

*“Transitions less than Democratic”
The case of Haiti”*

Michelle Munroe
Department of Political Science
Florida International University

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“As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy”



Abraham Lincoln

Introduction

Depending upon which lenses one is viewing Haiti through, it can be described using multiple adjectives; however, the two that are most appropriate in this analysis are struggle and hardship. These struggles and hardships are what personify the country of Haiti as a political anomaly within the primarily democratic Western Hemisphere. The most notable exception within this region is that of Cuba, who although sharing the title of non-democratic with Haiti, is at the same time distinct from Haiti who for decades has attempted to attain the democratic ideal.

After thirteen years of revolution, the Caribbean island of Haiti finally succeeded in ending slavery and became the first black republic in 1804. Unlike its other Caribbean counterparts such as Jamaica and Trinidad, who gained independence later on in the 20th century, Haiti did not. Haiti's independence took place at a time when all the major trade nations at that time were still all slave-owning states. Within this period, slavery was still a norm in the United States, Britain, Spain and France. Even when the Spanish colonies of Latin America were cut off from Spain during the Peninsula Wars starting in 1808, and juntas and the local elites, who were primarily affluent white or mestizos, ruled the colonies, Haiti's revolutionary inspired transition from colonial rule was still considered

an anomaly. In addition, given how the Haitian society savagely dealt with the abolishment of slavery and the manner in which they chose to rid themselves of the French elites and local descendants, it was further shunned by the international world. Leaders and communities from around the globe rejected both Haiti as an independent country and its leaders. The Island was rejected at a time when it was fragile in its development into an independent nation-state.

Because of their isolation, Haitians had no choice but to look solely to their past for answers to their future government given that they could not look internationally for help, answers, or models of how good government should be. Internally they lacked consensus on what forms of government would work versus what would not work for both long-term domestic growth and international success. Shortly thereafter the industrial revolution took root in 1854 and Haiti found that it not only had to worry about being shunned by the major players in the international arena, but it also realized that the Haitian economy was in no state to even take part in industrialization.

Nonetheless, can we say that the circumstances surrounding the consolidation of Haiti as an independent nation are determinant of Haiti's future as a stable democratic nation? More specifically, how much has the domestic [social, political and economic] and international background of Haiti influenced its ability to succeed democratically? Many Scholars has struggle with the causal factors behind Haiti's problems with achieving a stable democracy. On one hand, some argue that the leadership of the country is lacking. They blame the instability of the country on the first democratically elected president, Aristide and his administration. On the other, there is consensus that the

problem with Haiti is that it has not getting the continuous and unquestionable support it should from the international community.

In terms of analysis, the paper is interested in the causal mechanisms that influence the choices of government and the feasibility of transitions from one type of government to another. In keeping with this focus, this paper also assumes that while it may be beneficial for some societies to maintain a specific type of government, given time and the required amount of change, societies do have the choice to make decision that can change the path down which a country is progressing. These changes can bring a country either closer or farther from democracy.

Methodology

The concept of democracy and the tools necessary for transitions to democracy, has spurred many theoretical and analytical debates within the literature. Scholars are constantly faced with questions concerning the universality of democracy. Does democracy mean the same for different states and regions? Do all transitions take place in the same way regardless of the makeup of society, the culture of the people, and the political structure that it has prior to shifts to democracy? This paper will focus on transition paths purported by Linz and Stepan.

According to Linz and Stepan (1996) in *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidation*, non-democratic regimes follow various paths towards the transition and consolidate of a democracy. In Linz and Stepan's analysis, there are four types of non-democratic regimes. The first is sultanism, defined as a form of authoritarian government characterized by "extreme personal presence of the ruler in all elements of governance" typically used in sovereign and absolute monarchs predominant in Muslim societies. The

second, post totalitarianism regimes are closest in form to totalitarian type regimes and are distinguished by the ability to constrain leaders. The third type is totalitarianism which is a modern regime where the state rules all elements of public and private life, and the final type is authoritarianism that has been defined as a regime where an elite group rules through repressive means, but less intrusive than the means of totalitarian regimes.

In this paper, the transition path that will be focused on primarily is what Linz and Stepan refer to as “*interim government after regime termination not initiated by regime*” (Linz and Stepan 1996, 57-60). That is, a transition path that involves the end of a regime by persons outside of the power circle, towards a period of temporary rule until a more stable form of government can be put in place. But, how does this relate to the case of Haiti? As a Caribbean country, founded politically, socially, and economically on the slave trade, which shares several similarities with the characteristics of totalitarian types of government, Haiti can be considered as having in the past, slavery based totalitarian regime. Further, this regime type broke down with the abolition of slavery. Haiti went through drastic regime change unexpectedly at the hands of the masses in search of freedom and change; they went from a slavery based totalitarian regime to an extensive period of transition. These changes were a result of a revolutionary takeover of government rather than a power struggle between political elites. As a result, Haiti can be seen as going through an extensive period of unstable interim rule. The question remains however, what regime is Haiti moving towards?

It is the aim of this paper to demonstrate that Haiti has moved away from the slavery-based regime equated with totalitarianism and is moving towards a new regime on Linz and Stepan’s continuum. The paper will focus on answering the dominant

question: what regime is Haiti moving towards, and what evidence proves this theory. It will be argued that Haiti is progressing towards an authoritarian regime. Hence, given the continuum that Haiti is moving along, a democratic future is possible for Haiti once it has consolidated into an authoritarian regime allowing it to create and build on the necessary political, social and economic bases that lay the foundation for democratization.

Although there are other indicators supporting this argument of Haiti's movement on the continuum, which include the 1991 'democratic' elections of Jean Bertrand Aristide, his re-election in 2000, and continued political, economical, and social instability, they are beyond the scope of this paper. This paper is solely to propose that Haitian policies should redirect their focus to transitioning towards a new regime type closer to 'democracy' first, and then towards the consolidation of democracy within itself.

Despite Haiti's early start in the international realm, it received a late recognition, and from that time, Haiti has continually aimed at progressing towards democratic consolidation. Haitian leaders at various periods of history have played on international alliances and have further separated the state and the civil society, an issue that has prevailed since the time of slavery. In addition to the support for regional policies by local elites, several pertinent external forces and historical contexts have lead Haiti to further shape and define itself as a country. Since the recognition of Haiti as a sovereign state in the 1860's, it has repeatedly been influenced by the United States intervention in 1914, and second, by the United States remaining a key actor in its domestic politics over the years. In addition, the United Nations, France, Canada, the IMF, and other

international actors and institutions have influenced Haiti, and have continued to push for democracy in the country.

Background and Setting: Slavery

Due to the fact that slavery is an integral part of the understanding that Haiti evolved from a totalitarian form of government, it is critical that the formulation and eradication of slavery in Haiti be addressed. The regime of slavery began shortly after one of the most famous explorers landed in Haiti in the late fifteenth century. This famous explorer is Christopher Columbus. Because of Columbus' arrival to Haiti, many characteristics there changed, and the formation of a slavery-based totalitarian regime was established.

After Christopher Columbus's arrival in Haiti in 1492, the large indigenous Indian population that existed on the island gradually died out because of horrible living conditions, harsh mistreatment for disobedience and, forced labor for the production of the colonies sugar plantation. *“Christopher Columbus introduced two phenomena that revolutionized race relations and transformed the modern world: the taking of land, wealth, and labor from indigenous peoples, leading to their near extermination and the transatlantic slave trade, which created a racial underclass,”* (Loewen, 1995, 60). By the 16th century these indigenous people were replaced because, Indians previously enslaved died. The Spanish replaced the dying Haitians with *“tens of thousands of more Indians from the Bahamas and massive slave trades from Africa”* (Loewen 1995, 65). By the late 17th century, the production of sugar and coffee and the slave trade got into full swing.

Around the same time, Spanish mercantile policies dictated that Spanish colonials had to relocate to the eastern side of the island of Hispaniola in order for Spanish officials to ensure that these economic laws were not being broken. This left the western third of the island to the French plantation owners. The French side of the island produced more sugar and coffee than all the British West Indian colonies combined and became known as the “*pearl of the Antilles*” because of its ideal climate and fertile soil.

Within this French colony, there were four distinct sets of interest groups. The first group was the propertied whites who included the merchants, middle class and underclass whites. A second group within the French colony of Haiti was the “free blacks” who consisted of not only children of a white slave owning parent and one black slave parent, but also about half of this group in particular was wealthy propertied blacks. This segment was the largest and wealthiest of its kind in the entire Caribbean. The third group was that of the black slaves who outnumbered the rest of the population by a large margin, and the fourth group consisted of the maroons. Maroons were run away slaves who had retreated into the mountains away from the plantations and from French control. Opposed to slavery and the cruelty it inflicted, armed with combat knowledge from the help a few free blacks gave the United States to secure its independence (Corbett 1995) and influenced by the French revolution in 1789, which cried out for the rights of man, the masses revolted in 1791. This year marked the start of a very brutal conflict between the French and the slaves of Haiti. This year was the start of the Haitian revolution.

Background and Setting: Haiti and the International World

Still, in order to comprehend fully the essence of the idea proposed in this paper, Haiti's slavery is not the only issue critical in Haiti's movement from a totalitarian regime towards another form of government. One of the critical components in the big picture is how Haiti evolved in the international realm and its development as a nation.

After thirteen years of struggle in 1804, the French colony claimed its independence from France. Twenty-eight years after the Declaration of Independence was adopted in the United States in 1776, The Republic of Haiti became the second oldest republic. Nevertheless, more importantly, it made its mark as the first black republic in the western hemisphere.

Within Latin America and the Caribbean, Haiti became a supporter for freedom fighters wanting to end the slavery regimes, and in the early 19th century provided Simón Bolívar¹ with financial resources, a place of safety, and military assistance to liberate Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru from Spain dictatorship. During that same period, Haiti also invaded the other side of Hispaniola now known as the Dominican Republic, which was the Spanish colony on the island. This marked the end of slavery on the other two thirds of Hispaniola; however, Haiti as an independent state and a member of the international world did not gain recognition until 1862. Despite the role it played in South American liberation, Haiti was not invited to the 1826 Congress of Panama, organized by Simon Bolivar. This congress was the first regional meeting of independent states between South America and the United States because of their 'forceful tactics' in

¹ See Johnson, Harvey L., History of Simon Bolivar, <http://www.bolivarmos.com/history.htm> (last accessed 12/13/2005). "Simon Bolivar was one of South America's greatest generals. His victories over the Spaniards won independence for Bolivia, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. He is called *El Liberator* (The Liberator) and the "George Washington of South America".

the Dominican Republic which some felt was confounded by Haiti being an all black independent nation at a time when black empowered nations were not considered the norm.

Overall, the international arena was having a difficult time adjusting to Haiti's newfound independence, and its savageness towards the French and Spanish elites that spanned the entire island of Hispaniola. France regretted the loss of its richest and geographically strategic colony to the United States; Britain feared the impact of revolution on the islands of Jamaica and its other slave colonies. Similarly, the United States was also concerned with the possible domino effect of a revolution within its southern states, and Spain having lost control of its capital in the Dominican Republic feared that this drive for freedom would spread to Puerto Rico and Cuba. Thus, by inviting Haiti to an international meeting, the major trading blocks feared that other countries would view the Haitian revolution as acceptable, which would negatively affect their economies, as it was dependent on the slave industry. They therefore choose to not recognize Haiti internationally, resulting in Haiti being isolated from international affairs and meetings.

Background and Setting: Haiti Domestically

After independence in Haiti, the international world was wary of Haiti's potential impact on the politics of other states. This weariness evolved into hostile attitudes towards Haiti and trade, where France, Spain and the United States imposed sanctions on trade with Haiti. However, the United States and Britain did not sever all trade ties completely (Corbett, 1995). Private trade between the United States and Haiti continued

for economical advantages, with conditions that banned Haitian ships from docking at U.S port, thereby restricting the level and regulation of trade (Chin et al, 2004).

Haiti was practically broke. After thirteen years of intense struggle for independence, much of the social, economic and agricultural infrastructure had been destroyed. The majority of the sugar and coffee plantations had been burned to the ground and ravaged and with the genocide of the French aristocrats and white middle class, the management structure, store owners, manufacturers either had all escaped the genocide or had been killed.

Given its domestic situation and its lack of recognition in the international arena, Haiti made a deal with France requesting that the trade embargo be lightened if not lifted, and that it be allowed some sort of international recognition. *“After France's conditional recognition, Great Britain and the other European powers quickly followed suit. But the United States refused.”* (Chin et al, 2004). It was not until 1862 when Haiti was recognized by the United States as an independent state in the world arena, here it is important to note that the amendment to the United States constitution that related to the abolition of slavery was passed in 1861, around the same time it welcomed Haiti.

Theoretical Applications

However, it had been 57 years since Haiti's independence before the international arena accepted it. The industrial revolution in 1854 had practically passed it by, and now it was no closer to eradicating its economic debt than it had since its independence day. During the period of industrialization, Haiti had still been marginalized by the other major trading countries, and with an almost destroyed agricultural sector and willing working force, it was not able to compete competitively even if it had the opportunity.

In Linz and Stepan's book *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* the authors argue that the success of consolidated democracies and completed democratic transitions are dependent upon five socioeconomic factors and two macro variables that focus on the level of 'stateness' and the character of the prior regime.

Similar to the O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) argument that a consolidated democracy consists of something more than the achievement of public election, Linz and Stepan believe that a consolidated democracy incorporates "*established conditions, attitudes and habits that must be cultivated*" (Linz and Stepan 1996: 5). The acceptance of democracy behaviorally, attitudinally and constitutionally within a society requires the existence of these five interacting arenas. The first of which is a lively and autonomous civil society, the second is an autonomous political society, distinct from civil society in the sense that this group is structured to directly challenge and work within the framework of the political sphere. These two arenas Linz and Stepan claim must not only be distinct, but ideally, they should be complimentary where the political society should be representative of the civil society and in turn should be supported by it. The third arena requires the existence of a rule of law whereby every citizen must conform to, and work within the realm of the law. Given these three arenas, the authors also specify that a society requires the existence of a functioning state to govern, and finally an economic society that provides the citizens and the government with a financial base of support.

Linz and Stepan assert that several factors such as a) the leadership base of the prior regime, b) the nature of the political group who initiates and controls the transition, c) the level of international influences, d) the level of legitimacy and coercion in the political economy and e) the nature of constitution making environment; all impact on the

interaction of these variables and ultimately affect the success or failure of the régime change to that of a democracy.

Theoretical Applications: Stateness

The focus here is on the distinction between a state and a nation and the relationship they share towards the transition, and towards the consolidation of democracy. We find that in the slavery based society of Haiti, a salient issue during its early transition period and today, is determining who is allowed to become a citizen within its specified borders with rights and freedoms, and how these rights are equally acknowledged and represented by the government.

Haiti's past is one that is rich in racial issues of discrimination. Similar to the Eastern European cases where we find that it is just as salient for the state to address issues of locality, ethnicity and social cleavages as it is for the state to look at levels of development, literacy, and urbanization (Schmitter and Karl 1994, 179). As Linz and Stepan point out the conflating of nation and state began with the French revolution, prior to that *“the state building process went on without being based on a national sentiment, identity or consciousness...indeed, state identification and loyalty were often expected to be transferable merely by virtue of dynastic marriages”* (Linz and Stepan 1996, 20-21). For Haiti, the French revolution inspired the Haitian revolution. The rights of slaves as men and values of freedom were associated with a notion of a new state, thus for Haiti democracy was perceived as both a combination of building solidarity among the oppressed both 'free' blacks and the enslaved. As well as, the re-forming of the

boundaries of the state [conflating notion of nation-state], creating a rule of law and incorporating the citizens it represents².

Theoretical Applications: Prior Regime Type: Slavery as Totalitarian

While the term totalitarian originated in the early 20th century, it was not until the Cold War that the term was more widely used to describe fascist regimes and Stalinist governments in the Soviet Union. Today only a handful of countries are still characterized as totalitarian, and include countries such the Republic of China, Cuba Burma and North Korea. Adding to this understanding of totalitarian regimes, I argue that it is possible to contrast former slavery based societies prevalent to the Caribbean, as states that have over time transitioned from totalitarian regimes. For Haiti, however this transition [still occurring to date] has not been very successful.

Applying Linz and Stepan's checklist for a totalitarian regime (see Table 1.0)ⁱ; we are able to identify it as type of governance that must first eliminate all pre-existing political, economic and social pluralism that exists with a society, as well as, to squelch the ability of any new pluralism to arise. In Haiti, Slavery as a system of government was imposed not only on the indigenous people of the island, but also on the people that were brought against their will to the island as 'slaves'. All preexisting ways of life, [pluralism] was eradicated as well as the possibility of any new type of plurality brought to the island by the slaves was also eradicated.

² See Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University press, 1996).. (pages 17-18) Weber and Tilly base this understanding of a state on definitions, where within this view the state is characterized as an autonomous structure, which provides binding authority with a specified territorial boundary. Similarly, Linz and Stepan identify the concept of nation. By identifying a nation as based on identity, consciousness; and lacking autonomy, agent and rules' the authors distinguish it from the Weberian concept of state required for consolidation to take place. Here the authors bring to light democratic consolidation crises associated with multi-cultural countries concerned with developing a nation-state.

Second, totalitarian regimes are identified as providing both elites and non-elites with unpredictable events and vulnerable situations. As a colony of France, Haiti ultimately answered to the laws and decrees of the king of France and later to Napoleon. Despite the fact that it was thousands of miles away and that elites had their own interests regarding trade and the attainment of wealth, they were still uncertain as to what impact France's alliances would have on their interests and their ability to carry them out. To a greater extreme, non-elite such as slaves were vulnerable to French rule and to the possibility of their situation becoming more oppressive.

The third characteristic of a totalitarian regime is that it generates a guiding ideology. For Haiti, slavery had several important economic and social functions that contributed to Haiti success as the "pearl of the Antilles". From slavery, economic development was determined, modes of production and labor were defined and the ways in which the society lived and were treated were all based on the regime and its existence. Slavery did not recognize any autonomous groups other than the ones it created, or any other point of view other than those that supported the system.

Applying the Five intervening Variables

Civil Society

In Rethinking Military Politics, Alfred Stepan (1988) defines civil society as an arena comprised of several social movements and civic organizations aimed at advancing their interests. These movements and organizations include community, religious, and business organizations, as well as, trade unions and women's groups. This sector of

society aims to limit state power not by actively taking part in the political process, but rather by expressing their interests through formalized political groups.

More broadly, Haynes argues that the “*effectiveness of civil society is dependent on 1) cohesiveness, 2) a country’s level of economic development, 3) the length of time a country have been independent, and 4) the extent of ethnic or religious schism in a society*” (Haynes 1997, 18). Given this definition, strong societies according to Risse-Kappen are characterized as those with civil and political societies that comparatively lack vast levels of ideological and class cleavages (Risse-Kappen 1995, 22).

Within Haiti this is not the case, Society has been plagued by a history of racial divide and class struggle. “*By generally reflecting the lopsided balance of class, racial and gender power, the agencies of civil society inevitably privileged the privileged and marginalized the marginalized. Civil Society’s plurality does not entail an automatic and equal representation of the whole polity. [In Haiti] civil society is not an all encompassing movement of popular empowerment and economic change*” (Fatton Jr 2002, 31). Even to date problems with Haiti’s ‘group of 184’ an extension of the civil society initiative group formed in 1999³ still point to its exclusion of the masses and a focus on the particular interests of business and religious sectors.

³ Members of the Civil Society Initiative Group include: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Haiti (CCIH), Franco-Haitian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CFHCI), Center for Free Enterprise and Democracy (CLEDE), Protestant Federation of Haiti (FPH), New Foundation of Haiti (FNH), National Haitian Foundation for Private Education (FONHEP), Committee for Patriotic Initiatives (CIP), National Association of Distributors and Importers of Petroleum Products (ANADIPP), Democratic Initiatives (ID), Insurance Association of Haiti (AAH), National Haitian Teachers' Confederation (CNEH), Haitian Tourist and Hoteliers' Association (ATH), Friends of Nature Federation (FAN), Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Lower Artibonite, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Southeast, General Independent Organisations of Workers of Haiti (OGITH), Artibonite Entrepreneurs' Association (AEA).

The problem is that rather than representing a cross section of citizens, and the interests of the society at large, the group of 187 consists of industrialists, owners of media, commerce and financial institutions, who are of similar status and who were only interested in securing their economic interests and agendas from the control of the state. Similarly opposed to the power wielded by the government, this group is still distinct from society based civil society group. Falling under the banner of the civil society initiative group, the group of 184 is typically granted precedence over other more authentic civil society groups in gathering international support.

Yet there are other organizations outside of the umbrella of the group of 184 that fall short in their potential to generate change. These include organizations such as: Tèt Kole Ti Peyizan, a national peasant movement active since the late 1980s, PAPDA (Platfòm k ap Plede pou yon Devlopman Altènatif), a coalition of over a dozen non-governmental organizations, workers' and women's groups and Plate-forme Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire, a coalition of 18 non-governmental organizations working in the fields of social and economic development.

Political Society

Contrasted with civil society, political society is *“that arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself for political contestation to gain control over public power and the state apparatus”* (Stepan 1988, 3). Political society is most pertinent at the end of transitions and at the start of consolidations when the types of institutions, forms of government, political parties and political leadership are being determined. At this point it is key to reinforce the relationship between civil and political society, where it is

importance for political society to representative the interests of civil society in order to aide in the monitoring of government (Haynes 1997, 17).

In totalitarian type regimes Schmitter and Karl point out that the extent of collapse of the previous regime is an important factor in transitions to democracy because it provides guidelines of how actors, behaviors, process, values and resources are formed during periods of transition. For Haiti the events that lead to the end of the slavery regime were not pre-announced, nor were national leaders pre-prepared to govern, *“once new governments were formed the role of previous power holders [the French] declined precipitously and significantly”* (Schmitter and Karl 1991, 179).

However, in postcolonial societies in the Caribbean, Haynes reminds us the legacies of post slavery societies did not provide national leaders or society with models of democracy or democratic patterns of governance. *“some did not necessarily feel a close affinity with a form of politics...no doubt for some leaders that acquisition of power itself was by far the most significant reward, yet the wielding of that power was frequently problematic”* (Haynes 1997, 1).

The Haitian revolution ended totalitarian slavery rule in 1791. With no history or exposure to political governance other than by brutal dictatorship, Haitian leaders took their first steps at governing their future. However, these were steps that Haiti took in isolation; lacking allies in the international arena Haiti was not able to obtain political guidance from states that had already made those steps. Rather they had to model their understanding of democracy from observations made from afar. The first couple of Haitian leaders governed in an oppressive manner.

Rule of Law and Useable State

The rule of law implies that all significant political actors must and will exercise their authority through written laws, which has been adopted through consensus that provides actors with legitimacy and predictability. According to Linz and Stepan these *“hierarchy of laws are best interpreted by an independent judicial system and if supported by a strong legal culture in civil society”* (Linz and Stepan 1996, 10).

Prone to dictatorship government and riddled with violence, corruption and instability, Haiti has little to no rule of law. Even for something as simple as the constitution, it was not until 1990 where President Jean- Bertrand Aristide governed formally under the constitution that was received in 1987. This allowed him to make Haitian history by becoming the first freely elected president in over 200 years.

Schmitter and Karl argue that unlike in Latin America and Southern Europe the case in Africa and Eastern Europe were Different. For Latin America and Southern Europe, regime changes took place over time, where elites played a greater role in the transition process and where previous regimes were potentially able to incorporate needed structural conditions for a move towards democratic transitions; this was not the case in Africa and Eastern Europe (Schmitter and Karl 1991, 179). Transition in these latter regions as well as in the slavery based Caribbean as mentioned earlier were not pre-planned and pre-organized, as such, change among the various sectors of social, economic, political, were all taking place at the same time, with no clear sequential order, and their constant interaction while going through change continually affected the various outcomes.

The situation has led to the states continued struggle to try to get a handle on, and some semblance of control over the domestic arena in Haiti. Further in the arenas where the state have been able to exert control, it is typically through an ad hoc, dictatorial fashion that illustrates abuse of power and leads to a lack of accountability, representation of the people, and good governance. Further, the states ability to manage legislative and capacity building to combat corruption is also failing. Not only is there corruption in government and private sector organizations and political gangs as a collective, but within these groups there are constant internal power struggles that have contributed to the states inability to curb the violent uprisings and the lack of representation that take place.

Economic Society

The role of external factors in Haiti has played a very important role from as far back as Spain's 'discovery' of the island of Hispaniola. The politics of Spain, France, Britain, and the United States has led to the use of the island and particularly Haiti as an economic post/ colony and now state, to be exploited for its wealth and power.

As Schmitter and Karl point out, within Eastern Europe and Africa external factors such as trade relations and political standing within the international arena, has played a large role in the formation of "*longstanding commercial relations and international alliances... to a far greater extent than elsewhere these external actors have imposed political conditionality upon the process of consolidation, linking specific rewards to the meeting of a specific norm or even to the selection of specific institutions*" (Schmitter and Karl 1994, 181-182).

Within Haiti, Schmitter and Karl's analysis is realized. From as far back as its independence the formation of its economic structure has been dependent on the influences of external actors. As stated above, at the end of the long and strenuous Haitian revolution the economy of slavery and its infrastructure had been almost totally destroyed. The plantations, the manpower to work the plantations, the skilled labor to direct activities and production, and the resources necessary to manage the economy were little to none. The economic sanctions imposed on the state and its lack of recognition by the international world at such a low point in its economy life did not help to alleviate its economic woes. Rather the country fell further and further into debt.

Since its acceptance into the international world, Haiti has able to accept financial aide and resources from external organizations and actors such as the IMF, the Untied States, France, Canada; all involve political expectations that have to do with its ambitions of becoming a democratic nation. However, the country remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Like other developing countries in the region, it continued to struggle with problems of inflation, high external debts and trade deficits. Over the years, Haiti has shown marginal growths in its gross domestic product, and has managed to maintain highly levels of inflation (See Table 1.1)ⁱⁱ. Given the social and political context expounded upon in this paper, these struggles appear more difficult and the reality of centuries of poverty more hard felt, for Haiti than for any other country in the region facing the same fight.

Is an Authoritarian regime possible for Haiti?

Authoritarianism

One of the major arguments of this paper is that Haiti is moving towards an authoritarian regime. To fully make this argument valid, authoritarianism needs to be clearly examined in its definition, principles, characteristics, components, and forms in the real realm of international politics.

“Authoritarianism has four key components to its meaning (1) constraints on political institutions, (2) a basis for the regime's legitimacy, (3) constraints on the mass public, and (4) ill-defined executive power” (Casper 1995, 40). The authoritarian regime type is one used as a description for countries which *“enforce strong and sometimes oppressive measures against those in its sphere of influence,”* (Wikipedia, “authoritarianism). In a country ruled by authoritarian regime structure, the citizens are not given as much freedom as they would if they were in a democracy, their rights and lives are under direct state authority. However, given that some countries are more authoritative and restrictive in the levels of interfering in the citizen’s not only public but also private lives as well, there are different levels of authoritarianism. While some countries apply authoritarianism as a strict form and structure for running governments, others apply authoritarian principles within certain aspects of their form of government, which is conveyed in democracies. Forms of authoritarianism can be used in non-authoritarian regimes in areas pertaining to national security and health care. For example, the United States uses authoritarian principles in dealing with their social security system, and within developing countries, large numbers of public utilities are governed under the state’s authority.

As Nelson points out, Political structures reinforce the ideology of authoritarianism (Nelson 1995, vii). In this regard, ideology refers not simply to a general

accepted set of imposed beliefs within the society [unlike totalitarianism], but also to the perceived rights and beliefs of the party leader in power and thus the authority figure in control during that period.

These structures usually arise from elite driven groups using repressive means in order to keep their position of power by means of control; these elites beliefs may at times lead to the blatant violation of human rights. Within several authoritarian countries throughout Latin America, Higley and Gunther argue that the role of elites has been critical in transitions to democracies as they play an important role in legitimating and providing consensus about “the rules of the game” and the worth of existing political institutions (Higley and Gunther 1991). When citizens or members in opposition speak up against or ignore the party in power, they are said to be scheming against the countries’ best interest on a whole, as viewed in situations such as the Reign of Terror in France or in Spain under Francisco Franco’s rule.

Authoritarianism v. Totalitarianism

Haiti is moving from a slave-based totalitarian regime to an authoritarian regime. We should not confuse the two. These two regime types are not the same although similarities may be represented; they are highly distinguishable in comparison to each other. The difference lies in their levels of degree and scope of analysis.

Systems of governance within authoritarian regimes are typically less intrusive in comparison to those in totalitarian regimes and are not always backed unconditionally by militant or other groups of force. Totalitarian governments have a tendency in their nature to be revolutionary and insistent upon changing the basic structure of the given society. In contrast, authoritarian regimes tend to be more on the conservative side of

things and not to control every aspect of a citizen's life, unless deemed dangerous to the best interest of the country or challenge to the state. As O'Donnell and Schmitter argue, authoritarian governments at times unintentionally or intentionally set in motion a process of "liberalization". Liberalization is a process involving previous non-democratic regimes becoming more lenient on their restrictions within the social and economical arenas. Thus, "*creating certain openings for individual and group actions*" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 7, 9-11).

Within this analysis, authoritarian regimes are viewed as less dangerous and more capable of reform in comparison to totalitarian types. Given this distinction, authoritarian regimes are seen as more cooperative and willing to accept international aid and assistance from more established democratic countries such as the United States and Britain during their democratic transitions.

Authoritarianism in the Real World

Characteristics of authoritarian regimes can be seen in a multitude of forms within the governments of other regime types, both democratic and non-democratic. Even democracies, such as the United States, use elements of authoritarianism in some respects. Democratic nations in the modern realm have often enforced laws at one point or another through actions currently considered intrusive and authoritarian. Such is true in the United States and the United Kingdom who have imposed moral and religious values on the majority over matters dealing with private behaviors and life through the sodomy laws, and laws that make certain sexual acts sexual crimes. (Wikipedia: authoritarianism)

Researchers have argued over the years that while authoritarianism can be repressive and obtrusive, it can be quite beneficial in leading to economical growth and success. In the past, the Asian countries of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia were once an authoritarian regime and were classified as such during their periods of economic development (Wikipedia: Authoritarianism). It has also been argued, although through controversy, that authoritarian regimes can be more likely to achieve success in the arena of economics than in comparison to those countries trying to do so through democratic governance.

Movement along the Continuum: Transitions and Consolidations

According to Welsh, transitions are complex processes that aim at both creating change and applying consolidation. Given this understanding, it is reasonable to assert, *“Transitions have beginnings and that they must have ends, the problem is however that their fluidity makes clear demarcations difficult”* (Welsh 1994, 380).

As the definition of consolidation is best defined as murky, for the sake of this paper there is a need to discuss the need for a clear understanding of this concept. According to Pershing, what is murky are the terms democracy and democratization (Pershing 2004, 2) *“Primarily because they are too loaded with historical, ideological, and nationalistic significance”*. Rather the best approach to understanding consolidation is not to view it as only inevitably good [democratic consolidation] or inherently bad [any type of non-democratic consolidation]. Like Pershing, this paper argues that consolidation is based on two assumptions, that regimes are not stagnant, and second that the definition of consolidation can be applied to all other regimes types.

Within this context we can describe a country as consolidated within any regime type if we are able to spot repeated interactions leading to the formation of institutions [formal and informal], and the ability of actors to consistently operate under these institutions, both informal and formal. Despite Haiti's corrupted history and high levels of mobilization, these patterns of behavior have been consistent throughout Haiti's history as an independent nation-state. In addition, despite the fact that there are low levels of legitimacy towards government, there is a low value placed on the rule of law, the business society, and interest based elites still work partially within the scope of the law exhibiting consistent operations.

These factors illustrate that without applying the concepts of democracy and democratization to Haiti's current situation, we can more easily identify it as a country that is in the process of consolidating into a regime type that characteristically is not democratic.

Some of the institutional measures that are in place to prevent Haiti from returning to a totalitarian type regime are its constitution approved march 1987 and first applied to political rule in 1990 with the democratic appointment of Aristide. This constitution put in place three branches of government and the rule of law of the country. In addition, while political parties in Haiti have exhibited little control or influence on the political system, and despite that fact that many parties that opposed the incumbents, were banned or outlawed during both of the Duvalier governments, there are today six major political parties that vie for dominance.

Further Haiti as a member of the international have throughout the years become a member of several international organizations such the Caribbean Community

(CARICOM), which selects its member based on their democratic commitments. Their financial relationship with the United States, Canada and Britain has also imposed the acceptance of international norms and policies that would make it exceedingly hard for Haiti to return to a totalitarian form of regime. Within this light, the only way to go along the continuum is to remain in a period of transition or to move forward towards democracy.

In order to consolidate successfully as an authoritarian regime strong enough to move towards a democracy, Haiti need to raise its perceptions of the legitimacy of the government, and beliefs in the rule of law. More importantly they need to raise the involvement of civil society and the masses, not just to come together when issues become too much to bear, but to play a constant role in the monitoring of government and their policies. Further, the political society needs to grow to become more preventative of the civil society and to become more autonomous from governmental outcomes. The rule of law need to put measures in place that limit the effect of elite interests and the ability of the masses to gain better representation.

Concluding Thoughts

The aim of this paper has been two folds. Not only has it been illustrated that within the Caribbean that the island of Haiti may be characterized as a former slave based totalitarian regime, but this paper has also shown that Haiti can more accurately be seen as transitioning not towards democracy but towards an authoritarian type of regime.

As Rustow reminds however, *“without some prior consensus on overarching national identity and boundaries little or nothing can be accomplished to move the system out of the protracted uncertainty of transition into the relative calm of consolidation”* (Rustow

1970, 337-63). Given that, there is no crystal ball predicting the future and given human nature and how things change, nothing is for certain. It has been stated that when debating the promotion of democratic development there is reasonable doubt as to whether a state is really transitioning towards democracy, or whether it has re-structured and re-established its old regime type or consolidated itself into a form other than a fully democratic one (Pershing 2004, 1). Transitions from any regime type are laced with uncertainty and fear, and as such, outcomes to a consolidated political democracy are based on a little bit more than faith.

O'Donnell and Schmitter see transitions from bureaucratic authoritarian regimes as very Dahl like' in that they are based on struggles among the dominant social, political, and economical groups that essentially do not want democracy (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). This conceptualization may be applied to the Haitian case regardless of whether it has been classified as totalitarianism or not based upon its historical background. As Fatton Jr Notes, *"what characterized the particular form of historical Haitian dictatorship is that there have only been two classes which had the cohesion and the power to dominate the nation: the possessing class usually referred to as the elite and the government class which control the government's funds and military might"* (Fatton Jr 2002, 2).

Given the scope of this paper, it is possible to conclude that Haiti's current political pattern should not be viewed as democratic failures, but rather as a movement towards a consolidated regime type other than democracy. Maybe at this stage of the game, aiming for democracy is not the answer.

ⁱ TABLE 1.0

| CHARACTERISTICS OF REGIME TYPE | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| TOTALITARIAN REGIME | SLAVERY REGIME | |
| 1 | <p>Regime has eliminated all pre existing political, economic and social pluralism</p> | <p>Slavery superimposed the flourishing civilization of native American Arawak and Taino India population. It also imposed a new way of life and redefined one's position in life for all persons brought to the islands as slaves.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Articulated, guiding, utopian ideology</p> | <p>Slavery controlled not only all economic and political matters but also the attitudes, values, and beliefs of its population, erasing the distinction between state and society. The citizen's duty to the state becomes the primary concern of the community, and the goal of the state is the replacement of existing society with a perfect production based society.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Leadership is based on unpredictability and vulnerability among both elites and non-elites.</p> | <p>both the white plantation owners and the petit blanc elites in Haiti still had to follow French law and decrees, and so their interests and sustainability were dependent on French politics and her decisions in regards to it Haitian property. As a colony of France, Haiti was affected by France and its relations with other states</p> |
| 4 | <p>Extensive and intensive mobilization</p> | <p>Colonial economy was seen as so important to the livelihood of the motherland and those who governed on the island, that it was deeply entrenched into the social and political fiber of the states identity. Laws were established and social standing was determined based on racial and ethnic ties. Slavery did not recognize any autonomous groups other than the ones it created, or any other point of view other than those that supported the system. Anyone outside of this sphere was considered a threat to the regime.</p> |

ii TABLE 1.1

Haiti Economic Profile

| Economy | 2000 | 2005 | 2006 | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| <u>GNI, Atlas method (current US\$)</u> | 3.9 billion | 3.5 billion | 3.9 billion | |
| <u>GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)</u> | 490 | 410 | 450 | |
| <u>GDP (current US\$)</u> | 3.7 billion | 3.8 billion | 4.2 billion | |
| <u>GDP growth (annual %)</u> | 0.4 | -2.2 | 2 | |
| <u>Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)</u> | 11.2 | 20.6 | 15.5 | |

Source: World Development Indicators database, April 2006

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