitian Diasporas in New York and South Florida. I also discuss the process of coding and analyzing the data through a qualitative data analysis program, as well as consultation with Creole and French translators and community activists. This chapter also covers the method of assessing data reliability and validity.

In Chapter Four, I discuss the key empirical findings of the dissertation. I describe how the newspapers are framed and analyze those frames in order to explore the depictions of Haitians in the American news media. I examine the different patterns of frames and their amalgamation, which broadly produced a modified controlling image of Haitian people as *distressed victims*.

In Chapter Five, I discuss the emergence of a modified controlling image of Haitian immigrants in three newspapers. I show that this image is an iteration of old stereotypical controlling images, and that some of them are now presented in a more positive light. I conclude with a conjecture that the negative images of Haitians in American media have changed over time and varied by newspaper due to editorial policies and an evolution in American journalism.

In Chapter Six, I discuss the journalistic practices of constructing controlling images. I explain the transformation of the old stereotypical controlling images in relation to the changing journalistic practices of American media. I explain how the modified images in the mainstream and black newspapers resulted from a broadening in journalism that was influenced by social media. Furthermore, I explain how the broadening of journalism, especially after the earthquake,

was part of a series of events, including the politics of aid relief, racial issues and comparison to Hurricane Katrina victims, and mobile fundraising. Together these factors, induced by social media, led to efforts to broaden American journalism's depictions of Haiti compared to the previous way it had been covered in newspapers.

In Chapter Seven, I discuss my conclusions. I discuss the sociological process of modifying images of the Other in the mainstream, black, and Haitian newspapers. I explain how the democratization of sources led to the weakening of the dominant ideology in each newspaper. I also discuss the result of more positive images in the American media. Finally, I discuss the controlling images thesis and its application during the three crises. I explain the advantages and disadvantages of using controlling images as an interpretive framework in light of the findings.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this section, I review systematic investigations of Haitians in mainstream and African-American media. This discussion illustrates the findings and methodologies of researchers in the field of Haitian scholarship. I discuss instances when and where Haitians have garnered a positive image, proving that negative stereotyped images can be resisted as well. Finally, I discuss research findings on Haitians self-perceptions in the United States and Haiti, in contrast to American perceptions. Studies generally show that Haitians' self-perceptions in the United States are varied, different between parent and child, and different between people who follow French and African customs. This literature review offers the empirical background to this study.

### **2.1 PORTRAYALS OF HAITIANS IN THE AMERICAN MEDIA**

Literature on Haitians in the American media tend to focus on exploring the parallel discourses of mainstream and African-American media in the history of Haitians. Two such works by Baroco (2011) and Dash (1988), for instance, involve a comprehensive look at these parallel discourses and their implications, although Dash's work takes a more careful look at the American imagination of the Haitian people and the Haitian imagination of the American people in literary works in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In *Representations of Haiti in the American Press during the U.S. Occupation, 1915 – 1934*, historian Baroco examined how the mainstream and African-American newspaper employed these representations of Haiti to respectively perpetuate and challenge the U.S.'s racial

structure. Her historical and interpretative survey of the *New York Times* and the *National Geographic Magazine* revealed that the American media portrayed Haitians as incompetent, ignorant, degraded, sacrilege, and a people living in squalor. Furthermore, this discourse justified American imperialism on the island to the American public as well as to foreign observers.

However, Baroco found a different set of portrayals in the African-American organ, *The Crisis*. In contrast to the portrayals of the mainstream white press, the black journal portrayed Haitians as a symbol of “black power...an alternative to white, Western dominance, since its inception” (Baroco 2011: 85). Furthermore, “because of Haiti’s symbolic importance, [the journal] used its opposition to the occupation to further its magazine’s (and the NAACP’s) agenda of pursuing racial justice and equality in the U.S.” (Baroco 2011: 85). Baroco found that race ultimately became an important signifier in imagining Haiti in both the mainstream and black media in the 1920s and 1930s as both media worked to flatten the Haitian identity along racial lines (see Polyné 2010).

Dash’s study on the *United States and Haiti’s National Stereotypes* in literary works,<sup>22</sup> demonstrated *American orientalism*<sup>23</sup> (though not of Arabs) but based on Americans’ actual

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<sup>22</sup> Some of the literary work examined by Dash were written during the U.S. occupation of Haiti.

<sup>23</sup> Mainstream and African-American’s imagination of Haiti during the U.S. occupation is an example of Edward Said’s notions of orientalism, “a way of seeing that imagines, emphasizes, exaggerates and distorts differences of Arab peoples and cultures as compared to that of Europe and the U.S. Orientalism often involves seeing Arab as exotic, backward, uncivilized, and at times dangerous (Arab American National Museum 2011). Haitians may be seen as orientals in this regard. For Said, the American orientalist (the distorters of Arabs) are abstract in their imagination of Arab peoples. He explained that “the difference between Britain and France, on the one hand, and the United States, on the other, is that Britain and France had colonies in the Orient. They had a long standing relationship and an imperial role in a place like India. So there is a kind of archive of actual experiences of being in India, of ruling the country for several hundred years. And the same with the French in North Africa—say Algeria or Indochina. In the case of the Americans, the experience is much less direct. There has never been an occupation of the near east...[T]he difference between British and French orientalism, on the one hand, and the American experience of the orient, on the other, is that the American one is much more indirect; it’s much more based on abstractions” (Said 1998, in interview). Said’s notions of American Orientalism remained unexamined until 1988 (and not fully until Little’s work on the subject in 2008). Dash’s study, based more on American’s actual experiences of Haitians, predates this examination of Said’s works.

experiences of Haitians. More than Baroco, Dash was able to show how the U.S. imagined, emphasized, exaggerated, and distorted images of Haitian people. But Dash went further than that; he not only examined American orientalism of Haitians, but Haitian orientalism of Americans as well. More specifically, unlike Baroco who examined Haitians in the American media alone, Dash examined stereotypes of Haitians in American literary works and stereotypes of Americans in Haitian literary works.

Drawing directly from Said's orientalist thesis, Dash (1988) employed Foucault's method of textual analysis to identify what Said terms *textual attitudes* in essentialist discourse of works that project the Other as a negative of the Subject, as dark is to light, unclean is to clean, evil is to good, and, as Dash showed, as a developing Haiti is to an industrialized United States. Dash examined over 50 fiction and non-fiction works from both Haiti and the U.S. He ultimately found that both streams of works were (1) influenced by historical events and (2) largely instrumental in helping write the Haitian identity. Dash's work however suffers from similar critiques of Said's orientalism: that orientalist critiques removes culpability from imperial nations that inscribe images of ethnic people in media. Nonetheless, Baroco and Dash's studies revealed the extent to which representations of Haiti in news and literature influenced historical events in the United States and Haiti.

More recently, Jacob (1996) has shown that racially inscribed images of ethnic people in media have been an enduring element in American journalism, meaning that racism is an integral part of news reports. Jacob compared the *Los Angeles Times*, a mainstream newspaper, and the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, an African-American newspaper, in coverage of the 1991 Rodney King beating. Examining only the literary elements (plot, character, and genre) of the story in both

newspapers, he found that the black and mainstream newspapers were virtually identical in the racial nature of their reports.

Other studies have deconstructed Haitians' cultural identity in the media and literature (Celeste 2005; Dayan 1998; Lawless 1992; Lionnet 2008; Magloire 2000; Racine 2004; Walker 1993). Scholars of this vein have shown historical racist discourses, such as when an imperial U.S. clung "to characterizations of blacks as barbaric and subhuman" in literature about the Haitian people (Giles and Marshall 2003: 522). For example, one 19th century American author described Haitians on the island as transforming from "[a mass], trembling in hundreds before a single white man, into a people able to organized themselves and defeat the most powerful European nations of their day" (Giles and Marshall 2003: 522; also see Tiffin 1995: 356-69 on the politics of de-colonization). Here Haitians are perceived as inferior from the start, a perception that Americans relied on to justify their literary descriptions. Dash provides a further deconstructionist explanation that:

In order to deal with the disturbing and threatening existence of a state founded by ex-slaves, Americans resorted to the discourse that had already stabilized the way the black race would be perceived. Relations between the United States and Haiti were the political articulation of such a discourse and to this extent, it could be claimed that the United States invented Haiti imaginatively in the nineteenth century (Giles and Marshall 2003: 522).

Dash uses Said's concept of orientalism, referring to "Eurocentric discourse representing itself as innocent," (Chua 2011: 434) as a springboard to explain further how

like the orient, Haiti emerges as an inexhaustible symbol designed to satisfy the material as well as psychological needs. Images of mystery, decadence, and romance and adventure are not arbitrary in either case but constitute a special code, a system of antithetical values which establishes radical, ineradicable distinctions between the Subject and the Other, West and East, the United States and Haiti (1997: 2)

Here, Dash suggests that mystifying images of Haiti coming out of the U.S., such as in the citations above, can even appear as the *universal-speaking subject*, which has in an unfortunate way been accepted by the Haitian people and allows them to use these views to write about themselves. Reproduction of these myths in text especially emerged in the racist discourse about the specter of the so-called Black Fear. These writings were created mostly as a racial response to the Haitian insurrections with emphasis on Haitian inferiority on the French island.<sup>24</sup>

Moving to the 21<sup>st</sup> century media study, Celeste (2005: x) attempted to explain societal rejection of the Haitian immigrant population. She found that ethnocentrism in the media contributed to how people viewed Haitians as a group between the years 1994 and 2004. Media frames of Cubans and Haitians in 177 articles in the *New York Times* over a decade's time, according to Celeste, revealed that although both groups were framed negatively, Haitians were portrayed in the media more negatively with 206 frames to 23 positive frames. Her study revealed that “[o]nly 16.6% of the stories about Haitians (n = 16) contained positive frames...[with] six dominant negative frames emerging for Haitians as [representative of] Character Weakness, Poor, Victim, Troubled Nation, Primitive Other, and Immigrant” (Celeste 2005: 31-2).<sup>25</sup>

It is important to note that Celeste's study was developed from a broader concern over the social implications of the negative Haitian portrayals generated by the mass coverage surrounding the controversy between Cuban and Haitian refugees in late 1970s. At the time, the recent arrival

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<sup>24</sup> Slaveholding colonies feared that blacks might rise against whites and take over their colony. Europeans produced this discourse and it reinforced widespread beliefs of Haitians' barbarism, and not the Haitians' injustice—so much so that even Haitians were not immune to internalizing it by taking on that persona. The Haitian Dictator François Duvalier's adoption of the moniker “Papa Doc” after witch doctor with roots in black magic represents one extreme example of Haitian internalizing stereotypes (Nash 1998: 162). More recent attempts to deconstruct negative portrayals of Haiti are found in studies on media frames—to mean the social construction of social phenomena by mass media sources.

<sup>25</sup> Some researchers have suggested ways to reverse the coverage of Haitians character as weak, poor, victim, primitive and so on (Giles 2003).

of refugees en masse to the U.S. produced a public outcry on the incorporation of Cuban and Haitian immigrants in South Florida, and the prevalent racial tensions and prejudices about and between these two groups (Portes and Stepick 1993). These racial and cultural tensions surrounded the manner in which one group gained faster permanent residence and eventual citizenship, while the other group did not.

Other studies followed Celeste's lead to focus on the frames in mass media coverage of Haitians during times of crises in the Haitian homeland. Potter (2011), for instance, examined American media coverage during the 2004 Haitian Crisis soon after Haiti's Bicentennial Celebration. Through her qualitative and quantitative content analysis of over 700 articles on the coverage of Haiti in five major newspapers—*Miami Herald*, *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*—she identified several stereotyped frames which included Violence and Political Unrest, Poverty, Economy, History, Illicit drug, Landscape, and Refugee frames. Potter's study was ultimately an appeal to readers. She argued that Haiti is mired in foreign negative perceptions and representations that make it hard for (foreigners, I presume; or perhaps Haitians; she was unclear in this regard) to address the real issues plaguing the island.

In the 2010s, Herring (2011) did a similar study of American media coverage of another crisis, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Unlike Potter (2011), Herring examined the yearlong effect of the 24-hour cable news cycle on the coverage of Haiti. Herring used discourse analysis to analyze over 200 news transcripts from the three most viewed cable networks—CNN, MSNBC, and FOX. Herring identified five emergent themes in the networks' coverage: Problematic Pre-conditions, Incompetence of the Haitian Government, U.S. Involvement, Victim experience, and Recovery. With these frames, Herring concluded that the portrayal of Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake was not only shaped in the American media by an "if it bleeds, it leads" 24-hour news cycle

platform, but by networks that preyed on events unfolding in Haiti as a result of the earthquake, at which point the reports went from coverage of a disaster to coverage of crisis.

Balaji (2011) took a racial approach in his assessment of the earthquake coverage. He argued that the stereotyped responses to the Haiti earthquake reflect a racialization of pity and the privileging of a white view of a dark world as dysfunctional. His cultural critique is echoed by English and American studies scholar Trčková (2011) who through critical discourse analysis hypothesized that embedded and encoded Western ideologies that portray nature as peoples' enemies concealed human failures in newspaper discourse about Hurricane Katrina, Tsunami in Indonesia and the Haitian Earthquake.

Contrary to what he discovered about the reportage of other natural disasters, Trčková found that newspaper discourse about the Haitian earthquake in the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Globe and Mail* did not conceptualize nature as the enemy of the Haitian people. Rather, while natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the Indian tsunami were portrayed as the cause of disaster, newspaper discourse about the Haitian earthquake blamed human failure. Trčková concluded that the emphasis on poor socio-economic conditions in Haiti allowed for a patronizing ideology of the media that portrayed helpful Western rich countries helping a helpless and dependent Haiti (Trčková 2011: 134, 137, and 140). Others concur with Balaji and Trčková and have been critical of the mainstream media overall. These studies went beyond investigating stereotyped frames to a general critique of the press about Haiti (Lawless 1992, Farmer 2003, and Wilentz 1989).

Perhaps the most comprehensive study on the foreign coverage of Haiti is anthropologist Lawless's (1992) work *Haiti's Bad Press*. Lawless explains that Haiti's bad press evolved from folk beliefs about Haiti. Drawing on a plethora of primary sources, Lawless traces the origin of

foreign biases toward Haiti to centuries of American and British skewed press coverage of the island and its people. In Lawless's view (1992: 29) "by the time England became involved in the slave trade [circa 1600s]...most of the slaves were black Africans, and slavery itself required some justification other than war," which was different from the past slavery of whites. Therefore, new rationalizations in Africa were needed, "centered on the supposed mental inferiority of blacks and their alleged suffering under savagery of their own [African] leaders in the interior of diseased and untamed Africa" (1992: 29). These rationalizations began to appear in popular English travel accounts, representing "long-standing racial prejudices of Europeans," which circulated around the world and informed travelers about the African heritage in Haiti.

The popular works of Amy Wilentz (1989) and Paul Farmer (2003) have also called attention to Haiti's bad press. Wilentz's book titled *The Rainy Season* provided an in-depth report of the reality of Haitian life that differed from mainstream reports of Haiti, which covered the fall of Dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier between 1986 and 1989. In contrast to Wilentz's attempts, medical physician Paul Farmer argued that those wanting to understand the troubles of Haiti ought to understand centuries of its uses and abuses by the U.S. government and American press. More specifically, he maintained that Haiti's present status resulted from its client-state role under U.S. influence. This influence was (is) concealed in the journalistic distortions of the American press. To support his thesis, Farmer wove testimonies from his patients in Haiti and other primary and secondary sources to lambast the U.S. government for its major role in destabilizing the tiny island. His book gives an informative account for why Haiti has remained dysfunctional for so long.

Others studies have shown that there are American cities in which Haitians have garnered a more positive image, proving that negative stereotyped images can be resisted. As Jackson (2007:

abstract) observed in a study of Haitians in Boston, for example, “the local media and Haitian narrators position Haitians alongside groups [like the Irish and Italians] that were once marginalized, poor, and politically powerless, but over time and through hard work overcame those conditions.”

Celeste (2011: 371) argued that positive images of Haitians emerged when they exhibit qualities of *good immigrants* or “model immigrants” who are shown to reflect “the mythological ‘American success story.’” Celeste’s thesis, which was first posited by Robert Park and his Chicago team, assumes a melting pot ideology (a melting away of ethnic identity) that results from a competitive motive among immigrants, a visceral drive that “largely ignores the social and structural barriers that exist for [them, and, by extension] people of color, or [of] those living in poverty in the United States” (Celeste 2011: 371). *Bad immigrants*, on the contrary, are seen as the antithesis of this; they are seen not as viscerally competitive and so remain ethnic and trapped by social and structural barriers. Thus, their images are manipulated in the press to reflect a threat as well as their failure to achieve the American dream. The mainstream media portrays good immigrants with a sense of individuality by displaying their face in photographs, representing them as desirable in the U.S., and assimilating to America’s labor demands. Bad immigrants are portrayed as faceless individuals amidst their homeland tragedy, having little agency and ability to shape their own realities (Celeste 2011: 372).

Celeste’s emphasis on a melting pot underestimates the significance of race and racism in America (Feagin 2009), and does not stand up against classic studies that reveal the enduring nature of ethnic identities in the U.S. (Glazer 1970). Nonetheless, Celeste is correct that Haitian stereotypes have endured for “the large migrations of poor Haitians, particularly after political disturbances, that have come to typify this group for the U.S. media” (Celeste 2011: 377).

## 2.2 HAITIAN SELF-PERCEPTIONS

In contrast to American perceptions of Haitians, how do Haitians self-perceive themselves? Do perceptions of Haitian and Haitian Americans differ? How do Haitians perceive Haitian Americans, and vice versa?

For the better part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Haitians thrived undetected under the canopy of the black community (Reid 1939: 97-98). Before 1980, the United States Census did not list Haitians as a separate ethnic/racial category (Stafford 1984: 174). It was not until the 1970s that the invisibility of black immigrants was studied by scholars who argued that the cultural impact of such immigrants had been ignored because they suffered from *double invisibility*<sup>26</sup>—as black and foreigners (Bryce-Laporte 1972: 31).

A different double invisibility occurred for Haitians who experienced the dilemma of being treated as African-American (Woldemikael 1989: 164). Older first generation Haitians who, Woldemikael (1989: 165) notes, “attempted to assert their identity,” learned to be race conscious and recognized that their employers assumed they were African-American—a people they consider of lower status than any other ethnic group.<sup>27</sup> Haitians’ ethnic misidentification, presented “a major constraint to their aspirations” of moving up in U.S. society (Woldemikael 1989: 165).

First generation Haitian immigrants have negative stereotypes about African-Americans (see Schmalz 1989 on Miami’s ethnic conflict between Blacks and Haitians). They think of them as “not tak[ing] advantage of opportunities available to them, which contrasts with Haitians who

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<sup>26</sup> Bryce-Laporte (1972) also uses the term “triple minorities” to characterize black immigrants as black, black foreigner, and speakers another language.

<sup>27</sup> Haitians seem to exhibit what Killian and Johnson (2006) write about North African immigrant women in France who employ a “Not-Me” identity or “self-disidentification” toward being labeled an “immigrant.”

risked and sacrificed a great deal to come to the United States for those opportunities” (Waters 1999: 66). As a result, Haitian-Americans perceive themselves as superior to other black Americans and choose to distance themselves from them.

Second generation Haitians who were born into this country or grew up here from a young age, however, have tended to identify as black Americans. Their parents identified with Haitian groups in the U.S.; whereas this generation of Haitians “aspire to participate and be hired in a bigger [American] job market”—a market economy they view “as functioning efficiently to allow those who work hard to succeed” (Waters 1999: 66; Williams, Jackson, Brown, Torres, Forman, and Brown 1999: 508, see also Drotbohm 2009; Marcelin 2005; Potvin 1999; Reid 1939; Waters 1999). Second generation Haitian youth, however, soon found themselves choosing between their Haitian and their assumed black identity in light of the stigmas and prejudice associated with being Haitian in America.<sup>28</sup> Yet Waters (1994: 801) observed that some Haitian youths retained “networks and social ties from church and voluntary organizations [that] creates...interlacing ties which reinforce parental authority and values vis-à-vis the second generation.” “These groups”, she notes, “resist acculturation to the United States and end up providing better opportunities for the second generation” (1994: 801).

On the island nation of Haiti, Haitians perceive themselves differently. On the one hand, the majority of black indigenous Haitians tend to identify with their African roots. They see themselves as an *uprooted* (Handlin 2001) people from West Africa, and African tribes. The most fundamentalist of them all reject any European influence, believing in a Haitian black culture

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<sup>28</sup> Haitian immigrants share this common racialization with Israelis. Mittleberg and Waters (1992: abstract) showed that Israelis experience the same “ambivalence with the identities that American society would assign to them as Jews and black respectively” but conclude that the “primacy of race” in America afforded more identity options to Jews than to Haitians who were limited to choosing the Black American identity in spite of the stigma of being Haitian.

(*Noirism* and *Negritude ideology*), black language (Haitian *Kréyol*) and black religion (*vodou*<sup>29</sup>—a variant of Catholicism mixed with Amerindian ‘Tainos’ and West African beliefs): all of which are grounded in the African tradition. Black Haitians who perceive themselves this way do so not only because of the pain<sup>30</sup> from their European-imposed slavery, but because, as descendants of slaves from primarily West Africa and the wider African regions, they essentially draw from African beliefs and customs. On the other hand, Haitians are influenced by the Spanish and early French colonizers that brought Catholic religion<sup>31</sup> (Spain), the language (French), and respective customs. Haitians, therefore, have tended to accept this influence as a means of social mobility. In no other group is this acquisition of colonial culture more evident than among Haitian mulattoes—these light-skinned Haitians who were the illegitimate children of white-Frenchmen and female black slaves.

Haitians on the island also tend to perceive themselves as religiously devout. Rey and Stepick (2013: 3) write, “Historically, Haiti has been a predominantly Roman Catholic—and Vodouist—country, although Pentecostalism also has a long history in the Caribbean nation and has grown considerably influential over the last three generations.” Roman Catholicism, Vodou, and Pentecostalism make up “the three sides of what Drexel Woodson (1993: 157) refers to as a ‘religious triangle of forces’ that pervades Haitian society and culture” (Rey and Stepick 2013: 3). Haitians will therefore perceive themselves as *katolik fran* (or frank Catholics)—who believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ as his original followers taught and practice it; Vodouist—who

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<sup>29</sup> There is also growing literature surrounding Haitian immigrants and religion. Such investigations are mostly anthropological and focus on the role of religion of the Haitian people. Orientalist fascination about the rituals and beliefs of African people have always fed the imagination of the foreigner. Going back to the slave trade, scholars have tried to put into context Haitian culture. Among the Haitian people there’s been a move to understand their culture of mysticism embodied in their beliefs of what is known as vodou (or voodoo).

<sup>30</sup> Haitians tend to characterized slavery as a “painful” experience (Gates 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Catholicism was brought by the Spanish in 1511 to pacify the revolts.

believe in a supernatural reality exists with plants and animals enmeshed in Catholic symbolism; and Pentecostal—who believe in separating one’s self from the world to secure salvation. Followers of each of the three religions have become more devout and spiritual since the 2010 earthquake. As Rey and Stepick (2013: 6) explained, “many Haitian Protestants consider Vodou to be satanic and the source of Haiti’s many trials and tribulations, including the tragic 2010 earthquake.”

### 3.0 DATA AND METHODS

In this chapter, I outline the method of research, including the process of data collection and sampling of newspaper articles. I also discuss the preliminary study in New York as well as the method of coding and data analyses, and assessment of data reliability of validity.

#### 3.1 DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLING IN MIAMI CITY

I carried out a content analysis of a sample of Miami newspaper articles for the period 1979 – 2010. I examined news articles in three newspapers that primarily target different racial audiences: the pan-American mainstream daily newspaper the *Miami Herald*, the African-American weekly newspaper the *Miami Times*, and the Haitian community's weekly *Haiti-Observateur*.

The *Herald*, founded in 1903, is the largest newspaper in South Florida, serving Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties of multi-ethnic populations. (The *Herald* also publishes two Spanish-language newspapers, *El Nuevo Herald* and *Diario las Americas*, for Spanish speakers). To date, the *Herald* has an average circulation of 174,000 daily.

The *Miami Times* is one of two black-owned newspapers serving the black community of South Florida (the other being the *Miami New Times*). The *Miami Times* is the larger of the two, and it serves Miami-Dade and Broward counties since its founding in 1923. It is the most important newspaper for South Florida's black community, awarded the John B. Russwurm Trophy in 2011 by The Black Press of America as the #1 Black newspaper in the country (*Miami Times* website 2011). Currently, the *Times* has a weekly circulation of 20,000.

This study also investigated the coverage of Haitian immigrants in a weekly Haitian newspaper (*Haiti-Observateur*). The *Haiti-Observateur* (often referred to here as the *Observateur*) is the oldest and most significant newspaper serving the Haitian community. It was founded in 1971 and represents one of three major independent newspapers serving the Haitian community (the other two being *Haiti Progrés* and *Haiti en Marche*<sup>32</sup>) with a combined circulation of 125,000. Raymond A. Joseph and brother Leopold, Haitian political exiles, founded the newspaper with the expressed intention of bringing about democratic reform in Haiti. The newspaper publishes articles in English and French.

I sampled articles to compare the coverage of three pivotal events pertaining to the Haitian American community in the second half of the 20th century: The Haitian boatlift crisis in 1979, the AIDS epidemic in 1983, and the Haitian earthquake in 2010 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Collected sample of news articles by crisis**

CRISIS	NEWSPAPER			N =
	<i>Miami Herald</i>	<i>Miami Times</i>	<i>Haiti-Observateur</i>	
Haitian Boatlift	96	53	10	159
AIDS Epidemic	97	15	20	132
Earthquake	62	29	40	131
<b>N =</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>422</b>

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<sup>32</sup> I examined articles from the New York based *Haiti-Observateur* instead of the Miami-based *Haiti en Marche* since the *Observateur* was founded in 1971, covered the sampling frame of historical events from 1979 through 2010 and had wide circulation in South Florida. *Haiti en Marche*, however, was founded in 1983, short of the sampling frame under investigation and was not the leading Haitian newspaper at the time of its founding.

I collected 159 articles for 1979, around 132 articles for 1983, and about 131 articles for 2010. The total number of articles for this study is 422 (*Miami Herald* 255, *Miami Times* 97, and *Haiti-Observateur* 70).

To generate my data sets, I conducted keyword searches in the data base archives for “Haitian” “Haitians and Cuba” “Cubans and refugees” “detain” “judge” deport” Haitian” and “black” from May 1, 1979 to May 31, 1980. These keywords were specific to the media coverage of the Haitian boatlift crisis. I searched for “Haitians” “homosexual and AIDS” “stigma” “sex” “CDC” and “blood,” from March 1, 1983 to April 30, 1985—words specific to the AIDS epidemic. Finally, I searched for “Haiti and earthquake” “bodies” “victims” “sympathy” “solidarity” “smells” “violence” “dirty,” from January 12, 2010 to October 31, 2010—words specific to the earthquake disaster. The keywords were generated through a pretest of New York newspapers.

The subsamples were derived from three sources: the *Miami Herald* online archives for 1982 and 2010, and the *Herald*'s microfilm data archive at the Miami-Dade Public Library System (MDPLS) Florida Department for 1979, and the *Times*' microfilm archive at the MDPLS Florida Department for 1979, 1982 and 2010. Subsamples of the *Miami Times* were derived also from the University of Florida Digital Collections. I traveled to Miami, Florida, for a month to collect these data, during the month of June to July of 2013. Sub-samples of the *Haiti-Observateur* were derived from newspapers in the University of Pittsburgh online archives and the University of Wisconsin-Madison microfilm archives.

I used frame analysis from a grounded theory approach to sort out the viewpoints and stances reflected in news articles (Corbin and Strauss 2008; Creed et al. 2002: 38, in Bullock 2010: 45). *Frames* are the underlying assumptions and values that shape human perception and drive human action (Rein and Schon 1994; Gray 2003, in Bullock 2010: 44). They can be reflected in

spoken, written, or signed language (e.g. physical gestures) (Bullock 2010: 45). In historical documents especially, they “reflect decisions (either conscious or unconscious) about how to convey meaning about events and behavior through selection of ‘some aspects of a perceived reality [which makes] them more salient in a communicative text’” (Entman 1993: 52-57). Since framing implies “selection” and “salience”, frames are selectively “carried out by the news media, as is the decision to emphasize certain elements” (Van Gorp 2005: 488 on Entman). Successful uses of frames are, as Van Gorp (2005: 488) reminds us, “deeply anchored in the spirit of the age...and resonate naturally with the cultural motives” (Entman 1991, Gamson, 1995). Frames are politically constructed. As Creed summarized,

Eliciting frames from historical texts help us understand the contesting interests, the deep logics beneath them, and how they were reflected in discourse and polemics at the time. Seeing which frames were advocated by whom and which ultimately dominated pushes deeper understanding about power, politics and interests. (2008, 38, in Bullock 2010: 45)

Investigating the presence, absence and degree of *Black fear*, *polluted*, and *poverty* images pertaining to the coverage of Haitian people in the American news media therefore contributes to the sociological understanding of the struggle and interests of political power.

### **3.2 PRE-TEST IN NEW YORK CITY**

In summer 2012, I carried out a pre-test for this Miami study in New York City. I sampled two newspapers, the *New York Times*, and the *New York Amsterdam News*, to examine their coverage of the boatlift crisis, AIDS epidemic, and Aristide’s election. The study yielded interesting frames and sub-frames which were tested in the Miami study (see sample coding scheme in ATLAS in

Appendix A). The screenshot of the coding scheme in ATLAS (in Appendix A) specifically describes an article from the *New York Amsterdam News* illustrating Haitians in 1980, analyzed for my pretest. The excerpts show how I coded the text in the Miami study. In New York, I coded for frequent attributes, especially those illustrating negative images of the Haitian people. These attributes were clustered from primary coding of concrete characterizations. The study yielded a mix of positive and negative codes.

Miami and New York have comparable Haitian diasporas. However, their histories are different since Haitian migration streams shifted from New York in the 1950s to Miami in the 1970s. Early Haitian migrants in New York were largely urban (social conscious) elites, landowners who abandoned their property, and economic migrants who took advantage of the liberalization of American immigration policies and work permits during Papa Doc's tyrannical regime in the 1960s. Haitians in New York therefore early on opposed building an ethnic enclave since most viewed themselves as political refugees and their economic status as temporary (Fouon 1989)—an outlook that reflected their vivid sense of someday returning to an economic and politically stable Haiti (Schiller and Fouon 1998). Eventually, Haitians in the New York region formed hometown associations, which established transnational links with the homeland and an organ to speak out against the Duvalier administration, which helped develop the Haitian American identity (Pierre-Louis 2002).

Haitian migrants in Miami, however, largely tended to be unskilled, of rural origins and refugee claimants who initially fled Haiti amidst the collapse of the agricultural market in 1970s, then after the political violence with the overthrow of Baby Doc during the 1980s, and more so after the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's President in the 1990s. Haitians in Miami are therefore relatively recent arrivals to the United States (Stepick 1998: 6), many of whom could not

afford to travel north to meet their relatives in New York. Unlike their Cuban counterparts, Haitians have not been incorporated into largely ethnic enterprises; rather, as laborers, they fill a demand for low-wage in service industries (i.e., hotels and restaurants) and tourism (Mooney 2009: 56-57). Haitian-Cuban relations were strained over racial and cultural tensions surrounding the manner in which the U.S. government handled the initial bias toward determining asylum for refugee entrants.

Shifts in migration streams have shaped the Haitian diasporas in Miami and New York in terms of their sense of community and residency status. The diasporas are nevertheless comparable. Haitian presence in Miami is not unlike Stafford's (1984: 177) description of New York City neighborhoods

marked by Haitian Kréyol or French masses at Catholic churches; store front Haitian Protestant churches; bilingual education programs at local schools; transfer companies sending remittances back to Haiti; restaurants that serve griot (fried pork cubes) and diri ak poua (rice and beans); music stores advertising the popular Haitian "mini jazz" bands; and Haitian community centers that focus on delivery of social services, education and legal assistance.

Likewise, Haitians in both cities (as is the case for Haitians living in other host societies), as Mooney notes (2009: 5), continue to

face similar hurdles to their adaptation, including difficulty in obtaining legal papers, the burden of working low-wage jobs, the general handicap of being a racially distinct minority and, as such, a frequent object of discrimination, and the problems associated with living in poor and often crime-ridden neighborhoods.

**Table 2: Top two cities of residence for Haitians: New York and Miami (1986-1996)**

Year	United States	New York	Miami
1985	10165	6175	683
1986	12666	7145	1983
1987	14819	6274	3533
1988	34806	6075	13367
1989	13658	6141	1861
1990	20324	8056	3635
1991	47527	8141	15996
1992	11002	2288	3536
1993	10094	3325	1925
1994	13333	4085	2294

### 3.3 THE DATA

I collected 422 news articles from three newspapers—*Miami Herald*, *Miami Times*, and *Haiti-Observateur*—focused on three events in Miami, Florida: the Haitian boatlift crisis from May 1, 1979 to May 31, 1980; AIDS epidemic from March 1, 1983 to April 30, 1985; and Haiti earthquake from January 12, 2010 to October 31, 2010. The dataset of articles composed of microfilm (15.6%), word-processed (70.1%), digitized (13.6%), and physical print articles (1%). Each format of articles required different means of data collection, which presented unique limitations to the research process.

The *Miami Times* newspapers on microfilms (1979-1985) required analog and digital magnification to be read on desktop microform readers. However, some of the *Times*' microfilms had missing pages of articles, which were skipped inadvertently when microfilming took place.<sup>33</sup> As a result, some of the subsample of articles collected were incomplete, missing the adjoining page. These articles were included in the subsample and treated more cautiously.<sup>34</sup> The collected subsamples of articles on microfilms were scanned digitally, or photocopied, then transcribed in Microsoft Word. The MS Word files were then uploaded into ATLAS.ti, the qualitative data analysis program.

Most of the collected subsample of articles were already word-processed and therefore easy to upload into ATLAS.ti. For instance, I retrieved word-processed articles from the *Miami Herald* online archives (1982-2010). These were articles in standard word-processing format, including a title, by-line, date of publication and photographic captions, but no pictures—though the articles “did note when a photograph was included” with the story.<sup>35</sup> A standard word-processed article is, as Hartley (2012: 331) described, “not a picture of the article as it was featured in the newspaper column format”. As a result, word-processed subsamples of the articles could not be investigated in newspaper format as they were featured to readers at the time of publication. Moreover, there were several instances of duplicate word-processed articles, which I excluded from the subsamples. I did include appended articles into the subsample, as they had information which was included at the time of publication.

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<sup>33</sup> According to the genealogy company, Ancestry.com (2015), skipped pages on microform can occur inadvertently when pages stick together when turned or pages were missing when microfilming began.

<sup>34</sup> I used grounded theory to elicit themes in incomplete articles. I investigated those themes through memo write-ups and reflective notes.

<sup>35</sup> Phrasing adapted from Hartley (2012: 331).

Some of the subsample of articles were digitized; these were digital images of pages from the newspaper in column format as they appeared at the time of publication. Similar to microfilm, copies of the *Haiti-Observateur* (1979-1985), for instance, required digital magnification to be read on a computer. A principal disadvantage with the digitized subsamples involved copyright issues regarding photography included in the story. For example, several digitized subsamples of the *Miami Times* had photographs intentionally blurred due to copyright protections. In addition, the digital subsamples at the University of Florida Digital Collections online could not be saved on a data storage device nor printed. Instead, the digital subsamples had to be transcribed from the online archives site to MS Word documents, and then uploaded into ATLAS.ti. Physical newsprint articles were transcribed and uploaded directly into ATLAS.ti.

From the outset, the subsamples of articles for the *Herald*, the mainstream newspaper, averaged approximately 800 words. The *Times*, the black newspaper, averaged approximately 600 words, while the *Haiti-Observateur* averaged approximately 900 words in length. Since the *Times* and *Obsevateur* are weekly publications, and the *Herald* is a daily publication, the black (22.6%) and Haitian newspaper (15.8%) respectively had fewer subsamples of articles than the mainstream newspaper (61.6%)—representing a total 38.4% of the sample size. The subsample of articles ranged in length of 112 words and 2,935 words.

During the coding process, it became clear that the subsample of articles (but not those of the *Haiti-Observateur*<sup>36</sup>) could be classified into three groups:

(a) Articles that *specifically* discussed the Haitian people: In these articles, Haitians were the main topic and addressed a range of matters: from happenings occurring in Haiti, to threats of

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<sup>36</sup> Since the *Haiti-Observateur* specifically targets the Haitian community, the Haitian articles could not be classified in order of degree of focused coverage.

possible mass migration into the U.S., to the impact of Haitian immigration on all levels of American society—local, state, and federal.

(b) Articles that *broadly* discussed the Haitian people: These articles discussed Haitians as a contributing factor to broader issues like immigrant criminality, an economy in recession, illegal immigration, public health issues, and America’s humanitarian commitment to the world. In other words, Haitians were not the main topic for these articles; rather, they often served as supporting evidence to the main point of the news story.

(c) Articles that *marginally* discussed the Haitian people: these articles simply mentioned Haitians in passing.

The classified articles revealed the following: The majority of the news articles (69%) between 1979 and 2010 focused specifically on the plight of Haiti and Haitian people (Table 3). By newspapers, the *Miami Times*’ produced the most articles focused specifically on the Haitian people, which was indicative of the long history of African-American news coverage of this group, with African-Americans being among the Haitians’ greatest allies (Baroco 2011). In this case, the *Miami Times* had nearly twice as many news articles (93.8%) focused specifically on the Haitian people, compared with 50.8% in the *Miami Herald* between 1979 and 2010.

**Table 3. Distribution of articles focused on Haitians by newspapers, 1979-2010, in % (N)**

Article focus	<i>Miami Herald</i>	<i>Miami Times</i>	<i>Haiti-Observateur</i>	Newspaper Dataset
Broad	41.7 (106)	4.1 (4)	0.0 (0)	26.0 (110)
Specific	50.8 (130)	93.8 (91)	100.0 (70)	69.0 (291)
Marginal	7.5 (19)	2.1 (2)	0.0 (0)	5.0 (21)
Total	100.0 (255)	100.0 (97)	100.0 (70)	100.0 (422)

However, the mainstream newspaper covered more broad-based issues (such as immigrant criminality, recession economy, and illegal immigration) that were affecting the wider Miami community, than did the black newspaper. Here, the mainstream newspaper produced ten times as many articles (41.7%) focused broadly on the Haitian people, compared with the black newspaper articles (4.1%) throughout that time.

Differently, *Haiti-Observateur*, the Haitian newspaper, mostly covered events unfolding in Haiti and among Haitians in the United States. The Haitian newspaper, therefore produced only news articles (100%) focused specifically on the Haitian people, the paper’s main target audience.

Looking at the three crises, the Haiti earthquake garnered greater attention in the mainstream newspaper than in events prior. This is reflected in the extent to which the mainstream newspaper produced more articles (98.4%) focused specifically on the Haitian people in the earthquake aftermath than in coverage of the previous events—the 1979 boatlift Crisis (52.1%) and 1983 AIDS epidemic (18.6%)—Table 4.

**Table 4. Distribution of articles focused on Haitians in the *Miami Herald*, in % (N)**

Article focus	Boatlift Crisis 1979		AIDS Epidemic 1983		Earthquake 2010		Newspapers Dataset	
Broad	42.7	(41)	67.0	(65)	1.6	(1)	42.0	(107)
Specific	52.1	(50)	18.6	(18)	98.4	(61)	50.5	(129)
Marginal	5.2	(5)	14.4	(14)	0.0	(0)	7.5	(19)
Total	100.0	(96)	100.0	(96)	100.0	(62)	100.0	(255)

However, during the AIDS epidemic, mainstream articles focused more on the issue of AIDS and Haitians as a contributing factor in the epidemic, than them as the sole cause of it. The mainstream newspaper produced more articles (67%) focused broadly on Haitians during the AIDS epidemic than during the boatlift crisis (42.7%) and earthquake disaster (1.6%).

Unlike the mainstream newspaper, the black newspaper produced articles specifically and consistently focused on the Haitian people, which is consistent with historical records of African American coverage of this group (Table 5). Here, the black newspapers produced articles focused specifically on the Haitian people in all three events—boatlift crisis (92.5%), AIDS epidemic (80%), and earthquake (100%).

**Table 5. Distribution of articles focused on Haitians in the *Miami Times*, in % (N)**

Articles focus	Boatlift Crisis 1979		AIDS Epidemic 1983		Earthquake 2010		Newspapers Dataset	
Broad	5.7	(3)	6.7	(1)	0.0	(0)	42.0	(4)
Specific	92.4	(49)	80.0	(12)	100.0	(29)	50.5	(90)
Marginal	1.9	(1)	13.3	(2)	0.0	(0)	7.5	(3)
Total	100.0	(53)	100.0	(15)	100.0	(29)	100.0	(97)

The black newspaper gave more attention to the plight of the Haitians during the earthquake than in previous crises, in which media coverage competed with the McDuffie riots (during the boatlift crisis) (5.7%) or news of the opposition to making Martin Luther King, Jr’s birthday a national holiday and the presidential reelection of Ronald Reagan (during the AIDS epidemic) (6.7%). (Appendix C).

Overall, the descriptive statistics reveal the following: There was a marked shift in the mainstream and black newspaper coverage before and after the earthquake. Both papers produced more articles specifically and exclusively focused on the Haitian people in their earthquake coverage than in previous events. The descriptive statistics regarding the different coverage focus and marked shifts in the newspapers before and after the earthquake informed the following content analysis of the dataset.

### 3.4 CODING, FRAMES, AND DATA ANALYSIS

To investigate the images of Haitian people in the American news media, I initially coded my data in categories based on my New York study. I coded the articles that reveal the themes and subthemes to explore the controlling images such as the *pollution stigma* that I expect to find. I also coded themes that were unexpected findings in the data. I used grounded theory and ATLAS.ti (a data analysis software) to code, sort, and integrate multiple codes in the database.

Through memo write-ups and reflective notes, I discovered that unlike in the New York pilot study, the Miami newspapers had subtle differences in the themes that reflected the varying social norms and cultural meanings in the Miami region. One example is that Haitians are commonly referred to as “West Indians” in the Brooklyn region, but are simply referred to as “Haitians” in Miami. These differences dictated my level of sensitivity to the meaning of the term “West Indian” in the Miami study, which was not used as a form of classifying Haitians in South Florida.

My unit of analysis for coding was the news article. I coded each article via a coding sheet (Appendix B) for use with ATLAS, which helped generate a nuanced system of linked themes and

sub-themes (Bullock 2010: 45). Coded articles were clustered into common themes (such as articles focused on “risk factors for AIDS” “economic refugees” or “relief efforts”). Similar articles were then clustered together into frames and frames with different meanings were separated (e.g., frames of *burden*, *patriotic*, and *primitive*). If an article illustrated more than one frame, then each frame was coded. Frames were then clustered into images (in which Haitians were broadly depicted as *the other boat people*; *anti-authoritarian activists*; or *mEEK of the earth*, for example). These images allowed me to investigate more closely how negative images inscribed Haitian people in the American media.

Coding for frames yielded three types of articles: (a) articles that contain *no* suggestion of controlling images; (b) articles that contain *strong* suggestions of controlling images; and (c) articles that have *some* suggestion of controlling images. ATLAS analysis was particularly useful in exploring this third category which reflects the inferential racism.

In addition, to analyze articles in the Haitian newspaper, I consulted three Haitian translators fluent in the languages of English, French, and Kréyol. These were individuals who travel regularly to Haiti and / or are abreast with the local politics of the nation and helped decode the cultural meaning exhibited in the Haitian articles.

To ensure the reliability of coding, I measured inter-coder reliability to assess the extent to which two coders agree “in such a way that we come up with the same frames” (Van Gorp 2008: 488). As such, I solicited an additional coder to code the news articles. Both coders independently assessed the presence, absence, and/or degree of controlling images in the news articles. This information was considered as manifest or *on the surface content*. When the controlling image was implied, then coders provided their interpretations (Van Gorp 2008: 493). This information was considered as latent or *under the surface* elements.

Furthermore, I employed Cohen's kappa, a statistical measure of inter-coder reliability.

$$k = \frac{\Pr(a) - \Pr(e)}{1 - \Pr(e)}$$

Such that the relative observed percent agreement between coders  $\Pr(a)$  is calculated

$$\Pr(a) = \frac{\text{total agreements} + \text{total disagreements}}{\text{total decisions}}$$

And the probability of random agreement  $\Pr(e)$  is calculated

$$\Pr(e) = \left( \frac{\text{agreements}_{N1}}{\text{total decisions}} \times \frac{\text{agreements}_{N2}}{\text{total decisions}} \right) + \left( \frac{\text{disagreements}_{N1}}{\text{total decisions}} \times \frac{\text{disagreements}_{N2}}{\text{total decisions}} \right)$$

If coders are in complete agreement, then  $k$  equals one ( $k = 1$ ); if coders were not in agreement, other than what would be expected by chance, then  $k$  equals zero ( $k = 0$ ).

I employed Cohen's kappa as opposed to other inter-coder reliability measures, such as Holsti's simple percent agreement, since the above formula controls for the impact of chance. As a rule of thumb, data with  $k$  measures of .70 or more was considered, taking into account that data with the lowest reliability coefficient was treated more cautiously (Van Gorp 2008: 493, on Krippendorff 1982). The computed kappa coefficient for inter-coder reliability was  $k = .842$ . This reliability measured through inter-coding established that I had created relatively robust media frames.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> I randomly selected 30 articles using a random number generator from [www.random.org](http://www.random.org). I then solicited a second coder to code the articles in my absence. (APPENDIX D).

## 4.0 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In this chapter, I describe how I framed the newspapers and analyzed those frames, to explore the depictions of Haitians in the American news media. I examine the different patterns of frames and their groupings, which broadly produced a controlling image of Haitian people as *distressed victims*.

### 4.1 FRAMES

Newspapers, like all historical documents, have underlying assumptions or *frames* that shape human perception. According to Entman (1993: 52-57), frames “reflect decisions (either conscious or unconscious) about how to convey meaning about events and behavior through selection of ‘some aspects of a perceived reality.’” Since people rely on the news media for reliable information, frames shape the consciousness of the audience and how they should feel about the news content.

The following results describe the distribution of frames by newspaper. Through application of grounded theory (which yielded over a hundred memo write-ups and reflective notes) supported by qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti),<sup>38</sup> seven frames were identified, which also emerged in the New York pilot study: (1) the primitive, (2) burdensome, (3) victim, (4) polluted, (5) sympathy, (6) pity, and (7) dreading. However five others emerged: (8) patriotic, (9)

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<sup>38</sup> See Friese (2014) on the combination of using grounded theory and ATLAS.ti to analyze qualitative data.

ennobled, (10) empathy, (11) empowered, and (12) critical. Table 6 presents the list of dominant frames and representative quotes from the dataset of newspapers.

**Table 6. Dominant frames and representative quotes from the American and Haitian newspapers**

Haitian frames	Mainstream	Black	Haitian
<i>Primitive</i>	<p>Few babies in the Haitian village of Boi-pin have ever seen an American. Some stare wide-eyed at first view. The less bold scramble off bawling toward their mothers' ankles... Hidden in the underbrush on a limestone bulge at the island's southeast corner, the village pumps water from three open wells and goes without electricity. A three-foot-deep pit serves as a communal outhouse amid the crops of banana plants, pinion peas and pumpkin vines. While their scrawny chickens pick the dirt between the shacks, the Haitians from Boi-pin scratch for jobs no one else wants. (<i>Miami Herald</i>, December 6, 1982)</p>	<p>Bernice Chamblain keeps a machete under her frayed mattress to ward off sexual predators and one leg wrapped around a bag of rice to stop nighttime thieves from stealing her daughters' food... Women have always had it bad in Haiti. Now things are worse... A curtain of darkness drops on most of the encampments at night. Only flickering candles or the glow of cell phones provide light. Families huddle under plastic tarps because there aren't enough tents. With no showers and scant sanitation, men often lurk around places where women or young girls bathe out of buckets. Clusters of teenage girls sleep in the open streets while others wander the camps alone. (<i>Miami Times</i>, February 10, 2010)</p>	n/a
<i>Burdensome</i>	<p>At least 20,000 Haitians have settled in the county during the past two years since the illegal influx of refugees began. If the federal judge's order this week to release the 500 Haitians held in Dade's Krome Avenue detention camp is upheld, many of them will end up with relatives in Broward, further taxing the agency's resources. (<i>Miami Herald</i>, July 3, 1982)</p>	<p>The Afro-American community is both supportive and apathetic towards the continued arrivals and presence of poor Haitian refugees. There is some grumbling that the refugees can draw public consideration and aid when native born Blacks are completely disregarded or overlooked. There is talk of growing Haitian on Haitian crime. The most overheard and discussed topic seems to be: Why don't established Haitian residents help the refugees? (<i>Miami Times</i>, January 10, 1980)</p>	n/a
<i>Victim</i>	<p>Women covered in dust crawled from the rubble wailing as others wandered through the streets holding hands. Thousands gathered in public squares late into the night, singing hymns. Many gravely injured people still sat in the streets early Wednesday, pleading for doctors. With almost no emergency services to speak of, the survivors had few other options. (<i>Miami Herald</i>, January 13, 2010)</p>	<p>Suffering Haitians who flee to South Florida traditionally discover they have merely swapped one form of oppression for another, traded a prison without walls for a concrete jail... The Immigration and Naturalization Service for years had intimidated, mistreated and endangered Haitians seeking political asylum. Upon their arrival, the Haitians have been imprisoned in Immokalee, Fort Pierce or West Palm Beach. (<i>Miami Times</i>, February 28, 1980)</p>	<p>Judge James Lawrence King acknowledged that Haitians were victims of a discriminatory policy practiced by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and concluded that they actually risked their lives in frail boats fleeing a repressive and inhumane regime... [And that] Judge King further said that the Immigration Service "failed to apprehend the reality of the economic and political rules of the game in Haiti." He argues that "severe poverty" that strangled the country was "a consequence of the political system" and "derivative efforts of Duvalier to stay in power" (<i>Haiti- Observateur</i>, July, 11 1980 p. 1-2)</p>

<i>Polluted</i>	They crossed the sea in ramshackle boats -- and arrived in South Florida carrying a few belongings and multitudes of intestinal parasites: Giardiasis. Hookworm. Amebiasis. Ascariasis. Whipworm. Cryptosporidiosis. Nearly half of the estimated 50,000 Haitians who arrived in Florida between 1970 and 1981 may have been infected with one or more of these parasites. ( <i>Miami Herald</i> , June 8, 1983)	The second stage of Haiti's medical emergency has begun... Some 300,000 people are injured. At Port-au-Prince's General Hospital, patients continue arriving with infections in wounds they can't keep clean because the street is their home...Nearly a month after the quake, respiratory infections, malnutrition, diarrhea from waterborne diseases and a lack of appropriate food for young children may be the biggest killers, health workers say ( <i>Miami Times</i> , March 3, 2010)	n/a
<i>Democratic Solidarity/Patriotic</i>	n/a	n/a	...the Haitian community needs to act upon a spirit of initiative, collaboration and communal benevolence while executing the very staple onto which we first established our independence in 1804. "L'union fait La force" as a diasporic nation we need to be that force which affirms our solidarity, a willingness to hope, mobilize and lead the efforts that will serve to rebuild our Haitian homeland as well as other regions around the world that have been impacted by such devastation. ( <i>Haiti-Observateur</i> , January 20-27, 2010).
<i>Self-interested/ Ennobled</i>	n/a	n/a	From 1804 to the present day, there has been no real strategy to transform the country and provide a national dignity of the population. On behalf of blacks in Haiti, "black" elites have violated the masses of the dictatorship of Duvalier [a regime based on black fundamentalism]. On behalf of the "poor" poor old, they [black elites] still fooled the masses in the time of Aristide and Préval governments. Democratic vision of the so-called anti-Duvalier opposition of yesterday is a lure as many of those who wanted the challenge have shown no imagination, had no real development strategy. Like so many others before them, they did nothing to really get the country from chaos and evaluation of post-Duvalier three decades easily proved: insecurity, military occupation, violence, economic crisis, institutional vacuum in a country where the "uncle macoutisme" is a mute in

		"zeinglen dlo" than a chimera. ( <i>Haiti-Observateur</i> , January 20-27, 2010).	
<i>Sympathy</i>	<p>"What," asks the man in equally halting English, "are they for?" He grasps at once when the doctor explains he has a "problem de TB" but is stumped when the physician adds there is also a "problem de sang." The "problem of the blood" is AIDS and the doctor, who already has seen it kill several men, is faced with telling his 28-year-old patient that he has an incurable, deadly disease..."You are my friend. You tell me you are my friend," he says, in English, to the doctor. Indeed, the sympathetic physician has tried to help the man find work. (<i>Miami Herald</i>, April 10, 1983)</p>	<p>Before the earthquake in Haiti, 65 children lived at the orphanage. Thirty-six more came because their building was damaged. "We are trying to do the best we can," Milfort [the caretaker] said, but it is difficult to feed and care for so many children. Several are dehydrated, she said. Fifteen women are caring for the children in shifts...Delide Jean-Baptiste, a nurse who helped deliver supplies, said she was worried about the conditions of several children...The babies, she said, wore diapers soiled as if they had been worn a long time. "I almost cried," Jean-Batiste said. "It's difficult to see kids living like this." (<i>Miami Times</i>, January 20, 2010)</p>	n/a
<i>Dreading</i>	<p>The vast majority of those individuals are coming here for jobs," Starr told the Southern Conference of Attorneys General. "They are not fleeing persecution. Many Haitians sail for South Florida and think, 'If I can only get to Miami,' they'll get jobs and be okay." Starr said the government will continue to lock up Haitians who illegally enter South Florida. He said, legally speaking, they are not classified as refugees and shouldn't be paroled into the community until their cases are considered. (<i>Miami Herald</i>, May 7, 1982)</p>	<p>...elimination of Friendship Baptist Church as a refuge for the Haitians, and a recent surge in the number of Haitians arriving in Florida, will not prompt any change in the government policy toward the refugees. Jenkins said that members of his church were most elated. He said that the membership has wanted the refugees out of the church for some time. (<i>Miami Times</i>, March 20, 1980)</p>	n/a
<i>Empathy and Identification</i>	<p>Moments after attorney Barbara Malone described her Haitian client Wednesday as a[n] [economically] stable woman who should regain custody of her two young children, Marcia Jean-Baptiste burst into tears, threw herself to the floor and screamed hysterically before a judge and dozens of onlookers in a Dade Circuit courtroom. "I want my children back," Jean-Baptiste shouted frantically, waving her arms in the air. "Please give me my children back."... "She is a distraught mother who is facing a difficult situation," said Dade Circuit Judge Seymour Gelber, who watched Jean-Baptiste fall to his chamber floor. "I have not changed my opinion of her. She was obviously struck at that moment and she lost control of herself. It's a fact of life."</p>	<p>We do not like to entertain the idea that conspiracies against black people exist, however the way the national health agencies have handled the AIDS controversy as it relates to Haitians causes us to waver in our resolve to reject such ideas. Of all the groups that were said to be at high risk or potential carries of AIDS, Haitians made up less than four percent. Yet, Haitians were singled out and given such high visibility that one could have easily gotten the impression that Haitians were the main carriers of the dreaded fatal malady (<i>Miami Times</i>, August 11, 1983)</p>	<p>In the wake of the earthquake in Haiti I am moved to answer this question on behalf of my own family, friends and my partners in Ministry as a matter of collective prayer for the people of Haiti. We are deeply grieved by this tragedy recognizing the insurmountable loss and suffering Haiti continues to endure. Likewise, this very issue of, albeit, climate change, or in this most recent case, an unforeseen catastrophe such as the Haiti earthquake, as media sources describes it, all lends itself to the undeniable observation that God is speaking. It is time that we come together as a global family to listen and head God! (<i>Haiti-Observateur</i>, January 20-27, 2010)</p>

Pathetic	This is one of the worst disasters to strike Haiti in the course of a long and tortured history. Even the once gleaming National Palace, a symbol of strength and resiliency in the face of calamity, collapsed. Streets once teeming with life and commerce have been turned into scenes of heartbreak as the walking wounded pick their way through the rubble and around the uncounted dead and dying. ( <i>Miami Herald</i> , January 14, 2010)	...searchers, 68, in all, had been in the country three days...and found no bodies. "I don't think we'll find anyone alive," he said. "We'll just keep working." Ivan Cruz from Puerto Rico said searching here is more difficult than at the World Trade Center site after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. "There we were looking for people in just one block...Here it's everywhere." ( <i>Miami Times</i> , January 20, 2010)	n/a
Empowerment	n/a	n/a	Another example of the community's [Cape Haitians'] solidarity can be achieved. On February 1st, during the legislative elections of 1979, the solidarity of the Cape assured the triumph of Mr. Lerouge over Vixama, the candidate of the palace [the Duvalier regime]. [Here shows] again, the solidarity of the Cape's population to [influence] the regime. There is no need to say that the solidarity of the Haitian people is the only factor capable of changing the inept, cannibal, and looter Duvalier ( <i>Haiti-Observateur</i> , July 4-11 1980: Front-page, 7).
Critical	n/a	n/a	In the general confusion and collective despair in which has immersed the country, following the deadly earthquake that hit, you cannot resist the temptation to blame the leaders who over the years have turned a deaf ear to warnings about the imminence of this tragic event. Now that the Haitian capital and other areas of the country are virtually destroyed, [they ought to] think to rebuild the ruins of our cities modern urban centers and into real urban gems. This is a huge challenge, which requires the appointment of a brave, wise and intelligent leader. ( <i>Haiti-Observateur</i> , January 20-27, 2010).

Table 7 describes the distribution of frames by newspapers in the dataset, 1979-2010.

**Table 7. Distribution of frames by newspapers, 1979-2010, in % (N)**

Frames	<i>Miami Herald</i>		<i>Miami Times</i>		<i>Haiti-Observateur</i>		Newspapers Dataset	
	100.0% (N = 255)		100.0% (N = 97)		100.0% (N = 70)		100.0% (N = 422)	
primitive	5.5	(14)	1.0	(1)	2.9	(2)	4.0	(17)
burdensome	29.0	(74)	2.1	(2)	1.4	(1)	18.2	(77)
victim	51.8	(132)	83.5	(81)	62.9	(44)	60.9	(257)
polluted	35.3	(90)	4.1	(4)	0.0	(0)	22.3	(94)
patriotic	2.4	(6)	9.3	(9)	17.1	(12)	6.4	(27)
ennobled	2.0	(5)	1.0	(1)	37.1	(26)	7.6	(32)
sympathy	49.8	(127)	68.0	(66)	31.4	(22)	50.9	(215)
dreading	59.2	(151)	7.2	(7)	15.7	(11)	40.0	(169)
empathy	7.5	(19)	34.0	(33)	10.0	(7)	14.0	(59)
pity	11.4	(29)	6.2	(6)	4.3	(3)	9.0	(38)
empowered	3.1	(8)	11.3	(11)	27.1	(19)	9.0	(38)
critical	2.7	(7)	2.1	(2)	50.0	(35)	10.4	(44)

Note: Percentage totals may not equal 100% because articles illustrated multiple frames.

The majority of the newspapers in the dataset used the *victim* and *sympathy* frame between 1979 and 2010. The *victim* frame (60.9%) was used in 257 articles and emphasizes Haitians as powerless, having been forced into dangerous situations, often due to forces beyond their control—beyond their own actions and responsibility. They are depicted as innocent persons subject to the actions of much more powerful institutions and succumbing to social problems such as ethnocentrism, racism, the repercussions of slavery, and crises made by man and nature. They are described also as victims of unjust social and historical processes who are in constant need of foreign assistance and advocates to speak on their behalf.

The *sympathy* frame (50.9%) was used in 215 articles and emphasizes sensitivity toward the mental health and misfortune of the Haitian people. Haitians are described sympathetically as suffering from trauma, depression, and disease. They are described also as victims having been illegally detained and unceremoniously deported, as well as feeling suicidal, unfairly accused, stigmatized, mistreated by officials and/or victimized by natural disasters. The sympathetic coverage suggests a sensitive and concerned attitude toward the plight of the Haitian people about the negative social circumstances facing this group.

The *primitive* frame include stories that emphasize the poor physical appearance of Haitians in their everyday life in Haiti or in the host society. This frame was used in 17 articles (4%). Haitians are described as dirt-poor, ragged, mud-covered, and operating in abject make-shift quarters amidst an undeveloped land. As refugees, they have little to no education and century-old agricultural skills that contribute little to the industrial market in the host society. Moreover, they rely on lay physicians (unqualified persons) or local healers to meet their medical needs, rather than advanced practitioners of modern medicine.

The *burdensome* frame was used in 77 articles (18.2%). This frame emphasizes the threat Haitians pose to the welfare of the Miami community. Haitians are economic migrants who burden the American taxpayer services, overcrowd the public school system, contribute to the city's chronic unemployment, and/or lie in wait in neighboring islands (if not in Haiti) poised to storm the shores of South Florida. They are also described as deviants, increasing the city's crime rate and engaging in promiscuous sexual activity while acquiring and spreading sexually transmitted diseases that harm the safety and public welfare of the community. The burdensome frame suggests the economic and social consequences that Haitians present to the local community,

particularly the city's (in)ability to manage and track the "Haitian problem"—from government attempts at thwarting migrant smuggling to locating Haitians illegally hidden in the city.

The *polluted* frame emphasizes the poor health status of Haitians and their alleged risk of spreading communicable disease. This frame was used in 94 articles (22.3%). Polluted Haitians are described as critically ill refugee arrivals, who, through filthy boats, bring with them deadly disease, intestinal parasites and tainted blood. They are also described as sexually promiscuous and homosexual (despite their religious conservatism) and are likened to drug abusers and drug addicts. In their homeland, they are described as largely malnourished, gravely ill, and survivors of a polluted land, thriving in areas accumulated with garbage and foul smells. The polluted frame suggests the risk that Haitians pose to the public health of the Miami or wider American community, particularly the city's (in)ability to fight disease epidemics (like HIV/AIDS or Tuberculosis) and difficulties in mobilizing a plan of action to stop the spread of the "Haitian disease." Because of their health status, employers are urged not to hire them.

The *dreading* frame emphasizes this group's threat to the welfare of the Miami community. This frame appeared in 169 articles (40%). Unlike the *burdensome* frame, which focused on the strain Haitians put on the city, the tone of dread in news articles emphasized the fear of Haitians' relentless effort to migrate in mass numbers, evade immigration enforcement, take American jobs (by accepting the lowliest of menial jobs), and harbor communicable disease (by avoiding professional healthcare for fear of being identified as illegal and promptly deported). Dreadful coverage evokes fear toward the plight of the Haitian people, particularly regarding the city's (in)ability to manage and track the Haitian immigrants.

The *pity* frame includes stories that emphasize condescendence and sorrow aroused by the suffering of the Haitian people. This frame appeared in 38 articles (9%). The articles described

Haitians with pity – aroused by their suffering of disease, endemic poverty (stemming from political and economic instability in their homeland), and deadly natural disasters. The *pathetic* coverage suggests a condescending attitude toward the Haitian people on the scope of Haitians’ distress and anguish amid their predicament.

Five additional frames were discovered that were not initially identified in the New York study. The *patriotic* frame emphasizes Haitians’ membership and participation in a social movement, arising from their common responsibility and interest in bringing about democracy in Haiti in a democratic way, whether or not individual Haitians were aware of their participation in the movement. Although the newspaper did not specifically use the term *democratic solidarity*, their use of the French word *solidarité* (or solidarity) implies a sense of fighting in unity to bring about Haitian democracy while thinking of democratic ways to achieve that goal. Democratic solidarity was a perspective that emerged as a result of the Duvalier authoritarian regime (1957-1986) whose repression, under which the Haitian people had lived for so long, repressed political life and activism in Haiti. This frame was used in 27 articles (6.4%).

The *ennobled* frame emphasizes Haitians who characteristically exhibited a high regard for their own interests and advantages when working to oust any Haitian regime. This frame was used in 32 articles (7.6%). Self-interested Haitians are depicted as either too political or as “false patriots of the diaspora” who engage in political activities that failed to unite the people of Haiti in their time of need. Furthermore, these Haitians are portrayed as moralistic, ideological propagandists, and carpetbaggers who rise and fall with the ebb and flow of the movement. Newspapers use depictions of self-interested Haitians (elitist, politicians, diplomats, etc.) to inform and mobilize the Haitian community, as well as to redirect Haitian mobilization toward the “true patriots” of the Haitian democratic solidarity movement.

The *empowered* frame was used in 38 articles (9%). These articles opposed dictatorship in Haiti and often portrayed Haitians with an empowering tone to help them “uproot” authoritarian leaders and dictators. This frame therefore emphasized Haitian’s ability to build a social movement and form solidarity against the Haitian regime. The frame is often supported by historical and Christian references. These references evoke a moralistic quality and expression to tie Haitians’ sense of salvation and purpose to the common goal of bringing about democracy in Haiti. Haitians are thus described as having the power and authority to control their destiny in Haiti and the nation’s future. Newspapers used the empowerment frame to suggest a sense of a growing and larger social movement to oust the resident dictator, which included protest against the 2010 Haitian President René Préval.

Lastly, the *critical* frame includes stories that emphasize passing severe judgment toward Haitians either opposed to the Haitian solidarity movement or engaged in unfavorable activism that was believed to be a detriment to the crusade. This frame was used in 44 articles (10.4%). These articles critically judged Haitians for offering or supporting the actions of the Haitian government in place. Some Haitians are also described with a critical eye regarding their style and method of uniting the Haitian community against the brutal Duvalier regime, approaches that seemed hostile to the democratic solidarity movement.

## 4.2 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The frames can be illustrated in percent distribution by crises. The distributions reveal the *Miami Herald*, the mainstream newspaper’s preoccupation with the negative aspects of the Haitian people

over the course of the three events. According to Table 8, from 1979 through 2010, the mainstream newspaper used more frames of Haitians as *dreading* (59.2%) than those used by the *Miami Times*, the black newspaper (7.2%) and *Haiti-Observateur*, the Haitian newspaper (15.7%). The prevalence of mainstream articles depicting Haitians as *dreading* confirms the findings of previous research: that Haiti has been depicted negatively in American mainstream media (Herring 2011; Potter 2009; Celeste 2005; Mole 2004).

The mainstream media's preoccupation with the negative aspects of Haiti and its people for more than a generation has profound implications for the way Americans have perceived this group. American news media, within an American culture industry, report stereotyped responses for the sake of profit, stakeholders, and special interests groups, and so are less likely to present an authentic representation of reality. News media, at the service of their stakeholders, therefore, can greatly influence what their audience reads, hear, or watch. The pattern of American mainstream newspapers depicting Haitian as *dreading* in this study reflects a significant concentration of stakeholders' interests in the negative aspects of Haiti and its people over this time period.

**Table 8. Distribution of newspaper frames by crises, in % (N)**

Frames by Newspapers	Boatlift crisis 1979	AIDS Epidemic 1983	Earthquake 2010	Newspaper Dataset
<i>Miami Herald</i>	100.0% (N = 97)	100.0% (N = 96)	100% (N = 62)	100% (N = 255)
burdensome	66.7 (64)	7.2 (7)	4.8 (3)	29.0 (74)
polluted	1.0 (1)	91.8 (89)	0.0 (0)	35.3 (90)
primitive	8.3 (8)	3.1 (3)	4.8 (3)	5.5 (14)
victim	49.0 (47)	29.9 (29)	90.3 (56)	51.8 (132)
ennobled	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	8.1 (5)	2.0 (5)
patriotic	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	9.7 (6)	2.4 (6)
sympathy	44.8 (43)	28.9 (28)	90.3 (56)	49.8 (127)
dreading	60.4 (58)	86.6 (84)	14.5 (9)	59.2 (151)
empathy	9.4 (9)	2.1 (2)	12.9 (8)	7.5 (19)
empowered	2.1 (2)	0.0 (0)	9.7 (6)	3.1 (8)
pity	6.3 (6)	2.1 (2)	33.9 (21)	11.4 (29)
critical	3.1 (3)	0.0 (0)	6.5 (4)	2.7 (7)
<i>Miami Times</i>	100.0% (N = 53)	100.0% (N = 15)	100% (N = 29)	100.0% (N = 97)
burdensome	3.8 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.1 (2)
polluted	3.8 (2)	0.0 (0)	6.9 (2)	4.1 (4)
primitive	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	3.4 (1)	1.0 (1)
victim	86.8 (46)	86.7 (13)	75.9 (22)	83.5 (81)
ennobled	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	3.4 (1)	1.0 (1)
patriotic	1.9 (1)	6.7 (1)	24.1 (7)	9.3 (9)
sympathy	75.5 (40)	80.0 (12)	48.3 (14)	68.0 (66)
dreading	5.7 (3)	0.0 (0)	13.8 (4)	7.2 (7)
empathy	45.3 (24)	26.7 (4)	17.2 (5)	34.0 (33)
empowered	7.5 (4)	13.3 (2)	17.2 (5)	11.3 (11)
pity	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	20.7 (6)	6.2 (6)
critical	1.9 (1)	0.0 (0)	3.4 (1)	2.1 (2)
<i>Observateur</i>	100.0% (N = 10)	100.0% (N = 20)	100% (N = 40)	100.0% (N = 70)
burdensome	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.5 (1)	1.4 (1)
polluted	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
primitive	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	5.0 (2)	2.9 (2)
victim	60.0 (6)	40.0 (8)	75.0 (30)	62.9 (44)
ennobled	70.0 (7)	30.0 (6)	32.5 (13)	37.1 (26)
patriotic	60.0 (6)	10.0 (2)	10.0 (4)	17.1 (12)
sympathy	20.0 (2)	15.0 (3)	42.5 (17)	31.4 (22)
dreading	40.0 (4)	20.0 (4)	7.5 (3)	15.7 (11)
empathy	50.0 (5)	0.0 (0)	5.0 (2)	10.0 (7)
empowered	70.0 (7)	20.0 (4)	20.0 (8)	27.1 (19)
pity	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	7.5 (3)	4.3 (3)
critical	70.0 (7)	40.0 (8)	50.0 (20)	50.0 (35)

Note: Percentage totals may not equal 100% because articles illustrated multiple frames.

By contrast, the Black newspaper focused on the positive aspects of the Haitian people over the course of the three events. According to Table 8, from 1979 through 2010, the Black newspaper used more *victim* (83.5%) and *sympathy* (68.0%) frames than did the mainstream (51.8%, 49.8%) and Haitian newspapers (62.9%, 31.4%). The black newspaper is also the only newspaper that used the *victim* frame in all three historical events—boatlift (86.8%), AIDS (86.7%) and earthquake (75.9%). *dreading* was the least frequent frame (7.2%) used by the Black newspaper among the three papers in the dataset.

The prevalence of victim and sympathy articles in the Black newspaper reflects the African American news media's continued advocacy for Haitians. Since 1827, Haitians have been icons in Black media as symbols of black hope and pride, beginning in the first African American owned newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*. However, between 1979 and 2010, the American government's treatment of Haitians and Haitian immigrants changed Haiti's racial importance in the Black American community. The plight of the Haitian people became a narrative for the Black newspaper to oppose the racist policies of the Miami and federal government. As such, the dominant pattern of victim and sympathy articles in the Black newspaper was a defense of Haitians, who like blacks, have been victims of racism.

The differences in the prevalence of negative and positive frames used in the respective mainstream and black newspapers support the broader tendency of each paper to produce different portrayals of Haitians (Dash 1988, Baroco 2011). By crisis, the mainstream newspaper experienced a shift in frames before and after the earthquake. Before the earthquake, during the boatlift crisis, the *Miami Herald* mostly framed Haitians as *burdensome* (66.7%) and *dreading* (60.4%). In contrast, it framed them as *polluted* (91.8%) and *dreading* (86.6%) during the AIDS epidemic. After the earthquake, however, the *Miami Herald* framed Haitians as mostly *victims*

(90.3%) and with *sympathy* (90.3%). The shift in the mainstream frames, from negative to positive immediately after the earthquake, is not a surprise given the shared sense of sympathy and global support for Haitian victims in the aftermath, which influenced the media landscape.

Typically, reporters covering communities hit by disasters offer reports dominated mostly by images and accounts of distress and sympathy. Their final news report is then a culmination of a series of decisions (either conscious or unconscious) about how to convey the meaning of the tragedy within the 11-day grace period of life for victims of disaster. Such were the activities of journalists during the news coverage of the aftermath of the 2010 Haitian earthquake. In contrast, past media coverage of disasters in Haiti did not generate the level of sympathetic reporting as did the earthquake coverage. In pre-earthquake disasters, media coverage of victims was often a secondary interest; most news coverage centered on Haitian leaders and their failure to adequately prepare for the disaster (Trčková 2011). However, the gravity and scope of the 2010 earthquake focused more media attention on the victims than on leaders, creating a radical break in coverage of Haiti and the Haitian people, from negative to positive.

In the *Haiti-Observateur*, the majority of articles used the *victim* (62.9%) and *critical* (50.0%) frame—with *victim* being the most prominent frame over the course of the three events. By contrast, the *critical* frame was the least frequently used by the *Times* (2.1%) and *Herald* (2.7%) over the course of the three events. The *Observateur* used the *victim* and *critical* frames to bring attention to the human rights violations committed by the dictatorship of Haiti.

The Haitian newspaper's prevalent use of these frames, which focused on the day-to-day affairs of Haitian life more than the affairs of Haitians in the American mainland, has profound implications for the way Haitian media depict Haitians in the news. *Haiti-Observateur* is an American based newspaper with an expressed mission to inform the Haitian diaspora residing

chiefly in North America. Yet, the newspaper seems to focus more of its resources in Haiti than in the United States. This may be because the newspaper's audience is Haitian immigrants with family in Haiti and who are predictably concerned about diplomatic measures to stabilize the Haitian society, politically and economically. The Haitian newspaper was *critical* about political and economic measures instituted by the government. The pattern of frames in the paper reflects a political agenda that inscribes an image of Haitians as active agents capable of ousting authoritarian leaders.

Despite these differences between the *Herald*, *Times*, and *Observateur*, *victims* and *sympathy* were the dominant frames in the dataset from 1979 through 2010. Yet the dominant frames of victim and sympathy differed in frequency across mainstream “white”, Black, and Haitian newspapers. According to Table 8, a *dreading* (59.2%) frame in the mainstream paper, but not in the Black newspaper, accompanied *victim* (51.8%) and *sympathy* (49.8%) articles. While the mainstream paper did portray Haitians as powerless, and was sensitive to the mental health and misfortune of Haitians, the newspaper seemed more concerned about the danger the plight of Haitians might have on the welfare of the community than about the Haitians themselves.

In the Haitian newspaper, a *critical* (50.0%) frame accompanied articles of Haitians as *victims*, (62.9%) rather than *sympathy* (31.4%). The Haitian newspaper frequently acknowledged the powerlessness of Haitians during the boatlift and AIDS crises, and earthquake disaster, which the newspaper largely attributed to Haitians opposed to the Haitian solidarity movement that was believed to be a detriment to the democratic crusade in Haiti. The Haitian newspaper was less sympathetic over such issues.

Notwithstanding these differences among the newspapers, *victim* and *sympathy* were the dominant frames in the overall dataset of newspapers, the prevalence of which signals a marked departure in the traditional coverage of Haitians, from negative to positive.

**Table 9. Distribution of frames by events, in % (N)**

Frames	Boatlift Crisis 1979		AIDS Epidemic 1983		Earthquake 2010		Newspaper Dataset	
	100% (N = 159)		100.0% (N = 132)		100%(N = 131)		100% (N = 422)	
burdensome	41.5	(66)	5.3	(7)	3.1	(4)	18.2	(77)
polluted	1.9	(3)	67.4	(89)	1.5	(2)	22.3	(94)
primitive	5.0	(8)	2.3	(3)	4.6	(6)	4.0	(17)
victim	62.3	(99)	37.9	(50)	82.4	(108)	60.9	(257)
ennobled	4.4	(7)	4.5	(6)	14.5	(19)	7.6	(32)
patriotic	4.4	(7)	2.3	(3)	13.0	(17)	6.4	(27)
sympathy	53.5	(85)	32.6	(43)	66.4	(87)	50.9	(215)
dreading	40.9	(65)	66.4	(88)	12.2	(16)	40.0	(169)
empathy	23.9	(38)	4.5	(6)	11.5	(15)	14.0	(59)
empowered	8.2	(13)	4.5	(6)	14.5	(19)	9.0	(38)
pity	3.8	(6)	1.5	(2)	22.9	(30)	9.0	(38)
critical	6.9	(11)	6.1	(8)	19.1	(25)	10.4	(44)

Note: Percentage totals may not equal 100% because articles illustrated multiple frames.

Unlike the original controlling images of Haitians that described them as dangerous, impoverished, and polluted, *victim* and *sympathy* frames describe Haitians as innocent and powerless, and focus sensitivity toward their mental health. However, according to Table 9, *dreading* (40.0%) accompanies the *victim* (60.9%) and *sympathy* (50.9%) frames overall in the newspapers. This might suggest that despite Haitians' positive images of *victim* and *sympathy*, they are also seen as a *dreaded* threat to the welfare of the Miami community. This pattern of

frames means that stereotypical images of Haitians remain in the American public sphere, even as some old negative images are replaced by more positive ones.

### 4.3 THE EMERGENCE OF A MODIFIED CONTROLLING IMAGE

Information from the frame analysis informed the clustering of frames into a controlling image: the *distressed victim*. Table 10 shows the distressed image of Haitians which comprises victim (60.9%), sympathy (50.9%), dreading (40.0%) frames.

**Table 10. Dominant image and definition**

Modified Dominant Image	Definitions	Newspaper Dataset % (N = 422)
Distressed Victims	This image emphasizes sensitivity toward the mental health and misfortune of the Haitian people. Haitians are sympathetically described as suffering from trauma, depression, and disease. They are described as powerless, having been forced into dangerous situations, often due to forces beyond their control—beyond their own actions and responsibility. They are also described as innocent persons subject to the actions of much powerful institutions and succumbing to social problems as ethnocentrism, racism, the repercussions of slavery, and crises made by man and nature. They are victims of unjust social and historical processes and are in constant need of foreign assistance and advocates to speak on their behalf. They are also described as victims having been illegally detained and unceremoniously deported, as well as feeling suicidal, unfairly accused, stigmatized, mistreated by officials and/or victimized by natural disasters. Furthermore, this image evokes condescendence and sorrow aroused by their suffering of disease, endemic poverty (stemming from political and economic instability in their homeland), and deadly natural disasters. The Haitians in distressed may also be viewed with dread and represents another (more desperate) group of economic migrants who burden the American tax payer services, overcrowd the public school system, contribute to the city’s chronic unemployment, and/or lie in wait in neighboring islands (if not in Haiti) poised to storm the shores of South Florida to exacerbate these factors.	
	victim This frame emphasizes Haitians as innocent and powerless, having been forced into dangerous situations, often due to forces	60.9 (257)

	beyond their control—beyond their own actions and responsibility.		
sympathy	This frame emphasizes sensitivity toward the mental health and misfortune of the Haitian people. Haitians are described sympathetically as suffering from trauma, depression, and disease.	50.9	(215)
dreading	This frame emphasizes Haitians as a threat to the welfare of the Miami community and fear of this group’s relentless effort to migrate in mass numbers, evasion from immigration enforcement, taking American jobs, and harboring disease.	40.0	(169)

The *distressed victim* image emphasizes Haitians as innocent and powerless, and evokes a compassionate tone toward the mental health and misfortune of the Haitian people. This image is a positive image of Haitians since it supports the Haitian people during their ordeals. This often appeared in articles that “sympathetically” or “empathetically” portrayed Haitians as victims of their mass exodus from Haiti, as detainees and deportees, diasporic members of a Pan-African oppressive experience, and in the throes of the American legal system or affected by their label as AIDS carriers. However, the *distressed victim* image also insidiously comprises elements of negative images—including Black fear (primitive), poverty, and pollution—and was sometimes used to exclude Haitians from the communities of Miami. This appeared in articles that portrayed Haitians in a positive light but with an indirect sense of *dread* or disgust as *primitive* or *burdensome* to the local economy, public welfare and public health, as well as to American taxpayers, the legal system, national security, or as obstructing foreign assistance in relief aid.

## **5.0 MODIFIED CONTROLLING IMAGES OF HAITIANS IN THE MIAMI MEDIA FROM 1979 THROUGH 2010**

This chapter discusses the emergence of the *distressed victim*, a modified controlling image of Haitian immigrants in the three newspapers. I show that this image is a modified version of older stereotypical controlling images, but presents them in a somewhat more positive light. I also discuss instances when the distressed image is used to portray Haitians in a purely positive light. I conclude with a discussion of how negative images of Haitians in American media changed over time and varied by newspaper due to editorial policies and the evolution in American journalism.

### **5.1 “THE DISTRESSED VICTIMS”**

The original controlling images of Haitians—the Black fear (dangerous primitive), poverty, and pollution image—evolved into the *distressed victim* image, comprising both positive and negative depictions of Haitians. Newspapers using the distressed victim image emphasize the victimhood and mental health of Haitians while covertly emphasizing the danger of their primitiveness (Black fear), the burden of their impoverishment, and the public health (and moral) risks that the Haitian poses to the host community.

### 5.1.1 The Modified Image of “the Primitive”

This study found a modified negative image of Haitian immigrants as *distressed victims* during the boatlift crisis, which coincided with the downturn in Miami’s local economy. In 1979, Miami was on the verge of entering an economic recession that had afflicted most of the United States since the early 1970s. In 1973 the American economy was greatly disrupted by the Arab oil embargo, which aimed to punish Israeli allies—especially the United States—during the Yom Kippur/Ramadan War. The embargo produced OPEC,<sup>39</sup> an organized group of Middle East countries that replaced The (American) Texas Railroad Commission as the price setter of oil for the world. The jump in oil prices set by OPEC jolted the American economy that was already experiencing high inflation from expansionist economic policies meant to maintain low unemployment after WWII.

The combined simultaneous effects of a stagnate workforce resulting and inflation on the U.S. economy created America’s first stagflation—a period marked by high levels of unemployment and increases in the price of goods never thought to occur simultaneously before that time. Throughout the 1970s, the stagflated economy created an unusual situation for Americans, most of whom felt overworked or could not find work in an expanding economy. Stagflation was poised to throw the American economic system into another Great Depression. American economists thus went to extremes to fight stagflation by instituting price controls on goods, raising interests and tax rates, and lowering discount and spending rates—all of which had a deep impact on the lives of working Americans and the unemployed—but a combination of

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<sup>39</sup> Acronym for Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

which had finally succeeded a few years into the 1980s. Some major cities were however still reeling from the effects of stagflation by 1979.

In Miami, stagflation evolved into a recession. The economic downturn forced desperate small business owners to reorganize their companies, typically by laying off most of their workforce or replacing them with cheap immigrant labor. The business tactic of employing lower priced labor became a prominent feature of Miami local businesses, which soon generated anti-immigrant discourse (part of a general debate occurring in the nation). The debate illuminated the mythical abilities of immigrants, mostly the uneducated and unskilled Mexican immigrants who competed with native-born Americans for the same jobs. That—along with news of Miami’s flourishing drug cocaine industry (via money laundering in banks and real estate) which coincided with the mass entry of Haitian and Cuban refugees and limited federal assistance to remedy the influx of migrants—became the preoccupations of news media in the city.

Cuban refugees began arriving in Miami in mass numbers after Fidel Castro gave defectors permission to leave communist Cuba in 1980. Haitian refugees had been arriving on the shores of South Florida since 1972, fleeing dictatorship and political persecution. The simultaneous arrival of Cubans and Haitians created a refugee crisis for the Miami community that had few resources to spare due to the recession economy. Miamians dubbed the Haitian refugees “boat people.”

By 1979, the drug cocaine industry and arrival of the boat people received much news coverage, particularly about how these factors contributed to a rising unemployment rate and affected the welfare of the community.<sup>40</sup> Haitians received the brunt of the coverage since they are

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<sup>40</sup> American media appropriated the term “boat people” from coverage one year earlier (1979) of Vietnamese refugees that fled by boat to Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Australia after the Vietnam War. The 1979 American coverage on Vietnamese refugees subsequently focused on the impact the migrants had on the local economies of these countries, which generated similar debates in America about immigrant taking native jobs. It is likely that the 1979 Vietnamese refugee crisis triggered the simultaneous refugee crises in Haiti and Cuba in 1980

visibly black and immigrant, and their treatment by the U.S. government, compared to the better treatment of Cuban refugees, conjured notions of racial injustice.

The sharp contrast in the government's treatment of the Cubans and Haitians was based largely on a tenuous interpretation of the law, in which Haitians were viewed as economic refugees and therefore denied asylum, whereas, the Cubans were viewed as political refugees and therefore granted U.S. asylum. The contrasting treatment of the refugees was made all the more clear as images appeared in the media of Haitians overcrowded on leaky sailboats, distressed over the perilous sea journey, and barred entry by the Coast Guard on the shores of South Florida. These images raised humanitarian questions about America, frequently described as "a nation of immigrants" turning its back on one desperate group while aiding another (Primorac and Whearty 1992: n.p.).<sup>41</sup>

Haitians found themselves constructed by the U.S. media as *distressed victims* of a hypocritical American foreign policy, yet also as a burdensome group whose needs would come at the expense of South Florida's taxpayers. And, in fact, many Haitians were poor, uneducated, and lacked skills to work in an industrial economy.

As the American media covered the mass arrivals of Haitian refugees, it reinvigorated public interest in the debate over immigration and its effect on the recession economy. Yet, the mainstream newspaper also covered the views of Haitian supporters who felt that Haitians were being discriminated against due to fear of their supposed negative impact on the community. Such coverage thus modified the "danger" image of Haitians—fear of them as primitive and violent—

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given mainstream coverage over the deadly sea crossings in South Asia (See Bradley 1979 for video mainstream coverage of the plight of the Vietnamese boat people on *60 Minutes*).

<sup>41</sup> This was also part of the general debate occurring in the nation regarding Mexican immigrants.

into an image of *distressed*—a view of them as victims of circumstance. The *Herald* covered Reverend Thomas Wenski, director of the Haitian Catholic Center in Miami, for instance, who spoke out about the 70 Haitian refugees freed from the local detention center, awaiting trial for deportation. Wenski reportedly said, in response to widespread concerns that the Haitians would abscond into the community and pick up jobs, that “We are keeping track of our people [the freed Haitians]; no problem...We know where they are. The people have not absconded” (*Miami Herald*, August 1, 1982).

The newspaper’s coverage of Rev. Fritz Bazin of St. Paul’s Episcopal echoed Wenski’s assurance over the monitoring of paroled Haitians, saying that:

“in the absence of other instructions [from the court ruling], each refugee would be told to report to him weekly. He said the 10 [refugees under his supervision] also would be asked not to apply for welfare or food stamps. “We don’t want them to start becoming a burden on the state, make people fed up, and jeopardize the program [of releasing them under the supervision of Miami Catholic clergy] ” (*Miami Herald*, August 1, 1982).

The clergy’s assurances to the community that Haitian refugees would not threaten the local economy offered a humanitarian and sympathetic tone to the coverage. These articles offered a sobering description of the plight facing Haitians and covered matters concerning the group’s assimilation into the community, focusing on the efforts of social services to educate, shelter, and provide access to healthcare. On these issues, the mainstream newspaper provided positive coverage, which may have had positive effects for Haitian refugees. As such, by late 1981, regular protests over the mistreatment of Haitian refugees in Miami detention centers like Krome avenue detention camp led to a judicial ruling to release Haitian detainees, but strictly under the supervision of Miami’s Catholic clergy—the activists who petitioned for their release. However, such articles continued to reflect an unstated and unrecognized premise that Haitians are a danger

to the Miami community, not an asset. As the mainstream newspaper coverage of Rev. Bazin pointed out, “We don’t want [Haitians] to start becoming a burden on the state, make people fed up, and jeopardize the program [of releasing them under the supervision of Miami Catholic clergy].” Underlying the above news report is a separation of the Haitian and other communities with the assurance that the Catholic clergy, under the judicial ruling, are monitoring the Haitians closely. The mainstream newspaper offered no counter view to the Reverend’s comment, but focused on the likelihood of Haitians being a burden to the community.

The black newspaper, *Miami Times*, did not offer a modified distressed image of Haitians. Unlike the mainstream newspaper, the black newspaper continued to see the Haitians as distressed victims to challenge the prevailing attitudes in Miami that Haitians were a danger to the black community, politically and economically. The newspaper actively challenged the danger image offered in the mainstream newspaper by covering civil rights leaders commenting on the plight of the Haitian people—as black brethren and victims of racism. Despite this, the regular arrivals of Haitians since 1972 were often viewed in a negative light in the black community. Blacks accused Haitians for taking job opportunities from them and increasing black unemployment (PBS.org 2006). Mass entry of Cuban refugees who sought those same opportunities underscored the point and contributed to the general discontent among blacks about their loss of economic and political power in the city. Thus, the black newspaper often described Haitians as *dreaded* for “taking jobs and social benefits that had traditionally belonged to Blacks” (Meltzer 2007: n.p.).

The issue of how Haitians were portrayed by the black newspaper changed with Black leaders’ calls for unity in Miami’s black communities and their embracement of newly arrived immigrants during the McDuffie race riots. In 1979 three white police officers and one Cuban police officer brutally killed Miami black businessman Arthur McDuffie, after chasing his

motorcycle when McDuffie ran a red traffic light. McDuffie was beaten to death, bearing multiple skull fractures and a damaged brain from a blunt object. The police officers were also suspected of covering up their brutal attack. The Miami black newspaper captured the outcry in the black community that demanded justice for the brutal slaying, with the headline “McDuffie’s Death Spearheads Action Against PSD [Public Safety Department]” (*Miami Times*, January 7, 1980). The officers, however, were acquitted of the charges of manslaughter and evidence tampering. The verdict, handed down by an all-white jury, immediately provoked civil unrest and later a riot between protesters and Miami police throughout the city. Several more riots also broke out, during which time more than a dozen people died and a curfew was imposed<sup>42</sup> (Figure 6).

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<sup>42</sup> See actual footage of riots in "Liberty City / Miami Beach Riots (Part 1, 2, and 3)." *YouTube*.

**Showers**  
 Partly cloudy, afternoon  
 thundershowers. Highs,  
 upper 80s. Lows, mid 70s.  
 Winds southeast 10-15  
 mph.  
 Complete weather, 2A.

**The Miami News**  
 A Cox Newspaper

**Tuesday**  
 Metropolitan  
 Edition  
 15\*  
1987 The Miami News

Tuesday, Afternoon, May 20, 1980  
 40 Pages

# Carter calls for calm in Miami, orders probe of McDuffie case



**JACK KNARR**  
Miami News Reporter

President Carter has turned his attention to the riot-torn Miami, urging citizens to obey the law and seek any solution to the problems through legal force. He hopes the entire city will be calm.

It was calm this morning, a calm enforced by hundreds of armed policemen and thousands of National Guardsmen in battle dress.

Little shooting and only a few fires were reported last night in parts of the city that erupted Saturday a Sunday after the McDuffie trial verdict came in.

Carter said he believed officials and citizens could bring peace and stability. The President dispatched U.S. Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti to Miami spearhead a federal investigation to determine if Thursday McDuffie's civil rights were violated when he was beaten to death after a police chase last Dec. 17.

Civiletti promised that the federal probe would be fair to all involved — the black community and to a defendant who may be indicted. The four former Metro policemen accused in McDuffie's death were acquitted Saturday, triggering the worst race riot in Miami's history and perhaps the most costly in the history of the nation. The final loss may top \$100 million. Sixteen people have died.

Gov. Bob Graham has sent in an additional 25 Guardsmen, deployed mostly in Liberty City scene the worst rioting.

Miami Mayor Maurice Ferrel said yesterday, "I think one of the things that has come out of this tragedy of ours is that we can use it as a vehicle to reverse some of the problems we have had and encourage us to do what's right. We should have done what's right a long time ago, but now I think we have no choice but to see that it is done."

Civiletti said, "I pledge that everyone who is a member of the community will get a fair shake at fair play." He spoke at a press conference in the Miami FBI office minutes after arriving by military plane.

He said his role in Miami "is to help and continue to eliminate whatever injustice occurred here and bring peace back to this community."

Civiletti said he's asking Miami's black community "to help us and to help ourselves by remaining calm and nonviolent."

He said he had no special instructions from Carter but noted the President is "terribly concerned" Civiletti called McDuffie's death "tragic."

Acting U.S. Attorney After Wampler III said that the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice is "in

**Inferno**  
 Like a scene from Dante's "Inferno," madness reigned in Miami for the past 72 hours as rioters torched more than 200 buildings in the city's northwest section. Firefighters, who were not responding to alarms because of snipers, yesterday resumed their duties. Two firemen are shown here dowsing a blaze at the Joe Welch Moving and Storage warehouse, NW 56th Street and 27th Avenue, while officer Bill Press, below, watches for snipers and looters.

The Miami News CHARLES TRANDON

**See RIOTS, 9A**

Figure 6. Screenshot of *The Miami News* front-page story of the unfolding McDuffie Riots, 1980<sup>43</sup>

The acquittal, subsequent protests, and riots reshaped media coverage of the local Haitian refugees toward a moral stance. As a distressed people, the newspaper argued, Haitians were the unfortunate scapegoats of a racist government that blamed them for prolonging the recession economy. Haitians were a group that blacks could *empathize/identify* with as America's new scapegoats. The black media demonstrated its support of Haitians (and of other oppressed

<sup>43</sup> Knarr 1980, front-page.

minorities) by regularly reporting on the pro-Haitian efforts of members of the Congressional Black Caucus like New York's Shirley Chisholm (who herself was of Caribbean heritage) and reprinting the opinions of black nationalists and syndicated columnists like Bayard Rustin.

The following excerpt is typical of the Black newspapers' moral perspective challenging the anti-immigrant attitudes in the Black communities in the words of Rustin:

...the widespread hatred and animosity of blacks toward the Cuban and Haitian refugees demonstrates that our economy of scarcity has at least [sic] succeeded in breaking the natural bonds linking the oppressed, the old strategy of "divide and conquer" has been resurrected, and black people have been distracted from the real sources of their problems by those who use refugees as convenient scapegoats... On the surface, any argument pointing to "illegals" as the economic enemies of black people appears to make sense. After all, we all agree that the labor force included an enormous number of "illegals" subsist as a virtual under-class in economic terms, and second, many employers have a vested interest in preserving an obsolete and highly questionable immigration system that creates "illegal aliens." (*Miami Times*, June 5, 1980, in Gosin 2009: 140).

Syndicated columnist Sherman Briscoe was bolder in presenting his perspective about the scapegoating of Haitians, in an article titled "Stop Giving Haitians Raw Deals" in which he wrote

No group of refugees in the history of this country has been treated as shabbily as the Haitians who have been coming to our shores since 1972 seeking political asylum...The seven-year-old problem facing the Haitians is the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS] which has been treating them like "common niggers" ever since they arrived. Their idea of offering these people assistance is to shackle and throw them in jail, or worse, send them back home. Haitians have suffered inhumane treatment of the lowliest form at the hands of the American government. (*Miami Times*, May 24, 1979)

The above excerpts present Haitians as distressed and scapegoated, using the *victim* frame to describe a government interested in "dividing and conquering" the oppressed over concerns about the economy. The tone of *empathy* illustrated how Haitians had been treated by the local government as "common niggers"—an experience that African-Americans could empathize with.

### Stop Giving Haitians Raw Deals

No group of refugees in the history of this country has been treated as shabbily as the Haitians who have been coming to our shores since 1972 seeking political asylum.

Those who have not had their families separated by the jailing of their men, have been resigned to an even worse fate of having to depend on others for their survival. There is no reason for this, but America has persisted in imposing this final indignity on this group of aliens.

The seven-year-old problem facing the Haitians is the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service which has been treating them like "common niggers" ever since they arrived. Their idea of offering these people assistance is to shackle and throw them in jail, or worse, send them back home. Haitians have suffered inhumane treatment of the lowest form at the hands of the American government.

This past week a new law was hit. INS Commissioner Lionel Castillo sat in the Washington office of Congressman William Lehman and agreed to allow Haitians in South Florida work permits. But after making that agreement, he ran into his boss, Attorney General Griffin Bell, whose attitudes towards Haitians (and Mexicans for that matter) is well known.

Despite what Mr. Castillo says about Congressman Lehman misunderstanding him, it is perfectly clear what happened. Griffin Bell told Mr. Castillo, "No, no señor," at which point the commissioner did a very tacky retraction.

This is not the first time that Haitians were told they would be getting work permits, only to be later told that the deal was off. Raw deal after raw deal seems to be the lot of this oppressed group.

The "Castillo Fiasco" is but another indignity in a long line of bad breaks that Haitian refugees have suffered since coming here. While there is no reason or excuse for it, there is the passive approval of the American government.

"My father was a slave and my people died to build this country, and I am going to stay here and have a piece of it just like you. And no fascist minded people will drive us from it. Is that clear?" - Paul Robeson before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1946.

### TO BE EQUAL



By VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

### A Fair Break For Haitian Refugees

The government's policy toward refugees from Cuba has shifted back and forth since the exodus began, but for those who manage to reach our shores, America has welcomed them, in the President's words, with "an open heart and open arms."

But the Haitians refugees are the "invisible boat people." While media attention focused on Russians, Vietnamese, and Cubans fleeing oppressive regimes, the Haitians were ignored.

Over the past several years, about 23,000 fled Haiti. They made their way to Florida in makeshift boats. Some died in rough seas. All suffered on the arduous two week-long trip.

At a time when thousands of Cubans were coming to Florida about a thousand Haitians were beaching their boats on our coast, some of them in difficult conditions, without adequate food or water for their journey.

The reception the two groups of refugees got is a shameful indication of America's reluctance to welcome black refugees. The Cubans were generally assured of political asylum and the government moved swiftly to help resettle them. The Haitians were placed in the limbo of earlier refugees from Haiti.

For years immigration officials have put them into jails while being "processed." That "processing" often resulted in attempts to deport them without due process on the grounds that they are "economic immigrants" seeking work, rather than political refugees fleeing oppression.

That distinction is a difficult one to make, and it has been enforced in a wayward fashion. Political asylum is automatically granted to refugees from communist countries, even though many, if not most, flee because of economic conditions.

But refugees from non-communist countries such as Haiti are denied political asylum, even though they escape a dictatorship as oppressive as any communist one. Denial of basic human and political rights is hardly a monopoly of communist countries.

### Refugee Policy Twisted

Only a narrow interpretation of law — and in many cases an impressive thickness of bankbook — separates Nicaraguan refugees who landed in Miami in a commandeered plane Wednesday from the Haitians who arrived here Tuesday aboard the Coast Guard cutter which had rescued them from their foundering sailboat.

The Nicaraguans will be admitted, as they should be. The United States traditionally opens its doors to those who leave or are forced out of their homelands for political reasons.

The Haitians will be met and intimidated by immigration officials, and either jailed or returned to Haiti where they will doubtless be punished, perhaps tortured.

The Justice Department argues that Haitians' claims for political asylum are invalid because what Haitians really want in the United States is economic opportunity. That's the official line, a tenuous distinction which raises more questions than it answers.

Figure 7. Screenshot of three *Miami Times* stories on the scapegoating of Haitians in Miami<sup>44</sup>

Chisholm, Rustin, and Briscoe were voices of black notable figures imported to Miami, mostly from New York. They were concerned with the broader agenda of encouraging the solidarity of black Americans and the inclusion of Haitians and other oppressed minorities in that agenda to combat the distress and blatant racist treatment that Haitians endured in Miami-Dade County. The *Miami Times* gave print space to these voices, which challenged and overshadowed the "danger" perception of those blacks who believed that Haitians were the source of economic problems in the Black community.

<sup>44</sup> From right to left: Briscoe 1979, Jordan 1980, and *Miami Times* 1979.

### 5.1.2 The Modified Image of “the Polluted”

During the AIDS crisis, the American media portrayed Haitians mostly in a negative light,<sup>45</sup> instead of the modified distressed image that portrayed Haitians in a positive light. By 1983, Haitians had become the most frequently reported on immigrant group in Miami. In the two years before the AIDS epidemic, news coverage on the recovering economy gradually turned to covering the string of Haitian protests occurring around the city. These protests, dubbed colloquially as the “Haitian equal rights movement,” were held to mobilize people for justice and equal treatment of Haitian refugees. This movement was largely anti-Duvalierist and based in an organization, the Haitian Refugee Center (or HRC) that serviced (and still does) the Haitian refugees by working through human rights organizations like the United Nations and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The HRC’s founder Reverend Gerard Jean-Juste organized the movement under the heading and aligned with the principles of Black Liberation Theology.<sup>46</sup> Through tactics of what he called “street pressure” by protesters typically armed with rocks, Jean-Juste incited many riots and violent clashes between Haitian demonstrators and Miami’s riot police—mostly to protest biases in U.S. immigration policies and Duvalier’s repressive regime in Haiti and cronies in the Haitian consulate in Miami (Associated Press 1990: 12B).

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<sup>45</sup> Refer to Table 9, page 86.

<sup>46</sup> Black Liberation Theology is a variant of liberation theology, which “posits that the poor, long victimized by the rich, must translate Catholic teaching into action, in order to change the social system and bring justice to the world, rather than leaving it to the province of heaven” (Jacobson 1986: 318). In other words, Black liberation theology posits that black people, long victimized in and by a white-dominated society, must translate Christian teaching into action (and context), in order to overcome oppression by “see[ing] that the gospel [as] commensurate with the achievements of black humanity” (Bradley 2008). Thus, Black oppression that is found in South Africa, America, and Haiti evokes the black experiences of racism, racial segregation, and slavery by the hands of whites in these various regions. Blacks therefore are oppressed by the same oppression, the “dominant culture” which includes racist politicians and the “racist federal government.” It is they that are responsible for the perpetuation of black people’s struggle. As such, Jean-Juste accused the Reagan administration (the “unfair federal government”) of making a “strong step in prosecuting the Haitians: and [that] the same administration is going back against all the things black Americans strived for in the ‘60s” (*Miami Herald*, February 18, 1982).

In late 1981, Jean-Juste led a violent exchange between protesters and police in which 300 Miami-area Haitian residents stormed the gates of the detention center, “hurling stones and bottles” at the facility over claims of mistreatment of Haitian detainees (*New York Times*, December 28, 1981). In early 1982, he staged a protest at Florida’s capital city, Tallahassee, insisting that the U.S. government end its military and financial support of the Duvalier regime and continued mistreatment of Haitian refugees at several American detention facilities. Later that year, Jean-Juste led a crowd protest against a pro-Duvalier radio show, with the prime motivation of shutting it down since it served as the medium through which Duvalier had espoused his repressive rhetoric. The protests ended with rock throwing, resulting in injuries to the overwhelmed Haitian broadcaster.

Jean-Juste protests were not without repercussions. The attack on the pro-Duvalier radio station led to a counterattack on the HRC headquarters, in which an arsonist burned it down. Added to that, Jean-Juste’s attention-grabbing tactics were looked down upon by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which fired the priest as the director of HRC. The episcopal conference was later forced to rehire him due to large public support and widespread publicity and the demonstrations in Miami continued.

It was in this heated context that the Centers for Disease Control classified Haitians as risk factors for AIDS in 1983. In response, Miami Haitians, especially Jean-Juste, immediately protested that the classification was another ploy of propaganda (similar to the radio station) commissioned by the Duvalier regime (and supported by the U.S. government’s CDC) to repress Haitian exiles residing in the American mainland.

The media coverage of the CDC’s declarations that Haitians were “high risk” for AIDS coincided with the high profile Haitian refugee (anti-Duvalierist) protests raging in Miami.

Moreover, since medical officials first identified AIDS in homosexuals, heroin abusers, hemophiliacs, and Haitian immigrants, the disease was associated with a collective group of deviants known as the “4-H group.” Because the rate of AIDS among Haitians could not be explained at the time, the Haitian ethnicity became associated with the disease and deviance; and both were seen as needing to be expelled from the U.S. community.

The *Herald* attempted to offer a balanced coverage on the Haitian-AIDS classification, which, however, was sometimes overshadowed by the paper’s reporting of the CDCs’ pronouncement designating Haitian immigrants as a threat to the nation’s public health. In contrast, the mainstream paper went to great lengths to explain how the AIDS disease was a burden to South Floridians’ social life—all the while making special note in every news article of the U.S. government’s position that Haitian immigrants were among the risk factors for the disease. In such manner, every article began with the CDC’s pronouncement, usually without qualification, noting the Haitian susceptibility to AIDS. Some articles would note a word or a sentence of caution in the government’s labeling the Haitian community as risk factors, but seldom probed the erroneous claim, despite the journalists’ own stated suspicions. Such cautionary notes, attempting to qualify the CDC’s erroneous statement, appeared as:

Haitian victims make South Florida something of an aberration in the nation's AIDS statistics. Researchers aren't certain why Haitians seem susceptible to the illness, but in many cases, Haitian victims are homosexual, despite their reluctance to admit it, University of Miami researchers say. (*Miami Herald*, February 3, 1985)

Or an attempt not to sound too conclusive:

Homosexuals, along with intravenous drug users, hemophiliacs and Haitians, have *so far* been the most likely people to get AIDS (*Miami Herald*, February 3, 1985, italics added for emphasis)

Qualifications also appeared as appendages to articles. One article that initially published, as “Those in high-risk categories include homosexuals, bisexuals, intravenous drug abusers, hemophiliacs and Haitians” was then later appended to read: “Haitians who migrated to the United States since 1977” (*Miami Herald*, March 27, 1985). Journalists’ reservations, however, did not spark an investigation of alternative explanations for the CDC medical claim. Instead, newspapers generally relied on the credentialed experts and other authoritative bodies that offered what they believed to be factual evidence (rich in detail) of Haitians’ dreadful and polluted bodies—particularly in connection with their supposed homosexuality. Newspapers did not need to modify their negative image of Haitians as *distressed* since their reliance on medical authority permitted them to speculate openly on the danger Haitians might pose to the Miami community.

One instance of seeing Haitian as dangerous was in the mainstream newspaper which reported, rather uncritically, on medical experts that crudely described Haitians as carriers of a multitude of parasites that were infested in their brains so numerous that they could be seen with the naked eye:

They crossed the sea in ramshackle boats -- and arrived in South Florida carrying a few belongings and multitudes of intestinal parasites: Giardiasis. Hookworm. Amebiasis. Ascariasis. Whipworm. Cryptosporidiosis. Nearly half of the estimated 50,000 Haitians who arrived in Florida between 1970 and 1981 may have been infected with one or more of these parasites... (*Miami Herald*, June 8, 1983)

And

Shelves in pathology labs and the morgue at Jackson are lined with Formalin-filled containers of the more remarkable bits of people, living or dead, whose diseases may contribute something to future research. Some containers are no bigger than pillboxes; others are large enough to hold whole organs. "I just went to our brain bank, so to speak," Hensley said, "pulled them out and re-examined them." Hensley examined the brains of all four Haitian refugees who had died. "Once my eye and mind were prepared, I could recognize literally millions of parasites of *Toxoplasma-gondii*." (*Miami Herald*, April 10, 1983)

Such statements reinforced the *dreadful* narrative that AIDS is an ethnic disease brought in by outsiders. Media portrayals of Haitians as having a polluted nature contributed to their negative coverage during the AIDS crisis.

Not until local health departments began removing Haitians off the list of risk factors for HIV/AIDS, after prolonged political protests in New York then in Miami, did the mainstream newspaper produced positive unmodified images of Haitians as *distressed victims*. After that point, the newspaper no longer relied on the CDC's statements. In light of growing Haitian political protests that AIDS was a blood issue not an ethnic one, newspapers began to use the *distressed victim* image to describe the exclusionary experience of Haitians suffering from public hysteria and stigma of AIDS. These articles focused on Haitians who had lost their jobs, ability to find housing (because of reluctant owners of rental property), or insurance coverage, among other rights. The following excerpt underscores the distressing experience of Haitian exclusion throughout Miami:

Last June, a Haitian farm worker in his 20s threw himself into the path of a car in Belle Glade. Friends said he killed himself because he had AIDS. In December, a young, ill Haitian woman sought help at a West Palm Beach hospital. Before any tests were given, the woman was isolated, forced to wear a surgical mask. The woman said the staff was afraid she might have AIDS. She had pneumonia. A few months ago, an insurance agent told a Palm Beach County doctor the company's headquarters had ordered him to drop all Haitian clients because they were potential AIDS victims. Wednesday, another agent from the same company visited the doctor to tell him Haitians were welcome as customers again... Since being added to the list, Haitians have suffered because they were assumed to be infectious: Adults have lost jobs; children have been taunted; all have lost dignity. "If one coughs, it's AIDS. If one scratches, it's AIDS . . . people don't want to be close to you," said Thomas, a social worker in Belle Glade for two years. "It was like something you carry wherever you go: 'Haitians carry AIDS.' I hear that all the time. It's like saying, 'Good morning.'" Belle Glade schoolteacher David Warnke said he has heard children taunt their Haitian peers with "You got some kind of disease." "People totally stay away from places where Haitians might be," he said. "It's incredible . . ." But others who work among the county's Haitians said they knew of no incidents. (*Miami Herald*, April 14, 1985)

During the remaining years of the AIDS epidemic, newspapers relied heavily on the experts and insiders to show how Haitians felt unwanted and blamed for spreading the disease, which produced a *sympathetic* tone in their coverage. For example, one newspaper quoted a Haitian advocate: "There is a psychosis of fear created by AIDS that has caused people to regard Haitians as disease spreaders," says Henry Marcellus, chairman of the Haitian-American Community Association of Dade (HACAD). "The only time people want to make contact with Haitians is when they take their money" (*Miami Times*, July 10, 1983). Such sympathetic tones and *distressed* images were particularly prominent in the black newspaper, which portrayed Haitians as unfairly scapegoated by the U.S. government that was allegedly working in concert with the Duvalier regime to attack Haitian exiles, a conspiracy revealed in the Haitian protests. The *Times* captured the sense of scapegoat-conspiracy in the following excerpt:

...Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste of the Haitian Refugee Center based in Miami and also a member of the coalition [of Haitian American doctors] contends that the CDC is discriminating. "It is a clear case of discrimination. Why doesn't the CDC label other ethnic groups as high risk? They are conniving with the Reagan administration in an effort to blacklist us, especially black people [from political participation in the U.S.]." Haiti has reached an eternal stage since the Duvalier family took over. With Baby Doc, we have a new era, the AIDS era. Either Baby Doc be removed or he must allow scientists from Haiti and elsewhere to go to Haiti and help solve the problem," Rev. Jean-Juste said. (*Miami Times*, August 18, 1983)

Such excerpts typify the sympathetic way that the American media relied on Haitian experts (like physicians) and insiders (like respectable leaders in the Haitian community) during this period. The newspapers used such sources to counter the CDC's statements about Haitians spreading AIDS. Even though such counter claims were conspiratorial, as was the case of Jean-Juste's explanation of the Duvalier regime indirect attempts to victimize Haitians via the AIDS epidemic, the news reports presented Haitians in a positive light as *distressed* victims of racism. This image was strongly supported by coverage of other trusted figures in the community like

Roger Biamby, director of Haitian American Community Association, and Jacque Despinosa, director of Haitian American Voters League. Among their comments reported by the black newspaper were:

City of Miami officials plan to launch an investigation concerning allegations that employers and potential employers are urged to fire or hire Haitian workers because they may have Acquired Immuned Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). According to Roger Biamby, the director of the Haitian American Community Association, many businesses in the Miami area are receiving post cards urging the action.<sup>[47]</sup> “We need to stop this propaganda that is hurting the Haitian community, especially when medical facts do not corroborate the statement,” Biamby said. (*Miami Times*, August 4, 1983)

Like Biamby, Jacque Despinosa was convinced that

...many of the Haitians that have been diagnosed as AIDS sufferers have been misdiagnosed. (*Miami Times*, August 4, 1983)

However, in the black newspaper’s positive coverage of the Haitians, there was little inclusion of African-American voices (Rustin, Chisholm, and Briscoe). The newspaper offered many reports and responses by Haitian experts and insiders on AIDS, but it did not include prominent members of the black community, which differed from the inclusion of such voices in the coverage of the boatlift crisis. The black newspaper’s exclusion of these voices was symptomatic of the wider black community’s reluctance to actively support the Haitians, since the AIDS classification, if true, would connect the group to homosexual activity—something the black community has traditionally been against. Underlying the above reports is a focus on the *distressed* image of Haitians (as victims of racism) that, given the lack of support for Haitians, especially

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<sup>47</sup> See Farmer (2006: 214) on letters and post cards urging employers to fire Haitian workers.

around accusations about their link to deviant sexual orientations, contributed to the group's *pollution* image.

### **5.1.3 The Modified Image of “the Poor”**

This study found a modified negative image of Haitian immigrants as *distressed victims* during the aftermath coverage of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The fact that Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere generated a public outcry for the affected Haitian victims, as did coverage of how the disaster in Haiti was worsened by poor judgment by its present and past leaders.

While earthquakes have occurred in Haiti, the last major one occurring in 1842 in northern Haiti, most of the population in 2010 was unaware that one could happen at any moment. At the same time, building construction in the capital and a destabilized economy in the 1970s created a massive number of Haitians to migrate to the nation's capital in search of work and food (Chierici 1991). That, along with the numerous non-government organizations (NGOs) operating in the capital, created an overpopulated city becoming dependent on foreign organizations (Kristoff 2010). By 1981, NGOs began to overtake government functions when “U.S. officials decided to bypass a corrupt Haitian government and deliver aid dollars directly to international NGOs” (Schwartz 2013: n.p.). NGOs, having first arrived after Hurricane Hazel in 1954, by 1986, “dominated all state, healthcare, water sanitation, education, welfare, food, agricultural extension, and road construction programs” (Schwartz 2013: n.p.). The unofficial shift from government to non-government-led welfare programs attracted even more Haitians to the capital, which by the time of the earthquake, had the highest concentration of people in all of Haiti.

Over time, Haitian migrants built shoddy homes of “poor construction standards and inadequate building regulations...on steep slopes and unstable foundations” (Rowling 2011: n.p.).

The high concentration of people and substandard living in Port-au-Prince proved disastrous when the earthquake occurred, contributing to a death toll of nearly 300,000 people. The 2010 earthquake in Haiti was the worst natural disaster in modern history, destroying the nation's capital, its center of commerce, government, and communications and killing more people than the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (Lee 2010).

The American media used the *distressed victim* image to bring attention to the scope and depth of this disaster but their coverage shifted from negative to positive, from a *poverty* image—a poor land with no prospect of changing anytime soon—to an image of *distress* and desperation—of Haitians as victims of disaster. For example, the mainstream newspaper described vividly and sympathetically the carnage, distress, and need for relief in the disaster-torn country.

Préval told the Herald he had been stepping over bodies and hearing the cries of those trapped under the rubble of the national Parliament. "We have to do an evaluation," Préval said, describing the scene as "unimaginable." "Parliament has collapsed. The tax office has collapsed. Schools have collapsed. Hospitals have collapsed," he told the newspaper. "There are a lot of schools that have a lot of dead people in them." "I'm stepping over dead bodies," the first lady, Elisabeth Préval, said. A lot of people are buried under buildings... We need support. We need help. We need engineers." The U.N. said casualties were "vast" but impossible to calculate... (*Miami Herald*, January 13, 2010).

Furthermore, mainstream journalists reported the anguish of Haitians in the aftermath of the earthquake:

Teams of rescue and aid workers were rushing to Haiti on Wednesday to assess damage from a powerful 7.0-magnitude earthquake that crippled the island nation... Women covered in dust crawled from the rubble wailing as others wandered through the streets holding hands. Thousands gathered in public squares late into the night, singing hymns. Many gravely injured people still sat in the streets early Wednesday, pleading for doctors. With almost no emergency services to speak of, the survivors had few other options... The scope of the disaster remained unclear, and even a rough estimate of the number of casualties was impossible. But it was clear from a tour of the capital that tens of thousands of people had lost their homes and that many had perished. (*Miami Herald*, January 13, 2010).

Excerpts like those above typify the image of the *distress* of the Haitian people in the mainstream newspaper. Descriptions of the destructive force of the earthquake evoked a tone of sympathy, particularly about the extent to which the disaster affected the mental health of the Haitian people. This was evident in reports of the Haitian President “hearing the cries of those trapped under the rubble of the national Parliament” (*Miami Herald*, January 13, 2010) and those of even upwardly mobile Haitians who admit, “they’ve lost it all” (*Miami Herald*, July 1, 2010)—which created a sympathetic tone in the coverage. Sympathy was also evident in the subsequent report of “women covered in dust” crawling from the rubble, in which they were described as powerless in their situation in having “no emergency services” and “few options” available to them.

However, the mainstream newspaper’s use of the *distressed* image also covertly characterized Haiti and the Haitian people as exotic, set apart from normal human beings. News reports like the one above dichotomize Haitians from others, as in coverage of the earthquake aftermath: “Teams of rescue and aid workers were rushing to Haiti...” in which a group from an industrialized nation came to save a poorer place where the casualties were “impossible” to count (*Miami Herald*, January 13, 2010). Such articles make no mention of organized help of local Haitians, but instead portray the rescue and aid workers as capable agents of change, while Haitians are portrayed as wandering “survivors with few other options,” a “gravely injured people” pleading for help, and victims in a land “with almost no emergency services to speak of.” Underlying such news report is a focus on Haitians’ *distressed* image that covertly emphasizes the *poverty* image of Haiti, a poor land and people further beset by a natural disaster.

Differently, in the black newspaper, unmodified positive images accompanied reports about homeless Haitians and the immediate need for relief. In an article titled “1.5 million are homeless,” a reporter describes the distress of one Haitian man using the *victim* frame and *sympathy* tone,

Conditions in Haiti grew worse Sunday as thousands of residents begged for food and water, and bodies were dumped in mass graves...At the collapsed Palm Apparel T-Shirt factory in Thor, a neighborhood in the Carrefour section, the body of a woman poked out from the wreckage, her dust-covered hair visible...Evans Brice, 21, sat with his head in his hands. His girlfriend, Fiona Jean, 21, worked at Palm. He could see her body in the debris. He has visited her every day. “I can’t help it. I love her,” said Brice, opening his wallet to show photos of her. (*Miami Times*, January 20, 2010: A4)

The article goes on to make the point that the plight of Brice is a small fraction of widespread death toll distressing the community, including the unceremonious burial of loved ones under piles of rubble. The above excerpt thus evokes a sympathetic tone in making Brice an example of the anguish (and mental state) many Haitians faced in the aftermath. The black newspaper’s use of the *distressed* image does not stress the Haitian’s role as a scapegoat for the American government. Instead, the black newspaper focused on the humanity of distressed Haitians like Brice. The black paper’s focus on the humanity of Haitians rather than their racial experience (which was different from their earlier coverage) shifts the *poverty* image into a *distressed* image.

Nonetheless, images of Haitians as *distressed* appear frequently in both black and mainstream newspapers during the earthquake coverage. Yet, the frequent use of the *distressed* image of Haitians in the *Haiti-Observateur*, the Haitian newspaper, was for an entirely different purpose compared with the *Miami Herald* and *Miami Times*, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

## 5.2 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the emergence of a modified controlling image of Haitians as the *distressed*. I showed that emergence of the modified image of Haitian immigrants as *distressed* coincided with the downturn in Miami's local economy, the Haitian human rights movement raging in Miami, and the record-breaking earthquake in Haiti. It is likely that the prevalence of the modified *distressed* image in the mainstream and unmodified image in the black newspaper was a result of the different journalistic practices adopted by each newspaper organizations. I argue that the negative images of Haitians—Black fear (dangerous primitive), poverty, and pollution—in the American media changed over time and varied by newspaper due to editorial policies and an evolution in American journalism.

## 6.0 JOURNALISTIC PRACTICES OF CONSTRUCTING CONTROLLING IMAGES IN THE MIAMI MEDIA

My findings show that controlling images varied in the different newspapers overtime, especially after the 2010 earthquake. In this chapter, I discuss this transformation in relation to changing journalistic practices and the racialized practices of the mainstream and black newspapers.

### 6.1 PRACTICES OF NEWSPAPERS BEFORE 2010

#### 6.1.1 *The Herald*

The mainstream newspaper frequently produced modified negative images of Haitians as *distressed victims* according to racialized practices intended to present Miami as an economic stable white city and tourist destination.

Since the turn of the 20th century, the *Miami Herald* has aggressively promoted the city of Miami as a white tourist destination. The newspaper's predecessor and the city's first newspaper, *The Miami Metropolis*, began as a newspaper heavily influenced by a wealthy businessperson, Henry Flagler, who desperately wanted to promote the tropical city of Miami. The *Herald* followed suit, "heavily emphasizing the city's location and climate in an effort" to attract "Yankee dollars" (Williams 1999: 48). With the newspaper's promotion of the city came news reports about blacks posing a major threat to whites living nearby. A 1911 *Miami Herald* article wrote

White people do not care to live in the vicinity of colonies of Negroes housed in buildings little better than cabins. The conditions in both directions are steadily and

daily getting worse and threatens to drive out a large number of white people who have built up homes with the hope that other desirable neighbors would settle around them. The advance of the Negro population is like a plague and carries devastation with it to all surrounding property (1911: 2, in Williams 1999: 49)

Williams (1999: 49) observed that such “reports on housing conditions in the black community continued into the 1930s.” Williams’ observations are supported by those of historian N.D.B. Connolly, who writes about the *Herald’s* coverage of Miami’s historic Overtown formerly known as “Colored Town.” According to Connolly (2014: 81), the paper indignantly responded to criticism over Miami’s housing conditions by attempting to separate the black neighborhood from “the city”—a strategy that “generally proved effective in protecting Miami’s attractiveness.”

The *Herald’s* racist journalism continued well into the 1960s, but with a twist. In 1964, in the thick of the Civil Rights Movement, the newspaper charged that, “because the city treated its black residents well, civil rights legislation would have ‘little effect’” (*Miami Herald*, 1964: 1, in Williams 1999: 50).<sup>48</sup> Instead of addressing the racial tension in the city or describing the poor conditions of Miami’s blacks, the *Herald* preferred to report on the pleasures of living in the “Magic City”—the city’s nickname that referenced tourists’ surprise at its rapid growth.

The historical legacy of the *Herald* therefore shaped a particular racial practice for its journalists that continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The newspaper’s coverage of the arrival of Haitians in *distress* is an example of this racialized journalistic practice. It characterized the Haitians similar to its earlier characterizations of Miami blacks, as dangerous and “nuisances” that “detracted from the city’s image as an ‘American Riviera’” (Williams 1999: 48).

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<sup>48</sup> In fact, Florida was among the last states to desegregate (Frank 2013).

In this way, the mainstream newspaper racialized the Haitian people using a modified image of exclusion earlier used with blacks in the Miami community. The *Miami Herald's* racial Othering of Haitians was meant to protect the city of Miami from another black burdensome group that would detract from the city's touristic image. Their coverage of threat of the larger waves of Haitian migration to Miami prompted fears that immigrants would hurt the recovering American economy. Essentially, the mainstream modified portrayal of Haitians as *distressed* reflects a desire to protect Miami local communities from a group regarded as troublesome to whites.

### **6.1.2 *The Times***

The black newspaper's use of the *distressed victim* image of Haitians was informed by different racialized practices. Its support of Haitians (and Afro-Cubans for that matter) can be attributed to the leadership of the *Miami Times* Publishing Chief Executive, Garth Reeves, who believed that his newspaper represented the voice of reason for the black community and should fight for all minorities residing in the mainland as well as those arriving from abroad. Reeves' sympathies for minorities were due to his status as a son of a Caribbean immigrant. Moreover, he was an avid black activist and believed in "bringing the people the news of their community every week... from a black perspective and trying to steer them" (Reeves and Pleasants 1999: 27). Relying on the credibility of his newspaper, Reeves wrote editorials "trying to persuade the community as to how to vote" in elections and on which matters to support (Reeves and Pleasants 1999: 13). He and his family were deeply connected to the black community, all of them well-known figures in the black municipal and lived through segregation amid the racism and were among the displaced residents

of Overtown.<sup>49</sup> Having been involved in the family business all his life at the *Times*, Reeves was keenly aware of the way the mainstream newspaper, *Miami Herald*, “skirted” and “danced” around a lot of racial issues (Reeves and Pleasants 1999: 18). Under his leadership, he continued the newspaper’s essential function to reinterpret and clarify some of the facts of the white press, and offer a black perspective of the news (Reeves and Pleasants 1999). During the McDuffie controversy, for instance, the black newspaper framed the race riots as protests rather than disorderly uprisings as did the *Herald*.<sup>50</sup>

Reeves never pushed his activism too far, believing that it was not his job to make news for his newspaper—only to get a reaction about an injustice. His reservation about inciting direct public action was tested when BAMM, the Black African Militant Movement bombed the *Miami Times* headquarters because they saw the newspaper as not militant enough to urge people to riot (Reeves and Pleasants 1999). In the face of such extreme black separatist actions, Reeves and his newspaper remained advocates of civil disobedience and an inclusive fight for all minorities through his newsprint.<sup>51</sup>

Given his activism and interest in minorities, it was not surprising that Reeves covered supporters of the Haitians, like Bayard Rustin and Sherman Briscoe, who tried to make the link between Haitians and African-Americans based on the heritage of racism and designated scapegoat

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<sup>49</sup> Overtown was a neighborhood in Miami, Florida, that was originally called ‘Colored Town’ during the city’s Jim Crow era. In the 1960’s, Miami city planners commenced construction of the interstate highway I-95 that was to run right through the heart of the historically black neighborhood. Miami city officials’ displacement of more than half of the black population forced blacks to relocate to nearby fringe areas like Liberty City and Opa-locka (Borman and Dorn 2007). Angry sentiments among blacks, aroused by the huge displacement of their neighborhood, festered in black communities for more than a decade. The black anger finally came to a head when in 1979 the paper was steeped in coverage over the brutal killing of Miami black businessman Arthur McDuffie by three white police officers and one Cuban police officer.

<sup>50</sup> Wakefield (2005) noted that the *Miami Times* portrayal of the McDuffie riots was a form of rebellion.

<sup>51</sup> Reeves however came to regret supporting the Cuban refugees, which he thought would support the agenda of the black community—but did not (Reeves and Pleasants 1999: 24).

status that both groups shared and argued that Haitians were not enemies of black Miamians. In this way, the black newspaper racialized the Haitian people using *distressed victim* images to call for black inclusion based on the paper's experience with racial injustice toward Miami's black community. The historical legacy of the *Times* and its agenda of black inclusion therefore provided a particular racial practice for its journalists. The newspaper's coverage of Haitians as *distressed victims* is an example of this racialized journalistic practice that characterized the Haitians as no different from blacks and, as such, victims of white prejudice and discrimination in the city of Miami. The *Miami Times*' racialization of Haitians therefore helped advance the paper's pan-African inclusion agenda.

As a result of the black press's close examination of the plight of the Haitian people under the auspice of the shared opinions of Rustin, Briscoe, and Jean-Juste among others, Haitians were portrayed positively as victims of racial injustice, despite the prevailing xenophobia among blacks at the time. Haitians therefore received a *sympathetic* frame by virtue of Reeves and the black press's commitment to cover Miami's black community, especially issues like racial injustice.

During the AIDS crises, however, the black newspaper's *distressed victim* image of Haitians meant that it seldom covered debates about AIDS that were occurring in the black community. While the newspaper had covered issues of homosexuality in the past,<sup>52</sup> on the issue of the supposed homosexual Haitians as spreaders of AIDS, the newspaper fell noticeably silent.

African-Americans have generally had anti-homosexual attitudes for most of the nation's history, since a majority base their attitudes on a literal interpretation of Christian Holy Scripture, which was a source of hope for enslaved blacks (Ward 2005). For this reason, "Black churches hold a central and uniquely influential position within black culture and society in the USA" (Ward

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<sup>52</sup> For example, its coverage during the Anita Bryant campaign against gay ordinances in Florida in 1977.

2005: 494). The Black church has also been the largest advocates of homophobia, creating its entrenchment in black culture.<sup>53</sup> Most blacks assumed the disease was borne out of homosexual behavior (Ward 2005). This myth first emerged during the 1983 AIDS epidemic but owes its popularity to anti-gay debates occurring in the late 1970s, when singer and Christian activist Anita Bryant<sup>54</sup> led a crusade to, as she described, “Save Our Children” from legislation protecting the rights of homosexuals in Miami-Dade County. Having benefited from discourse in Florida that claimed to protect children from racial integration, Bryant claimed that gay rights ordinances were another attack on America’s kids that encouraged “gays to molest children or convert them into homosexuals” (Frank 2010: 55). Her message, supported by passage from the Christian Holy Scripture, resonated with influential black churches in Miami’s black community.<sup>55</sup>

Miami’s black community, with some reluctance, soon joined in support of Anita Bryant and her coalition of white evangelicals and Latinos which succeeded in repealing Florida’s gay rights ordinances. Similar Christian anti-gay movements began to form in other U.S. states, specifically Kansas, Oregon, Washington, and Minnesota—all of them succeeding in overturning such ordinances (Frank 2010). In the years to follow, homophobic attitudes deepened in America, especially during the AIDS epidemic (Stanford 2013).

In 1977, readers of the black newspaper, *Miami Times*, would have however read a different perspective on the matter. Despite anti-gay debates occurring in the black community, and despite the AIDS stigma on the Haitian people, the *Miami Times* came out “in favor of gay

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<sup>53</sup> This point is underscored by the tone of some impassioned sermons by older black pastors. In the present day, however, there are signs of tolerance toward homosexuals in the Black church, largely the result of the need to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic among members of the black community.

<sup>54</sup> In 1977, her campaign represented the first Christian counter movement against advances of gay rights, which sparked a national debate on the dangers of homosexuality.

<sup>55</sup> The African Methodist Episcopal Church, for one, soon denounced homosexuality.

rights and advised its readers that ‘black people should not be party to endorsing any policy that will discriminate against anyone’” (Frank 2013: 154). The black press’s support of gay rights came at the behest of the *Times*’ head publisher, Garth Reeves, with intent of “steering” the black community just as he did in supporting the Haitians amid blacks’ discontent during the 1979 boatlift Crisis. His protests in the newspaper likened gay rights rhetoric with civil rights language. Some blacks were however troubled by the comparison, believing the matter was a religious issue, not a civil rights issue (Frank 2013).

Given the *Times* publisher’s attitude toward the rights of minorities, Haitians, whether gay or not, received favorable coverage in the Black press, despite the prevailing anti-gay attitudes in Miami’s black community. News of Haitians’ supposed homosexuality was generally a non-issue in the paper. AIDS was viewed as a homosexual issue and claims that Haitians and homosexuality were synonymous was described as a conspiracy against the immigrant group. Even if they had been proved to be homosexual, Haitians would have likely received favorable coverage in the black newspaper, given Reeves’ stance on the issue.

### **6.1.3 *The Observateur***

Overall, *Haiti-Observateur* largely operated outside the racially-charged framework of the American newspapers that were (1) explicitly committed to their respective journalistic racial practices and (2) closely engaged with the boatlift crisis and AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 2010 earthquake disaster. The Haitian newspaper did not want to be perceived as promoting propaganda. Instead, it was largely anti-dictatorship before the earthquake and less ideological in the quake’s aftermath. The newspaper was only peripherally engaged with the American refugee and AIDS events, turning its attention to other significant developments affecting the Haitian community.

Amid the refugee crisis, for example, the newspaper directed its coverage towards the mass revolt against a Duvalier official in Northern Haiti. Amid the AIDS epidemic, the newspaper covered the fractured and oppressive Haitian government. For the newspaper, these events in Haiti, not the American crises, fomented the idea and possibility of an impending revolution against the Duvalier regime and thus were primary in the newspaper's coverage. The newspaper was, of course, more engaged (and more attuned with the American coverage) in the 2010 earthquake disaster, though less in-depth in its reporting than was the American media throughout the aftermath.

By far, the most prevalent image in the early years of the Haitian newspaper was the *distressed victim*; however, this image was deeply related to the urgency of Haitian activism against the Haitian government. After the quake, however, the Haitian newspaper changed and became less focused on its earlier anti-dictatorship perspective which it had held since the fall of Baby Doc Duvalier in 1986—although it remained highly critical of the Haitian state and international affairs in the quake's aftermath. Before and after the quake, the newspaper was determined to delegitimize the Haitian state which it saw as prohibiting political freedom in Haiti and causing its present conditions and the diaspora since the election of François “Papa Doc” Duvalier in 1957.

*Haiti-Observateur's* coverage was rooted in its history as the most significant newspaper serving the Haitian community in the U.S., from New York to South Florida. The newspaper was founded in 1971 by Raymond Alcide Joseph and his brother Leopold, Haitian immigrants residing in New York, who wanted a weekly news publication that would be an alternative to the propaganda writings of Haitian communists who were working to topple the Duvalier regime. Although the US State Department's Director of Intelligence and Research found in 1969 that “the communists in Haiti [were] few in number and constitute[d] no real threat to the Duvalier regime,”

Haitian activists in the United States had been invigorated by the rising tide of revolution sparked by Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution at the start of the decade that was now touting communism as the driving force (Lindskoog 2013: 57). Joseph was among the dwindling voices that felt that what Haiti needed was not a “Fidel Castro type society,” having previously worked for a disorganized coalition of New York Haitian activists in 1965 which began to be infused with communist, Black power, and anti-imperialist rhetoric. Joseph became unwilling to work with his radical colleagues and in 1971, with brother Leopold, left the Haitian coalition to begin his newspaper (Lindskoog 2013: 60).

*Haiti-Observateur* became the Haitian community’s first weekly newspaper, reporting at once on the campaign for freedom and fair treatment of Haitians who arrived in South Florida in 1972. By 1976, the newspaper was focused on U.S. President-elect Jimmy Carter’s campaign pledge to make human rights a priority and the distinct possibility that Carter might end the refugee crisis caused by human rights violations under the helm of Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier. The possibility seemed even more probable since Baby Doc showed signs of political liberalization. Baby Doc briefly allowed political and press freedom, which had been non-existent in Haiti since 1957. Fearing the loss of U.S. aid in light of President Carter’s human rights initiative, he allowed the intervention of the Organization of American States (OAS) Inter-American Commission Human Rights into Haiti. Duvalier also released 104 political prisoners in 1977, which was credited to the influence of the Carter’s administration (*Unite*, September 30, 1977: 1 in Lindskoog 2013: 65).

However, in 1980, the newspaper was steeped in Baby Doc’s betrayal of his 1976 pledge for political tolerance in Haiti. Just weeks after Ronald Reagan was elected to the presidency, the Haitian dictator unleashed a massive crackdown on opposition organizations and the independent

press. Baby Doc was well aware that Ronald Reagan’s vision was a departure from Jimmy Carter’s human rights vision. In fact, the differences in the presidents’ visions could not be clearer. Reagan was “highly critical of the Carter administration’s attempts to employ the principle of human rights in its policy toward Latin America and the world” and so “pledged to get tough on leftist governments and to reinstitute support for the United States’ anti-communist allies” (Lindskoog 2013: 130-131). Reagan would therefore support right wing governments like the Duvalier regime that got tough on communists. Baby Doc’s efforts to capitalize on the shift in American foreign policy reverberated throughout the diaspora and Haitian media in the Americas—particularly in the U.S. and Canada amid the mass exodus of Haitians (in concert with the Cubans) that began to flee the island. The dictator’s purge of Haitians’ political freedoms (claiming the move as an attempt to rid communists) however intensified resistance campaigns against the Haitian government (and the U.S. government).

The Haitian newspaper provided regular coverage of the intense political mobilization occurring in and outside of Haiti, especially in New York and Miami, about the U.S. treatment of the entering refugees. The coalition of local and national African-American leaders and organizations such as the NAACP and the National Urban League that joined the fair treatment campaign drew 1,600 participants to demonstrate in Miami (*Haiti-Observateur*, April 27-May 4, 1978: 18, 20). Vernon E. Jordan Jr.,<sup>56</sup> president of the National Urban League, highlighted the political oppression facing the Haitian refugees at the time, saying that the Haitians were “clearly as much political refugees as were the Hungarians, the Cubans, and the Vietnamese’ to whom the American government offered both asylum and resettlement assistance. ‘For [the Haitians] to be

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<sup>56</sup> Jordan was among the notable black voices imported from New York to Miami in defense of Haitians in the *Miami Times*. Refer to page 96.

denied access to due process in the effort to prove their status raises the question of whether the color of their skin makes them somehow different in the eyes of our government” (Lindskoog 2013: 103).

The racial outrage in the black community over the U.S. discriminatory policy quickly became a preoccupation of the Black and mainstream American newspapers, but not for the Haitian newspaper. For the *Haiti-Observateur*, the discrimination in the U.S. was a secondary issue. Since the newspaper viewed developing events in Haiti as the source of all Haitian problems affecting the nation and the diaspora, the Duvalier regime was assigned blame for the refugee crisis occurring in Canada and the United States. By that standard, the American events did not initially draw the attention of the *Observateur* as much as the mass protests that were occurring in Haiti. The Haitian newspaper was more concerned about the brutal beating of Cape Haitian lawyer Harry Sanchez, and Miguel Casseus by police captain and Duvalier enforcer, Michel Cesaire than about the bias in U.S. immigration policy affecting the refugees. The newspaper went to great lengths to describe the public outcry that mobilized over 5,000 Haitians to march to the nearest Teleco, a landline telecommunication service, to demand justice from President Duvalier. The mass protests immediately caught the attention of Baby Doc, who sent his core (and most feared) leaders of national defense, Colonel Henri Namphy, Minister of Interior Dr. Frantz Medard and M. Achille Salvant, to suppress the situation. The Haitian President even sent his father-in-law in the presidential limousine to give the impression of addressing the situation.

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## Le rouleau compresseur mobilisé au Cap

CAP-HAÏTIEN, 30 juin.— Les émeutes déclenchées dans la métropole du Nord ont continué la journée de lundi et ont pris des proportions qui ont virtuellement intimidé le pouvoir.

Les Capois des bas et hauts quartiers se sont transformés en « rouleau compresseur » pour demander la tête du capitaine Michel Césaire, qui avait arrêté Harry Sanchez et Miguel Casséus, samedi soir, au club « Feu Vert », au Cap-Haïtien. La populace déchaînée exigeait également qu'on lui livre le bourreau dénommé « Américain », à qui le capitaine avait remis les deux citoyens pour être roués de coups.

À la métropole capoise, lundi, c'était la grève générale. Tous les magasins étaient fermés et les parents gardaient

gramme au président à Port-au-Prince, demandant une punition exemplaire pour le capitaine et le bourreau.

Quelques brefs détails sur le capitaine Césaire démontrent qu'il est l'unique officier de sa promotion à être élevé à ce grade. Et ceci pour avoir bien servi le régime. Avant d'être transféré au Cap-Haïtien, il se trouvait à Petit-Goâve où il faisait abus de son autorité. Il personnifie l'officier macoute: toujours prêt à terroriser et à torturer ses victimes ou les citoyens paisibles pour des pédailleries.

Entre-temps, à Port-au-Prince, le gouvernement s'est empressé, à la suite du passage du beau-père de Jean-Claude Duvalier au Cap (il avait pour mission de pacifier la métropole du Nord) d'envoyer une commission d'enquête sur les lieux, composée du colonel

d'enquête ont visité les deux victimes à l'hôpital et ils les ont trouvés en très mauvais état. Harry Sanchez est sourd de l'oreille droite et ne peut rien voir de l'oeil gauche. On souhaite que la surdité et la perte de vision soient temporaires.

Retournant à Port-au-Prince, les membres de la commission d'enquête ont invité le capitaine Césaire à prendre place dans l'auto qui devait les conduire à la capitale (pour sa propre protection peut-être). On ignore les dispositions prises en ce qui concerne le bourreau « Américain ».

Encore un autre exemple de ce que la solidarité d'une communauté peut réaliser. D'abord, au mois de février, lors des élections législatives de 1979, la solidarité des Capois assura le triomphe de Lerouge sur M. Vixama, le candi-

## Deux hommes battus sauvagement au Cap, la population s'ébranle

CAP-HAÏTIEN, 28 juin.— La population de la métropole du Nord s'est mise debout comme un seul homme pour manifester sa désapprobation et provoquer le chef de la police de cette ville, à la suite de l'arrestation suivie de tortures brutales de deux citoyens de cette municipalité.

Hier soir (vendredi 27 juin), le capitaine Michel Césaire procéda à l'arrestation de Harry Sanchez, avocat, et Miguel Casséus, deux citoyens bien connus de la ville. Arrivé à un club accompagné de quelques touristes (marchant sur les brisées de son père il s'est engagé dans le tourisme), M. Sanchez tentait d'exhorter un militaire, qui battait sans pitié un homme, à éviter ce genre de violence. Sur ce, Césaire, qui s'amenait, tomba sur Harry Sanchez à coups redoublés. Conduits à la prison, les deux hommes furent sauvagement battus. Sanchez perdit connaissance. Les deux furent hospitalisés et leur condition fut jugée inquiétante. Car ils portent tous les deux des contusions sur tout le corps et ont le visage tuméfié. En outre, Sanchez a été battu si brutalement à la tête qu'il saignait des oreilles. On craint qu'il n'ait eu le tympan éclaté.

Au moment de procéder à l'arrestation de ces messieurs, une foule s'attroupa, essayant d'empêcher au capitaine de partir avec les prisonniers. Il dut dégainer son revolver et tirer en l'air pour disperser la foule hostile et arriver à se dégager.

Plusieurs dizaines de citoyens de la ville, solidaires de Sanchez et de Casséus, se rendirent à la prison pour s'instruire du sort fait aux deux citoyens. Quand la nouvelle de leur torture leur parvint, ils la propagèrent à travers la ville entière et en un rien de temps toutes les rues de la métropole du Nord fourmillaient de gens. Aujourd'hui encore les esprits ne s'étaient pas toujours calmés et le gouvernement a dû envoyer le beau-père du « président », M. Ernst Bennett, au Cap-Haïtien, conduit dans la voiture numéro 1, pour démontrer au public capois l'importance de l'émissaire, afin d'exhorter la populace à l'ordre et à la tran-

Figure 8. Screenshot of *Haiti-Observateur* front-page story of the police brutality of two Cape Haitians, 1980<sup>57</sup>

Mass revolt in northern Haiti has always brought fear to Haitian Presidents, particularly since a revolt in the city of Cape Haitian could incite protests in the neighboring city Gonaives, where, historically, mass revolts supported by citizens of Gonaives have ousted Haitian presidents. Known as the city and site of where the first chief of state Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared Haitian

<sup>57</sup> *Haiti-Observateur* 1980: Front-page.

independence, and its citizens ousted the French colonizers in 1804, Gonaives, living up to its liberation history, would be instrumental in ousting Presidents Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier in 1986 and Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004. However, Gonaives was a significant threat to Baby Doc’s government since Cape Haitian (in northern Haiti) was a pipeline of imported goods to the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, which could be severed in the mass revolt, if supported by the people of Gonaives (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Screenshot of Map: Location of Cape Haiti relative Gonaives and Port-au-Prince.<sup>58</sup>

The Haitian newspaper noticeably picked up on the significance of the mass revolt and Haitians’ potential to overrun the government. The *Observateur* suggested that Duvalier had a scheme to suppress the otherwise powerful solidarity of Cape Haitians; the paper also criticized his police chief, Michel Cesaire, who beat local citizens and sparked the uprising. The newspaper reported that

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<sup>58</sup> *BBCNews.com* 2004, graphic.

...Some brief details about Captain Cesaire will demonstrate that he was the only officer of his promotion uniquely promoted to this position. And this because (his position would) serve the regime well. Before being transferred to Cape Haitian, he was in the town of Petit-Goave where he abused his authority. He personifies the ton ton macoutes officer: always ready to terrorize and torture his victims or peaceful citizens for trifles... (*Haiti-Observateur*, July 4-11 1980: Front-page)

The newspaper's underlying point was that the regime's interests in punishing Captain Cesaire and sending top investigators (e.g., Duvalier's feeble effort in sending his step-father in his limousine) to see the police brutality was all a charade meant to suppress the power and solidarity of the Haitians. In actuality, the government was well aware of Cesaire's brutality, the paper argued, as he was a devoted macoute, one of Duvalier's secret police officers.

...in Port-au-Prince, the government was quick, following the appearance of [President] Jean-Claude Duvalier's step-father in Cape Haitian (whose mission was to pacify the metropolis of the North), to send a commission of inquiry to the scene...Returning to Port-au-Prince, the members of the inquiry commission invited Captain Cesaire to a car (which was to take them to the capital [supposedly to be punished, rather], maybe for his own protection). The arrangements of the measures taken regarding the executioner were unknown...We should recall that Captain Cesaire is a macoute who had been denounced last year by *Haiti-Observateur* when he was a lieutenant in Petit-Goave... (*Haiti-Observateur*, July 4-11 1980: Front-page).

The *Observateur* began to use the *empowerment* tone to instigate reform among Cape Haitians, reminding them of their potential to act as a unified group. The paper reported that:

Another example of the community's [Cape Haitians'] solidarity can be achieved. On February 1st, during the legislative elections of 1979, the solidarity of the Cape assured the triumph of Mr. Lerouge over Vixama, the candidate of the palace [the Duvalier regime]. [Here shows] again, the solidarity of the Cape's population to [influence] the regime. There is no need to say that the solidarity of the Haitian people is the only factor capable of changing the inept, cannibal, and looter Duvalier (*Haiti-Observateur*, July 4-11 1980: Front-page)

Underlying the *Observateur's* report is the notion that Haitians ought to realize that Duvalier is the source of their distress and that his regime operates to suppress opposition and

suppress their spirit. It also suggests that “Haitian activists” ought to feel empowered by the knowledge that their solidarity influenced the lives of the people of the Cape and can affect the Haitian regime. These events reveal how particular political ideas shape how journalists report the news.

Unlike the racial American media, the Haitian newspaper used frames of activism and solidarity within the broader *distressed victim* image based on the paper’s experience with political persecution by an authoritarian Haitian regime. The newspaper’s coverage of Haitians as *distressed* Haitians capable of activism is an example of a politicized journalistic practice that characterized the Haitians as capable of reforming the Haitian government. *Haiti-Observateur’s* coverage of Haitians therefore helped advance the paper’s anti-dictatorship agenda.

By 1983, a grassroots campaign in Haiti had generated open political protests against the repressive forces of the Duvalier regime and its paid loyalists who were no longer able to violently maintain social order in the country. The newspaper exploited the breakdown in government by covering leaders of the grassroots movement that promoted Haitian solidarity. Suppressing the opposition was Baby Doc’s primary means of securing his dictatorship, a method his father, François “Papa Doc” Duvalier initiated in 1959 after failed assassination plots and his father’s predecessor, President Stenio Vincent (1930-1941) (Paquin 1983: 166). Under “Papa Doc,” the Haitian government greatly expanded its role in the country by increasing the number of government employees, especially in the area of military and paramilitary forces (Lindskoog 2013: 11). Drawing on the support of an extensive network in both urban and rural areas that could depend on the executive branch for their income and status, “Duvalier created an expansive system of low- and middle-level loyalists spread throughout the country and in so doing, he not only bought the allegiance of a large number of people, but he also intensified competition among those

at the bottom of society,” loyalists competing to automatically suppress mass revolt on behalf of their employer, the state (Lindskoog 2013: 11). This “basket of crabs” system of rule, as anthropologist Trouillot (1990a: 155) described it, generated an atmosphere of silence and unchecked repression for decades, as Haitians feared not knowing who might be a Duvalier loyalist in their midst.

By 1983, however, repression was met by a clamoring rebuke. Haitians in the homeland were now courageously speaking out, joining other dissonant voices in the Haitian Diaspora in calling for a total rebuke of the Duvalier regime. A grassroots movement emerged, surviving the 1980 and 1981 political crackdown<sup>59</sup> which mostly “grew out of the work being done by progressive elements in the Catholic Church” (Lindskoog 2013: 155). At the same time, Radio Soleil emerged as a growing voice of opposition, after Radio Haiti Inter was shut down during the 1980 crackdown (Lindskoog 2013: 155). These radio stations were among the first to broadcast in Haitian Kréyol, the language of the people and spoke out against the regime in terms the masses could understand. That along with Pope John Paul II’s visit and comments that “things must change” in Haiti in 1983 further galvanized the grassroots movement.

Despite the AIDS epidemic emerging in the U.S., the *Haiti-Observateur* centered its attention on Protestant minister Sylvio Claude, an outspokenly staunch critic of Duvalier in Haiti,. The newspaper feted him for his courageous activism, in the face of the regime. Here again, the newspaper attempted to instigate reform and Haitian solidarity by praising Sylvio Claude as a genuine “Haitian activist” of the resistance and heralding his manifesto for Haitian solidarity as the way forward.

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<sup>59</sup> Just weeks after Ronald Reagan was elected to the presidency, Baby Doc unleashed a massive crackdown on opposition organizations and the independent press.

In his letter, [Sylvio Claude] the leader of [Christian Democratic Party of Haiti], CDHP, requested members of the diaspora to "consult in the shortest time for a unified and coordinated action to prove to the world that the government of Haiti is oppressive, corrupt and despotic. Sylvio Claude public call must be the object of attention of party group [of solidarity], associations fighting for Haiti to rid of abjection, of misery, of hunger and oppression (*Haiti-Observateur*, July 4-11 1983: 4).

The *Observateur* went so far as to published Claude's letter which called for a "Joint Declaration of the Leaders of the Opposition" demanding the amendment of the Haitian President for Life term limit, creating a constituent body representing all political ideologies, and calling for general elections (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1988). These were features of democratic solidarity that satisfied the revolutionary interest of the newspaper. The newspaper's coverage of the pursuit of Haitian solidarity instead of issues in the United States shows how far the newspaper went to fulfill its anti-dictatorship agenda.

## **6.2 POST EARTHQUAKE JOURNALISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA (*THE HERALD*)**

In the mainstream newspaper, the shift from the old controlling images of Black fear (dangerous primitive), poverty, and pollution to a modified controlling image of *distressed*, reflected individual journalists' new reliance on social media and citizen journalism, as well as the phenomenon of mobile giving, and American politics that together allowed journalists of traditional media<sup>60</sup> outlets to broaden the boundaries of journalism.

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<sup>60</sup> By 'traditional media' I mean newspaper journalism that traditionally involve more editing processes, concentrates on a variety of news stories and relies on the experience of the journalists. Social media, on the other

Citizen journalism is a new form of journalism which viewers submit content to newspapers. These citizen journalists, as Bowman and Willis explain, are amateurs who “play active roles in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news information” (Bowman and Willis 2003: n.p.). Citizen journalists represent a phenomenon in which audience play a significant role in shaping the future of news and information.

Citizen journalism in Haiti emerged in the aftermath of the earthquake, as members of the general public in and outside of Haiti began posting (and were, in many cases, invited by news networks to post) newsworthy content on the internet. The images they produced displayed the kind and extent of death, destruction, and desperation in Haiti. As these were uploaded on the web, they shifted not only how outside people perceived Haiti, but how they thought about how to help Haitians in their time of need. Citizen journalism in the earthquake aftermath therefore marked a watershed in the longstanding negative public image of Haiti and the Haitian people that had preoccupied American media coverage. It diversified and democratized the sources of information and the kind of writers who presented information about Haiti during the tragedy on the island.

In the 1970s, when the troubles of Haiti re-entered the American consciousness<sup>61</sup> and the American media focused on Haitian refugees fleeing the island for political freedom, citizen journalism played no part in the coverage of the island. Instead, news about Haiti was managed and monopolized by established professional journalists. Most U.S. coverage of Haiti, like other foreign countries, was based on *parachute* and *pack journalism*. Parachute journalists were “thrust” into an area they knew little to nothing about. Pack journalists relied on other reporters for information. The two concepts are best illustrated in Amy Wilentz’s book *The Rainy Season*,

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hand, typically involves less editing, concentration on one area of news, and relies on instant news postings (Ibold, Peter, and Adams 2012).

<sup>61</sup> Not since the 1930s, during the U.S. occupation, had Haiti received so much focus.

which recounts her disbelief about the journalistic practices in Haiti during the coup d'état of 1986. As was often the practice, these journalists relied on whatever information they could find in a country that prohibited freedom of the press. Other journalists were often critical of reports from Haiti during this time since the information that could be obtained was not always reliable (Perreault 2010).

In 1979, journalists relying on information from the Haitian and U.S. government about the Haitian refugees used material that was simple and sometimes partial to the interest of the governments. For instance, the U.S. government often denied reporters' claims that the American government had ignored human rights violations in Haiti since these violations helped maintain U.S.-Haitian relations. The U.S. government, instead, offered explanations that characterized the arriving Haitian boat people as "economic migrants," individuals dissatisfied with the economic prospects in their homeland. The mainstream newspaper used this information to describe Haitians who were claiming refugee status, much to the group's dissatisfaction since they considered themselves as migrants fleeing Haiti for political asylum. Journalists consequently provided the public an available, albeit inaccurate, description of Haitian refugees as *distressed* and desperate to find work in the U.S. The image did not address the human rights violations in Haiti from which the refugees were fleeing. Essentially, mainstream modified portrayals of Haitians as *distressed victims* burdening South Floridians were partly the creation of limited information, from parachute journalists, cultural barriers resulting in *pack journalism*, and the political agendas of the U.S. and Haitian governments.

The earthquake in Haiti and news by available social media and citizen journalism removed many such barriers between journalists and their sources. The proliferation of context and images of the earthquake in Haiti through social media shifted descriptions of the plight of the country

and its people living abroad, from negative to positive. It also shifted the media as reporters relied on social media accounts of Haiti.

A typical earthquake report read:

Eyewitness accounts of the destruction were hard-to-come-by, some came via Twitter, Facebook and Skype. Richard Morse, owner of the Oloffson Hotel in Port-au-Prince, sent tweets to the outside world. "Just about all the lights are out in Port au Prince," he said. "People still screaming but the noise is dying as darkness sets. Lots of rumors about which buildings were toppled. The Castel Haiti behind the Oloffson is a pile of rubble. It was eight stories high. Our guests are sitting out in the driveway." (*Miami Herald* January 12, 2010)

This was news reporting enriched by social media content, which provided sympathetic views of the Haitian people. Such reports, enhanced by online material, emphasized Haitians' suffering during the tragedy. They offered sympathetic descriptions that were neither provided by a hostile U.S. government nor subjected to the political postures of authorities. Viewer-submitted content was usually unfiltered, either text threads or disturbing and graphic photos of the disaster. Most importantly, they were not initially edited by the usual media channels—the news media and cable news.

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A major earthquake struck southern Haiti, toppling buildings and inflicting misery on the hemisphere's poorest nation. [FULL STORY](#)



**'The whole world started to shake'**

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Luke Renner, an American staying in Cap-Hatien, a city nearly 100 miles north of Port-au-Prince, said he was sitting at his home when "the whole world started to shake." Watch continuing coverage on CNN TV. [FULL COVERAGE](#)

Figure 10. Screenshot of Viewer-submitted image on CNN<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Pedre 2010a, viewer-submitted image.

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## Major Quake Hits Haiti; Thousands Feared Dead

The largest earthquake to hit Haiti in more than 200 years rocked the Caribbean nation Tuesday, collapsing a hospital and heavily damaging the presidential palace and U.N. peacekeepers headquarters. Officials reported bodies lying in the streets and an aid official described "total disaster and chaos."

Figure 11. Screenshot of Viewer-submitted image on NPR<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Pedre 2010b, viewer-submitted image.

In the mainstream media's coverage of the quake aftermath, viewer-submitted content became a way for the usual media channels to report news. As had been the increasing pattern of established news organizations since perhaps the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake, journalists were increasingly relying on viewer-submitted content to report on breaking news. The mainstream newspapers adopted this trend after the earthquake in Haiti.

In addition to social media, reporters relied on their personal knowledge about Haiti, perhaps more than they had in the past. Given Haiti's tumultuous history of political and environmental disasters and the regular news coverage of Haiti which had become commonplace in American media, reporters had grown accustomed to the familiar narrative about the cause of the nation's troubles—its violent gang culture, culture of dependency on foreign aid, entrenched poverty, and corruption in all levels of society (Birrell 2012; Blake 2010). Yet some reporters stepped out of their role to note other causes of Haiti's legacy of cruel luck, such as

Bad enough, Haiti is wretchedly poor. Bad enough it has a history of political instability and colonialism, of being ignored by the major powers when it is not being exploited by them. Bad enough, all that, yet at the end of the day, those are disasters authored by human hands, by human greed, human corruption, human economic predation. (*Miami Herald* January 14, 2010)

Journalists who offered such opinions were reflecting on the plight of the Haitian people who were being “ignored by the major powers.” Such candid reflection stemmed from journalistic practices of being increasingly attuned to what is referred to as reporting *disaster porn*—a prurient attraction to news about Haiti that is divorced from the larger structural issues plaguing the country (Gould 2010; Sirota 2010). As many journalists would realize amid the devastation of the earthquake, reporting on the disaster raised “ethical questions not often raised in their routine professional lives” (Gould 2010: n.p.). Reporting about Haiti, for them, seemed different. Covering

Haiti felt like important journalism since they were “telling stories that could change people’s lives” (Gould 2010: n.p.).

Journalists’ views and reliance on self-knowledge in covering Haiti can be mostly attributed to the widespread distrust of the Haitian government. While the American media became more suspicious of their own government after Iran Contra scandal in 1987 (perhaps more so when the Society of Professional Journalists dropped ‘objectivity’ from their code of ethics in 1996), media distrust of the Haitian government has been a major concern since the 1950s. In 1955, Haitian president Paul Magloire was accused of stealing international relief funds designated to victims of Hurricane Hazel and amid severe economic problems that followed the disaster, the scandal led to his ouster. Corruption in Haiti deepened under the leadership of François “Papa Doc” Duvalier’s administration that used government funds to enrich his elite backers, who profited from his power (WTVJ-Miami 1966). Son and heir to the presidency, Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier also embezzled millions from the state treasury before finally being ousted in 1986 (Thompson 2011). In 2004, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was accused of engaging in back-door deals with foreign investors and running a corrupt government in which officials “used their public office as personal fiefdoms, engaged in rampant corruption and drug trafficking;” as well as made use of gangs, “some of whom were armed, against their opponents” (Dupuy 2011: n.p.; also see O’Grady 2005). Such corruption and misuse of public funds caused a lack of faith in the capacity of the Haitian government to address the nation’s most dire problems in the media, among others over a generation (Kristoff 2010; Coutsoukis 1989).

During the 1979 boatlift crisis and 1983 AIDS epidemic, the mainstream newspaper relied on the corrupt Haitian government for information on the plight of the Haitian people, which fueled a modified distressed victim image of the Haitian people as impoverished and polluted fleeing to

America.<sup>64</sup> After the earthquake in 2010, however, mainstream journalist relied on their personal knowledge about Haiti, in which some were personally invested, in their coverage and produced more positive images. They recalled past travels and compared Haiti pre-earthquake to Haiti now.

As I read the stories and see the images of the devastation in Haiti, my mind's eye keeps flashing back to those key moments in my own life that connect me to the pain and anguish, the resolve and resilience of the Haitian people... Everywhere there was rubble and dust, piles of bodies and survivors wandering in a daze. I look at the scenes played out every day now in Haiti and I am transported back to Guatemala, where I had to swallow hard to keep my emotions in check, to focus on being a reporter documenting the grief and the devastation [of the Guatemalan earthquake in 1976]... Many years later [before the earthquake] , as foreign editor for *The Miami Herald*, I went to Haiti to get a first-hand look at a country we covered extensively for our readers. I stayed at the Hotel Montana, and I was quickly struck by the two worlds that co-exist in Port-au-Prince. Mansions and slums... (*Miami Herald*, February 1, 2010)

Such personal reflections were not introduced in journalism in the mainstream newspaper's coverage of the boatlift crisis or AIDS epidemic. Journalists' reflections of Haiti represented a sea change in how the newspaper described Haitians, from the old controlling images to a modified and more positive version of *distressed*.

### **6.2.1 Modification in journalistic tone: Social media and aggressive mobile aid campaigns**

Coverage of the unprecedented wave of cash donations via mobile device and social media furthered the shifted in the mainstream image, from the old controlling images to a modified version of *distressed*. This was due to public attention to lessons learned from the 2004 Indian

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<sup>64</sup> The Duvalier regime considered Haitians refugees as traitors for fleeing the homeland. As such, the Haitian government had no interests in challenging American stereotypes and discrimination of Haitian immigrants as "economic migrants" or "diseased." The Duvalier government considered American discrimination toward Haitian immigrants a retribution for leaving Haiti.

Ocean Tsunami relief efforts and the ability of social media to personalize aid campaigns. The simultaneous coverage of aggressive relief campaigns via mobile devices particularly modified attitudes towards Haiti.

Early in the earthquake recovery, emergency relief groups creatively utilized smartphone texting platforms to fund raise, which enabled them to solicit donations directly from individuals. Relief organizations, beginning with the American Red Cross, also used the mobile infrastructure to encourage cash donations instead of the typical in-kind donations such as clothes, food, medicine, or other relief supplies which might inundate transportation ports already struggling to cope with deliveries for aid work (Gray 2010). The campaign push for cash donations was a result of hard lessons learned from previous disasters, notably the 2004 tsunami that struck Indonesia (Lipton 2008; McCawley 2009). In the tsunami's aftermath, in-kind donations reportedly took up valuable space and the time of aid workers (Gray 2010). Unusable goods were hard to dispose of and posed a serious danger when not disposed appropriately. Moreover, inappropriate donations added to the mounting landfill created by the disaster. Since the 2004 tsunami, relief groups, with the support of the U.S. State Department, made aggressive campaigns for cash-only donations, as cash offers flexibility so that relief items can correspond to the needs of the victim (Gray 2010). The fundraising for cash via text for Haiti was the first such venture implemented for large-scale disaster relief (Lobb 2012). Of the \$275 million donated to charitable organizations for Haiti, "\$24 million was raised in \$10 donations by the American Red Cross via a text messaging effort (by texting to a specific number, [in which] the donation was charged to the donor's phone bill)" (Lobb 2012: 323). Humanitarian aid to Haiti eventually totaled over \$9 billion dollars, with 89% of funds received going toward non-Haitian humanitarian organizations that contributed to the relief efforts, 10% toward government needs, and less than 1% toward local organizations (Rodgers 2013).

The extraordinary pledge of financial aid to Haiti was due to the flexibility and ease of making donations via smart devices, which went viral on social network sites and inspired an explosion of other charitable organizations to utilize similar donate-by-text and -by-social media programs (Nielsen 2010; Pew Research 2010). Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, with the support of mainstream media, further provided information directing individuals where to send cash-donations. Celebrities used online platforms like their Twitter feeds to plead for earthquake-relief donations via text-messaging, in addition to by phone and mail, all of which contributed to record breaking cash-donations (Gross 2010). The campaign for cash-donation via smartphone devices and social media, together with the images of earthquake aftermath coming out of Haiti, generated a nationwide and global impulse to help (Gahran 2012; Winslow 2005).

The nationwide patterns of giving represented a shift in American's awareness of Haiti and the Haitian people and motivated the mainstream media to write more positively about the Haitian people than had been done in the past. Thus, in the aftermath of the earthquake in 2010, the tone of the media coverage was sympathetic and supportive of the flood of mobile donations. Social media reports both shifted mainstream coverage of the Haitian people—from the old controlling images to a modified version of Haitians in *distress*—and helped the fund raising campaigns.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Social media may be described as web-based services that facilitate interactive communication and the exchange of content, while enabling the user to easily move between the roles of audience and content producer (Laad 2012). Social media here is characterized by microblogging, blogging, social networking, photo and video sharing tools—just to name a few. It is not yet mainstream media, since the recent Gallup poll indicates that half of American adults still rely on television for news and current events (Saad 2013). It is hard to ignore however the impact that social media has had on social life. Among the reasons for the widespread use of social media involves its ability to facilitate social life through a computer screen, in ways that help users build personal relationships with people in close or remote places in the world. Social network platforms like Facebook and Twitter design their sites to foster these relationships, by personalizing the user's content. While such sites bill themselves as a free service by not charging its users, these sites are financially supported by web and mobile advertisements, mostly through businesses that create and market ads on the site for a paid fee. Users of social media, sharing media and email, are thus exposed to advertisement as part of the network's servicing agreement. Moreover social networks like Facebook and Twitter can personalize the content, promoting the most relevant ads to the interests of their users in hopes of keeping them connected to their relationships, which in turn earns the site more money. Pinkovitz explains the earning potential of

Social media was influential in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake because its so-called “magic” keeps users connected and allows them “to participate and contribute their ideas, experience, and knowledge to others” (Laad 2012: 12). In this way, social media facilitate people’s desires to connect to others, helping them feel personally invested in their interests.

It is the ability of social media to make its users feel personally invested in their relationship with others, that contributed to the tidal wave and extraordinary success of mobile-giving campaigns to Haiti. Social media platforms made donating to the Haiti relief a personal and relevant part of the users’ social life. Users would “change their status updates to reflect when they’d donated to the Red Cross campaign, thus encouraging their friends to do likewise” (Gross 2010: n.p.). Others joined multiple online communities and other social media groups related to Haiti, some of which extended to users the real-time experience and challenges that arose from the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti (see interactive sites like [Insidethedisaster.com](http://Insidethedisaster.com)).

Further personalizing social media users’ giving patterns was the sharing of images coming out of Haiti, which often came by personal connections facilitated by a social network platform. As the *Wall Street Journal* noted “Thanks to the internet, pictures of the death and destruction were familiar to the world within hours, and the need for a massive influx of relief and specialized medical care was instantaneously apparent” (*Wall Street Journal*, Jan 25 2010: n.p.).

The mainstream newspaper’s unique reliance on social media for coverage of Haiti increases this online personal campaign which Gross aptly describes as a “spate of online efforts that have allowed people to help victims of the devastating earthquake” (2010). During this period,

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such sites in that “when people create personal profiles on a Social Media site like Facebook, the information they provide is collected, stored and used to help advertisers target their online ad” (Laad 2012: 11).

the mainstream newspaper portrayed Haitians with sympathy. For example, one newspaper published an account of a social media user:

With telephone communication to the island nonexistent or spotty, survivors turned to the Internet to search for loved ones and plead for help. "There are people trapped in Caribbean Market in Delmas, pls help," wrote Sandrine Malary on Facebook. "Really there are people trapped in lots of places, so if you are down there please get out there and help save our people." (*Miami Herald*, January 13, 2010)

Many turned to social-media websites like Twitter and Facebook to plead for updates about their loved ones, and beg for urgent aid for victims – some going so far as to provide specific locations where they believed relatives were trapped. (*Miami Herald*, January 14, 2010)

The mainstream paper also published web reactions to the Haiti earthquake as well as personal testimonies of Haitians hard pressed to get in contact with lost loved ones.

Nearly 24 hours after a devastating earthquake struck Haiti's capital, anxious Haitian Americans trooped through Sant La, Miami's Haitian neighborhood center, desperate for word on the fate of relatives and friends back home -- and having no luck at all... All day, Metellus herself had been trying to reach her mother, Ghislaine Pinchinet, 72. Time and time again, the phone at the family's home in Petionville - - a hard-hit Port-au-Prince suburb -- offered a disheartening "this mailbox is full" message. (*Miami Herald*, January 14, 2010)

In this coverage, journalists portrayed Haitians as distressed and showed sensitivity toward the mental anguish of the Haitian people who were desperate to contact loved ones and receive international aid via social media. News articles that gave information about how to give to Haiti relief added to the sympathetic coverage.

## 6.2.2 Disaster threat and American politics

Media coverage of the political and racial implications of the Haiti earthquake in the wake of the 2005 Katrina disaster in the U.S. precipitated a further shift in mainstream frames of Haitians from the old controlling images to a modified and more positive version of *distressed*. The shift began in President Obama's first years in office in the comparisons on the Katrina relief debacle five years earlier when then-Senator Barack Obama criticized President George W. Bush for his "half-hearted measures" in the Katrina disaster (CNN 2008: n.p.). Obama echoed what most of America had come to think of the 2005 Katrina relief efforts, that they were late and mismanaged. All levels of government (local, state, and federal) were criticized for their uncoordinated assistance to New Orleans, but it was President Bush who received the heaviest condemnation for returning to Washington D.C. from a family vacation a day after the hurricane struck and his premature comment that progress was being made. The controversy contributed to the president's already dismal approval ratings from public opinion about the Iraq war and helped elect Senator Obama to the presidency (CBS News 2009).

Obama's first tests of presidential leadership were the national problems he inherited and the promises he made during his presidential campaign. These included an economy in free fall, rising joblessness, widespread home foreclosures, and a collapsed auto industry (Henry 2010), in addition to his campaign promises to shut down the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, deliver on comprehensive healthcare reform, and create a "responsible" closure of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Obama would later add a colossal humanitarian crisis in Haiti to that list.

Immediately, the earthquake in Haiti drew comparisons to the devastation wrought by hurricane Katrina in New Orleans but Obama's response was swift, leaving little doubt that the Haiti disaster would not be another Hurricane Katrina. He called for a "swift, coordinated and

aggressive” relief effort, which included orders to dispatch ships, soldiers, and Marines, in addition to a government pledge of \$100 million dollars for the relief efforts (Feller 2010: n.p.). He also marshaled his 13 million campaign supporters to donate to the cause. Obama also mobilized former presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton to lead the fundraising efforts and gave daily updates of the progress being made in Haiti. Perhaps his most appreciated action by the Haitian community was Obama’s granting of temporary protective status (or TPS) to Haitian refugees, which represented a break from past U.S. treatment to Haitian exiles and the detain and deport policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations. Under TPS, Haitian refugees illegally residing in the U.S. were now permitted to work while their homeland was rebuilt.

Sociologically speaking, the inevitable comparisons between the Hurricane Katrina disaster in southern Louisiana and the earthquake in central Haiti was fueled by what had ultimately defined the Katrina disaster: the government’s slow efforts to attend to victims that were mostly poor black people. The racial conflict that arose in the mismanaged relief in Katrina is what Pastor and his colleagues have termed the *second disaster* (Pastor et al. 2006). Second disasters<sup>66</sup> denote problems that often arise in the rebuilding and recovery process, which then contributes to further inequalities in the disaster area. Second disasters emerge from acute environmental risks (like underprepared, uninsured minorities living in substandard housing) made all the more visible after a disaster strikes. What then results is a huge disparity in the kinds of victims who are hardest hit. In the case of Katrina, victims were residents of the poorest and “blackest” neighborhoods of

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<sup>66</sup> It is important to distinguish the emergence of a second disaster and crisis. According to the Lighthouse Readiness Group (2015), a disaster is a major event that causes serious misfortune in a particular region, usually requiring the coordination of several different agencies as first responders. A disaster denotes an event that has already happened. A crisis is an event that is expected to lead to a dangerous situation and often defined as “a time of intense difficulty.” A second disaster, unlike a crisis, constitutes a major event that follows the initial disaster and unexpectedly occurs, which again requires coordination of efforts.

New Orleans. Failure in all levels of government to prioritize emergency plans for these vulnerable residents contributed to this second disaster of Hurricane Katrina, the looting and racial conflict. The government's failure to prioritize the needs of this vulnerable population was amplified by the disaster, leaving the affected black victims to blame racism for the slow relief efforts that left them feeling abandoned, pleading on roof tops for rescue, and surrounded by floods of water (Kuzmier 2010; Sanders 2005). Their sentiments were confirmed and made more visible by the media that focused on the implications of race. This was most striking for those who sought refuge in the New Orleans Superdome, where some 30,000 victims witnessed the results of racial and class disparity. The racial context eventually took on political overtones when Black politicians expressed anger over what they said was "a slow federal response to Hurricane Katrina" (Alfano 2005: n.p.).

The social and political outrage in New Orleans was augmented by a string of conspiracy theories and outlandish comments in the press, including one celebrity who called the President a racist on live television. The public vitriol and contempt negatively impacted the approval ratings of the president and deepened the public's distrust and lack of faith in government. This, and firsthand testimonies from the victims (some comparing the ordeal to strategic genocide), led one reporter to describe the "emergency response to Hurricane Katrina [as], in every sense of the word, a disaster on top of a disaster" (Kuzmier 2010: n.p.) or as is referred here to as a second disaster.

The threat of a second disaster after the earthquake in Haiti supported mainstream criticisms about the inevitable similarities between the two disasters, which ultimately changed the U.S. government's attitude about Haiti and motivated U.S. aid to the island (Fineman 2010; Soumitra R. Eachempati 2010). This political threat motivated the mainstream newspaper to closely cover the management of aid in Haiti, which furthered the shift from the modified image of Haitians as *impoverished* and *polluted* to one of *distressed victims*, similar to victims affected

by the Katrina relief debacle. The threat of a subsequent disaster was signaled in mainstream news images of *distressed* Haitians that in-turn signaled the role that race and class would play in the recovery and rebuilding process in Haiti.

The following excerpts were typical of this close examination of a possible second disaster:

One disaster response expert recalls how after Katrina, New Orleans received a flurry of do-gooders -- not all of whom were qualified to assist. "People showed up in New Orleans, saying, 'I'm a doctor, I have a stethoscope around my neck.' It was unclear if they really were," said Irwin Redlener, a physician and director of the National Center for Disaster (*Miami Herald*, August 1, 2010).

...the road to failure is paved with good intentions and worthy plans. This time, for the sake of Haiti's nine million inhabitants, everyone must get it right. Unfortunately, the Obama administration veered far off course, endangering the lives of hundreds of grievously injured earthquake victims when it halted U.S. military flights on Wednesday that were supposed to take patients to American hospitals, mostly in South Florida. Military officials said the states, including Florida, were unwilling to pay for treating victims at their hospitals... The stand-off deepened the worry of former Federal Emergency Management Agency Director R. David Paulison, who won praise for leading FEMA in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. He said the response in Haiti so far has been haphazard. "What I see down there is there is nobody in charge," said Paulison. (*Miami Herald*, February 1, 2010)

These excerpts demonstrated the mainstream newspaper's scrutiny of the recovery process in light of the possible political turmoil President Obama might face. They focused on the management of aid relief and on the risks that halting services would pose to the Haitian people. The Haitian people were therefore often described in the mainstream newspaper not only as *distressed victims* because of the earthquake, but as potential victims of a mismanaged recovery by the U.S. government, like the Katrina debacle. Threat of a second disaster strengthened the *distressed* image, even though the Obama administration avoided a subsequent disaster.

### 6.3 POLITICS OF RACE IN JOURNALISM (*THE TIMES*)

In the black newspaper, the shift from the old controlling images to a positive one of *distressed victims* reflected a reduced interest in race in the black media coverage of the Haiti disaster when compared to coverage of earlier crises. During the 1979 boatlift Crisis and 1983 AIDS epidemic, race played a significant role in the black media as journalists saw their mission as reporting the news from a black view. They therefore offered racial perspectives on the U.S. government's actions toward the Haitian asylum seekers, compared to its grants of asylum to immigrants fleeing other repressive governments such as Cuba, the Soviet Union, and those in South Asia. Even when scientific research proved that there was indeed a strong prevalence of AIDS among Haitians, the black media often introduced counter points and alternative explanations, including reasons that the Haitian people and their troubles should matter to the Black community. The black press's coverage of the role racism in the plight of the Haitian people thus provided an *empathic/identification* frame subsumed within the *distressed victim* image.

After the Haiti earthquake, race eventually became less significant in the coverage by the black media than had been the case in earlier crises. The black newspaper articles seldom discussed race as a factor exacerbating the plight of the earthquake victims. As a result, race had a marginal impact on the tone of black press's coverage of the earthquake.

For instance, early in the earthquake coverage, the *Miami Times* focused on the similarities between Haiti and Louisiana disasters and the threat of a second disaster of racial conflict. In one report, the newspaper found President Obama to be appropriately speedy in feeling compassionate for the Haitian people and committed to helping the embattled nation. This was unlike the previous U.S. President George W. Bush who the newspapers criticized for taking a "lackluster attitude toward the crippling blow that Hurricane Katrina dealt to the Gulf Coast until the mayor of New

Orleans took over and told his story to CNN” (*Miami Times*, September 7, 2005). Instead, the newspaper wrote of President Obama that

Knowledge of [Haiti’s troubled history], as well as the daunting tasks of rebuilding that lie ahead, may have caused President Obama to speak so compassionately to the Haitian people two days after the quake...

Furthermore, his initial commitment of \$100 million to help Haiti’s is a “good answer” to the rhetorical question he posed earlier about Haitians who might have reacted with despair and wondered, “Have we somehow been forsaken?”

The *Miami Times* went on to write that

And in getting former Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton to lead a relief fundraising effort, Obama gives Haitians reason to believe their country will stay on America’s radar longer than it takes to rebuild the fallen [Haitian] presidential palace. (*Miami Times*, January 20, 2010: A4)

This early report of the President’s handling of the earthquake disaster stressed his generally *empathetic* concern and “compassion” for distressed Haitian people, in much the same way the wider black community felt about the victims of the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans. The Black media was critical of opponents to the Haiti relief such as *New York Times* opinion conservative columnist David Brooks who blamed Haitian culture as resistant to progress (Brooks 2010) and Televangelist Pat Robertson who suggested that Haiti was cursed (Robertson 2010). The black media offered searing responses in defense of the Haitian people, in an *empathic* tone in which race was a significant factor.

Televangelist Pat Robertson stated that Haiti’s Pact with the Devil is the reason for the earthquake. It seems that the old fear of the Haitian Revolution has resurfaced 200 years later in Robertson’s insensitive and ignorant remarks... This pact was allegedly made between slaves revolting against the French. Robertson believes this pact explains the poverty, hurricanes, and earthquake as God’s punishment on the Haitians for their illicit pact. Robertson seems to gloss over the fact that white French people took unwilling Africans from their continent, shipped them over to

the New World and then worked them to death. Was there no sin in this transgression? I guess this was okay because the slave trade was conducted by purported white Christians. Where is the wrath of God on the descendants of these White slave owners? (*Miami Times*, January 20, 2010).

The early coverage in the black press—on the similarities of the Katrina disaster and reactions to columnist David Brooks and televangelist Pat Robertson—were mostly defensive of and *empathetic* towards the Haitians. In these articles, Haitians were likened to victims of disasters in various locations in the U.S., to make the broader point that such criticisms were an effort to scapegoat the Haitians for a natural disaster. Such criticisms were described as baseless and essentially racist since Haiti was not uniquely cursed, sick, or trapped in a cycle of poverty. Race in these reports early in the quake aftermath was significant and *empathetic* of the Haitian people, as was the case in the earlier boatlift crisis and AIDS epidemic.

But the newspaper's racially-charged *distressed victim* coverage (of Black Americans' and Haitians' mutual experience of racial injustice) soon turned to sympathetic *distressed victim* coverage (toward Black's *sympathetic* views of the misfortune and anguish of Haitians). After the Brooks and Robertson controversy, opponents of Haiti relief were few and far between and were overwhelmed with attacks by not only the black media and black supporters, but by non-blacks as well (Driver and Lindskoog 2010). That in addition to President Obama's swift, coordinated, and aggressive relief effort (and perhaps in part because he was elected by the majority of blacks in the U.S.) effectively lessened concerns about racism later in the news coverage.<sup>67</sup> The black media eventually turned to covering the bleak outlook of the island, without any strong discussion of racial discrimination in the coverage.

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<sup>67</sup> Refer to Gallup poll of Black's approval of President Obama from 2009 to 2014 (Newport 2014).

Without the racial element in the coverage, which often stressed Haitians' and African-Americans' common heritage of racism, the black newspaper focused on Haiti's plight:

Before the earthquake in Haiti, 65 children lived at the orphanage. Thirty-six more came because their building was damaged. "We are trying to do the best we can," Milfort [the caretaker] said, but it is difficult to feed and care for so many children. Several are dehydrated, she said. Fifteen women are caring for the children in shifts...Delide Jean-Baptiste, a nurse who helped deliver supplies, said she was worried about the conditions of several children...The babies, she said, wore diapers soiled as if they had been worn a long time. "I almost cried," Jean-Batiste said. "It's difficult to see kids living like this." (*Miami Times*, January 20, 2010)

Such excerpts typified, not African-American's mutual experience as in the previous crises, but the suffering and *distress* of the Haitian people in the quake aftermath in the newspapers. A *sympathetic* tone is found in the way the article captures the mental health and misfortune of the Haitian nurse, who is caring for the affected Haitian children. The article thus describes the distressed social circumstances facing this group.

#### **6.4 POLITICS OF POST-DUVALIER HAITIAN JOURNALISM (*THE OBSERVATEUR*)**

After the 2010 earthquake, the Haitian newspaper was more closely engaged with the earthquake disaster, more than its coverage of the previous crises, though less engaged than the American newspapers. Compared to the *Miami Herald* and *Times*, the *Observateur* understandably lacked the resources to keep up with the round-the-clock American news platforms, which resulted in their limited and speculative coverage of the aftermath.

Notwithstanding, there was a major shift in the Haitian image in the *Haiti-Observateur*. During the 1979 boatlift Crisis and 1983 AIDS epidemic, the *Observateur* portrayed Haitians as

*distressed* members of a movement capable of being empowered as a solidarity group against the Duvalier regime, often in the face of self-serving false patriots of the Haitian Diaspora. After the quake, depictions of Haitians were divergent and varied, but mostly focused on the earthquake victims. Among the varied frames (in addition to *victim*, *patriot*, *self-interested*) were those related to the international aid and the politics of aid relief, American celebrities and entertainment, race and ethnic relations, youth in the priesthood, and French comedy. Later coverage was more focused on relief efforts and Haiti's gratitude for international assistance.

The variety of frames reflects an increase in the number of journalists who wrote on topics beyond just the governance of Haiti and a shift in the *Observateur's* portrayals of the Haitian people—from *distressed victims* capable of becoming activists to more divergent frames. The declining significance of the *anti-dictatorship* frame allowed room for more divergent views on the Haitian people. While the earthquake disaster did serve (like the anti-dictatorship ideology) as an organizing principle for the news, the Haitian newspaper often digressed from the disaster to provide coverage by Haitians and non-Haitians on issues unrelated to Haiti, as well as adaptations of news reports from other media organizations like CNN and the *New York Times* rather than from Haitian sources. The divergent coverage resulted in an incoherent set of frames that were tangentially related to the earthquake disaster in the initial days of coverage but more related in the ensuing month regarding the future of Haiti.

During the quake's aftermath Haitians appeared as victims in 71% of the coverage,<sup>68</sup> as the target of some force, as persons who were in need, killed, lacked emergency care or were

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<sup>68</sup> Since depictions of Haitians were divergent (frames not held together by a common ideology, which would have otherwise helped further decode the text), but mostly focused on the earthquake victims in the articles, I used semantic grammar analysis of the word *victim* to reveal how Haitians as "victims" were perceived in the newspaper, either as the subject or object of concern. That is, I used semantic grammar analysis (Fransozi 1994) to analyze the relationship between terms in the Subject-Action-Object (who-does-what) semantic triplet form as, for example,

neglected. For instance, the *Observateur* wrote that the Haitian government neglected the earthquake victims or that lack of emergency care resulted in the death of an earthquake victim. Haitians were thus portrayed as bearing the brunt of forces beyond their control. In only 29% of the coverage were Haitians portrayed as active persons, who survived the disaster, benefited from aid relief and the widespread sympathy, and finally given the attention they desperately needed. For instance, the *Observateur* reported that an earthquake victim (or victims) survived the collapse of their residence, or that a victim benefited from swift medical care. Such Haitians were portrayed as emerging from danger.

In places where Haitians were described as a *distressed* group capable of activism, the image took on a broader meaning, broader than its original usage in the previous two events. During the boatlift crisis and AIDS epidemic, the newspaper's agenda to promote awareness and solidarity caused them to stress the unity and capacity of distressed Haitians to fight against the Duvalier regime. During the 2010 earthquake, the controlling image of *distressed* Haitians capable of activism, however, applied to the emergent and wider international campaign of nations aiding Haiti and the Haitian people in their darkest hour. The image often appeared when the newspaper offered articles encouraging the mobilization of nations and Haitian leaders to participate in an international solidarity to help Haiti. In other words, the paper's advocacy for international mobilization became the new Haitian activism. In an interview printed in English, an interviewee explained that

In the case of our beloved "Ayiti Chéri" industrial nations need to facilitate and channel the resources necessary to coordinate as well as deliver relief to survivors as urgently as possible. Likewise, the Haitian community needs to act upon a spirit

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<subject> Aid worker <action> saves <object> earthquake victim. I counted the number of times the word *victim* appeared as the "subject" versus "object" and the salience of the action word used to describe Haitian victims in the triplet form. I did this for 40 articles in the *Haiti-Observateur*, and in all of them, I determined several sets of semantic triplets as themes that represent how the victims were depicted in the text.

of initiative, collaboration and communal benevolence while executing the very staple onto which we first established our independence in 1804. "L'union fait La force" as a diasporic nation we need to be that force which affirms our solidarity, a willingness to hope, mobilize and lead the efforts that will serve to rebuild our Haitian homeland as well as other regions around the world that have been impacted by such devastation. (*Haiti-Observateur*, January 13-27, 2010)

The above excerpt elicits a *patriot/solidarity* frame by evoking the nation's motto *L'union fait La force* (Union Makes Strength) to emphasize that Haitians' need to affirm their heritage of solidarity to rebuild their homeland. The *Observateur* also included articles that used the solidarity image to describe the future prospects of Haiti and its citizens as a united group that will survive this tragedy.

Frames of *self-interested* persons or, as the newspaper had previously described the "false patriots of Haitian Diaspora" was seldom used. When used, the *self-interested* frame was often applied to nations whose assistance was perceived to be self-serving, like when Haitian President René Préval allowed American Marines to briefly control the Haitian Presidential residence in the early days of the aftermath, or when the president's agendas fit past despotic tendencies. In a searing article in the Haitian newspaper, the Préval government was spotlighted:

From January 1804 to the earthquake in Haiti - black or mulatto they have or know - part of the political, economic and military power [dynamics operating in Haiti]. Clearly, the Préval government is no exception to the rule [of knowing those dynamics]... Already [leaders claiming to work]...on behalf of the "poor," the old and some elites, [some of these leaders] have been able to still fool the hungry masses in the time of Aristide and Préval governments. One can easily trace the history to spread forfeitures of Haitian elites who mostly have no real strategy to change and modernize Haiti. (*Haiti-Observateur*, January 27-Februaury 3, 2010)

In this instance, the *Observateur* used the *self-interested* frame to describe President Préval as a traditional elitist, caught in colonial ideology to exploit the Haitian masses. The Préval government is described as exhibiting high regard for its own interests against the modernization

of Haiti. The above excerpts therefore illustrate some presence of the old anti-dictatorship perspective in the newspaper's 2010 earthquake coverage.

Generally, my analysis found that social media had no effect on the *Observateur's* coverage. Viewer submitted content was not noted in the articles. Instead, a declining anti-Duvalier ideology caused the variance of frames in the *Observateur*, since the fall of Baby Doc in 1986, which brought not only political liberalization, but broad democratization across every aspect of Haiti, the Haitian Diaspora, and media.

The broadening in the Haitian newspaper's news coverage was due to events in 1985 that proved crucial to the overthrow of Jean-Claude Duvalier's regime and his presidency. In the coastal city of Gonaives, the Haitian military fired shots at a mass of young marchers protesting the Duvalier dictatorship. In the end, three lay dead, including twenty-year-old Jean-Robert Cius, nineteen-year-old Daniel Israel, and thirteen-year-old Mackenson Michel. More than after any previous suppressed protests, Gonaives, the city known as a site of liberation and independence, erupted. "The Duvalier regime's rather routine attempt to suppress a single expression of dissent had this time provoked an uprising" (Lindskoog 2013: 161-162). With every passing month the unrest was ballooning into an uncontrollable rebellion, with Duvalier doing everything in his power to "placate the growing popular movement" (Lindskoog 2013: 161-162). The dictator's concessions, to mandate economic incentives for the masses and do away with the political police unit, were ignored. The rebellion eventually paralyzed the country with daily road blocks and protests. By the beginning of 1986, the Haitian government faced the prospect of being toppled (Lindskoog 2013: 164).

The Haitian Diaspora, inspired by the grassroots movement in Haiti, made serious advances in New York and Miami "to pressure the U.S. government to withdraw its support for

the dictator” (Lindskoog 2013: 164). In New York, Haitians protested in the streets with speeches and music; in Miami, the protest was more destructive, with activists clashing with a Duvalier supporter (Lindskoog 2013: 164-166). The U.S. government’s claim (and retraction) that Duvalier had in fact been toppled further galvanized the revolutionary fervor of Haitians. All that the *Haiti-Observateur* had fought for—establishing democracy in Haiti and ousting the brutal dictator—was finally paying off. Duvalier was on his way out and Haiti was about to change in a big way and so would the media.

The significance of this change and its effect on Haiti and the Diaspora could not be overstated as Haitian historian Carl Lindskoog (2013: 171-172) aptly illustrates about the unfolding revolution that took place; that

In the hours and days after Duvalier’s departure, there was plenty of celebration in Haiti and throughout the diaspora. But Haitians had their minds on more than mere celebration. There was also the urgent task of defending their freedom now that the dictator was gone. Protesters outside the Haitian consulate in Boston expressed the need for a means to recoup the fortune Duvalier had stolen from the Haitian people; they demanded that the tontons macoutes and other members of Duvalier’s network be tried for the crimes that they had committed against the people. The same desire drove Haitians in Miami into conflict with supporters of Duvalier and with workers at the Haitian consulate... In Haiti, on the other hand, those who had suffered violence and repression during the Duvalier era carried out a campaign to dismantle the system that had victimized them and to punish the individuals responsible. They called this *dechoukaj*, or “uprooting,” and it was a bloody affair. Known or suspected Duvalier supporters were exposed to violent acts of retribution. Perhaps the most common image associated with *dechoukaj* is that of Duvalier supporters burning to death after having a flaming tire placed around their necks. “Necklacing,” as this form of execution was called, was one of the most grisly manifestations of the uprooting. Another powerful image captures another important aspect of the *dechoukaj*: the sense that the uprooting was a blow against imperialism and a step toward self-determination: in the celebration over Duvalier’s collapse, a statue of Christopher Columbus was torn from its foundation in a public square in Port-au-Prince and thrown into the bay. The people renamed the square for a leader of the resistance to the US occupation, Charlemagne Peralte.

These events had a wide sweeping effect on Haitian consciousness and impacted Haitian media in the years that followed, prompting the *Observateur* Chief Editor Raymond Joseph to address the prospect of the newspaper's mission and purpose and life in post-Duvalier era. That, according to Joseph,

People said that when Duvalier leaves, the newspaper will fold. That did not happen. The newspaper broadened to include all issues and with an office in Haiti, we were able to broaden the news base. We are the voice of the democratic reformist. Our editorial policy is to support the democratic process. We are known as the newspaper of the artist. We have turned from being political to stressing the aspirations of the people (Joseph, in Rhodes 1999: 52).

Divergence in the Haitian media finally took root in a media that had previously served a revolutionary function. Not only the *Observateur*, but Haitian media in general broadened its scope. As Haitian communications scholar Leara Rhodes (1999) discovered, in post-Duvalier era, Haitian media encouraged local advertising, promoted local cultural events, and included English pages. Former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, a non-Haitian, for example, maintained a regular English column in *Haiti-Observateur* during his political tenure. The Haitian newspaper, regularly published in French, also increased its inclusion of news content published in Haitian Kréyol, the language that most Haitians speak on the island and in the U.S. and Canada.

The newspaper did suffer a few setbacks in its move toward becoming a diverse and quality Haitian newspaper, specifically when Chief Editor Raymond Joseph briefly left the publication in 1990 and again in 2004 to serve an appointed position as an ambassador for Haiti. In his absence commentators charged that the newspaper's objectivity declined (Rhodes 1999: 56), but it is not clear on the extent to which this changed its political orientation since the *Observateur* remains politically oriented and critical of the Haitian government.

Why did the Haitian newspaper remain political after the fall of Duvalier, despite broadening its scope of coverage? The newspaper's political orientation may be due to the symbiotic relationship between the Haitian media and the government. Rhodes (1999: 45) explains this bond between the two institutions noting that state ideology generally directs the media. By this she means that Haiti's media is constrained by the Haitian government. This relationship becomes more apparent when we look at the history of Haiti's partisan media that preceded the Duvalier regime (1957-1986), a period that is generally thought to have been the creation point of Haitian partisan media. As Rhodes argues, Haitian partisan media vis-à-vis the state has been entrenched in the nation since the 1804 Declaration of Independence. Haitians inherited partisan media from their French colonial masters who (in-turn learned to be partisan against their own government leading up to the French Revolution—1789) imposed an authoritarian regime on the island (Rhodes 1999). To be partisan was a revolutionary activity. The authoritarian tradition of a repressed state was infused in the Haitian leadership after independence, which has since fueled Haiti's partisan media. Indeed, Haiti elected its first civilian president as recently as 1946; prior to then, Haiti was under the command of authoritarian military men. With every regime came repression and control of the press for political purposes. However, with the Duvalier regime, which exiled politicians, protesters, and an independent press, came the emergence of a hyper-political and propagandist diaspora press that fought against the Haitian government, such as *Combatant Haitien* in New York, *Construction* in Haiti and Cuba, *Alternative* in Caracas (Venezuela), and *Democratique Nouvelle* in New York.

It is Rhode's contention that the Haitian government's opposition to the media during the Duvalier regime, more than any other time in Haitian history, led to poor quality and non-objective journalism at the expense of fostering healthy debates about establishing democracy in Haiti. In

her comparison to the United States media, Rhodes argues that the American media functions better than the Haitian media since the U.S. government allows the media to freely foster debates about democracy. Since the Haitian media's only function is regarded as bringing about democracy in Haiti, it can, according to Rhodes, only do so with the aid of the Haitian government. Simply put: If the government allows media to have access to sources (e.g., interviews, statistics), then the democratic discourse may give rise to a democratic state. If there is contention between the Haitian government and media, then that will give rise to political discourse and speculative coverage. To this day, the Haitian government continues to control the media, which explains the Haitian newspapers' continued political outlook in their earthquake coverage. So while there are signs of divergence in the *Observateur's* coverage of the earthquake aftermath, the newspaper still exhibits a political orientation in most aspects of its reporting, speculating on the affairs of the state in the face of an intransigent Haitian government.

## 6.5 SUMMARY

The controlling image of *distressed victims* varied in different newspapers over time, especially after the 2010 earthquake. The *Miami Herald*, historically, promoted the city of Miami in its news coverage. During the boatlift crisis and AIDS epidemic, the *Herald* maintained its traditional coverage of the Haitian people, largely portraying them as *distressed victims* burdening the city, which represented exclusion. The black newspaper, in contrast, reported the news from a black

view, pioneered by its Chief Editor, Garth Reeves. In the newspaper's coverage of both the boatlift crisis and AIDS epidemic, the *Times* supported the Haitians with portrayals of them as *distressed victims* resulting from racist actions of the Miami community. The *Haiti-Observateur*, the Haitian newspaper, operated outside of the framework of the American newspapers that were committed to journalistic practices very different from its own. The *Observateur* was a political newspaper with an anti-dictatorship ideology.

The chapter showed that mainstream coverage on Haiti during the earthquake coverage changed its old stereotypical portrayals of Haitians toward a modified one. The following factors explained this modification: citizen journalism (arising from social media), journalists' personal knowledge, the phenomenon of mobile giving, and American politics that allowed journalists of traditional media outlets to broaden the boundaries of journalism. The mainstream newspaper enriched its news coverage with viewer-submitted content, which were unfiltered compared to the newspaper's reliance on government information in previous crises. The newspaper was therefore able to largely and positively depict Haitians as *distressed victims*.

After the 2010 earthquake, there was major modification of the *distressed* image in the black press, *Miami Times*. While the earthquake had no impact on the *Miami Times*' positive coverage of the Haitians, the black press's quake coverage indicated a shift in the positive portrayal of Haitians, from an image based on racial justice to one based on victimization and sympathy. The modified image reflected a decline in the significance of race in the black media coverage of the Haiti disaster when compared to the crisis coverage of earlier events. The significance of race in the boatlift and AIDS coverage produced a *distressed victim* image comprising of *empathy and identification* frames in which the black newspaper emphasized a mutual experience of thoughts, emotions, and direct experiences with African-American and Haitian people. In the earthquake

aftermath, however, a decline in the significance of race in the newspaper's coverage produced *distressed* coverage, in which the newspaper emphasized sensitivity and sympathy towards the misfortune and negative social circumstances facing Haitians. Race only mattered in the early coverage of the aftermath, in the newspaper's *empathy* frame in reports of President Obama's handling of the Haiti earthquake compared to the debacle of Katrina efforts, as well as its report on critics of support given to Haiti. The *empathetic and identification* coverage was, however, short lived amid widespread support to aid the Haitian people in their time of need.

Finally, the Haitian newspaper produced an image of Haitians as a *distressed* people capable of activism and part of a solidarity movement. The distressed activist image was however more prevalent during the 1979 boatlift Crisis and 1983 AIDS epidemic than in the 2010 earthquake disaster. The diversification in frames after the earthquake—from *patriotism* and *empowerment* (subsumed in a wider *distressed victim* image) to diversified frames—reflects the extent to which the newspaper was determined to delegitimize the incumbent Haitian state. The shift was a result from the *Observateur's* interests in broadening the Haitian coverage after the fall of Duvalier in 1986. The 1986 revolution represented events that had a wide sweeping effect on Haitian consciousness, which equally impacted Haitian media in the years that followed. The social change prompted the *Observateur* Chief Editor Raymond Joseph to broaden the scope of the newspaper which invited divergent viewpoints on the Haitian people. Unlike the American newspapers, the Haitian newspaper was more interested in developments unfolding in Haiti than the social crises occurring in the United States, especially the mass revolt in northern Haiti, the refugee crisis, and the grassroots movement amid the AIDS crisis.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

In this conclusion, I discuss the sociological process of modifying images of the Other in the mainstream, black, and Haitian newspapers. I explain how the democratization of sources led to the weakening of the dominant ideology of each newspaper, but how more positive images also distorted the reality of Haiti. Finally, I discuss the controlling images thesis, its application during the three crises, and the advantages and disadvantages of using controlling images as an interpretive framework.

### 7.1 THE CONVERGENCE OF CONTROLLING IMAGES IN THE MIAMI MEDIA FROM 1979 THROUGH 2010

What do the discussions above tell us about the presence of racialized controlling images in 31 years in the American and Haitian media? Patricia Hill Collins (2008) writes that controlling images in the media serve a function to hide or normalize oppression by appearing as something the oppressed subject wants to do or something that comes from the oppressed person's nature. The American culture industry (including the media) participates in this oppression through ideological messages encoded in the image that shape the consciousness of the audience. While oppressing the Haitian immigrant may not have been entirely the purpose for all three newspapers—*Miami Herald*, *Miami Times*, and *Haiti-Observateur*—each newspaper was more or less dominated by ideologies that shaped the consciousness of its readers about the Haitian people (sometimes as a racialized Other, sometimes not), and failed to represent them as multidimensional

human beings. My findings show that controlling images inform the media production of news in the mainstream, black, and Haitian newspapers, but that these papers also modify their controlling images over time.

### **7.1.1 Pre-earthquake Coverage**

Before the earthquake, coverage in the mainstream newspaper was dominated by racialized ideologies that justified negative treatment of Haitian immigrants. In the mainstream newspaper, there existed a dominant pattern of *white prejudice* with stereotypical depictions of Haitians as a racialized ‘Other.’ This pattern served to highlight Miami as a progressive white tourist town while marginalizing news that detracted from that image. This pattern of white prejudice appeared, for instance, in the newspaper’s flat view of Haitians as “economic migrants” and “risk factors for AIDS,”—all of which amounted to an image of a *distressed* group that would burden the local economy and public health. Haitians were depicted, as Williams (1999: 75) observed about Black Americans in Miami in the 1980’s, as “isolated from the real world...a social group or groups seen somehow ‘different’ and ‘marginal’ in relation to the assumed majority culture.”

This pattern of prejudice represented a value-system based on the journalistic mission to preserve Miami from factors that might exacerbate existent social problems, of which Haitians were among the threatening ones. As Williams (1999: 134) stated, such a value system gets passed down to journalist practitioners and insures that their stories confirm the established framework and cultural experiences of the reporters. It is a pattern that reflects a *white* ideology, as it empowers a white establishment and marginalizes a black immigrant group. This coverage on Haitians (a black immigrant group) always compared them to Cubans (a lighter immigrant group) and Haitians were described as the more *distressed* group.

Controlling images in the *Miami Herald* also resulted from the newspaper's reliance on government characterizations of the Haitians, i.e., the U.S. State Department's view of them as "economic migrants" as well as the CDC's "risk factors AIDS" classifications. The mainstream newspaper relied on these official sources and neglected Haitian perspectives, which "disguised in a gesture of rationality" the newspaper's appeal to authority to legitimate their news coverage (Williams 1999: 78). Reliance on official sources further justified the newspaper's coverage of Haitians as *distressed*, but also highlighted the failures of the federal government to alleviate the immigration and public health concerns of South Floridian communities during the boatlift crisis and AIDS epidemic and intensified a modified *dreadful* tone in their coverage.

In comparison, images in the *Miami Times*, the black newspaper, were informed by the idea of *racial injustice*. The newspaper criticized U.S. immigration policy and treatment of the Haitian people based on their erroneous classifications as "economic migrants" and "risk factors for AIDS." The newspaper expressed suspicions about the mainstream media as having racist agendas in scapegoating Haitians and causing their distress. The racism of the Miami media became the target of critique in the black newspaper, which embodied the black newspaper's journalistic mission, which was backed by the activism of the newspaper's Chief Editor Garth C. Reeves, who believed that the wider African-American community needed to be "steered" toward issues of importance. However, the *Times*' journalistic practice often appeared as a flat racial view of Haitians as merely *distressed victims* of a white racist Miami city and a U.S. government that supported repression in Haiti through its military aid to the Haitian government (WTVJ-Miami 1966).

Racialized images in the black media were based on information from leaders in the black community and the implications of race in the American government's treatment of the Haitian

people. These sources that justified the newspaper's coverage of Haitians as *distressed victims* were often used to advance black human rights for minorities around the world, such as the fight of black South Africans against apartheid (*Miami Times*, February 18, 1982). The *distressed victims* image of Haitians also worked to coalesce the black American community around racial injustice against Haitians, a part of their community. The black newspaper's interviews with individuals in the community and its commiseration about the racial injustice against the Haitians offered an *empathetic and identification* tone to the coverage.

Coverage in the *Haiti-Observateur*, the Haitian newspaper, by contrast, was informed by a political ideology which supported controlling *political* images of Haitians during the 1979 refugee and 1983 AIDS epidemic. The political opposition against Duvalier's dictatorship predominantly informed images in the *Observateur* during these periods, in which they adopted an anti-Duvalierist position and portrayed Haitians as catalysts for revolution in Haiti. The newspaper invoked the nation's motto, *L'union fait la force* to rally Haitian support, a motto that previously brought about Haitian independence (1804) through mass solidarity. The newspaper therefore called for a stereotypical view of the Haitian masses as Haitians in distress yet capable of activism for a united independent nation. That is, it offered an idealized view of desperate Haitians working together with political exiles for a common purpose, when in fact Haitians were divided politically and have been so since the nation's founding (see Trouillot 1994). The stereotype of a unified Haiti often appeared in reports of Haitians' experience with the Haitian regime and how the masses ought to interpret the actions of the Haitian state. This stereotype (desperate Haitian masses and political exiles working as one) painted a picture of victimized Haitians as capable of being *empowered* and members of a solidarity movement that could bring democracy to Haiti.

However, the Haitian newspaper was less influenced by negative images of Haitians in American culture. The newspaper regularly promoted positive images of Haitians, which contradicted Americans' media-saturated sensibilities of the Haitian people as a burden to taxpayer services and victims of political unrest. Unlike the other newspapers, the *Observateur* covered issues that appealed to those in the Haitian Diaspora, and thus represented the common outlook of Haitians whom were interested in bringing about democracy in Haiti. They were less interested in issues outside of Haiti, a point supported by a Haitian community leader who observed that "[Haitians] are so busy watching what is happening in Haiti, that they've neglected their own problems, their own children here [in the U.S.]" (Stamets 1994: 1A). This outlook represents the *Observateur's* target subscribers: Haitian immigrants residing in the U.S. who were more interested in the events unfolding in Haiti, than those in the United States, particularly the early years of the 1979 boatlift crisis and 1983 AIDS epidemic.

While the newspaper served people in the Haitian Diaspora, its news content was highly politically oriented. Production of political images in the Haitian newspaper resulted from what communications scholar Leara Rhodes (1999) described as the Haitian regime's attempts to control public opinion and silence the independent press, which fostered a partisan press in and outside the country. The political discourse that emerged among Haitian exiles like the journalism of Raymond Joseph of the *Observateur* therefore portrayed the Haitian government as solidly against democracy in Haiti in order to build consensus and solidarity among the Haitian people in Haiti and the diaspora.

### 7.1.2 Post-earthquake Coverage

After the earthquake, coverage in the mainstream and black media exhibited fewer negative and racialized images. The most important reason for the shift in images was the presence of social media, which led to a broader range of journalistic practices in covering the earthquake in Haiti. This modified representations of Haitians so traditional racialized images of Haitians no longer appeared natural to the audience.

It was the mainstream and black newspaper's unconventional reliance on social media and reporters' personal knowledge that shifted the tone of their coverage. Reporters who were personally invested in helping Haiti re-used viewer content in their news reports.

This led these newspapers to draw parallels between the Haiti disaster (and expected recovery) and fears of a second disaster like that of the 2005 Katrina relief effort. While the black newspaper was notably silent on the possibility that a second disaster could occur under the command of Obama, the mainstream media focused on the likelihood of another Katrina-like crisis. As a result, the Obama administration responded swiftly, aggressively, and in a coordinated manner to prevent a political fallout reminiscent of Bush's handling of the Katrina relief. The black and mainstream newspapers however did not compare Obama's actions to the Haitian disaster except in the first days of the aftermath, when the Black press used themes of racial injustice to highlight the shared racial experiences of Black Americans and Haitians. However, as their emphasis on racial injustice against Haitians declined, the *scapegoat* and *empathetic* frames in the boatlift and AIDS crises were replaced by *victim* and *sympathy* frames of the plight of Haitian earthquake sufferers.

Swift U.S. aid to Haiti undermined U.S. fears of Haitian migration to communities like South Florida. Such fears also subsided when the Obama administration granted temporary

protective status (TPS) to Haitian refugees, at which point the mainstream newspaper focused more on Haitians as *victims* instead of risks.

The American newspapers were also affected by a wave of support to Haiti that included the American Red Cross's aggressive relief campaign. This aid campaign was enhanced when the American Red Cross implemented a donate-by-text program which instantly went viral on social media and made people personally and instantly aware of the Haiti earthquake. The mainstream and black newspapers joined in the campaign, highlighting people in social media who were helping out and offering *sympathetic* coverage and information on how people could get involved with the relief effort. The result was an extraordinary pledge of relief funds and an increased number of aid relief workers as well as a number of hard-nosed journalists who wanted to help Haitians in their time of need.

Unlike the other newspapers, the Haitian newspaper's coverage of the aftermath was not subject to the effects of social media. Instead, the newspaper broadened its Haitian coverage in post-Duvalier era, allowing more divergent views than in previous crises, since 1986. Its coverage of the earthquake therefore had fewer politicized images than in the past, although many still reflected an anti-dictatorship ideology.

## **7.2 ON THE CURRENT DOMINANT IMAGE OF HAITIANS AS DISTRESSED**

### **VICTIMS**

A major consequence of journalists' reliance on social media to report the news (just as solely relying on government sources in the 1980s) is their inability to verify content in real time, as there is no proper way to monitor online information. Journalists relying on viewer-submitted content

to report breaking news therefore face challenges of separating verifiable information from opinion and speculation in order to “prohibit the use of irrelevant and false information” from being reported (Laad 2012: 17). In worst-case scenarios, such proliferation of false information could undermine the ability of social networking platforms to facilitate, incite uprisings against repressive regimes and aid in crisis management and humanitarian assistance (Laad 2012: 13).

In the 2010 earthquake, mainstream and black newspapers relied on social media and unverifiable content and portrayed Haitians as *distressed victims*. Why did they use this particular image? And if Haitians did not approve of this image and tone, why did they not react? Did the Haitian media’s preoccupation with matters in Haiti (and its neglect of stories of the stigmatization of Haitians on the U.S.) contribute to this stereotype?

The above analysis of the Haitian media provides some answers. As was found in the coverage of the quake’s aftermath, the image of the Haitian identity in the Haitian newspaper was multidimensional, including coverage of Haitians as both *victims* of the earthquake and *critics* of the Haitian government’s handling of the disaster. The Haitian paper did not portray a wholesale characterization of Haitians as simply *distressed victims* of the tragic earthquake like its American counterpart. The fact that most of the articles in *Haiti-Observateur* preceding the earthquake were divergent in content exemplifies the multidimensionality of Haitian life. These articles, which also appeared alongside the quake coverage, featured the community’s interests in movie reviews, theoretical essays on Haitian social and humanitarian problems, obituaries of renowned writers, interviews of American celebrities, poems, and historical pieces—all of which portrayed Haitians as active beings, not simply statistics in the earthquake. More importantly, Haitian media did not fully subscribe to the *distressed* image even in the worst conditions of the aftermath, perhaps since the *distressed victim* image exports a uniform image of the entire island, when in fact the

earthquake only occurred in the island's capital, Port-au-Prince (Figure 12). Yet, the *Haiti-Observateur* had once circulated its own uniform image of Haitians to mobilize them against the Duvalier regime for a political agenda. Why not for a humanitarian one during the 2010 quake aftermath coverage? Did the Haitian media accept American circulation of this image?

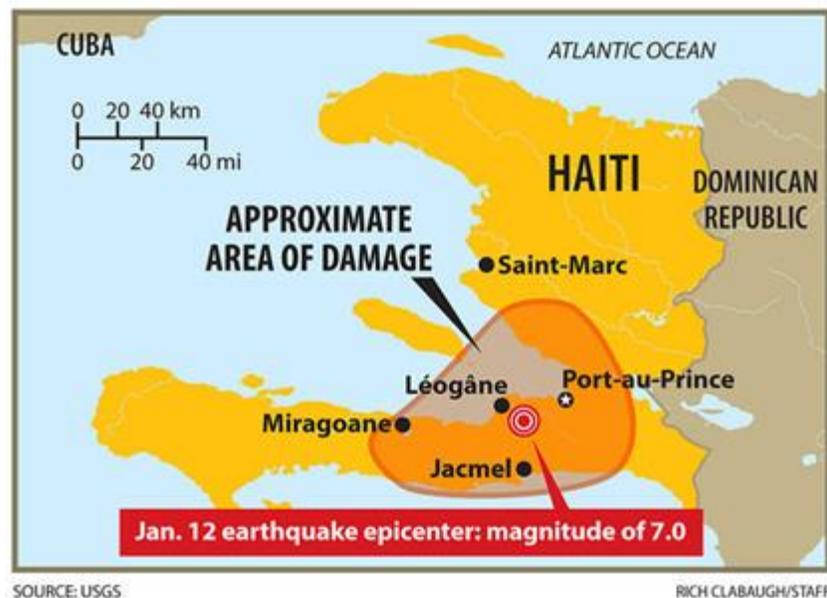


Figure 12. Screenshot of Map: Earthquake epicenter near Port-au-Prince, Haiti<sup>69</sup>

Many reasons abound for why the Haitian newspaper (and wider community) did not counteract or control the mass circulation of the *distressed victim* image in mainstream and black newspapers, which attributed to speculative coverage of the island's total victimization by the earthquake. One reason is the simple fact that the earthquake struck suddenly and there was a brief window of opportunity to save people so the *distressed* image was an outcome of crisis management of a natural disaster.

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<sup>69</sup> Clabaugh 2010, graphic.

A more sociological explanation is that Haitians and the Haitian newspaper were more interested in affairs in Haiti than in the American portrayals of Haiti.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, in times of tragedy to the homeland, the Haitian media naturally become more focused on the care and stability of the country and the safety of Haitian families, and less interested in their negative images in the U.S. media. With the exception of the AIDS crisis, tragedies in the homeland, while provoking negative images of Haitians, have recurrently lured activists away from fighting the looming stigmas these frames evoke.<sup>71</sup>

The AIDS crisis did however posed a different scenario, in which case Haitians were in a fitting position to protest the stigmatization. Unlike the subsequent tragedies (i.e. 1986 coup d'état, 1991 refugee migration, 1994 U.S. intervention, et cetera), AIDS was not a tragedy that first affected the island of Haiti. Instead, AIDS was an epidemic that first generated a public health crisis in the United States. While news on Haitians labeled as "high risk for AIDS" did not generate outrage in the initial coverage of *Haiti-Observateur*, protests and social action in the community against the subsequent Haitian blood ban eventually gained publicity and by 1990 the ban was finally removed. But while Haitians had won the battle to remove the blood ban, in all practical sense they had lost the war. Despite the Haitian community's long fight from 1983 (circa AIDS label) to the 1990 blood ban removal, the stigma was secured in the wider Haitian diaspora and continues to stain the pages of American media. Even now, a New York disk jockey, DJ Cipa, was suspended indefinitely for his remarks that "he is HIV-negative because he abstains from

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<sup>70</sup> This was observed by Larry Pierre, director of the Center for Haitian Studies who said that "[Haitians] are so busy watching what is happening in Haiti, that they've neglected their own problems, their own children here [in the U.S]." (Stamets 1994: 1A).

<sup>71</sup> Tragedies that fueled the stigmatization of the people of Haiti include the 1986 coup d'état that ousted Baby Doc, 1991 influx of refugees, 1994 U.S. intervention, 2004 ousting of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and a slew of recent natural disasters, including torrential rain and flooding and the destructive force of four hurricanes in one summer season in 2008 preceding the earthquake.

relations with Haitian girls” (Newsguy 2010: n.p.). Haitian protests against the AIDS stigma notwithstanding, the American and Haitian papers’ unchecked coverage of the *victim* image has mostly come at the expense of the Haitian community’s preoccupation in addressing tragedies in Haiti not in the U.S.

Another reason for the Haitian papers’ non-reaction to the *distressed victim* image in America can be attributed to the collapse of Haiti’s central government and communications infrastructure. The Haitian government was therefore not able to frame the earthquake discourse, much less counter mass media exportation of the *distressed victim* image. According to political scientist Melissa Merry (2014), an organization’s ability to frame an environmental disaster proffers them the ability to regain control of the message in the ensuing chaos. This was the case of the U.S. government’s response to the Tuscaloosa-Birmingham Tornado disaster in 2011, in which the government demonstrated excellent communications system in its messaging and handling of the disaster (Sack and Williams 2011). In contrast, organizations that fail to frame a disaster risk having the message framed by outsiders and not in their own terms. This is now the case with the Malaysian Airline’s poor framing of the tragedy of the missing Malaysian flight 370, which was beset by poor crisis management and communication and the eventual intervention of international actors.

Outside interference had indeed been the case in the framing of Haiti’s disaster message. International actors were able to frame the Haitians masses as *distressed victims* and blame a corrupt Haitian government for the tragedy, in light of the fact that the Haitian government was incapable of addressing the disaster. As an U.S. Federal Communications Commission official observed, “going through Port-au-Prince... Haiti lost a good portion of its communications in the

destruction”—destruction of every of ministry “from the presidential palace to the ministry of art and IRS Building” (Jackson 2010: n.p.).

Haiti therefore faced the risks that Merry (2014: xiv) notes of organizations that do not frame a disaster; that “whoever offers the most convincing causal story stands the best chance of having their preferred solutions enacted”. Haiti was of course on the losing end of this challenge. If, however the Haitian government had been able to frame the disaster, then Haiti might have received targeted and comprehensive aid and, given the global compassion, the privilege of framing the perceptions of Haitians on their own terms—and not just as *distressed victims* of a natural disaster that was the result of an impotent Haitian state (Llana 2010).

However, it is hard to imagine the Haitian government as being capable of altering the longstanding perceptions of Haitians as victims, even if its communication infrastructure was intact and it supported by worldwide sympathy. As cognitive linguist George Lakoff (2010: n.p.) points out, long-term frame systems are hard to defeat. He writes that “the more language [of a] frame is repeated, the stronger the frame gets, along with the system [of frames] that the frame is in.” Haitian frames of *burdensome* and *victim*, are two such long-term frames, which have been burnt into the minds of Miami residents through media in the past three decades.<sup>72</sup>

The power of the *victim* frame is an example. Haitians have long been viewed as victims of their government as well as natural disasters, a frame that is constantly repeated and often in circulation in American media, as the *distressed victim* image. The frequency of the victim frame has been such that photographers have won Pulitzer awards in documenting Haitian images, like *Miami Herald's* Patrick Farell, whose work encapsulates the frame. Photos foster powerful ideas

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<sup>72</sup> Largely due to national security concerns over communist takeover of the Caribbean amid the Haitian and Cuban refugee crises and public health concerns over communicable disease like TB, hepatitis, swine flu, and HIV/AIDS.

in the audience about the Haitian people (Viglucchi 2009) and, along with video, supply the systems of frame that extend in time. The Haitian government and activists, despite their opposition, both face ‘long-term frame systems’ that are kept intact by career professionals which the Haitian community may or may not be able to counter with a stable government in place.

### 7.3 THE CONTROLLING IMAGES THESIS

A controlling image is a sociological concept used to explain the production of public images defined by race, gender, and class that inscribe American Black women. Collins, who pioneered the term, contends that African-American women encounter different sets of controlling images—such as the Mammy; its counterpart, the Matriarch; the Welfare Queen, among others—each of which are oppressive and have historical significance and contemporary implications. Furthermore, controlling images of the oppressed are justified by a dominant ideology that makes them appear natural to the oppressed and oppressor and supportive of the social order. An American culture industry is partly responsible for the production and circulation of controlling images, especially through the news media.

For the purposes of this dissertation, Collins’ explanatory framework was used to assess the production of images of Haitian people in three newspapers—*Miami Herald*, *Miami Times*, and *Haiti-Observateur*, across three events—1979 boatlift Crisis, 1983 AIDS epidemic, and 2010 earthquake disaster. Like Collins, I found that Haitian people were depicted by racialized, stereotyped images that suggested that Haitians were reducible to a primitive Other. However,

Haitians were not always depicted this way during coverage of the 2010 earthquake as newspapers generally depicted Haitians in a positive light after 2010.

This finding suggests that while controlling images are supported by a dominant ideology, that ideology can be modified by historical developments. This modification constitutes of an adjustment in the seamlessness of producing/representing a cultural object in the American culture industry. The American media (both black and mainstream), operating within this culture industry, promoted controlling images of Haitians that appeared naturally racialized to the audience—i.e., as a black burdensome group and as black scapegoat. Modifications in the dominant ideology of the newspapers because of immigration debates, race, the earthquake and social media, however, allowed the American, Black and Haitian newspapers (to some extent) to broaden their range of journalistic practices and thereby produce fewer negative racialized Haitian images. The mainstream newspaper produced fewer negative racialized images of Haitians as a black burdensome group, which resulted from less reliance on white prejudice as ideology but more coverage of Haitian-related needs as it was no longer constrained by a threat of mass immigration to the American homeland. The black media newspaper produced fewer negative racialized images of Haitians as *distressed* black scapegoats, which resulted from less reliance on racial injustice as ideology but more coverage of Haitian-related needs as it no longer constrained by a Pan-African vision to combat racial discrimination. The Haitian newspaper produced fewer negative politicized images of Haitians as anti-Duvalier activists, which resulted from less reliance on anti-dictatorship as ideology but more coverage on Haitian-related needs, as it was no longer constrained by a threatening state regime.

It is important to note that while social media in the quake aftermath produced coverage of Haitians as *distressed victims* worthy of *sympathy*, these images may not have been constructed

out of ideology. The *distressed victims* image produced via social media can be best described as a *viral construction* in which Haitian earthquake victims served as a marketing tool used to spread awareness, increase donations, and engage volunteer service.

Nonetheless, all three newspapers' attempts to broaden the traditional practice of media coverage (newspaper journalism, concentrated editing process, and reliance on journalists' professional experience) amid the social media are clear evidence of the newspapers' inability to ideologically frame the quake. Each newspaper's appropriation of the *distressed* image resulted from temporarily abandoning their ideology to keep up with the fast-paced delivery of news via social media.

The shifts in the American and Haitian media that I studied were the consequence of disasters. Disasters loosen the permanence of ideology and the organizational routines of newspaper companies. Even man-made disasters like the 1986 Haitian revolution had this effect by loosening the anti-Duvalier ideology embedded in the Haitian media. Just as the American civil rights movements shook the foundations of the racial segregation ideology in America by invading the segregated spaces that generated televised violence, social media reshaped the delivery of news amid the earthquake disaster and its aftermath.

Therefore, the controlling images thesis as an explanatory framework is limited. It does not explain changes in images occurring in periods of social disruption. The earthquake showed that, in moments of disaster, the controlling image thesis is not applicable. Such times are a window of opportunity for new media images. Before the earthquake, news outlets were able to deliver and frame messages in a timely and intentional manner. However, the emergence of social media changed these traditional patterns. Time will tell whether social media will come under an ideology by some dominant media organization, such as one shaped by companies that deliver the internet

like Comcast, Verizon, and AT&T; internet giants like Facebook and Google; or streaming services like Netflix (Fitzgerald and Ante 2013; Stetler 2015). While media ideologies have been disrupted in the past (Merry 2013), traditional media outlets may be at a tipping point in espousing their preferred ideology, at which point the controlling image thesis may be regularly modified in an era of social media that lacks a coherent ideology.

#### **7.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY**

My findings extend scholarship on the Haitian Diaspora by showing how American journalistic practices distort images of Haitians (Baroco 2011; Dash 1988). Previous studies found that American journalism used Haitian images to fulfill their journalistic agenda and in doing so offer a flat racial view of Haitians. This study found underlying journalistic agendas in the mainstream newspaper which used Haitians as a foil to promote the welfare of the Miami community. Similarly, the Black newspaper used Haitian images to promote a racial justice agenda; the Haitian newspaper used Haitian images to promote an anti-authoritarian political agenda.

My study found that the Haitian image has evolved from a negative to positive one in the mainstream media; whereas previous studies found that American and the wider Western mainstream media have historically painted Haiti mostly in a negative light.<sup>73</sup> However, these

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<sup>73</sup> Dash (1988) found that Haiti was caught in the American imagination. Baroco (2011) found that the American media assigned negative traits to Haiti. Celeste (2005) found that the American media offered sensational and stereotypical images of Haitians. Brown (2012) found that Haitian coverage was subject to Western bias. Herring (2011) found that American representations of Haiti were based on longstanding negative notions about the country. Balaji (2011) found that Haiti was a victim of an American-Western-based mediated discourse. Trckova (2011) found that a Western ideology underlying the negative coverage of Haiti. Lawless (1992) found that Haiti has been the victim

studies did not investigate the image over a thirty-year period, which might explain the different outcomes between these studies and the current study.

Furthermore, while a comparative analysis of three local news media of historical events in Miami has been done before (Williams 1999), this is the first study in which a Haitian newspaper was compared to mainstream and a black American newspaper. My study thus contributes to the field of Haitian diaspora studies by illuminating how the American media perceived the Haitian people and how the Haitian media perceived the diaspora community in times of crisis. To the best of my knowledge, no scholar has elucidated the frames of Haitians targeting three different racial and ethnic groups—American, Black, and Haitian, although Dash (1998) comes close to assessing the Haitian identity within the Haitian and American public sphere.

A comparative analysis of the media representation of Haitians is important since the Haitian diaspora resides in a host society where the majority group is white and the second largest minority group is African-American. Haitians, already a minority within a minority, as black and foreign, therefore face a society that has and will continue to have a deep impact on their self-esteem and mental health. Some of the consequences Haitians face when they are not received well include feelings of failure and having nothing to be proud about (Link et al. 2001). Such feelings have been strongest in second-generation immigrant youths who resolve to hide their ethnic identity because of stereotyped images of Haitians in the media. The above findings offers insight into the different types of messages projected about the Haitian identity that evoke such social-psychological challenges in the Haitian community.

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of an “unthinking tradition” based on Western superiority. Wilentz (1989) found that Haiti was subject to “parachute journalism” which produced a narrow portrayal of the island. Potter (2009) found that the American media painted Haiti as a “failed state.”

Finally, my study contributes to the field of Haitian studies by illuminating for the first time the Haitian role and responsibility in framing their public image. Scholars have found and continue to find evidence that Haiti and the Haitian people have suffered a century of bad press (Farmer 2006; Lawless 1992; Wilentz 1989; Balaji 2010). But what has not yet been fully understood before is what role could Haitians now play, if any in combatting their stigmatizing media frames in the post-earthquake era. The analysis shows that perhaps for the first time in the nation's history, and with the help of social media, Haiti received a long-awaited wealth of sympathy and international assistance, which provided an opportunity for the Haitian people to rewrite their destiny as a poor nation. It showed that social media proved that Haiti's media representations could be disrupted and modified by historical events.

The significance of this observation is two-fold: first is that Haiti's media frame could indeed be disrupted, different from previous claims that Haiti is entrenched in an impenetrable poverty frame; and second, that even with the wealth of world sympathy by their side, which at best only provided another flat *distressed* image, Haitians too have a responsibility to frame their media image or risk having it shaped by outsiders and international actors. No longer should Haitians be perceived as stuck in a bleak existence of poverty. As social media has proved, even though they have missed their opportunity amid the cost of over 300,000 lives, Haitians are well within reach of reframing their public image through social media.

Abolitionist Clarkson writing to King Christophe:

*I took liberty...of showing [Russian Emperor Alexander II] confidentially one of your letters to him, which I had taken with me from England for that purpose. This letter produced upon his Imperial Majesty the effect that I had anticipated. He expressed his obligations to me for having shown it [to] him; for he confessed it had given him new ideas both with respect to Hayti and to your Government. He had been taught by the French and German newspapers (and he had no other source of information) that Hayti was inhabited by a people little better than savages. He now saw them in a very different light."*

(Christophe and Clarkson: A Correspondence, October 30, 1818)

# APPENDIX A

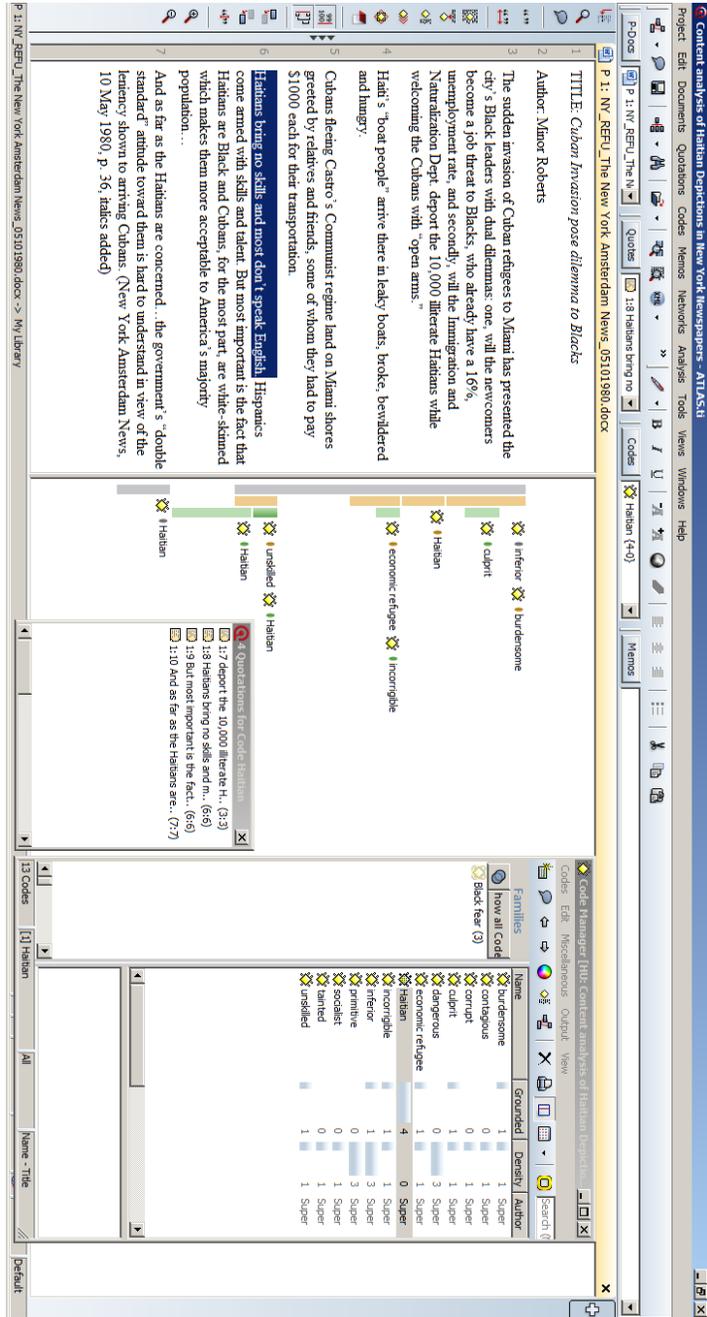


Figure 13. Screenshot of Coding Scheme in Atlas.ti Used in the New York Study

## APPENDIX B

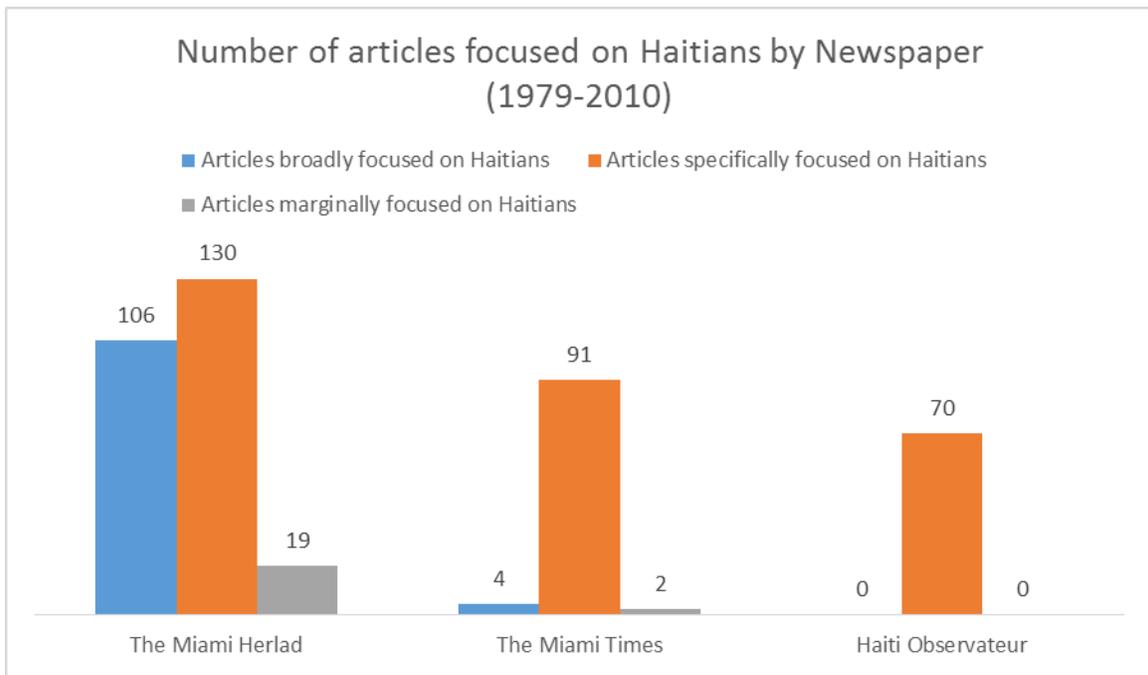
Newspaper (circle): H / T / O      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 <sup>st</sup> coding	2 <sup>nd</sup> coding	3 <sup>rd</sup> coding	4 <sup>th</sup> coding	
Tax burden <input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/>	Burden <input type="checkbox"/>	Boat people <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsympathetic <input type="checkbox"/>	
4-H Group <input type="checkbox"/> Living in Haiti <input type="checkbox"/>	Polluted <input type="checkbox"/>			
Work skills <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Primitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Diseased <input type="checkbox"/>		
Political <input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input type="checkbox"/>	Victim <input type="checkbox"/>			
Haitian exiles <input type="checkbox"/> Charlatans <input type="checkbox"/>	Ennobled <input type="checkbox"/>			
Solidarity <input type="checkbox"/> US Protests <input type="checkbox"/>	Patriotic <input type="checkbox"/>	Scapegoats <input type="checkbox"/>		
Church <input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/>	Sympathy <input type="checkbox"/>			Sympathetic <input type="checkbox"/>
Government <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/>	Dreading <input type="checkbox"/>	Distressed <input type="checkbox"/>		
Racism <input type="checkbox"/> Tragedy <input type="checkbox"/>	Empathy <input type="checkbox"/>			
Anti-dictator <input type="checkbox"/> Resilience <input type="checkbox"/>	Empowered <input type="checkbox"/>			
Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/> Journalists <input type="checkbox"/>	Pity <input type="checkbox"/>	Activists <input type="checkbox"/>		
Haiti affairs <input type="checkbox"/> On charlatans <input type="checkbox"/>	Critical <input type="checkbox"/>			

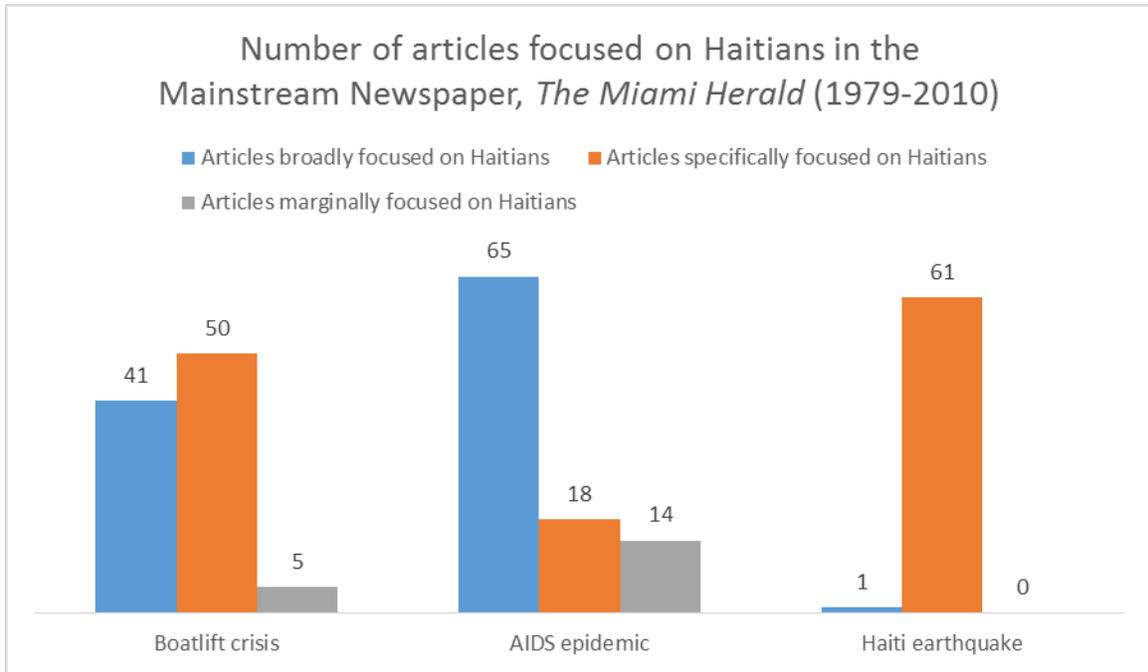
**Figure 14. Coding Sheet Used in the Miami Study**

## APPENDIX C

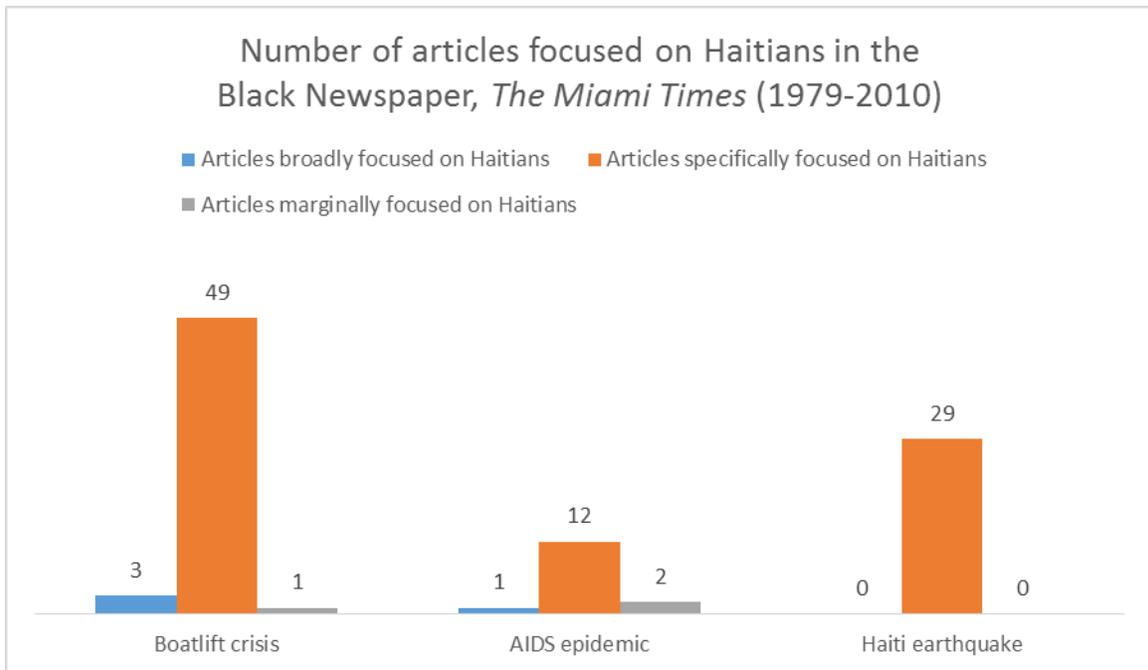
### RAW FREQUENCIES FOR TABLES 3, 4, AND 5



**Figure 15. Distribution of articles focused on Haitians by newspapers; Miami Herald, N = 255; Miami Times, N = 97; Haiti-Observateur, N = 70**



**Figure 16. Distribution of articles focused on Haitians in the Miami Herald, N = 255—boatlift crisis, N = 96; AIDS epidemic, N = 97; and Haiti earthquake, N = 62**



**Figure 17. Distribution of articles focused on Haitians in the Miami Herald, N = 97—boatlift crisis, N = 53; AIDS epidemic, N = 15; and Haiti earthquake, N = 29**

## APPENDIX D

### INTER-CODER INSTRUCTIONS

#### CODING INSTRUCTIONS:

Thank you for assisting me regarding my dissertation project.

Here is what I am asking you to do:

1. Review the sheet of codes/images and their definitions. These images represent the ways Haitians have been described in the American media in the last 30 years—as “Boatpeople” “Diseased” “Scapegoats” “Distressed” and “Activists”. However, these images maybe viewed from a “sympathetic” or “unsympathetic” perspective.
2. Carefully read the way Haitian people are described in an article, then code that article according to **ONE** of these images (Boatpeople, Diseased, Scapegoats, Distressed, or Activists) and whether it was a “sympathetic” or “unsympathetic” description. That is, using the attached coding form, place an ‘X’ on the best image **AND** tone that corresponds with the article’s description of Haitians.
3. Each article is numbered. So please note the article number somewhere on the coding form. However, you can code each article out of order, just as long as you note the article number on the coding form.
4. These articles range from approximately 150 to 1800 words, which adds up to about 1 to 5 pages of reading. However, I prefer that you read at most **TWO** pages for these longer articles. The point of the coding activity is to determine the image that best corresponds to the content of the news article. You should be able to decide on an image within two pages of reading the document. Focusing on the word “Haitians” and how they are characterized in the article may help you determine to best code.
5. If you are not sure which code to choose, then take an educated guess and, in a sentence or two, write your reason on the back of the coding form.
6. If you feel more than one code applies to the article, then place an ‘X’ on the best code and **CIRCLE** all the other ones that applies.
7. When you done, please return all the materials to me. We will schedule a pick time and receipt of payment. You will be earning \$1 per page.

Email me at [destiny@countryday.net](mailto:destiny@countryday.net) if you have any questions throughout the process.

Yven Destin

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