

Haiti

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Hi, Joshua here. Sorry about the footnote mess. I'm still wrestling with T_EX to get it to format it exactly the way you want it. It's getting close, though. Sorry about that.

In the late 1600s, Haiti's sugar and coffee exports led it to become the richest colony in the world. By the mid-1900s, however, Haiti had transformed into one of the poorest nations in the world.^[1] This extreme poverty is one of the many important issues facing Haiti today, but at present, the central issue in Haiti consists of the lack of a strong Haitian-supported leadership. This central issue is the direct result of the many economic, political, and social hardships faced by the people.

To analyze this issue, it is important to start at the beginning. For Haiti, this was in 1697, when the Spanish gave the western third of the island to France. At this time, Haiti was the richest colony in the world, producing 40% of all sugar exported to Europe, and 60% of all coffee.^[1] In 1697, the French took a disputed number of slaves nearing 500,000 for

[1] , "History of Haiti," *Wikipedia*, April 2004, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Haiti>

their own tasks, and treated them brutally.^[1] The people on the island were infuriated at this event, and a civil war followed. After a few similar events, in 1791, the first major black rebellion occurred. During this rebellion, the slaves would band together and form their own military. This military would proceed to take over most of the island by 1801.^[1] This early foreign rule and the ensuing racial tension would be the first precursors to the very same political stressors that are damaging Haiti today.

The black rebellion would continue for some time, fueled by the reintroduction of slavery in the 1802 convention in Paris. After a royal suicide by King Henri I, Jean Pierre Boyer would take control of Haiti in 1820 and buy Haitian independence from France. Haiti's history would remain uneventful until 1843, when an economic crisis and an earthquake initiated a series of revolts. The 1843 revolution overthrew Jean Pierre Boyer, and put Riviere Herard into office. Five months later, the peasants revolted, and Jean-Jacques Acaau was put in to place. He died of natural causes, and was succeeded by Philippe Guerrier and Jean-Louis Pierrot. Pierrot would be overthrown by Jean-Baptiste Riche in 1846, who died a year later. In 1847, Faustin Solouque was elected. Solouque created a stability that lasted for five years. Some other highlights of the string of revolts included Fabre Geffrard deposing the leader at the time in 1847, followed by a string of 22 other leaders up until the mob execution of the leader Guillaume Sam in 1915. The 1915 execution was punctuated by the U.S. military invading the country. The Americans made improvements, but the Haitians still opposed

[1] , "History of Haiti," *Wikipedia*, April 2004, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Haiti>

their presence. In 1934, after 19 long years, the Americans left Haiti in a more prosperous state. Combined with the former French rule, however, this final event would create a general distrust of foreigners, as well as a more specific distrust of foreigners who may have any interest in leading the country. This distrust would resurface in the future as an political hardship when Aristide would return to office.

The 1957 elections, which were the first in 110 years, would elect Francois Duvalier. Francois Duvalier, nicknamed “Papa Doc”, was a brutal man who did his utmost to stifle his opponents. He changed Haiti’s constitution to give himself a permanent dictatorship, and “won” the next election with a score of 1.32 million votes for him, and zero votes against him^[2]. In his next term, he became even more brutal and repressive, buttressing his government with a militia of his own creation, which he called the “tontons macoutes”, or “Uncle Boogeyman”. It has been reported that “Papa Doc used sadistic murder, rumor, and conspiracy theories as political voodoo, to intimidate and to control.”^[3] In 1971, “Papa Doc” died, and passed control of Haiti on to his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, who was only 19 at the time. Jean-Claude, or “Baby Doc”, generally followed in his father’s footsteps, and continued the oppression. In 1986, the sentiment against him became too strong, and he fled Haiti, which was by then in abject poverty. The ‘Doc’ family created yet another environmental stress: corrupt dictatorships

[2] , “Francois Duvalier,” *Wikipedia*, April 2004, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papa_Doc>

[3] Austin Bay, “Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Liar, or Victim of the Bush Administration?,” *Strategy Page*, March 2004, <<http://www.strategypage.com/onpoint/articles/200439.asp>>

causing violence and poverty.

In December 1990, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected to replace the Duvaliers. Before his election, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was a priest, a spokesperson for the Catholic church, a strong supporter of human rights, and an advocate of democracy. However, those were all also reasons why he was targetted by the previous military government. He survived nine attempts on his life, including one while he was giving mass on September 11, 1988. He took office on February 7, 1991. While in office, he fought drug trafficking. He was also an anti-corruption leader, and he reduced criminal activity. Unfortunately, at this point, the environmental stresses acting on the various groups built up to an intolerable level. On September 30, 1991, a short 8 months after he took office, he was overthrown by angry army members and high-classed citizens. He spent 1,111 days in exile in Venezuela and Washington, DC. The U. N. intervened, and he returned to finish his term and reinstitute democracy on October 15, 1994. In the interim, since the Haitian constitution did not allow leaders to serve consecutive terms, other leaders served.

In 2000, Aristide ran for president again in Haiti. He won the election with 91.8%^[4] of the vote, and took office back on February 7, 2001. However, once again, all of Haiti's past social and political hardships came around to wreak havoc on a president's career. Haiti's paranoia of foreign rule led many to believe that the election was fixed by the United States. The United States returned political fire, and blocked loans going to Haiti from

[4] , "Jean-Bertrand Aristide," *Wikipedia*, April 2004, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Bertrand_Aristide>

the European Union. All the while, an opposition party was being formed. The opposition party gained some seats in the senate, but a combination of political infighting between the two parties and economic issues caused the cancellation of the elections scheduled for 2003. Aristide continued to rule, however he promised to organize elections.^[5] The opposition accused Aristide of being corrupt^[5], and accusations turned into political violence in January 2004.

Through all of these events, we have seen three common themes in Haiti's past: social, political, and economic hardships. Some of the hardships we've seen include poverty, foreign rule infringing on Haitian pride, racial tensions resulting in civil wars, and corrupt dictatorships causing violence. In addition, all of the aforementioned environmental hardships also feed into an "umbrella" stressor, which manifests itself as a general mistrust of all forms of government. As we've seen here, as long as the environmental hardships are present, the cycle of stress bubbling up through peace will continue. In this instance, the "bubble" is a lack of supported leadership, but as we've learned, this is just another manifestation of the "umbrella" stressor. This "umbrella" stressor, and all of its feeds, are what Haitians must resolve before they can enjoy a truly peaceful nation.

[5] , "2004 Haiti rebellion," *Wikipedia*, May 2004, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Haiti_rebellion>