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# The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same: Haiti still under occupation in the 21st Century Caribbean Studies Association Conference

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***The more things change,  
the more they stay the same:  
Haiti still under Occupation  
in the 21st Century***

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Florida International University  
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# The Empire strikes back

- Hardt and Negri's (2001) concept of 'Empire'
- 'Empire' is a network of various politically and economically powerful nation-states that function as a conglomerate to ensure that world order is maintained.

# Imperialism vs. 'Empire'

- Consolidation and strengthening of European nation-state borders
- Competition between European nation-states

De-centering and de-territorialization of the form of rule

Coordination, promotion, and maintenance of global capitalism beyond geographical boundaries

# 'Empire' ≠ United States

- The United States functions as the de facto core.
- However, its privileged position is contingent upon the approval of the other power blocks.

# The Empire revealed

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- The World Bank
- The G-8
  - The G-20 most recently
- The United Nations peacekeeping troops
- The U.S. Military
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Religious missionary groups
- Political and economic elites of the peripheral countries

# The Empire merges...

- The era of Empire emerged with the overthrow of colonial regimes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America following the Second World War.
- It was consolidated after the collapse of the Soviet Union.
  - The end of the Cold War marked the end of two 'separate' economic systems and the creation of one world order



# And Haiti...?

- The 19<sup>th</sup> Century is marked by ephemeral regimes, government corruption, and mass repression and violence.
- Haiti is isolated from participating in the world economy after its independence.
  - France demands compensation for its lost colony.

# The First Occupation

- With the collaboration of political and economic elites in Haiti, the United States deployed marine troops to Haiti.
  - Port-au-Prince is 'modernized'
  - The national army is 'professionalized'
- Haiti is occupied from 1915 to 1934
  - Africa, Asia, and Latin America are still colonized

# The Cold War and Haiti

- The 'Noirisme' movement emerges as a nationalist response to the monopoly of political and economic power of the 'mulatto' elites
- The movement produces the Duvalier family and the Tonton Makout (1957-1986)
  - They enjoy a 30-year dictatorial reign
  - They protect and maintain the interests of the U.S.

# The rise of Democracy?



# And the saga continues...

- From the anti-Duvalier movement emerges the charismatic leader Aristide
  - He pronounces himself anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-U.S.
- The Duvalierist army quickly deposes him before he is able to complete the first year of his term
  - Aristide seeks refuge in the U.S.

# Another intervention

- During the consolidation period of the 'Empire', the U.S. acquiesces to the demands of Aristide to return him to his elected post with the protection of the U.S. military.
  - Collaboration with the IMF and World Banks is one of the major conditions of his return
  - The Haitian army is disbanded
  - Violence is committed against the population
  - The intervention last 2 years (1994-1996)



# 21st Century Haiti: 'Sovereignty' compromised

- Less than 2 months after Haiti's celebration of its bicentennial independence (2004), United Nations troops are deployed on Haitian soil
  - Aristide goes into exile for the second time
  - Haiti is a global problem, not just a regional problem





# The 2010 Earthquake

- Following the earthquake, after 6 years of “peacekeeping”, more UN troops were sent to securitize the borders of Haiti
  - Troops came from other countries of the Global South
- The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) headed by Bill Clinton is created to preside over the “reconstruction”
- NGOs receive most of the international aid

# What is 'Sovereignty'?

- The 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed the birth of many new 'nation-states'.
- However, while many of these 'nation-states' had “control” over their land, they continue to exist under the political and economic tutelage of their previous colonizers.





# Empire = Imperialism

- While the modalities of rule may vary and the power holders may have “diversified”, the underlying project both Imperialism and Empire seek to protect, promote, impose, and maintain is: Capitalism
- The need to preserve capitalism has produced different political systems.
  - Capitalism re-invents itself

# The 'Empire': What's missing?

- Patil's (2008) 'Kinship Politics'
  - A politics that combines the notion of a natural (familial) relationship across peoples and territories with the notion of a natural hierarchy within this relationship.
  - The modernist binary of rational/irrational is expressed through the embodiment of a racialized, feminized, sexualized, and infantilized Other

# The People's Agency

- The Haitian Popular Movement struggles against the Occupation and continues to mobilize and organize to promote an alternative “development” of Haiti.





