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Haitian Representation in the Media: A Comparative Analysis between an African American Owned Newspaper and a Mainstream Newspaper

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

HAITIAN REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
BETWEEN AN AFRICAN AMERICAN OWNED NEWSPAPER AND A
MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPER

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

BY
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THESIS

In 1994, the UN entered Haiti under the premise of establishing peace in Haiti's current political mayhem. During U.S. intervention, the country remained volatile and this led to an increase of Haitians migrating to the U.S. both legally and illegally (by boat). Pegged as "Boat People", major U.S. newspapers describe Haitian immigrants as "illiterate, impoverished individuals who would drain public resources" (Conway and Safford 1997:253). In 2004, Aristide was re-elected, but later, suffered a coup d'état, leading once again to political unrest that caused yet another wave of Haitians to migrate to the United States (Bellegarde-Smith 2004). That same year, Hurricane Jeanne passes through Haiti and leads to a large number of victims. Haitians thus have to deal with two main issues; political instability, and the consequences of a natural disaster. Historically, when Haiti is experiencing a period of violence or of instability, Haitians flee in masses to the United States. Unfortunately, the media coverage of Haitian refugees and immigrants is seldom flattering; it affirms, "[n]otions of Haiti as [a] wretched and desperate nation populated by wretched and desperate people" (Doucet 2014:2). The literature on immigration and media representation explains that this negative image is due to several factors such as geographical location, anti-immigrant sentiment, fear of economic threat, or political ideology of a news source (David & Cromwell 2006). Immigrants, upon their arrival are at an impasse; if they thrive in their host society, natives see them as a threat to the resources, if they do not thrive; natives see them as a financial burden (Esses et al. 2001).

Overwhelmingly, written news portrays immigrants as a threat. This phenomenon is due to their status of outsider, or non-citizen. However, not all American citizens have a good portrayal in written news. Although citizens, African Americans face more negative representations than whites do. News outlets are twice as likely to portray African Americans negatively, than they are likely to portray whites (Dixon and Linz 2000). Being that African Americans are subject to a representation bias, I wondered if they too, would be likely to present Haitian immigrants in a negative light; especially because Haitians and African Americans have a history that predates the waves of immigration that occurred in 1994 and 2004, 2008, and of 2012. Pamphile (2001) documents the relationship between African Americans and Haitians and explains, “African Americans always thought of Haiti not only as the guardian of freedom but also as black cultural mecca” (Pamphile 2001:193). Throughout history, African Americans have often times intervened to protect Haiti from the US government (Pamphile 2001). Unfortunately, with the influx of immigrants, the image of the poor, wretched boat person took precedence over the image of the first Black people to gain their independence. Both groups suffered from negative images, and caused them to stray away from each other (Woldemikael 1989). No longer seeing the benefits of associating with an ethnic group with so little to offer and with bad reputation, Haitian Americans and Haitians grew apart and eventually, became hostile towards each other (Zephir 1996).

According to Woldemikael (1989), the negative imagery surrounding Haitians was the primary reasons behind the lack of interaction between Haitian immigrants and African Americans. Starting from the assumption that all written media surrounding immigrants is tainted, I endeavored to discover in which news source the representation

would be most negative. “There is compelling evidence that heavy consumption of threatening media depictions of minorities helps to create and reaffirm negative schemata that these groups are threatening” (Atwell and Mastro 2015:4). Searching for a discrepancy between the two news sources in their representation, I believed that if I could prove that African American owned newspaper portrayed Haitian immigrants in a much more negative light than other corporate owned ones, than I could find proof of a wholehearted rejection of a people based on more than just anti-immigrant sentiment.

In order to ascertain whether there is a difference in representation, I conducted a content analysis of articles covering news on Haitian Immigrants in 2004. Given the historical context, most articles published around Haiti and Haitian immigrants, focused primarily on either the coup d’état, or on Hurricane Jane. Articles focused a lot more on the interaction between the United States and Haitian government, and reported very little on how Haitian immigrants themselves were doing, or thinking about the state of their home country.

Although 2004 was one of the years, where the U.S. experienced a mass wave of immigration from Haiti, there was little focus on Haitian immigrants. Because my focus is on Haitian immigrant representation, I provide a very broad overview on the themes addressed in relation to Haitian immigrants. I also identify how the representation of immigrants differ based on the source of publication and show the differences and similarities that exist between the ways the news was reported in the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Defender. In general, my findings are similar to the literature and that it reflects a clear representation of immigrants in ways that reinforce their economic and political inferiority. By identifying the frameworks, used surrounding Haitian Immigrants

in African American owned newspapers, my research shows whether or not they too use a racial framework when covering Haitian immigrants. Identifying a framework that encourages either a type of self-segregation on the behalf of African Americans from minorities, or specifically from Haitian immigrants, could help shed light on relations between minorities living in the United States. I can also help shed light on how the media can influence or mold those interactions.

[C]ontemporary intergroup contact is typically associated with anxiety due to perceptions of out-groups as (a) physical, (b) economic, and/or (c) symbolic threats to the well-being of one's own group... given this, if the media persistently characterize particular groups as physical, economic, or symbolic threats to other groups, exposure is likely to have negative implications for intergroup relations. (Seate and Mastro 2015:2)

Although it is clear that the representation of Haitians has been consistently negative, it is not clear however, how news outlets refer to Haitians in relation to African Americans and to other minority groups in the United States, if at all. There is ample literature (Seate & Mastro 2015), (Domke, McCoy and Torres 1999) on the ways that media discourse affect relations between whites and blacks; I propose that we extend this analysis for interactions between immigrants and African Americans. In conjunction with the struggles that African Americans experience in the United States in terms of gaining political power and respectability, representation of Haitians in the news may help guide the decision of disassociation from this specific immigrant group.

Framework

In order to conduct this research, I will be using Gramson and Modigliani and their understanding of media discourse as being constituted of “a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue... at its core is a central organizing idea, or frame,

for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue” (Gramson and Modigliani 1989:3). They argue that packages have the ability to construct meaning over time. Newspapers use frames to build and convey specific ideas about Haitian immigrants to the general U.S. public and more specifically to African Americans. This ability to establish strong meanings depends on Cultural resonance, and cultural power. Cultural resonance refers to the idea that “certain packages have a natural advantage because their ideas and language resonate with larger cultural themes” (Gramson and Modigliani 1989:5). Griswold (1987) presents the concept of cultural power as referring “to the capacity of certain works to linger in the mind...it locates itself within a set of contentions that it strains, plays with, perhaps inverts” (Griswold 1987:1105). In other words, cultural power may influence individuals when they are exposed to an idea that is rendered more appealing to them through cultural resonance.

We can define framing as the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation ...Framing works to shape and alter audience members' interpretations. (Entman 2007:164)

The frame thus has the ability to create in the mind of a citizen, the first association or opinion on Haitian immigrants. Entman stresses the importance of framing; “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote...treatment recommendation” (Entman 1993:52). Media is often times the first point of contact between Haitian Immigrants and citizens, it is important to understand how African American speak of them. Because Chicago does not have a high percent of Haitian immigrants and the latter do not pose an imminent threat, Chicago is an interesting city to study whether Haitian immigrants will

receive bad press. In addition, I may uncover whether the findings on Haitian immigrant representation in the media in Chicago, will be consistent with the representation in Miami and in New-York.

Methodology

I conducted a qualitative framing analysis of the Chicago Defender and Chicago Tribune written news coverage from January 1, 2004, to December 31, 2004. The 20 articles, ten from the Chicago tribune and ten from the Chicago Defender, were sampled from the ProQuest New source database using the search terms “Haitian immigrant” or “Haitian refugee”, or “Haiti and immigrant”, as the two are often alternatively used when referring to immigrants (Potter 2009). I used both search words because my focus is on the representation of a migrant group, whether their status be legal or not, in newspapers. I read and used NVivo to qualitatively code articles in each news source and identify frames as they emerged. The sample of articles excludes feature articles, editorials, and reviews. I categorized frames by which context Haitian immigrants were referred to. I ran a word frequency to determine which words were used to describe Haitian immigrants, and the frequency and context such words were used in. I then grouped these words and phrases together in order to identify the dominant frames used to describe Haitian immigrants and Haitian refugees. I selected the “new query” tab and ran a “word Frequency” in order to have an analysis that highlighted the most common words. I coded the data by most frequent themes and subject by organizing them into nodes (files) within NVivo. After identifying the main themes, I was able to pinpoint the frameworks used around Haitian immigrants. I identified the main topics that were recurrent when talking about Haitians and Haitian immigrants.

Media has an impact on the formation of political ideologies, which, in turn, affect race relations. (Entman 2001:773). It is important to analyze frames because racialized discourse is not outwardly present in media discourse, but instead is present in subtext (Domke 2007:774). There is a link between news media, racial perception and citizen political cognition. Stereotypes remain the primary issue in that section. Doucet (2014) and Chierici (1991) both explain that is the predominant image of Haitians as “boat people” in the news, is one of the major reasons that prevent Haitian immigrants from integrating in society. It is important to take into consideration those representations because they create frames around sub minorities. “Frames tend to make news accounts simpler and more understandable...this simplification can lead to a homogenized perspective...and frames can even lead to political action” (Potter 2009:213). The homogenization of Haitian immigrants as a group creates a dangerous partial view of a culture, which can, according to Entman (1991) in turn lead to political actions that may not work in the advantage of the minority in question. My purpose is to determine whether these frameworks suggested friction within minority groups by rejecting the Haitian immigrant as a category. Racial difference and illegal immigrant status can greatly affect an immigrant’s primary. News outlets portray brown bodies as dirty and dangerous because of their ethnicity...even as this metaphoric articulation divides immigrants from mainstream America, “immigration as pollution” also serves as unifying function bringing together disparate groups of Americans under the banner of protecting the sanctity and integrity of the nation (Cisneros 2008). The metaphor of pollution normalizes American identity, an identity based on racial and cultural “purity”. The construction of self and other through the metaphor of immigrant as pollutant makes this

normalized American identity visible while painting immigrants as contaminants and pushes the immigrant to the periphery. In the following sections, I will address the major themes and framework addressed as well as the differences that exist between the two sources.

Findings

In this section, I analyze passages extracted from the articles I have collected for analysis. As expected, most of the articles focused on the damages of Hurricane Jeanne and the wave of migration it caused to the U.S. The articles also focused on how the political instability in Haiti too, caused a wave of immigration to America. Subsequently, more passages talked about Haitian immigrants in relation to natural disaster, poverty and U.S. intervention, than there were on Haitian immigrants residing in the United States. In this section, I report the main themes in which the migrant group was covered.

Haitian immigrants are mentioned in relation to Haiti itself and the circumstances that lead to their migration to the United States. Both news sources paint Haiti as a country in dire need of help and constantly plagued by either natural, economic or political disasters. In both news sources, the imagery of Haiti is often gruesome and reminds the reader of the constant violence, pollution, and broken infrastructures. This is particularly the case in the report of the damages that resulted from Hurricane Jane;

The press has reported widespread human suffering in Haiti, with unburied bodies in the streets; hospitals and hospital equipment rendered unusable because of water and mud; grave shortages of fresh water, food and antibiotics; a very real threat of public health epidemics and thousands without even rudimentary shelter. (Strausberg 2004)

The above passage is an example of how the authors highlight the limited access to very basic needs for Haitians in Haiti, which thus lead them to migrate to the U.S. Both news

sources report the difficult circumstances that lead to this exodus, however articles published in the Chicago Defender displayed a much larger concern for the logistics of helping Haitians survive the hurricane; they emphasized on relieving human pain and the alarming lack of access to healthcare. Haiti's representation was not flattering in the Chicago Defender. The Chicago Tribune's reference to Haiti often came highlighted with comments pertaining to the body count caused by disasters both political and environmental; "The death toll from floods unleashed by Tropical Storm Jeanne rose sharply Sunday to 1,970 people, with 884 still missing, as officials said they found hundreds more bodies in Haiti's devastated northwestern region" (Strausberg 2004). In the case of the Chicago Tribune, passages that mentioned natural disasters did so in relation to the existing violence and political disorder that exist in Haiti. However, they do not put a focus on Haiti's access to medical resources to help the victims of the disaster; "The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere was already besieged by poverty, high crime and deplorable health standards; now comes the deadly floods of Tropical Storm Jeanne" (Strauberg 2004). When covering the news on natural disasters, both journals highlight that the Haitian government is not able to survive without U.S. or outside influence either from the UN or from the other empirical nations. Although both news sources convey that aid is necessary and provided by these previously listed countries. The articles did not discuss the survival tactics, or solutions to end the violence used by Haitians. Instead, they report that Haitians either flee, or endure violence and pollution. The news sources report that Haiti's bad economy explain the necessity to rely on outside intervention in times of crises.

Haitians are not the only ones who are subject to an image that emphasizes their poverty. Consistent with my findings, the representation of minorities generally highlights the financial burden that they pose to the U.S.; media outlets tend to present minorities as an economic threat (Rodgers & Thorson 2000). The issue of poverty has become “increasing (and inaccurately) racialized over the decades, with the least sympathetic messages consistently linked with Blacks” (Seate and Mastro 2015:3) with an extra emphasis placed on the negative impact that immigrants have on the economy and their possibility of taking a toll on the financial wellbeing on U.S. natives (Pew Research Center, 2011). The articles explain that the violence noticeable in the country exists in conjunction with the rampant poverty: “The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere was already besieged by poverty, high crime and deplorable health standards; now comes the deadly floods of Tropical Storm Jeanne” (Strausberg 2004). Not even referred by its name, “The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere” becomes the set of words that are synonymous with Haiti. Before even knowing about the events that took place in Haiti, the reader is first exposed to the image of a country that has known nothing other than poverty; it is done in a very redundant way; “The poorest country ...already besieged by poverty”, presents the visual of a country that is a magnet to both poverty and natural disaster. An attraction that cannot be avoided, regardless of who is ruling it; "President Aristide ... represented a democracy without the economic stability necessary to provide hope for his people" (Strausberg 2004). The correlation is simple; without political stability, economic growth is impossible, and without these three pillars, U.S. intervention and immigrants from Haiti are both inevitable.

Although both journals emphasize on the role of the United States in Haiti's ability to survive, neither journal reports the improvements that resulted from such aid. By quantifying the the aid, the Chicago Tribune frames US intervention in Haiti as economically harmful to the U.S. and other nations.

The U.S. has provided \$11.4 million in disaster aid... you can add \$1.2 billion in aid pledged by a number of countries at a summit on Haiti this summer-- before the hurricane--and intended to stabilize the country's economy... An awful lot of money, isn't it? (Marx 2004)

In this passage, the writer presents to the reader the idea that helping Haiti comes at an exorbitant price; one that other countries, as well as the United States has paid. This emphasis on the financial toll of helping Haiti is specifically present in the articles published in the Chicago Tribune. However, when the Defender chose to speak out in monetary terms, the numbers vastly differed than those given by the Tribune:

Thus far, the United States' response has been terribly weak. The U.S. Embassy in Haiti announced that a measly \$60,000 has been allocated to assist in the relief...to think that all the U.S. can come up with is less than the cost of a bomb being dropped in Iraq is beyond belief. (Strausberg 2004).

There is a lack of consistency in the reports provided by each source. One emphasizes that Haiti should be grateful to be receiving financial help from other nations; while the other explains that the U.S. owes so much more to Haiti than what it has given. Either way, by presenting Haiti as the responsibility of the West, both journals present the United States as the savior of Haitians in Haiti and of Haitians migrating to the U.S. for opening its gates so that the latter group may experience a functioning democracy.

In the same year, that hurricane Jane hit Haiti and that Aristide had to terminate his presidency, the U.S. was engaged in a war with Iraq. Although the two countries have two different histories, the journals used the Iraqi war as one of the explanations behind

the necessity for U.S. intervention. Although Haiti is far from posing any kind of economic, political threat towards the United States, the writers of the Chicago Tribune argue that the U.S. has chosen to intervene in Haitian affairs in the name of democracy. In contrast, the Chicago Defender reports that if the U.S. can get involved in Iraq, then the US can afford to intervene in a nation that has not been able to sustain a stable democracy because of its chaotic past. In that sense, both countries illustrate an important international lesson:

While the United States tries to help build a new democracy in Iraq, another may be falling apart in Haiti. In that sense, both countries illustrate an important international lesson: After you help people to form a democracy, you might have to come back and help them to keep it. (Clarence 2004)

To intervene in Haitian affairs is portrayed as a way to protect democracy and, more specifically, as a way to stabilize Haiti's political climate in order to minimize the number of Haitians that flee for the U.S. The Chicago Tribune portrays Haiti as a lost cause by repetitively reporting U.S. and Haiti relations where Haiti is always at the receiving end of aid. Only in one article in the Chicago Defender was Haiti mentioned reaching out to the United States for help; however, in general, both journals take away Haiti's agency to improve its economy and political situation. Instead, the articles present US involvement as a form of last minute intervention where the Haitian government failed to self-govern to the point of U.S. involvement; "Haiti is a long-term project. It's going to take us a while to bring humanitarian relief to that area," she said. "They can get water and food today, but if you've never been to Haiti, you've never seen poverty." (Pride 2004). Both journals presented Haiti as having no desire to solve its own issues, "it's going to take us

a while” gives a narrative of Haiti as the personal responsibility of the rest of the world, but of Haiti itself.

They (Haitians) need more United Nations security troops on the ground for security," he said. "The U.S. Corps of Engineers should be there because the country's infrastructure has been destroyed. People need electricity and roads. (Strausberg 2004)

When the US provides aid to Haiti, both the Chicago Defender and the Chicago Tribune link humanitarian aid to the possibility of helping Haiti retain a level of democracy. A functioning democracy here defined as a country’s ability to remain politically stable and able to meet its peoples’ basic needs. The news does not report specifically how the U.S. helps Haiti establish a functional democracy. One thing however is clear, political intervention and humanitarian aid in the face of violence and environmental disasters seem to somehow, have the end goal of helping Haiti become a better democracy. The authors did so by mentioning health issues in combination with issues pertaining to “supporting Haiti’s democracy”; these two issues seemingly different, are, according to the articles I have selected, inseparable from each other.

Greater international intervention is urgently needed to keep suffering and violence from escalating. Then there's humanitarian aid, which cannot be distributed without some public order. Again the UN has gathered and distributed aid from a number of countries--but it's not enough to get Haitians past the current crisis. (Marx 2004)

Despite the UN’s experience on providing aid to other countries, this passage suggests that Haiti is difficult to handle; if Haiti is having trouble self-governing, distribution of medical supplies will not take place smoothly. Without a functioning government, the U.S. government cannot distribute international aid to Haiti. By presenting Haiti as being unable to rule itself, both news sources legitimizes U.S. involvement and present is as a

need. The Defender appealed to the reader's duty towards the maintenance of democracy to help Haiti and presented it as a moral responsibility of the American people:

The United States had a decision to make. Are we going to stand with a democratically-elected government in our own hemisphere, or are we going to side with those murderers and former death squad leaders, and drug dealers and thugs who wanted, through violence, to take out this president?... This is about whether or not we have a commitment in democracy. (Strausberg 2004)

The Chicago Tribune however, mentions the instability in the country a lot more frequently than the Chicago Defender. The Chicago Defender is the only one to question U.S. intervention; otherwise, the Chicago tribune accepts it as justified and legitimate. "The U.S. has often sought to control Haiti's affairs, sending in troops to protect American economic interests or in response to assassinations, coups, rebellions and wars. One U.S. incursion lasted nearly 20 years, from 1915 to 1934" (Kilian 2004). This passage does not present the U.S. occupation of Haiti as oppressive. On the contrary, the passage downplays it and presents it as de facto of U.S.-Haiti relations. An "incursion" in no way helps with developing political strategies that can help stabilize the country. Instead, this exemplifies the possibly oppressive nature of U.S. involvement into Haitian affairs. U.S. intervention is not portrayed as a violation of any kind of international relation; nor does it take into consideration the desires or needs of the Haitian population itself. These newspapers convey that without outside involvement, Haiti cannot establish peace. This framework completely dismisses the history behind the nations. For example, the Chicago defender reports; "Rep. Jackson told the Chicago Defender: "The administration's efforts are insufficient. It's inhumane, and it doesn't look at the historical factors that the U.S. has played in undermining the Haitian economy" (Strausberg 2004). The U.S. occupation of Haiti and its implications on the latter's economy are not

mentioned or explained. In addition, the newspapers often mention Haiti's status of ex colony to France as a part of the nation's identity; yet, Haiti's history as the first Black republic is not often mentioned and the newspaper describe Frances' involvement is a blessing in disguise. The involvement of the US is usually described as originated from issues of violence, but not necessarily on any other reasoning such as health or education. "Greater international intervention is urgently needed to keep suffering and violence from escalating. About 3,000 more UN peacekeepers have been approved by the Security Council" (Strausberg 2004).

In general, the Chicago Tribune does not report Haiti's desire to establish a peace nor the effort the nation has taken towards doing so. For example, in 1994 Aristide dismantled Haiti's Army in the interest in maintaining peace in the country. In the 1960s under the rule of Francois Duvalier (papa Doc), the army uprooted and revolted against the current government leading to political mayhem. Hoping to prevent history from repeating itself, Aristide took the decision to dismantle the army. Aristide's decision was presented as being a terrible political move that pointed to Haiti's reliance on other countries to govern; "Aristide disbanded the Haitian army and was forced to rely for security on a small U.S.-trained police force" (Marx 2004). Disbanding the Haitian army is presented as destroying a necessary component of the nation; forcing the U.S. as being responsible to provide support. Both news sources report interventions because of violent outbreaks, but, never describe them to occur in an effort to prevent them from happening.

After Aristide resigned in February, U.S. troops intervened briefly to stanch the fighting between opponents and partisans of Aristide, and to install a caretaker government... Greater international intervention is urgently needed to keep suffering and violence from escalating (Marx 2004).

Haiti therefore hogs both labor and monetary funds from the U.S. in order to sustain itself. Referring to immigrants while mentioning the amount of resources that goes into their homeland creates an image that the immigrants themselves will be of equal or more strain on America. More importantly, the level of involvement suggests that the Haitian government and the Haitian people need much more than money; they specifically need American leadership:

U.S. policymakers have faced the challenge of whether and how to intervene in Haiti's turbulent affairs for most of the island nation's 200-year history... The U.S. has often sought to control Haiti's affairs, sending in troops to protect American economic interests or in response to assassinations, coups, rebellions and wars... Typically Haiti has collapsed back into violence after a U.S. withdrawal until conditions deteriorate sufficiently that Americans feel compelled to intervene again... an overthrow of the Haitian government prompted a long, involved U.S. engagement. (Kilian 2004)

The absence of the United States in Haitian affairs is explained as always having a negative outcome. The author indicates that it is almost impossible for a democracy to be successful without the U.S. feeling "compelled to intervene". This is reminiscent of an association of a failed democracy as being a threat to the United States' identity of a democratic country. References of the United States involvement in Haiti's political affairs occurred most often in articles published in the Chicago Tribune. There were 14 references of Haiti's political instability in the Chicago Tribune, compared to 2 references made in the Chicago Defender. The Chicago Tribune articles reported the instability as being rooted in the Haitian government or lack of it; and that peace is only established when the U.S. decides to intervene: "The U.S. offers the best way for Haiti's feuding leaders to come together, find common ground, clean out corruption and build a healthy future" (Page 2004). While the Chicago Tribune articles emphasize on Haiti's

instability, the Chicago Defender, very different from the Tribune's presentation of forceful unwanted intervention, presents a version where the Haitian government has explicitly asked for help in maintaining a semblance of peace, only to be denied such help by the Bush administration, unless the latter decided to intervene on its own accord. "While turning a deaf ear to Aristide's earlier plea to the U.S. to send in troops and a similar call to the international community, Bush is now sending in troops to stabilize that nation" (Strausberg 2004). The absence of a report of actions taken by the Haitian government to help its own people elevates the image of the U.S. government as being Haiti's savior. More importantly, it sends the message that if the Haitian government does not care enough to take action for its own people, then even Haiti does not care for and/or protect Haitians. When Haitians migrate to the United States, they thus appear to be unwanted and uncared for by their own government. More importantly was an absence of a report of what Haitian immigrants themselves thought about what was taking place in Haiti.

Immigration

In this section, I analyze the passages that mention Haitian immigrants and refugees. As stated previously, I place my focus on comparing how the portrayal of this minority group varies depending on the source of publication. The news coverage of Haitian immigrants residing in the United States was minimal. Instead, there were more news entries on prospective immigrants, and Haitians in the process of traveling to the United States; there was no distinction made between the Haitians who arrived in the U.S. legally or illegally. Both journals describe the migration to the United States as an exodus where Haitians flee a failing democracy in favor of a functioning one; "The

current unrest may result in an exodus of refugees fleeing to our shores, thus placing the lives of many Haitians in danger “(Strausberg 2004). Haitian immigrants and refugees are often described as fleeing their homeland, either for safety concerns, or because of an environmental disaster. Both newspapers report Haiti to be a country whose natives are willing to die in order to reach U.S. shores; thus portraying the United States as the international haven for peace and democracy.

As the crisis deepened, U.S. Coast Guard officials said Thursday that they have intercepted more than 500 Haitian migrants at sea in recent days. That disclosure was the first indication that the nation's strife might be fueling a wave of illegal immigrants. (Marx 2004)

Immigrants are described as being victims who migrate because of difficult circumstances. According to the Chicago Tribune, Haitians run from their country in seemingly dangerous circumstances. “Haitians were fleeing their homeland by boat in growing numbers” (Marx 2004). The Tribune was a lot more likely to report news of Haitians migrating in reference to their numbers: “The number of Haitians fleeing the deadly uprising in their homeland has risen, with the Coast Guard saying it has intercepted 546 people at sea over the past three to four days” (La Corte 2004). The use of numbers provides a visual of the amount of immigrants coming to the U.S., small waves of migrations below the hundreds were not reported. Most entries that mentioned the incoming of immigrants were published in the Chicago Tribune. The Defender does not disregard the extent of the migration of Haitians, instead, articles in the Defender referred to their numbers more subtly: “A stream of frightened refugees flowed out of this port city Monday ...many residents fled on foot carrying suitcases or balancing huge sacks of belongings on their heads” (Strausberg 2004). The extent of Haitians who left

Haiti is still made evident, but it is done so in a less technical way. The articles report that without the support of the U.S., Haiti fell into a mass period of violence that caused the dislocation of a large number of migrants to the U.S. Both news sources describe Haitian immigrants as either fleeing, dying, or being intercepted and deported back to their native country; “The number of Haitians fleeing the deadly uprising in their homeland has risen, with the Coast Guard saying it has intercepted 546 people at sea over the past three to four days (La Corte 2004). Most entries that mentioned the incoming immigrants in such matter were published in the Chicago Tribune. The Defender does not disregard the extent of the migration of Haitians; instead, articles in the Defender referred to them their numbers more subtly: “A stream of frightened refugees flowed out of this port city Monday ...many residents fled on foot carrying suitcases or balancing huge sacks of belongings on their heads” (Marx 2004). The extent of Haitians who left Haiti is still made evident, but it is done so in a less technical way. The state of emergency that leads to Haitians leaving the country is reported as being mostly the fault of the Haiti itself.

The Chicago Tribune tended to report that peace is only possible in Haiti when the American government, or any other government, intervenes. Although both journals constantly reported that the U.S. had intervened in Haitian affairs, there was minimal mention of the consequences of such involvement. Unlike those published in the Chicago Tribune, articles published in the Defender did not portray U.S. intervention as a blessing. The following excerpt from the Chicago Defender highlights the straightforward criticism of strategies used by the U.S. government.

The U.S. involvement in the coup -- by publicly discrediting Aristide, vowing no military defense of the democracy, and using our military to secure our embassy, while leaving the president and his family unprotected, and further use of our

military to return Haitians fleeing for their lives and block others from leaving Haiti, is a blatant violation of human rights," charged Jackson. (Strausberg 2004)

Although this passage assumes that the U.S. has the authority to make decisions concerning Haiti, the Defender is more critical of the reasoning behind such decisions. To make statements such as "The U.S. involvement in the coup...is a blatant violation of human rights", stands in stark contrast with the Tribune qualifying any form of U.S. involvement in Haitian affairs as a relief, and as a humanitarian action. However, there were no reports on how the U.S. government intends to help the refugees and immigrants upon their arrival; neither news source report U.S. response to immigrants as being tailored to welcome them or help them adjust. "The U.S. Coastguard says it is holding about 500 Haitians on vessels at sea after they were intercepted fleeing Haiti. (Haiti rebel warns Chicago Defender Unknown author). This passage suggests that the U.S. government has enacted more of a closed-door policy for Haitians. The articles describe the migrant as being intercepted, detained, denied entry, or simply deported back to Haiti. Although the articles provide a clear depiction of the rampant poverty, and the gravity of the instability caused by both political and environmental issues, the Tribune does not reprimand the government's decision to close its doors to the refugees and immigrants; "If a Haitian makes it to our shores, they're either put in a compound or they are sent back at sea and often they die" (Strausberg 2004). The decision to return the Haitians to their homeland is not described as an abnormal response from the part of the U.S. government; "The Haitians were picked up within 50 miles of their country's shore in about a dozen small boats, Coast Guard spokesman Luis Diaz said, bringing the total number of immigrants intercepted this month to 694" (La Corte 2004). The Chicago Defender, on

the other hand, appeals to the United States to make decisions towards Haitian immigrants and refugees that would help the latter groups adjust to the American society. Although articles from both journals describe immigrants as being highly dependent of the U.S., each news source advertised different approaches on how to receive them:

A small but significant contribution by the U.S. would be to grant Temporary Protected Status to about 20,000 illegal Haitian immigrants in Florida, likely to be deported to a home country on the edge of collapse. Allowing them to stay and work here for 18 months would be a humanitarian gesture. And it would likely provide some financial relief--like immigrants before them, Haitians here are likely to send cash and goods to their stricken relatives back home. (Marx 2004)

Very much like the above excerpt, articles published in the Tribune report the rejection of refugees when they are in dire need of help and, gives little suggestions on an alternative approach. In contrast, in addition to the criticism towards the U.S. intervention in Haitian soil, the articles in the Defender encourages for a more humanitarian approach to immigrants; that is to help them for the sake of helping them. Reports on what should be done with immigrants often frame these immigrants as being a source of concern for the American government:

Authorities on Thursday were interviewing nearly two dozen Haitians on a ship the Coast Guard intercepted off the Florida coast, trying to determine whether the vessel was hijacked and the immigrants should be returned home... Officials would not say whether the Haitians had requested asylum. (La Corte 2004)

Other than the one mention in the Chicago Defender of Haiti seeking out help from the Bush administration, neither journal reports the actions taken by the Haitian government to help its refugees upon arrival in America. In doing so, both suggest that the immigrants and refugees are the responsibility of the American government and of Americans themselves. In the articles published in the Tribune, this responsibility is presented as a burden; those published in the Defender however, have a much more welcoming take on

how to receive refugees and immigrants. The latter news source invites its readers to welcome the wave of Haitian immigrants on U.S. soil as an extension of the responsibility that the U.S. has towards Haiti. In addition to helping save Haiti's democracy, writers of the Chicago Defender invite Americans to facilitate the transition of Haitians into a functioning democracy; one that differs greatly from the failing democracy of the Haitian government.

There is room for individuals from other countries to come to the United States, the greatest nation on the face of the earth, and to experience the tremendous opportunities and to further open the doors. (Strausberg 2004)

The report of this invitation for integration is very different from the hostile interaction that exists between African Americans and Haitian immigrants reported by Zephir and Woldemikael. It is also very different from the other mentions of immigrants that I have shown in my work. It is not associated with rejection but instead, with the greatness of the United States; and it is by virtue of said greatness, that immigrants should be received and treated well. This sentiment expressed in articles of the Chicago Defender, was not common in the Tribune articles. Although both journals advertised for a stronger involvement of the U.S. government in Haitian affairs, and in immigrants, the Chicago Defender was the only one to be explicitly outspoken about what the government did or should do with the migrant group. They also displayed a concern on Haitian politics in general, as they understood that it is its instability that causes this mass migration.

The U.S. government, under Mr. Bush, cut off emergency aid, humanitarian...and economic aid to Haiti, which boosts the sense of desperation in Haiti." Jackson referred to the U.S. bifurcated immigration policy where "if a Cuban makes it to our shores, they're automatically accepted and given subsidy. (Strausberg 2004)

This passage highlights a discrimination of Haitian immigrants in favor of Cuban immigrants who too, were fleeing what could arguably be coined as a politically imbalanced country. It reports a discrimination based on place of origin is, a fact that is not addressed in any of the Tribune's articles. This observation is once more made in another entry in the Chicago Defender: "The practice is to stop Haitian immigrants on the high seas and to allow Cuban immigrants to come in freely while giving immunity to Mexican immigrants" (Strausberg 2004). The blatant rejection of a minority group in favor of another suggests a targeted closed-door policy towards Haitians. Both Cubans and Haitians were fleeing political instability; however, the Haitians were not received well. The Chicago Tribune's report how blatantly the U.S. has decided to close its borders to the Haitians:

The United States is trying to avoid a repeat of the exodus a decade ago, when tens of thousands of Haitians fled political violence and tried to reach U.S. shores. "It is our intention that most if not all of the Haitian migrants on Coast Guard ships be returned to Haiti," said Steve Sapp, a U.S. Coast Guard spokesman in Miami. "We are now keeping an eye on every ship that leaves Haiti--even legitimate merchant vessels--to make sure there are no illegal Haitian migrants on board. We don't want them to consider it a route off the island. (Marx 2004)

The Tribune does not give any indication that the U.S. government is wrong for the strategies used nor does it report any kind of opposition from members of the American population. The Chicago Defender however reports that the Black organizers in Chicago were concerned with the ineffective approach provided by Bush's administration against the violence in Haiti. This is the first mention of interaction between African Americans and Haitian immigrants. The US government did not intervene in Haitian affairs to help resolve the issues that lead to the violence, but merely to attempt to salvage its political and economic investments. Continuing on the theme of being concerned for the plight of

immigrants, the Chicago Defender reports both a concern for the wellbeing of Haitians residing in Haiti, but also a concern of their well-being once they have arrived on U.S. soil.

‘I’m also in favor of looking at our immigration status across the board and making sure that we provide equal opportunities for people from around the world,’ said Davis referring to people of African descent and Haiti. (Strausberg 2004)

The above passage reports an interest in navigating the integration of immigrants in the U.S. It is one of the few mentions of fairness towards refugees and immigrants and of the precautions that will be taken towards their well-being and equal integration. There is only one occurrence in the Chicago tribune where such approach is suggested:

A small but significant contribution by the U.S. would be to grant Temporary Protected Status to about 20,000 illegal Haitian immigrants in Florida, likely to be deported to a home country on the edge of collapse. Allowing them to stay and work here for 18 months would be a humanitarian gesture. And it would likely provide some financial relief. (Strausberg 2004)

Although this passage mentions an alternative approach, it does so with a reminder of the possible impending deportation of a large number of illegal immigrants. Extending help to immigrants is described as “humanitarian” and as a convenient approach to help Haitians in Haiti survive the violence and instability.

It is worthy to note that although the articles were published in Chicago, very few of them covered Haitian immigrants residing in the Chicagoland area. Instead, their focus was placed either on Haiti, on Haitians in the process of migrating, or on refugees/immigrants in Miami. More importantly, the reports of Haitian immigrants still refer to them in terms of illegality; “Many Haitians, who arrived illegally years ago on Florida’s beaches, still live in the neighborhood festooned with blue and red banners

celebrating 200 years of independence for the "first black republic in the world" (Franklin 2004). Their illegality undermines the historical significance of Haiti's independence. More poignant is the report by one of the Chicago Tribune articles that even Haitian-Americans are concerned with Haitians migrating to the United States: "Many Haitian-Americans and immigrant advocates fear the bloodletting in Haiti will lead to another exodus to Florida" (La Corte 2004). This passage does not explain the origin of this worry; it merely mentions it. It is not clear whether the Haitian-Americans are simply worried for the safety of their families, or if they have an issue with the the idea of the migration itself.

There was minimal report of the Haitian immigrants' activity in influencing, if at all, the strategies used by the US government towards Haiti. When there was mention of them, it was made clear that there was a form of union between Haitians and African Americans. The only instance where race was outwardly mentioned was in a Chicago Defender article where US citizens and activists protested for the lack of involvement of the US government into Haitian affairs. The main criticism made by immigrants and activists was a lack of timely intervention:

It smells of race, and it's not fair," said Jackson. "Today, there is a crisis in Haiti, and the U.S. has an obligation to intervene or stop the violence in Haiti," said Jackson, who was joined by several Haitian activists and African American leaders, including his chairman of the board, attorney Martin King. (Strausberg 2004)

This is the first suggestion that the portrayal of Haitians and of Haiti could be related to any kind of racial prejudice. In sharp contrast, the Chicago Tribune's articles report the price of US intervention and its necessity for the sake of Haitians because of their inability to survive without it. The idea of intervention for the protection of democracy is

more at the forefront in the Chicago Defender, than in the Chicago Tribune. Similarly, the Chicago Tribune did not report any criticism of the aid provide by the US. The Chicago Defender reports; "The Black community and around the world in this country should rise up in opposition to U.S. foreign policy, particularly in this instance" (Strausberg 2004). The nature of this statement was racialized as it specifically identifies that those who should protest should be people of color. In the same breath, the Chicago Defender indicates that the U.S. may possibly have a tendency to be more helpful with those who migrate from European countries. The racial language continues in ways that encourage an active union between African Americans and Haitians; a language that is inconsistent with the negative relationships that was documented by scholars presented in the literature. "I call on every African American congressman to hold up their vote until every possible accommodation is made for Haitian immigrants" is a clear call for unity based on race and suggests a specific union between African Americans and Haitian immigrants. This union will serve to accommodate the latter group and will require more funds than those already spent by the U.S. government. These articles displayed that African Americans have actually extended a helping hand to Haiti and have been very vocal against the ineffectiveness of Bush's strategies. This union is not displayed in the Chicago Tribune's articles nor is it displayed in works covered in my literature. More importantly, the Chicago defender was a lot more likely to report instances where the U.S. government was not tactful in their approach of dealing with immigrants. For example, the Chicago Defender reports that the U.S. and France have both intervened in ways that have crippled Haiti's economy and political stability. Although the majority of the coverage of Haitians in the Chicago Defender referred to the instability experienced

by Haitians and the Haitian government, the Chicago Defender was more likely to explain the historical reasons behind Haiti's inability to maintain political order as being to some extent, originated from U.S. intervention into Haitian affairs. Whenever American citizens are reported to intervene, the Chicago Tribune does not make any ethnic or racial distinction about those who volunteer to help immigrants. Articles in both newspapers do not report any form of interaction between the United States and Haiti where there was a discussion on the needs or desires of the latter, and how Haiti wanted to install or apply its democracy.

The two newspapers differ on two major points.

1. The Chicago Defender encourages the integration of Haitians into the American society and criticizes the U.S. actions towards Haitians immigrants and Haiti.
2. The Chicago Defender advertises for the union of African Americans and Haitian immigrants in order to guarantee a better way of life for both Haitian refugees and immigrants.

Both news sources portrayed the U.S. as having a much better functioning democracy than Haiti, and by default, the Chicago Tribune and The Chicago Defender present America as being superior. There are evident racial undertones behind the consequences of this negative representation, but I do not believe that racial discrimination is the sole explanation behind the representation and the inequality experienced by immigrants in relations to African Americans. If Haitians were painted in a more positive light, it would be interesting to see if those feelings of rejections and of oppression would be as strong, or present at all in both groups. This research project shows that corporate newspapers display a clear bias towards immigrants of color.

Implications

Media produces particular messages using certain frames that generate certain intergroup interactions. For example, one-time exposure to threatening images of minorities “activates intergroup anxiety, mediating the relationship between news exposure and intergroup attitudes” (Seate & Maestor 2015:2). Haitians suffer from the most acute stereotypes in areas such as Miami and New York where they have a relatively large population. Because the articles were published in Chicago, I expected that there would be little similarities with articles published in Miami or in New York. Consistent with stereotypical representations, Haitians were portrayed in ways that reinforce the idea of immigrants as a financial strain. Domke (2001) explains that the stereotypical nature of media coverage can have very detrimental effects on social relations for racial minorities; “Racial stereotypes are mentally available for most individuals by adulthood” and influence social interaction based on how readily accessible such stereotypes are (Domke 2001:775). Cues that are therefore transmitted via political relation or media relations can have very strong influences on relationships between different groups. Because of a predisposition to a familiar “schemata”, the listener or reader is more likely to accept notions that fit hand in hand with pre-established notions of minority groups. Therefore,, the schemata of the Haitian immigrant as violent and poor, may predispose African Americans to engage with hostility with the migrant group. More importantly, both news outlets alternatively referred to Haitians as both immigrants and refugees. Not making this distinction can bring readers to generalize that all Haitian immigrants are in the country illegally. Seate and Mastro (2015) explain, “Anxiety towards undocumented immigrants can be influenced by just a single news

exposure to group-based threat and further exacerbated by overall local news consumption” (Seate and Mastro 2015:14). If all immigrants are portrayed as violent and illegal, it greatly diminishes the likelihood of the migrants experiencing a smooth integration in their host society, especially since immigrants are forced to live in either immigrant neighborhoods or African American neighborhoods.

Walker (1999) documents the effect of media on first-year Haitians in the United States. He explains that new immigrants use ethnic media to adapt to their host society. Because of their limited linguistic skills, they refer to the news to mediate their adaptation. Unfortunately, native blacks are less likely to resort to ethnic news outlets and more likely to refer to newspapers such as the Chicago Tribune for news. They are thus more likely to use corporate news as a way to inform themselves about immigrants. Immigrants face a biased representation that emphasizes their state of vulnerability and poverty; “By choosing [to] link illegal immigration to drug cartels, violence, and crime, the media frames immigration as a threat to the safety and security of the American public” (Fryberg et al. 2011:98). The Chicago Tribune portrays Haitians as victims who will be a financial strain on the U.S. Although the Defender does the same, it advocates a compassionate treatment of immigrants. The limited exposure to media discourse that encourages an open arm response to immigrants may be the source of the friction that exists between African Americans and Haitians. The solution would thus be an increased exposure to news that is similar to those presented by the Chicago Defender would help guide African Americans and immigrants to a less hostile interaction.

Flore and Zephir explain that African Americans and New York and in Miami have held negative views of Haitians; and such opinions have become transparent in the

news coverage of Haitians in newspapers and media outlets. The argument is often made that immigrants are particularly seen as threat from blacks or whites located in the lower class; precisely because they are seen as a threat to resources. Following up on this argument, I chose to look into the differences that would exist between an African American owned newspaper and a corporate one to see whether this argument was consistent across newspapers. Because African Americans are arguably more threatened by the existence of an immigrant population, I expected to see more of a negative representation of Haitian immigrants in the Chicago Defender. The Chicago Tribune's representation was more likely to represent Haitian immigrants in a light that undermined Haiti's inability to retain balance and safety. Considering the fact that 2004 was one of the years where there was one of the years where Haitians migrated in mass to the US, in addition, to the negative representation, Haitian immigrants, as well as news stories covering Haiti, received little attention.

If the issue had been that immigration was threatening the fabric of American society, then there would be no observable discrepancies between the African American owned newspaper and the corporate one. Most importantly, if there were to be a distinction, one would expect that the African American owned newspaper to have lot harsher words towards Haiti and Haitian immigrants. Precisely because African Americans have been secluded from mainstream society and its resources, they would advocate against the integration of immigrants, into their communities already stricken with poverty, and violence. That was not the case; the Chicago Defender promoted an increase in investment towards helping immigrants integrate American society, which is vastly different from the sentiments displayed in Zephir, Woldmikael and Flore's work.

Unfortunately, the sample of newspapers that I have chosen were incredibly small and in no way do they confirm that African American owned newspaper tended to generally have kinder words towards Haitian immigrants.

In my analysis, I did not detect any suggestion towards minority friction. The only mention of interaction between social groups was in the article of the Chicago Defender that encouraged the union between African Americans and Haitian immigrants. The results from my research do not allow me to make an argument the racial nature of the representation of Haitian immigrants in the newspapers. It is difficult to identify whether the negative framing of Haitian immigrants because of the advertised inability of the Haitian government to retain a semblance of balance, or because it is particularly targeting immigrants of color. In order to answer this question, a study should be conducted on the difference between the reports of white immigrants coming from a country of renowned political unrest, with the representation of Haitian immigrants. In addition, the history of the country of origin of these white immigrants should be as similar as possible to the history of Haiti with the United States. Controlling for all of these variables, it will be easier to assess whether or not the issue is really about the failed democracy of the Haitian government, or whether it is about the failed democracy of a black republic. Zephir explains that both African Americans and Haitian immigrants reject each other specifically because of the negative representation of African Americans. It would be interesting to include in the analysis a view of Haitian newspapers and how they speak of African Americans in order to detect if there is a pattern of embracement or rejection of the minority group. The importance of this research stemmed from a belief that the representation of Haitians in the newspapers in

the Chicagoland area would be done with much less negativity and would have a different framing of Haitian immigrants. Coverage of Haiti only occurred when major political, environmental issues took place. I assumed that the presence of a small percent of immigrants in Chicago would yield a much more flattering representation of Haitians. However, written news in both the news sources were consistent with providing a representation that showed immigrants to be poor, violent, and a financial strain on the American government and the American people. Economically, and culturally, Haitians have established a certain level of dominance in Miami; this might help explain why Haitians could be perceived as a threat. However, in Chicago, Haitian immigrants and refugees constitute 11 percentage of the population- their presence is barely known beyond Evanston, sitting right outside of Chicago.

Domke et al (1999) explain that the presence of stereotypes fueled by media representation has a direct effect on the construction of attitudes towards whom the stereotypes are constructed. The attitudes towards Haitian immigrants are formed in connection to how this group is represented. The availability of the schemata created by mass media distribution of certain racial groups is a strong influence of those attitudes. Domke et al agree that if a specific framework is not pushed to the forefront, then such framework is less likely to affect the attitudes towards represented groups. Charles (1990), Campbell (1995), Waters (1999), Entman (1992), and Gamieson (1992) have demonstrated that racial interactions are highly influenced by media representations.

Benson (2006) argues that the involvement of black immigrant minorities with black Americans starts with both groups and their racial consciousness and how they identify to each other. If African Americans follow the schemas generated by media

outlets, they will most likely reject the arriving Haitians, whom, for the majority, are just like them, black. Such rejection will discourage Haitians can discourage Haitians from having the same racial consciousness as African Americans, thus leading them to dissociate themselves with the latter. This creates the friction documented in the literature on discord between these two minority groups. Haitians are associated with being “boat people”, as well as being members of the working class. In an effort to avoid further negative representation, Haitian immigrants do their best to not associate with African Americans; “[they] see black Americans as having little to offer to them” (Doucet 2014). The origin of this rejection is multifaceted. Chierici and Zephir identify this rejection as a reaction to how African Americans mistreat Haitian immigrants. Documenting the interaction of the two groups in New York, and in Miami, Haitian immigrants have reported being referred to as as having “HBO (Haitian Body Odor), having AIDS and being boat people” (Chierici 2000:51). It is important to note that the previous imageries are very dominant in popular media when referencing to Haitian immigrants and refugees. As one of Zephir’s informant shares, “I experience discrimination in the United States, it is on the part of the very people who have been discriminated against” (Zephir 1996:85). The negative imagery of Haitian immigrants provides schemata to African Americans that leads them to being discriminatory towards Haitian immigrants.

My research explains that such schemata is also present in the Chicago Defender. Although not as aggressive in their affirmation of the inferiority of this migrant group, they nonetheless convey the general understanding that Haitians need help and that it is the duty of the United States to deliver. Consistent with the literature, the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Defender both presented Haitians as being poor, incapable, and

as heavily relying on the American government for stability and peace (Edwards and Cromwell 2006). Haiti's identity is wrapped in mass media, as well as in other forms of representation such as books, films, and travelogues that help reinforce the stereotypes that exist on Haitians.

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VITA

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