RESPONDING TO HAITI'S SHAKY FOUNDATIONS:
EXAMINING CAPITAL RELOCATION IN THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Scientists have proposed that Haiti should relocate its capital to avoid another catastrophic earthquake in Port-au-Prince, projected to happen in about thirty years. Haiti still suffers the effects of colonialism in the socio-economic structures throughout society as well as political tribulations, originating from its early beginnings as a post-colonial state; these factors greatly contributed to the high fatality from the January 12th earthquake. This thesis will investigate whether relocating a capital could alleviate the flaws from its colonial heritage and foster initiatives to bring about equality and improvements in the social, political, and ecological atmospheres as Haiti enters the post-quake reconstruction process. The comparative study of two capital relocations in Tanzania and Kazakhstan will generate several analytical observations from their complicated experiences in order to gather projections on the proposed Haitian relocation. In addition, these projections will formulate some recommendations to mitigate the blunders from global relocations and promote a better outcome for Haiti.

This thesis asserts the following (a) that relocation must address multiple pressing concerns beyond the quake factor; (b) that relocation must provide the dual service of furnishing a better new capital and not abandoning the former capital; (c) that relocation must be accompanied with complementary measures and initiatives (i.e.: decentralization, anticorruption laws, early warning/prevention systems) in changing the socio-economic
and political structures in society; and (d) that these measures must be implemented as part of the reconstruction process, regardless if capital relocation occurs. In the pursuit of fostering the elements of the Haitian motto (liberty, equality, and fraternity), the real reconstruction is not restricted to a capital but to an entire nation.
PREFACE

Shock, disbelief, misery and hopelessness: these are just a few words to describe what many Haitians felt on January 12th 2010 as a 7.0 scale earthquake shook Port-au-Prince and Haiti’s southern region. The aftermath resulted in apartments and buildings completely pan-caked flat, people trapped in cramped, dark spaces for hours under burning heat, and widespread grief and agony as people lost their loved-ones, homes, and more. The sheer magnitude of the quake combined with the substandard infrastructural composite of the city accounted for the vast number of casualties, catastrophic amounts of damages and an astronomical death toll of more than 230,000 people. The media coverage of numerous flights landing in Port-au-Prince was surely phenomenal, but the distribution of relief aids was awfully upsetting, especially to those in the south and west regions of Port-au-Prince where the damage was more severe, amidst some logistical and transporting problems.

The shock hit hard physically and emotionally for an island that hasn’t experienced an earthquake for hundreds of years, but this ill-stricken island is sadly no stranger to misery on a constant daily level. While this event stands as Haiti’s worst in history, the psychological trauma rouse more uncertainty towards the future of Haiti as victims fear what is next to be unleashed by Mother Nature’s fury.

Shock, disbelief, misery and hopelessness: those same words used to describe the earthquake’s aftermath can similarly be used to illustrate the pre-existing socio-ecological and environmental conditions of Haiti, particularly seen in Port-au-Prince. There is no question that a huge chunk of the blame in this calamity rests in the poor infrastructure
and unreinforced building construction. Yet, the cause of this flawed ecological environment in the capital, and the rest of Haiti, stem from socio-political factors originating from Haiti’s colonial age and the beginnings of its independence period. Reconstruction after a disaster therefore is solely not an effort of physical rebuilding with reinforced and earthquake-proof materials; the true lasting reconstruction is a matter of nation rebuilding which changes attitudes, preconceptions, and practices inherited from the colonial past. In transforming the societal culture and interaction for the pursuit of a sustainable state that upholds the Haitian motto of equality, liberty, and fraternity while creating a safehold for the government apparatus, can capital relocation offer the solution?
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEDICATION

To all my fellow Haitians and every individual rebuilding their lives after chaos and searching for real
“Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality” in the aftermath
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INTRODUCTION

Having struggled through slavery and oppression, imperialist dominance, and multitudes of political insurrections, Haiti was rocked by a violent force from the 2010 earthquake that took the lives of more than two hundred thousand people, leaving many Haitians in fear of what more deadly rounds might be lurking round the corner. Human error and the failure to breakdown hard-old habits, produced from colonialism and its troubled post-colonial beginnings, have greatly contributed to the high toll of human fatalities from the earthquake. Haitians have much to worry about since there are projections of another catastrophic earthquake in the horizon. As a result, scientists have suggested relocating the capital away from the seismic fault. Through the countless episodes of misery, worry, and suffering in Haiti, it is essential to ask what steps are being taken to build lasting recovery and resilience from both natural and human causes, and whether capital relocation is a reasonable and effective response. Can capital relocation serve multi-functional roles during the reconstruction period? Also, are there any necessary actions to accompany this procedure for this repeatedly ill-stricken nation?

This paper investigates whether relocation can help Haiti effectively break away with its destructive remnants of colonialism, concentrated in the epicenter of PAP, as well as prepare the nation for the anticipated future seismic event. As an impoverished country with a centralized core, the remedies to produce a safer environment for a capital involve serious readjustments of historic systematic patterns and practices that have led to the urban decay and vulnerability of the capital. As Haiti enters the period of reconstruction, this thesis seeks to explore the utilities of relocation to address significant
issues beyond the quake factor. While analyzing some of the benefits, the arguments surrounding relocation will also address the limitations and blunders witnessed from the relocation experiences of Tanzania and Kazakhstan, therefore allowing this paper to find solutions to mitigate some of these challenges through a comparative case study approach.

In this introduction, the significance of capital relocation will be examined by first detailing the general importance of the capital cities, their elevation as premier urban centers, and their vital relationship to the rest of the nation. Then, the analysis will shift to the applications of capital relocation in addressing serious pressing socio-political, ecological, and economic concerns within the state, including responding to the aftermath of an urban disaster. Lastly, the overall structure of the thesis will be outlined.

**Importance of Capitals and Its Relationship to the Nation**

The bond between a political capital and the nation can be compared to a parent-child relationship. Like a responsible parent, the capital provides its child, the nation, with materials and resources it needs to survive; it regulates its behavior, monitors its activities and progress, and supports its functioning to create a stable, healthy and productive state. In turn, the nation looks to the capital for guidance, assistance with its affairs, and, of course, money. When a state as a whole “misbehaves,” often it is the capital which is blamed, citing bad-parenting practices. Conversely, the capital swells up with pride and receives great recognition and praise if its “child” excels. Since the duties within the capital are vital to the survival and prosperity of the state and people, the efficiency of the capital reflects on the condition of the state.
In addition to being responsible for the state’s condition, the capital serves as an expression of the nation’s ideology, symbols, challenges, triumphs, and achievements; it symbolizes the nation’s grandeur and authority by visual and non-visual means. The physical representations, by way of buildings, monuments, statues, art, and sculptures within the capital, provide the setting to captivate and impress the public and simultaneously demonstrate the power and legitimacy of the state. While some capitals are at the peak of sophistication with awe-inspiring culture, technology, arts, and architecture, other capitals are trying to compete with many contemporary global cities to be more visually stimulating and attractive since more advanced technologies and architecture are being used in the urban landscape design.¹

Although the most impressive cities and metropolises are not capitals, many capitals still try to advance their physical makeup to look more modern, as in Tokyo and Brasilia. But there is a risk involved in looking more modern, making the task more difficult: “it is unclear which physical elements can communicate ‘national identity’ even if that becomes an accepted goal, or how. Such attempts may actually conflict with the settings currently required… [Still] city planning and even architectural design involve innumerable negotiations and compromises.”² At times, some traditional and unique national symbols may be lost in the capital when upgrading the city’s appearance, but preservation, by way of historic landmarks or museums, has tried to conserve these


² Ibid., 58.
symbols. Nonetheless, all capitals communicate their national identity or shared value or belief, such as democracy or religion, and they often have symbolic dominance and authority over other cities within the state.

Capital cities typically rose to power by winning the competition of resources and power over other urban centers. Amos Rapoport explains that capitals climbed to “the top of the given hierarchy [becoming] the centre of centers. They organize and control larger territories, with more centralization and control, with more authority and more redistribution of resources.”³ By gaining more control, the capital, with its government, took primary responsibility for the functioning and prosperity of the state. With more authority, the capital also drew attention and people; Jean Gottmann further describes the capital:

The city that is a political capital has always attracted special attention. The capital is by definition a seat of power and a place of decision-making processes that affect the lives and future of the nation ruled, and that may influence trends and events beyond its borders. Capitals differ from cities: the capital function secures strong and lasting centrality; it calls for a special hosting environment to provide what is required for the safe and efficient performance of the functions of government and decision making characteristic of the place. ⁴

On a global standpoint, the rise in urban population is not limited solely to capitals, even with their elevation in political and economic power. Hernando de Soto explains the reason of this urban growth specifically for underdeveloped countries:

Before 1950, most Third World countries were agricultural societies organized in ways that would have made an eighteenth-century European feel right at home. Most people worked on the land, which was owned by a very few big landlords, some of them

³ Ibid., 32.

indigenous oligarchs, others colonial planters. Cities were small and functioned as markets and ports rather than industrial centers; they were dominated by tiny mercantile elites who protected their interests with thick wrappings of rules and regulations.

After 1950, there began in the Third World an economic revolutions similar to the social and economic disruptions in Europe in 1800. New machines were reducing the demand for rural labor just as new medicines and public-health methods were cutting the rate of infant mortality and extending life spans. Soon hundreds of thousands of people were trundling down the newly built highways to the cities so alluring described in the new radio programs.5

The shift from agricultural societies to more urbane spheres has produced mounting pressures in many developing and underdeveloped nations since the burden of urban growth correlates with problems of uncontrolled population growth and overcrowding, ineffective centralization measures, and unbalanced urban space allotments where resources are not fairly distributed. For some Third World countries like Haiti, the agricultural sector has gravely deteriorated with limited to no improvements since the focus turns to industries in the urban centers; therefore centralized capitals, in their competition for more attention and opportunities, attract the rural gentry, resulting in an unequal scale of production between rural and urban sectors. In many instances, destabilized and impoverished nations also carry additional problems of corruption and mismanagement in their government system, causing deep socio-economic and political conflicts within the state.

As a result of the capitals’ popularity as a supreme urban center, escalated urban growth has fueled center-periphery geographical conflicts. The regional fight for power and control within the state also entail the same battle for capitals to grab more political

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and economic gains over their peripheral territories. As the relationship with central and periphery areas continue to compete for political power, wealth, and resources, some nation-states suffer in maintaining control over social, economic, political, and ecological functions. Still, while global urban growth increases, the complex nature and features of capitals have continued to change over time.

Throughout history, different types of capitals have been generated, thereby confirming the notion that capitals are not created equal, according to Peter Hall who details six different types of capital cities.\(^6\) Whether serving as a political outlet, an economic powerhouse, or a cultural metropolis, the roles of capital cities have changed, and the capitals’ population density and size do not have to be the largest in the state, since cities like Houston and Los Angeles have larger metropolitan areas and populations than the U.S. capital of Washington, D.C. Some capitals do not hold the seat of government as in the case of Amsterdam or may house a section of the government as in Dodoma. On the other hand, nations like South Africa carry three different types of capitals: Pretoria (executive), Bloemfontein (judicial), and legislative (Cape Town). Super-capitals, global cities that rose to the high rank of international importance, house important global organizations such as New York’s headquarters of the United Nations. Still, many capitals are multi-functional, taking on many national functions to a degree of

organized performance, which works to promote political, commercial, and cultural efficiency in most cases.\textsuperscript{7}

No matter the type of capital, an essential component of capitals is geographic location and access, which can greatly affect the functioning of the state. Whether seaside or centrally located, the decision to locate the capital depends on political, military, economic, and cultural factors. Furthermore the location of the capital can also be determined by whether the state is under colonial influence or independent control. Traditionally, close access to the port was beneficial in not only importing/exporting activities but also in foreign policy negotiations, defense, and information retrieval and transmission; many colonial capitals were designed for these purposes.\textsuperscript{8} Author Edward Schatz argues that many colonial, waterside capitals served the interest of seafaring colonizers and their businesses; thus, centrally located, or relocated, capitals emerged as a response of independent nations to decolonize and provide equitable access in the interest of the citizens.\textsuperscript{9}

Even as some capitals have gravitated to the central portion of the state, accessibility to the capital can still be problematic for the inhabitants of the state, which may not come easy to all. In connecting to people and its government, access to the capital ensures that both parties are informed and kept current on the affairs of the state. But in some cases, such interactions were limited, for example as the Forbidden City in

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 69-70.

\textsuperscript{8} Gottman, “Capital Cities,” 89.

Beijing, where one needed special governmental permission to enter the premises. If access restriction wasn’t a matter of government paperwork, access to capitals signified preferential treatment to some over others simply based on its geographic location and/or resulted in ineffective roadway connection systems – a symptom of poor countries with centralized governments.

In the age of advanced technology in transportation systems (airplanes, high speed trains, etc.) and in communication (satellites, cell phones, computers, etc), coastal proximity no longer is the determining factor of a capital’s location as it was once. Likewise in a military perspective, as the defense industry modernized, capitals were no longer locked in by the seaside, where once the navy and marine guards posed as the highest defense for a nation like Britain. But, the development of long range missiles, jets, and rockets enable capitals to be more inland. Although modern technological advances were thought to improve access between the government and citizenry, regardless of the geographical location of the capital, poor countries with weak infrastructure and ineffective management systems have challenged that notion.

Many capital relocations have been used and attempted as a way to implement progress, to establish better accessibility or protection, to providing better service to the citizens, to modernize its appearance, to establish better infrastructure, to engage in nation-building efforts, or to stimulate economic growth. In fact, capital relocations often have responded to changes within states, whether a transition of a leader or regime or natural/human disturbances in physical environment. Relocations can even display the temperament of an authoritarian leader since a number of global relocations have
occurred primarily to satisfy the preference of dictatorial leaders. Yet, an important step in the early planning of the relocation process is to determine what classification this new capital will fall under, either as political (Washington D.C.), cultural (Rio de Janeiro), judicial (Bloemfontein), commercial (Dar es Salaam), or multi-functional (London or Paris). In addition, the intent of relocation should supply significant reasons for the transitioning of the head city to address serious pressing concerns.

**Why Capital Relocations Do or Don’t Occur**

Although transitioning the capital is perceived to achieve some national purpose, some capital relocations have been triggered just by the whims of authoritarian leaders, often to bring the capital closer to kinship or to their homeland. However, relocation under this selfish condition is not advisable for nations attempting to manufacture democratic, social equality or nation-building pursuits; and fortunately, there have been such relocations to administer those means within their state. Unfortunately, capital relocations do run the risk of creating counterproductive effects when trying to accomplish nation-centered objectives.

Popular nationalistic purposes for relocation include addressing the (d)establishment of ideological or socio-political regimes, marking the end of colonial rule, and harmonizing warring parties in a process geographer Jean Gottmann has termed “hinge.” During times of change in the political arena, the state or leader must respond to and alleviate the outburst of tensions and conflicts among the populace that inevitably emerge from these transitioning events. Therefore, the head(s) of state attempt to establish an orderly state by utilizing relocation to form a new capital to “hinge” together
people. Thereby, the capital acts as a unifier to encourage social cohesiveness and harmony in pluralistic societies by connecting differing groups or cultures and/or consolidating opposing ideologies. For example, the capital of Washington D.C. served as a geopolitical “hinge” between the North and the South of the United States.\textsuperscript{10} This “hinging” tactic attempts to set the new capital as a fresh environment to incorporate diverse socio-economic, cultural and political groups. This will be further explored in the case of Kazakhstan in chapter two.

With respect to the proposed roles of relocation, two approaches are uniquely portrayed by Edward Schatz, author of “What Capitals Say about State and Nation Building.” Schatz utilizes a carrot and sticks analogy in explaining the dual functions that capital relocation can play:

First [as a carrot], by bringing the apparatus of the state to a new region, new economic and political opportunities accrue. The region benefits from increased investment and access to political power. Employment levels climb. Regional political actors rise from obscurity to prominence. The economic, political, and physical security of the region may increase. Regional publics stand to benefit, as well, as they become the recipients of better services and come to identify more strongly with the national identity that the elite pretends to represent…

Capital relocation can also be a stick. A restive region, and particularly one dominated by minority ethnic populations, presents the central government with the prospect of ungovernability or separatism. Moved to such a territory, the new capital brings with it the state’s coercive apparatus and greater ability to exercise control. In addition, it brings novel demographic pressures, particularly migration from the old capital’s region to the region of the new one. If the elite’s cultural group is underrepresented in the region targeted for a capital move, this can powerfully change that region’s political demography.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10} This paragraph takes accounts from Gottmann, "Capital Cities," 89.

\textsuperscript{11} Schatz, "Capital Cities Say," 121-122.
By demonstrating Schatz’s first illustration in one of the case studies, Tanzania’s carrot-inducing relocation was an effort to bring much attention and resources to the hinterlands that would have not only improved the access between citizens and government but also elevated the status of the rural plains as well as the people who live on them. Consequentially, such tactics can produce fear from hardliners who stand to lose something, specifically from elites of former capitals who view such a move as a threat to their prestige, status and livelihood.

In portraying the analogy in the other case study focused on Kazakhstan, the proverbial stick carried by Kazakhstan’s president Nazarbayev ushered in a strategy for executing control under a new Kazakh umbrella while setting a middle-playing ground to minimize social discomforts and uplift a cultural group long oppressed by colonizers. Still, similar to the carrot scenario, significant challenges in Kazakhstan’s nation building are generated as the transition in the power dynamics on the socio-economic and political scale benefits one party over the other.

As there are many purposes behind the transfer of the capital, there may be more reasons why they fail. It is often the case that hurdles along in the process, like the ones previously mentioned regarding resistance from certain parties, may draw the plans off course. There is no doubt that financial availability is often to blame for stalled implementation and engineering of the relocation. In fact, costs, location, and willingness are variables needed to complete any relocation, big or small (if there’s such a thing as a small relocation). Thus, when one variable is missing, the process is very likely to be delayed or blocked.
But even when the endeavor has brought the completion of a newly situated, well-established capital, the former capital may often remain the favorite as major socio-economic and political activities still engross the area. Therefore, some capital transfers are only of a titular nature, leaving the new capital without the main instrument of government and its accessories. Financial obstacles and resistance from political and economic elites may challenge the development of the new capital, even when the new capital is established to alleviate some burdens from the old capital, as seen in Tanzania. And until the new capital can properly become an efficient and dynamic asset to society, significant existing problems within the old capital may well flourish and intensify, further debilitating the nation as a whole. But what happens in the event that the capital is stricken by a serious and abrupt situation?

**When Disaster Strikes**

Beyond the recommendation to respond to changes in the political, social, economic, and cultural layout within the state, relocations are also implemented to provide a solution to new pressing concerns, especially those of major urgency. When a capital is faced with destruction, the immediate response should be to restore the governments and auxiliary institutions (considering that the capital holds the seat of government) as quickly as possible to maintain order in the state. Therefore, solutions for reconstruction and recovery may include a plan for capital relocation. But first, it is important to understand what constitutes a disaster that can potentially trigger relocation as a response.

According to Vale and Campanella, the magnitude of an urban disaster is determined by four categories: (1) the scale of the affected area, whether being a small
district or a large city; (2) the human toll factor, which includes the number of deaths, injured, and displaced; (3) the cause of disaster, whether willed by uncontrollable natural force or human action; (4) the economic result influenced by migration shifts and population flight, infrastructure collapse, and investment and business crises.\textsuperscript{12} Floods, volcanoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, fire, bombs, disease, and warfare are some of the major culprits known to leave some cities in a range of misfortune from moderate structural damage with mild death rates to utter ruin with catastrophic death tolls.

Needless to say, the Haitian earthquake was greatly affected along these criteria, making it not only the worst natural disaster in Haitian history but also highlighting the many pre-existing problems that need to be addressed during the reconstruction period.

In light of the recent quakes in the Indian Ocean, Japan, Haiti, Australia, and elsewhere, there is a global risk of seismic disasters, as the world population increases and urban areas swell. Scientists have calculated that a range of densely-populated global cities tend to lie on seismic areas:

At a global level the distribution of the world’s largest cities, supercities and megacities, shows an unexpected preference for plate boundary settings where strain rates are high. More than 55\% of supercities are located within 200km of a plate boundary. A supercity is defined by the UN population statistics division as a city with a population exceeding 2 million. Almost two dozen of these cities now host populations exceeding 8 million, the UN qualifier for megacity status… Of these, 80\% (232 million people) were forecast to live in the developing nations. In 2005, 79 supercities can be identified in seismically vulnerable settings with a total population of 472 million. About 68\% of these populations are found in the developing nations, 81\% of which are found the southern

edge of the Eurasian plate. The total number of supercity-dwellers at risk in the cities of the developing nations is 272 million.\(^{13}\)

Although the earth’s population substantially increases, the frequency of earthquakes has remained relatively the same based on historical records; the major caution, scientists warn, is the lack of proper earthquake-resistant structures, specifically in developing (and under-developed) nations where ignorance and corruptive practices fail to satisfy the standard.\(^{14}\) Other than earthquake risks, general accommodation and safety concerns arise amidst the changes in climate and global temperature, socio-political events, decline of rural activities, economic downturn, etc.

Once disaster hits, the city ultimately has to choose from two fates, a choice between life and death. The volatile nature of the world often exerts calamities that are nature-born or man-made in which entire cities can be destroyed, ultimately defining the future of those cities for better or worse. “Lost cities,” such as Pompeii, serve as a testament of the sheer force and violence of these disasters, preserved as a remembrance or tourist site. Contrarily, like the legend of the phoenix, others cities are born out of their ashes, say Chicago or London. Therefore, the aim for reconstruction is to build a durable and more resilient city. This often does occur in an economically developed and politically stable nation-state; however, poor countries may not be resourcefully able to produce a better city.


\(^{14}\) Ibid., 34.
Avoiding urban disasters is a massive initiative that requires the involvement of authoritative agents, technical expertise, and cooperation from multiple parties. The least that can be achieved is to somewhat “soften the blow” in the expectation of the threat of some form of “act of God” or human fury. Even with the most prepared and resourceful cities, unexpected outcomes from disasters can arise, as seen in Japan’s 2011 earthquake. In the modern age of advanced technology, communication, and science, early detection and prevention systems can help warn of upcoming dangers, permitting, at times, a chance to prepare and brace for the worst ahead (depending on how effective the authorities communicate to the public). But, this may not be sufficient in some instances.

In an act to mitigate future catastrophes and avoid seismic disasters, some countries have turned to capital relocation, or at least considered it. Guatemala was struck by a series of major earthquakes, which resulted in relocating the capital twice before finally settling in Guatemala City in 1773.\(^1\) The Iranian government was also considering relocating the capital of Tehran, which lies on at least 100 fault lines, to prevent a future catastrophe.\(^2\) As many forms of natural events create conditions to test the resiliency of the capital, or other major cities, government or state leader(s) must find ways to prepare their state to withstand, or at least survive, these extreme disturbances, thereby giving them the final say in relocation proceedings.

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Structure of Paper

In examining capital relocation in Haiti’s post-quake, reconstructive period, serious considerations must be weighed, if this procedure is ever to be finally decided and implemented by Haitian authorities. As a response to the scientists’ suggestion for capital relocation, this thesis will explore the issues surrounding the relocation of Haiti’s capital and the impact relocation would have on the Haitian people and state. Amidst the challenges observed from global relocations (specifically Tanzania and Kazakhstan), the thesis will also attempt to provide recommendations and solutions to implementing this endeavor, in order to help accomplish set objectives and lessen the chances of disruptions and failures. The structure of this paper is as follows:

Chapter 1 will discuss numerous socio-economic and political problems beyond the construction hazards of Port-au-Prince that have debilitated the ecological environment, contributing greatly to the disastrous outcome of the earthquake. These socio-economic and political issues (i.e. uneven distribution of resources, urban space problems, the three-tiered class system and racial oppression, corruption, political clientele networks, political insurrections, and coups) occurring in the capital, affecting the rest of the country, are deeply rooted in Haiti’s colonial rule under the French and its troubled post-colonial beginnings as a free black nation. In conjunction, the discussion of the uneven development in the capital will cite the work of David Harvey to explain the historical and current socio-political exploits and mechanisms that discourage the fair distribution of wealth and resources among different communities. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the deteriorated ecology and poor infrastructure in PAP, which are
affected by significant national problems outside PAP, such as deforestation and agricultural decay. The purpose of this chapter is to explain that the multitude of socio-economic and political problems, which have negatively affected PAP, must be addressed and corrected before a new capital is built.

Chapter 2 will examine the case studies of Tanzania and Kazakhstan to demonstrate the multi-functions of capital relocations, thereby generating some key analytical tools in observing the challenges and benefits of their experiences. The purposes behind both their relocations aimed to set their country on a different course for their newly independent statehood. However, as will be shown, such relocation efforts still have their drawbacks.

Chapter 3 will utilize the analytical tools drawn from the comparative studies and apply them to Haiti’s current situation, in order to weigh possible positive and negative effects. By explaining the various functions of relocation, the intentions behind both case studies’ relocations offer solutions that can be worth implementing in Haiti. Based on their experiences and outcomes, precautionary concerns arise in the manner of relocating capitals. This thesis does not seek to offer a resolute “yes” or “no” to the proposed attempt. Instead, this section explores the consequences to the relocation proposal in Haiti and develops strategies to mitigate the relocation blunders, as observed from the case studies, and to increase the chances of relocation success.

Chapter 4 will offer some recommended reconstruction initiatives for Haiti, which includes defining the role of capital relocation during Haiti’s rebuilding period. Specifically, this chapter will examine relocation’s responsibility towards the new and
old capitals, which incorporates a proposal for another host site in Haiti that is different from the scientists’ recommendations of St. Marc or Marchand-Dessalines. I also stress the importance of not abandoning old capitals by using the case of Haiti’s former capital of Cap-Haitien. Moreover, reconstruction in Haiti must incorporate essential measures on a national scope, focusing on mental recovery, decentralization, anticorruption efforts, disaster preparation, and human resources. These initiatives should be complemented along with a capital relocation effort; they are required for the development of the nation as a whole.

During the reconstructive phase for Haiti, this thesis asserts four important claims pertaining to relocation. First, relocation should attempt to address the ecological/environmental risks regarding safe housing and infrastructure while also tackling the socio-political and economic issues that feed into the deterioration of the capital and nation. Second, because Haiti has multi-faceted foundational problems beyond the quake risk, the process of relocation must include additional reconstructive measures to improve the entire nation-state including its governmental system and socio-economic culture. Third, capital relocation requires fulfilling the needs of both the new and former capitals in which both places are vital to the functioning of the other and to the entire nation-state. Lastly, the complementary measures that were to accompany the capital relocation program must still be implemented as part of the reconstruction process, regardless if capital relocation occurs.
CHAPTER 1
SHAKY CAPITAL, FATAL FOUNDATIONS

Scientists have proposed a capital relocation to avoid another earthquake occurrence in the capital; however the matter is much more complicated than simply moving from a seismic area to a quake-safe zone. The once colonial metropole turned national capital of Port-au-Prince is at the forefront of controversy as talks circulate whether PAP is safe enough to rebuild or should a new capital be built elsewhere. As the following news article illustrates, the pursuit for relocation requires considerable analysis:

Haiti’s official seismologist [Claude Prépetit], who predicted the recent earthquake, has warned that an even stronger one is likely to hit Port-au-Prince within the next 20 years. Now the Haitian government is debating how and if the capital should be rebuilt - or if it should be moved elsewhere…At some point, the government and the parliament will have to decide whether to stay in Port-au-Prince. ‘We must consider the pros and cons,’ says the minister [Jacques Gabriel, minister of public works, transportation, and communication]…Is it even possible to simply abandon a capital?¹

As a response to the scientists’ proposal, this chapter will begin to explain the reasons why relocations must tackle a multitude of objectives by exploring the underlying foundational problems, rooted in the French colonial period and the early years of Haiti’s independence, which contributed to making the January 12th earthquake Haiti’s most deadly event. The symptoms of colonialism via socio-economic and political issues continue to permeate this post-colonial state by severely debilitating the capital’s ecological and environmental conditions – factors that cost the lives of thousands during

the quake. However, the many causes of the capital’s ecological degradation, social inequalities, uneven accumulation and distribution of wealth and resources, and other existing problems must all be addressed before any attempts for relocation and rebuilding can occur, so as not to replicate the same problems in a “new” capital.

The structural format for this chapter will first detail the historical significance of the Haitian capital and explore the mechanisms and conditions within the capital that have caused the lingering instability in Haiti, which also contributed to the quake disaster. This chapter begins with a discussion of the earthquake’s immediate aftermath and the scientific projections of future violent quakes targeting PAP. Then, a study of the socio-political patterns from the French colonial period and early stages of post-colonial statehood will be explained to understand their effects on contemporary socio-economic and political affairs. Finally, some concepts from prominent social theorist David Harvey will be utilized in the discussion of Haiti’s uneven development in which the uneven distribution of wealth and resources within the capital produces vast imbalances and inequalities among communities in PAP and outside the city; an evaluation of the ecological and environmental conditions of the capital will also be included.

**The Earthquake Impact**

If the earthquake served as the first shock to Haitians, the second major shock came in the form of how ill-prepared and inefficient the state was to respond to a disaster as this. In Port-au-Prince, the National Palace and several government buildings were destroyed, leaving the president and his administration to take refuge in a surviving police building. Lacking sophisticated tools and heavy-duty equipment, civilians had to use anything (shovels, machetes, and their bare hands) to dig people out of the rubble.
Several days had passed before President Rene Préval addressed the nation. The government’s lack of coordination and outlining protocols to guide and instruct the citizens and aid workers during the crisis provoked strong, severe sentiments by the public to the government’s inability to serve its citizens. Because the earthquake crippled the centralized capital of Port-au-Prince, the entire country was affected as people scrambled, at first, to flee the capital to other cities and towns, also ill-prepared to handle the flood of capital refugees, only to return back to PAP for the massive distribution of aid.

As troops of international help flowed into Port-au-Prince, problems mounted with the rescue efforts. The nightmare at the airport involved issues with space and access since damaged Toussaint Louverture airport in PAP, with only one runway, having no air traffic controller at the time, was the only Haitian airport able to accept big aircrafts, and even that wasn’t enough; Santo Domingo airport had to be utilized to take in some of the aero-burden. Roads were blocked by debris, and smaller roads on hilly terrain could not support bigger trucks and vehicles. As a result, the southern regions of Haiti that were closer to the earthquake’s epicenter, such as hardest-hit Léogâne, remained beleaguered for days before help arrived.

With the help of the international community, this event could have turned more tragic if it weren’t for the global contributions of emergency personnel, medical and food supplies, heavy-duty equipment, and flood lights that aided in rescuing trapped people. Even with the delays in emergency and humanitarian deliveries, Haiti was completely helpless without the world-wide response. As numerous, miraculous stories of rescued victims trapped two weeks to a month emerged, the resilience and faith of the Haitian
people, which they’ve conjured on a daily basis to endure the hardships of life experienced before the quake, without a doubt kept them alive during this catastrophe.

Unfortunately, a large part of this disaster could have been prevented since the most contributing factor is based on human error, and possibly human indifference. Haitian officials were informed of the threat two years prior to the quake by scientists.\(^2\) Whether by indifference or the incapability to prepare since being burdened by several hurricanes in 2008, the Haitian populace was not informed of the seismic threat; albeit, many might have found the prediction preposterous – ‘Haiti is prone to hurricanes, not quakes’ would have likely been their reaction. And yes, the occurrence and the magnitude of devastation from the quake took Haitians and the whole world by surprise. Therefore, the remedy for a nation shaken by an earthquake and devastated by man-made perils alike is to seek to correct human mistakes.

**Quake vulnerability**

Regardless of the excuses (even though some warning should have been transmitted to the public), Haiti’s prior existing housing problems, specifically the flawed construction practices and lack of regulation, were blamed as the major cause of the quake disaster. The lack of building codes, restrictions, regulations, and inspectors all contributed to the flawed housing system that resulted in the collapse of hundreds of buildings, houses, and emergency service centers, such as hospitals and police stations, during the earthquake.

Urban theorist Mike Davis wisely comments that “‘[f]ragility’ is simply a synonym for systematic government neglect of environment safety, often in the face of foreign financial pressures.”\(^3\) Because of the government’s inaction to regulate housing structures, the high numbers of death tolls from earthquakes within Third World regions are attributed to the vulnerability of the housing, according to geologist Dr. Martin Degg; inadequate and hurried construction and overcrowding create a breeding ground for disaster.\(^4\) As the most populated city in Haiti, PAP is fully occupied with shantytowns, squatter tenements, and other unregulated building constructed from unreinforced masonry, cement blocks, and betons armées (iron rods), instead of steel planks. As rural to urban migration increased due to the rise of deforestation, leading to reduced amounts of arable land, the numbers of inadequate housing in the city also rose.

This “urban vulnerability”, as Dr. Degg calls it, is influenced by three important factors within society: 1) the accessibility factor consisting of the ease to which people can escape injury and the speed and effectiveness of the emergency response teams can reach the affected area; 2) the construction type and height factor influenced by the type of building materials and the “political, social, and economic mechanisms which impel people to live in such condition;”\(^5\) 3) the infrastructural factor pertaining to the importance of public buildings and emergency services (i.e.: the need for hospitals, fire

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\(^3\) Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 125.


\(^5\) Ibid., 37.
and police stations including adequate personnel) and the necessity of water, gas, electricity, telecommunication and other life-saving equipment.\(^6\)

Port-au-Prince successively failed on all three factors before and after the quake. First, the non-existing procedures to regulating building construction stood as the foundation of the disaster. Second, the poor infrastructure that struggled to provide basic human need for water, electricity, and other needs had long been deteriorating before the quake, greatly complicating the emergency relief efforts. In addition, many of the emergency centers, hospitals, schools, and police stations, were destroyed during the quake because of the structural tendency of using the same unreinforced building materials; however, these institutions were not conceived to withstand earthquakes. Lastly, the access to emergency vehicles, life-saving equipment, and personnel was challenging. The blockage of debris and fallen materials on roads and seaports caused a major setback to rescue efforts. Even prior to the earthquake, some long depilated roads and the hilly terrain made driving a risky and dangerous affair, especially under rainy weather conditions. Surely, PAP and its environs would not have been able to withstand an earthquake of a smaller magnitude.

**Projections for future quakes**

With the capital already in utter ruin, Port-au-Prince still must expect a more harmful earthquake in the future. While tremors continued months after the original January earthquake, scientists predict yet another major earthquake to hit in about twenty to thirty years. According to some geologists, the quake epicenter hit the city of Léogâne

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\(^6\) This entire paragraph accounts the work from Degg, “Perspectives on Urban Vulnerability,” 35-45.
which is 20 miles west of the capital, resulting in the rupture of half of the Enriquillo fault-line segment, while the other half of that segment, lying closer to Port-au-Prince to its south, is subject to more stress. Therefore, PAP must brace for another earthquake of the same magnitude or stronger.

In anticipation of the crashing of that segment which will cause a harder blow to PAP, American scientists, specifically University of Miami geologists Falk Amelung and Tim Dixon, have proposed to the government to relocate the capital: “Amelung and Dixon say it behooves Haiti to at least consider relocation scenarios, perhaps moving government, medical and education infrastructure as far north as the port city of St. Marc.” St. Marc is a city on the west coast located forty-six miles north of PAP. Haitian seismologists, like Claude Prépetit, and other Haitian authorities are suggesting the possible site of Marchand-Dessalines, a former Haitian capital under the ruler Jean-Jacques Dessalines, in the country’s interior:

[Bernard] Etheart, [an employee at a Haitian institute for land reform] believes that a place like Dessalines could now become the country's new capital. As ludicrous as it sounds, he knows that the idea makes sense. According to Prépetit, the plain surrounding Dessalines is, seismologically speaking, one of the safest areas in the country.”

While Port-au-Prince’s fate hangs in the balance, some debate has stirred whether relocation is even possible as the expensive costs, the political and commercial

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8 Ibid.

9 Höges, “Haiti Debates Moving,” http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,675299,00.html
attachment to the capital, the historical significance of PAP, and the unwillingness by many pro-PAP individuals have discouraged the prospect for the move. The objection also includes the fear that the capital will lose its port-side advantage if moved inland to a place like Marchand-Dessalines. No final decision has been made on the part of the government as of yet. Nonetheless, the rebuilding process starts with the idea of starting from scratch whether in the same place or a few miles north. Even if the government and major businesses heads northbound, PAP still needs to be cleared and rebuilt for the remaining residents.

No matter the verdict, the geological dilemma is only a fraction of the problem that needs to be considered. Port-au-Prince hosts a historical overload of social problems, political crises, and overcrowding issues. In exploring the inner workings of the capital, centralized Port-au-Prince reveals a plethora of issues that need to be addressed in forming a better structured, more efficient capital to serve the functions of the state and prove capable of surviving any future natural attacks.

**The Human Perils Inside Capital: A Socio-Political Focus**

At the heart of Haiti’s problems lie deep-rooted socio-political issues which affect every segment of society from a local to national scale, especially in the capital. The socio-economic and political condition of today’s Port-au-Prince is greatly impacted by the influence of the French colonial system and the struggle among Haitian politicians to establish a post-colonial state. Thus, it is important to recount Haiti’s early history of racism, classism, political tension, and other social traumas to understand the current deteriorating state of this country. These socio-political mechanisms lay the foundations
for the proliferating ecological and environmental factors that assisted in the destructive aftermath of the quake.

The colonial residues are not the only cause that generates the problems found in the capital and beyond it. Foreign abuse also participated in the decades of instability after the independence, which highly influenced Haiti’s economic downfall. For example, France’s demand for Haiti to pay millions of dollars to recover their losses from the revolution, which took close to a century to pay off, and events like the Luders affair hurt Haiti’s pockets.  

Despite these factors of colonial oppression and other foreign exploitations, Haitians themselves share the bulk of the responsibility. The constant social, political, and ecological dilemmas in independent Haiti involve domestic players with corrupt, violent, neglectful, discriminatory, or uncooperative tendencies from government, private and public sectors, which also include the elites and the poor alike for continuing to entertain certain colonial-based socio-cultural and racial attitudes and to practice damaging and oppressive behaviors.

This segment of the chapter will go into depth on the socio-political factors that contributed to the deteriorated and vulnerable capital by offering historical analyses and contemporary observations. The historical mechanisms that emerged from the colonial period and the early stages of the post-colonial state along socio-political realms will first be described. Then, the elaboration of those mechanisms shaping PAP’s contemporary socio-political atmosphere will be presented.

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10 Hyppolite Pierre, *Haiti, Rising Flames from Burning Ashes* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2006), 49. In September 1897, Emilie Luders, a German, was arrested for assaulting two officers and sent to jail. Highly displeased, the German Emperor not only demanded the release of Luders but also a retribution sum of $20,000, a letter of apology, and a twenty cannon salute to the German flag.
Then: The colonial origins and early post-colonial independence

The French colonialists, who brought wealth and power in Haiti by using slave labor to enrich themselves, also established the system of racial oppression, social exclusion and division, and political favoritism – a process that lingered for centuries long after their exit from the island. Under the French rule, Saint-Domingue was the world’s most productive and lucrative colony, a success based on slavery, giving the noteworthy title to the island as “The Pearl of the Antilles.” Saint-Domingue contributed to half of France’s transatlantic commercial industry, and almost twenty percent of the French population depended on these transactions from the island.¹¹ Port-au-Prince became the landmark destination for the French industry and secured itself as the capital of the colony in 1770, demoting Cap-Français (Cap-Haitien) as the capital.

With this lucrative economy, the French developed a segregated social class structure by adopting the three-tiered system, consisting of the top white French class, the middle Affranchis (mulattoes and free slaves) group, and the bottom black slaves. (See Appendix 1 for more historical information on Haiti’s class system). Although slaves greatly outnumbered white Frenchmen and Affranchis, the privilege and high status belonged to the white class.¹² To supervise and control the more than half million slaves, all white French were required to serve in the military, which maintained a contingent of three thousand army officers. In addition, the French used the caudillism system


¹² Robert Debs Heinl and Nancy Gordon Heinl, Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People 1492-1995 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1996), 31. During the eighteenth century, there existed over 700,000 slaves, only about 30,000 - 40,000 whites, and close to 30,000 Affranchis.
composed of military leaders with unlimited power and authority.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, the highest members of the social pyramid were a small group of powerful white high-ranking military officers. The influence of the \textit{caudillism} system still has an impact on contemporary Haitian politics, as evidenced by many military-driven coups in Haiti and a history of military-ranking officers serving in government.

To keep this institutionalized social structure and freeze any social mobility, discriminatory policies were also adopted by the colonials. The French attempted to control racial mixing through the law of the \textit{Code Noir}, which prohibited sexual relations between whites and blacks; however the contrary prevailed as white owners usually frequented with female black slaves, giving rise to the Affranchis/ mulatto class. Strict codes condemned black slaves from being educated and persecuting those who taught literacy to them. As the black populace suffered from the highest degree of human indignity by being enslaved and oppressed, the elevated class of mulattoes were treated as second-class citizens with no full rights and status as the white French inhabitants:

The \textit{Code Noir} (Black Code) enacted in France in 1685 was derived from similar Spanish codes and differentiated only between free citizens and slaves. In practice, however, the affranchise were severely discriminated against. They had no political rights and were eventually barred from having “white” surnames, wearing certain kinds of dress, being addressed as “sir” or “madame,” and using certain public accommodations. Adding injury to insult, they were barred from practicing law, medicine, or pharmacy, and they were not allowed to be members of the priesthood or teaching profession.\textsuperscript{14}

Before mulattoes and blacks could come together to defeat their common oppressors, the French, they both had to overcome the rivalries between them; even

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Bellegarde-Smith, \textit{Breached Citadel}, 35.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 38.
\end{itemize}
though the truce was short-lived after their victory. Both slaves and the mulattoes had independently attempted to cause rebellions and insurgencies on their own but to no real avail. Eventually, the tensions between blacks and mulattoes would culminate in civil war. With the black slaves wanting freedom and independence from France and the mulattoes wanting more rights and power, an alliance was formed to revolt against the French under the leaderships of black and mulatto military men which included the black general Henri Christophe and the mulatto general Alexandre Pétion. However, it is important to note that the mulatto community’s intention was to replace the white class superiority, not to eradicate slavery; the mulattos entered this alliance as a crafty tool to use slaves to fight against French since previous attempts by them alone were unsuccessful. Shortly after achieving independence in 1804, the two classes broke their alliance and returned to their former animosity, eventually splitting the nation in 1807 to two dominions - the southern republic headed by Pétion and northern kingdom under Christophe.

The conflict between mulattoes and blacks continued to spill into the political arena, religion and cultural lifestyles. Even after the country’s reunification in 1820, mulatto dominance flourished in economic prowess, social status, and political control by way of politics de doublure (a process of mulattoes manipulating black presidents in power to maintain mulatto dominance in society). To combat their manipulation in

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15 By the late 1790s, a raging civil war broke out in southern Haiti where the rivalry between black dominated north and mulatto concentrated south transpired into a battle between two military heavyweights, Toussaint Louverture, a black slave turned army officer, and André Rigaud, a mulatto general. Louverture had succeeded in toppling a mulatto insurgency in the south led by General Rigaud and Alexandre Pétion, another famous mulatto who was later involved in the Haitian revolution.

16 Bellegarde-Smith, Breached Citadel, 39.
society, pro-black political factions, like the Noiristes or Les Griots, emerged to reject the mulattoes’ orientation toward European culture, the Catholic Church, and the French language by instead focusing on African rooted customs, encouraging the use of the Kreyol language, and promoting the Voudou religion. Voudouism itself has been a hot topic thrown many times into the political debate, seeing that some parties and presidents have worked either to preserve or reject it.\textsuperscript{17}

The premier colonial city relic of Port-au-Prince has still not detached itself from such colonial-based traditions in social structure, or the negative, early post-colonial habits in politics, even after turning into the capital of free, independent Haiti. Despite the glory of liberating slaves, this post-colonial nation was extremely chaotic at the very beginning of independence, and its stability continues to be challenging. Politicians, social class members, and the public at large are thrown into the melee. Although slavery was defeated as an institutionalized system in the country, there remains a mental enslavement of attitudes and practices based from the colonial era.

\textbf{Now: The present socio-economic and political dilemma}

Unable to let go of the negative forces of colonialism, PAP repeats the mistakes of the early post-colonial leaders, resulting in continuous political crises as well as the persistence of severe socio-economic imbalances, racism, and classism. PAP is characterized as an arena of mistrust for the lack of cooperation among disputing parties and the absence of civic harmony and collaboration within the city. The power struggle in

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 20-21. Voudouism, a spirit-centered religion derived from a compilation of Dahomen, Yoruba, Igbo, Congolese, and other African cultures and entangles Christianity and Catholic elements, originated from the slavery period and has become a facet of Haitian symbolism and culture today.
the capital constantly produces inequalities in the ecological and environmental landscape and hostilities among political, socio-economic, and regional groups. While a majority of poor black Haitians live in utter squalor and misery in PAP, the wealthiest socio-political elites reside in luxurious mansions in the suburban hills. The disorganization and lack of social and economic opportunities in PAP have discouraged people’s hope for personal growth and nation-wide development.

In terms of modern day social class groups, the three-tiered class structure consists of the small bourgeois class with mostly mulattoes in the top tier, a combination of both black and mulattoes – educated individuals composed of businessmen, the intelligentsia community, and members of the Haitian Diaspora - forming the ailing middle class, and the immensely large mass population of blacks at the bottom. (See Appendix 2 for a discussion on Haiti’s contemporary class structure). At first glance, the socio-economic spectrum seems to incorporate only two distinct classes: the small bourgeois community and the large black poor mass. Unfortunately, social upward mobility is still suppressed, causing the high illiteracy rate among the poor black masses. In general, the barriers that limit the upward movement of people on the socio-economic ladder are due to unemployment, lack of education, and uneven distribution of resources.

The obstruction to social development and upward mobility, especially among the bottom class, is also influenced by other factors - influences that have been unbroken by time. First, one major handicap to the socio-economic advancement and equilibrium in Haiti corresponds to the dealings of the bourgeoisie class. Many Haitians have criticized the upper class of monopolizing most of the industries and hoarding the wealth for themselves: “[a]bout 4 percent of the population owns 66 percent of the country’s wealth.
Some 10 percent owns nothing. A small elite organized in family groupings control all exports and imports, tourism, construction and manufacturing.”\(^{18}\) Although black businessmen, politicians, and other figures are infiltrating the upper class, the mulatto and light-skinned members still have an edge in the upper class minority, especially in the commercial world. Currently, the impact of the disastrous earthquake along with Haiti’s distressed economy is affecting the middle class as they struggle to survive.

Second, the progress for social advancement and nation-wide development is threatened by the problematic government and its political clientele / patronage system. (See Appendix 3 for political problems in Haiti). The frequent political instability in Port-au-Prince has discouraged foreign investments, has encouraged social divisions, has contributed to the socio-economic disparities, and has repeatedly troubled the democratic process, especially during election time. Many consider the Haitian government in the perspective of Marx and Engel, inspired from *The Manifesto of Communist Party*, as an ‘executive arm of the bourgeoisie’ or imitating the bourgeoisie for its own accumulation of capital, putting personal ambitions ahead of state affairs. The manipulation of high-positioned politicians by the bourgeois and vice versa keeps the cycle of wealth exchanging between their hands. Sociology professor and Haitian scholar Alex Dupuy describes the Haitian political condition:

\[\ldots\text{a fraction of the middle or dominant class controls the state by allying itself with a supreme ruler or dictator}\ldots\text{. Rulers of prebendary states appropriate public}\]

resources for their own benefit and those of the class fractions allied with them, returning little to society in the form of public goods and services.\(^{19}\)

Finally, the widespread prevalence of corruption in the country is another deterrent to social progress. Because corruption circulates at almost every level in society from petty offences to high-level corruption, Haiti was ranked as the third most corrupt countries in the world among 133 countries surveyed and remained high on the list for the next couple of years, according to the Transparency International.\(^ {20}\) Rubbing elbows with the likes of the president and high officials is more like greasing their hands with bribery money in PAP. Security forces have been implicated in corrupt practices in which an estimate of “90 percent of Haitian police superintendents were involved in drug trafficking.”\(^ {21}\) Based on a 2005-2006 World Bank Institute survey, 70 percent of public officials cited that bribes were common in avoiding taxes and custom duties.\(^ {22}\)

Moreover, centralized PAP absorbs most of the resources. A considerable amount of time, energy, and money is spent solely in the capital for projects designed for regions outside of it. From obtaining specialized licensing or permits for major businesses projects to special kickbacks and tax breaks, access to Port-au-Prince and its political connections is necessary for commercial survival:


Like Estimé before him, Duvalier found his collaborators more greedy than helpful. His top partisans fought for contracts providing them with kickbacks. In the scramble for personal profit, Haiti’s poor resources were eroded and the new administration weakened. On businessman who knew Duvalier said that the President had decided very early in his career that all US businessmen and politicians had a price and dealt with them on that basis.23

Like a reflection in a mirror, the lack of coordination and cooperation within the government reflects the same interaction in the regular social arena. While the socio-economic disparities in Port-au-Prince and in Haiti should be rectified and adjusted by the Haitian authorities and government, these state figures are also implicated in the problem as they work to maintain their own superiority. Since the products of the colonial influences and post-colonial disagreements have manifested into modern-day classism, social inequalities, and political quarrels in 21st century Haiti, these disruptions also developed a cycle of severe ecological and environmental damages in the capital and the entire island.

**The Realities of Uneven Development**

The socio-political mechanisms in PAP affect the environmental sustainability in the country, and similarly the level of ecological and environmental degradation increases as socio-political tensions grows. The real demonstration of this fierce battling and disunity among social, economic, and political elements is dynamically visible by the decayed ecological setting and deteriorating environment within and outside Port-au-Prince. Since Port-au-Prince dominates the absorption of wealth and resources among some individuals, developmental inequalities appear in the geographic landscape of the island in which parts of the capital, and other urban and many rural sectors, are ruined.

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and decayed because of their socio-economic distance to the wealth of the capital and/or their physical distance to the centralized capital.

Since the socio-political mechanisms have been explained, this section will focus more on the physical ecological and environmental factors that provide other fatal foundations to PAP’s urban vulnerability to the quake and currently impact the nation’s full recovery. In discussing this imbalanced spatial layout of resources and unfair distribution of wealth, David Harvey’s theory of uneven development is a helpful framework in understanding the way this French colony became a post-colonial state with centralized capital, impacting the current ecological/environmental crisis. In addition, the rural degradation outside the capital highly affects the urban decay within the capital. As a result, several major ecological and health challenges plague the city: electricity, water, sanitation, and housing.

Uneven development theory at work

Applying David Harvey’s “development of underdevelopment” theory, geopolitical and socio-economic mechanisms affect the ecological inequalities among society and within the entire nation. The attainability of resources and wealth, mostly hovering around the centralized capital, is limited to the higher class members who monopolize the power and wealth. Thus, within the capital, those who live in the unhealthiest and ecologically hazardous areas are slum inhabitants who are composed of the poor, illiterate, black masses. The rural inhabitants who live outside of PAP suffer worst of all because they are further away from the resources of the capital. The underdevelopment problem in Haiti is not a matter of the quantity of wealth; rather the
fault lays in the management of the money in which the material resources are not
distributed evenly and consistently – a problem of uneven development.

Harvey provides an historical to modern-day progression of this uneven
geographical development in capital cities. Based on The Manifesto of the Communist
Party, David Harvey suggests that these inequalities can be traced back to the bourgeoisie
quest for capital accumulation during the discovery of the New World in search of other
global markets. But as they touched down on new lands and colonized them, the
geographical landscape was changed, and institutionalized systems, such as the structure
of the social class system, developed.24 Modern problems within capital cities,
augmented for centuries by a systemized structure of “development of
underdevelopment,” have caused generations worth of socio-economic and ecological
disparities in society.25 Such contemporary problems include the role of the government.
Instead of acting as a mediator to stabilize the situation and reverse the destructive
patterns within society, the government has consistently participated negatively in the
“influence the dynamics of accumulation and class struggle.”26 Therefore, polarization of
the circulation of wealth has created major struggles among different parties to obtain
those resources. As more channels to opportunity decrease or become closed for those
attempting to gain some advantage, more corruption, bribery, and violence result to find
an opening.

24 David Harvey, Spaces of Hope (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 24 -25.

25 David Harvey, Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical

26 Harvey, Spaces of Hope, 35.
Furthermore, the progression of the developmental flaws found within the capital can be understood through the lens of two arguments. The first argument is an environmentalist explanation that recognizes the worldwide disparity of differential exposure to health problems, environmental adaptations and capacities including territorial development functions found among certain groups. The second is the constructivist argument, which stresses that differential outcomes are produced by various exploitation procedures:

[the exploitative practices of capitalism backed by political, military, and geopolitical activities of the most powerful nation states engaging in imperialist, colonial or neo-colonial exploitation of territories and whole populations and their cultures lie at the root of the uneven development. Differential patterns of exploitation (of populations, resources, lands) result.]

Applying Harvey’s arguments specifically to Haiti, the uneven development began with the colonial establishment of Port-au-Prince, chosen for its geo-political positioning and its remarkable bay for servicing the economy of the colony. With the French class system in effect, the agricultural and rural communities of Haiti became the real centers of oppression and enslavement for the blacks since they had to work the fields, while the high French elite and businessmen stayed in, around, and close to the capital. This explains why many current Haitians detest the country-life because of the reminders of slavery, and many are condensed to the areas of PAP. Soon after independence, exploitation shifted from colonial abuse into socio-geopolitical battles between Haitian leaders and racial groups (mulattoes vs. blacks). The country’s split is the first post-colonial example of this socio-geopolitical conflict, putting Cap-Haitien and

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27 Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, 72-73.

28 Ibid., 72.
PAP at odds as they both competed for power; Cap-Haitien is now severely less developed than PAP.

In contemporary Haiti, the state’s failure to distribute its accumulation of wealth and resources far outside its periphery caused an uncontrolled migration of people from the rural zones towards the capital. While power is confined in the capital, other urban and rural sectors are struggling with heavy deforestation and ecological degradation to an alarming degree. It is estimated that “[i]n 1923, forests covered nearly 60 percent of the country; today they cover less than 2 percent.”29 The lack of alternative energy sources and employment is the primary reason for this heavy deforestation in Haiti, where trees are used to make charbon (charcoal) for cooking fuel and also to sell as a product. Local administrations, especially in the rural sector, suffer at the hands of the national headquarters because their allotment of resources is not honored or sufficient.

Within PAP, the disproportionate spatial allocation of power and resources is visibly throughout society just by looking at the drastic differences between the affluent neighborhoods of the bourgeoisie class and the deplorable living conditions of the poor mass sector. Wealthier citizens escape high to the hilly and affluent suburb of Pétionville30, named after Alexandre Pétion; these neighborhoods have the best amenities (schools, hospitals, supermarkets, etc.). In contrast, the poor take refuge in the highly destitute area of Cité Soleil, translated “Sun City”. It is estimated that a vast majority of capital-dwellers, about two-thirds of the two million PAP inhabitants, live in drastically


30 Pétion-ville is a suburb of Port-au-Prince, predominately composed of the mulatto class in the post-independence period, and later marked as the spot for the affluent social elite.
poor slums and shanty towns such as Cité Soleil, suggesting that moving to PAP does not guarantee an improved way of life for those searching of it.\(^{31}\) Therefore, PAP’s powerful and rich socialites are living in well-equipped, better structured, and resourceful neighborhoods better than anyone in the island.

The exploitation of classism and racism persists to suppress opportunities and education to the poor and disadvantaged. Because the chances of upward mobility among the poor mass sector are limited, violence increases – generating more unhealthy, unsafe, and dangerous neighborhoods. As the alternative, in order to possess wealth and goods, some individuals resort to a life of illegal and criminal activity; thus, drug activity continues to be a major problem in the island. Exploitation also includes the manipulation of the poorer individuals and the use of gangs to control territories to intimidate others.

In sum, these problems of uneven development correspond with the problems of centralization, leading to an exponential increase in the capital population and the heightening of the ecological and environmental crises (see Appendix 4 for further discussion of the overcrowding and centralization of PAP). As a result of the uncontrolled growth in the capital, there is great difficulty in accommodating and providing basic services to a growing capital population. The proliferation of the socio-political exploits and uneven wealth distribution continue to worsen the infrastructure, create health and ecological risks, and foment environmental degradation. These mounting ecological and health problems are plenty and will take years to fix, especially after being struck by the recent quake disaster.

Ecological and health concerns

The author of *Slum Planet* Davis writes that there is a responsibility to protect and maintain rural agricultural zones through sustainable urban development. However the influx of habitants into urban areas, especially within Third World cities, and rising pollution exacerbates the conditions of the environment.\(^\text{32}\) The ruin of agricultural lands, decline in agricultural production, and the abandonment of the rural way of life by many farmers continues to add to the environmental woes of the capital and the entire country. Therefore, the spike in urban growth creates problems in the public works domain; general services to the public have became severely inadequate as problems mounts over electricity, water access, sanitation, and housing. Due to financial difficulties, administrative mismanagement, and political unrest, the government simply cannot handle the intake, although some private agencies have been tapped by Haitian authorities to address these issues. The following lays out the critical infrastructural elements to be addressed in the post-quake recovery:

*Electricity*

Electricity is a valuable yet scarce commodity in Haiti. Nationally, 31.6% of all Haitian households have access to electricity, with the greater Metropolitan PAP area having the bulk access of 92.2% of it; whereas other urban (23.2%) and rural areas (10.5%) are severely lacking, based on a 2003 survey of electric access provided by the

\(^{32}\) Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 134.
Infrastructural access to electricity does not equate to actual retrieval of electricity. The production of electricity is too weak to satisfy the demand as the state-owned Electricity of Haiti (EdH) struggles to provide power to the public. Hydroelectric plants built on the Artibonite River, Haiti’s longest river originating from the Dominican Republic and stretching 320 km or 199 miles long, provided energy originally to US-owned factories in the 1970s. But the river does not produce enough to serve the general public. As a result, electricity is only given hours at a time; blackouts are common and frequent as noted by the following Reuters News Agency article:

Many people are cut off from electricity for 16 to 22 hours a day and, in some of the congested shantytowns, people go days without electricity. Even the wealthy with equipment that can convert battery-stored DC power to AC current are suffering because the electric company can’t pump enough energy to recharge batteries. Students who are not lucky enough to live near a lighted public plaza have to modify their study schedules according to that of EdH [Electricity of Haiti]. If the government supplies power between 3 and 5 a.m., students study between those hours.

Since only a minority of people can afford generators or electric inverters, mostly candles and kerosene lamps are used as a means of lighting, while the largest energy source for cooking comes from wood and charbon (see figure 1.2 for modes of energy sources for lighting and figure 1.3 for cooking sources in PAP). The measure of

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34 Bellegarde-Smith, Breached Citadel, 4.

Deforestation is directly correlated with the increasing needs for fuel source among the population. Thus, the energy crisis represents an infrastructural failure and an environmental catastrophe.

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**Figure 1.1.** Proportion of households with electricity access by geographic departments.  

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**Figure 1.2.** Lighting source types among metropolitan PAP residences.  
Water

The distribution and access to water remains a critical issue before and after the earthquake. Within the PAP area, only 33.4% of homes have running water, while the national average stands on 21.5%. Although Port-au-Prince residents have access to several kinds of potable water sources, the national standard is the use of rainwater and rivers. (Figures 1.4 shows the types of potable water sources in PAP). Throughout PAP and beyond, people crowd around street pipes or pumping stations to fill their buckets, while wealthier citizens get water delivered to their homes by massive water trucks to fill their home reservoirs (road deterioration is affected by these heavy trucks). A joint report from UNICEF and World Health Organization indicates that 70% of the urban and 51% of the rural population in Haiti have sustainable access to improved drinking water; only

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36 IHSI, “Enquête sur Les Conditions,” Table 1.2.3.1.
58% of the total population has access to safe water.

Thus, urban areas, principally Port-au-Prince, are more likely to have better water filtration and chlorination facilities as compared to other regions.

The critical need for clean potable water before the quake has risen to a level of extreme urgency months after the seismic occurrence. Unfortunately, it is very likely that many of these facilities were destroyed from the earthquake. Challenges in water distribution post-January 12th remain difficult in some parts, and a general overhaul in potable water distribution systems must be considered in the rebuilding plans for the entire nation. The latest tragedy to occur in Haiti is the cholera epidemic, originating from the contamination of the Artibonite River, which currently has a death toll of over 1,500 people and growing.

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Waste, Sanitation and Drainage

The visible mounds of trash on the streets and canals full of stagnant water, trash and sewage are indicators of the highly inadequate sanitation system and faulty solid waste management that are in desperate need of improvement. The attractiveness of the capital is undoubtedly diminished by such scenes. Loose waste materials in the air mixed with pollution produced from the high volumes of traffic congestion make for an extremely unhealthy environment in the city, causing high and frequent occurrences of sickness, especially among children, in the form of tuberculosis, typhoid, malaria, diarrhea and other diseases.
The ineffective drainage system and the primitive plumbing functions have made it more difficult to control human waste, trash, and sewage, especially in shantytowns and slum areas. The two principle methods of trash removal in Haiti are transporting the trash elsewhere (61.2%), or burning it (23.5%). (Figures 1.5 details the waste methods in PAP). However, the data is not clear about where trash is transported; this may mean that garbage gets dumped at some varied distance from the household – a communal, but unofficial, dumping ground.

Due to the lack of indoor plumbing, a substantial number of residences in Port-au-Prince (many of which are older homes or built by poor individuals) do not possess indoor bathrooms (see figure 1.6 for indoor and outdoor lavatory proportions among residences in PAP). However, more modernly-built homes are now adding indoor bathrooms. (See also figure 1.7 showing types of latrines among residences in PAP). The common use of antiquated outdoor latrines causes many health hazards; pools of contaminated water with waste and trash create the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes, insects, and diseases. In addition, the combination of deforestation and lack of proper drainage systems generates a flooding crisis in PAP during the rainy and hurricane seasons; rain runoff from the deforested mountain ranges and hills, surrounding the south and east regions of PAP, amass the wide low-lying areas deep in heavy flooding and filth.

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39 IHSI, “Enquête sur Les Conditions,” Table 1.2.6.5.
Figure 1.5. Modes of waste removal among residences in metropolitan PAP.

Figure 1.6. Indoor vs. outdoor lavatory among households in metropolitan PAP.
Housing

As the most significant factor involved in the high number of fatalities from the seismic event, the housing crisis in PAP entails substantial issues beyond the structural frailty problem discussed earlier in this chapter. The accommodation problem was a critical issue before the quake and remains a serious dilemma in the aftermath. Since there are relatively no public housing projects provided by the government, civilians take it upon themselves to build shoddy domiciles and buildings, a main ingredient in the earthquake tragedy. And still after the quake, PAP residents are not getting the adequate help they need.

Before the quake, the capital was host to a sea of cardboard, tin, and unfinished concrete houses, resided in by the mass poor. Over the past several decades, little has been done to provide enough adequate public housing for the growing numbers. Therefore, the people made their own abodes with whatever material they could afford.
(materials using tin shingles, plastic tarps and/or cement blocks), resulting in the widespread emergence of slums and shanty towns, also known as _bidonvilles_, in Port-au-Prince; squatting, of course, became prevalent. The lack of building inspections or enforcements to regulate construction in Haiti made it easy for these types of shoddy construction and unsafe domiciles to spread and grow rampant, making these areas potential disaster zones, which later turned into a real catastrophe.

When the quake hit, over a million people lost their homes. This included members of the high and middle class. Thus, tents were donated to the poor and homeless and formed a large temporary settlement known as “tent city.” Although some surviving homes appeared to be safe, many people did not take the chance to stay in them, especially since a series of aftershocks continued months after the original quake. Many people were and continue to use this temporary arrangement as a permanent solution, a highly critical dilemma in a tropic country affected by seasonal hurricanes. In addition, there continues to be a fear that more deforestation could occur in constructing homes with wood.

These ecological and health hazards are not just symptoms of a poor nation; they are reminders of the constant struggle over power and money. Haiti’s socio-political instability and economic downturn impacted the collapse of urban ecology in PAP, and there is a direct correlation between the urban ecological deterioration and the rural environmental degradation. The crises in energy and water, insufficient safe housing, poor waste management, lack of infrastructure and security have driven Haiti to its knees, but the earthquake has forced the country to beg for more help. A government weighed by pre-existing issues could have never been prepared to encounter such a catastrophe;
the ecological hazards and crumbling infrastructure made PAP the perfect demolition ground for a seismic attack.

This island nation, indebted to France and other nations, suffers from systemized patterns and behaviors rooted in the colonial period that have culminated in constant political instability and corruption, frequent social injustices, and the widening schism between rich and poor. Having suffered from man-made disasters of ignorance, violence and deceit, the poor Haitian mass has been brutalized the most, as they now deal with Nature’s hard blow. A heavy burden weighs on the shoulders of Haiti, as existing problems persist and new ones surmount. In determining solutions for the country’s recovery, the goal should be correcting the underlying problems described in this chapter that made the earthquake a highly tragic occurrence, while finding ways to create resiliency, stability and endurance to withstand any future blows. Therefore, this paper’s quest is to examine the possibility of relocation and its effects on Haiti by analyzing comparative studies of capital relocation in other post-colonial countries as well as proposing suggestions for Haiti’s overall reconstruction.
CHAPTER 2
RELOCATION CASE STUDIES: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE MONEY

The surprise of the 2010 Haitian earthquake has prompted efforts to prepare for other future seismic disturbances thereby proposing capital relocation as an option. Although Haiti is no stranger to relocating capitals, some people may worry if capital relocation is pursuable in this current age and under these circumstances. Others may seriously stress over the future implications in Haiti by the process. Since many other pressing concerns in the socio-economic and political arenas must be addressed in Haiti, the expectation is that capital relocation should be multifunctional and used for reconstructive purposes to help set Haiti towards improved environmental resiliency, better infrastructural durability and better socio-economic development. However, learning from global relocations, consequential outcomes may emerge to contradict the positive objectives of relocation, giving some doubts to the efficacy, benefits and promises of the endeavor.

This chapter will assess the human efforts to relocate and develop a capital, using the case studies of Tanzania and Kazakhstan to generate some key observational points and elements. Although Tanzania’s intentions concentrated on promoting the underused hinterlands to decongest the former capital and Kazakhstan’s relocation heavily focused on nation-building efforts, their purposes were to address serious ecological/environmental, political, and socio-economic problems in their state, issues that resonate in Haiti. However, the results from Tanzania’s troubled, lengthy and incomplete relocation and Kazakhstan’s challenges to bring about social unification and state allegiance provide some precautions to implementing this procedure. In examining
the experiences of the case studies, key analytical tools extracted from this chapter will be later applied to the Haiti’s current situation in chapter three.

**Common Traits**

Before the critical analysis of capital relocation in Tanzania and Kazakhstan starts, it is important to share some common characteristics these two case studies share with Haiti, giving premise as to why these countries were selected for the investigation. The multiple purposes behind Tanzania’s and Kazakhstan’s capital relocations involved attempts to address the multiple issues of socio-political division, centralization effects, and ecological and environmental concerns; the same issues found in Haiti, specifically Port-au-Prince.

The characteristics of Tanzania and Haiti consist of similarities in poor economic status, political conflicts, ecological and environmental degradation, and common ancestry. Both countries are grievously affected by widespread poverty and constant economic crises that reduce living conditions beyond the capital city limits. Tanzania’s labor force is proportional to Haiti’s, where half of both of their populations are employed in some industry. While the two nations have predominately agricultural economies, their dependence on wood for energy needs and their underdeveloped agricultural practices have caused major deforestation and land degradation in their

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countries, increasing urban population especially in the capitals. As a result, both Port-au-Prince and Dar es Salaam struggle with waste management in which the lack of proper sanitation and trash removal deteriorates their ecological environments and ruins the cities’ appearance while raising the levels of water and air pollution.

In comparing Kazakhstan and Haiti, the two physically distant countries encounter related difficulties within their social spheres and face the same problem of seismic volatile capitals. Foreign colonization in both countries created socio-economic ambiguities within society that privileged those of certain origins (the ones with closer genetic ties with colonizers) while others (of far-removed origins from colonizers) were discriminated and oppressed during the time of occupation; the effects lasted way after their independence. In addition, the effort to reconcile two different cultures has been no easy task for either country, specifically between Asian and European influences in Kazakhstan and French European versus African-rooted dominance in Haiti. Coincidentally, like Haiti, one of the official reasons regarding Kazakhstan’s capital move from Almaty was based on predictions from scientists that an earthquake would ravage the seismic volatile area.² Yet, such a projection was not the major contributing force behind Kazakhstan’s capital relocation.

The various socio-political problems observed from these nations are global issues experienced in other countless countries, for example the global problem of corruption and urban overcrowding. While Haiti, Tanzania, and Kazakhstan carry multi-

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² Schatz, "Capital Cities Say," 122.
cultural facets (Kazakhstan’s demographic being more ethnically diverse than the two), the existence of significant social barriers by the processes of prejudiced practices in mundane activities, exclusion of certain groups from civic and political participation, and uneven wealth distribution and unequal spatial allocation of resources are observed in all three nations. They also contribute to the disparities among ethnic/racial, economic and regional lines seen around the world.

In sum, the three were controlled by different imperialists, their independences were produced by different means at different times, and their socio-economic and political situations are bred by different factors and ranges at varying degrees. But they all share the obstacles and impediments in maintaining the productivity of their nations even after relocation has occurred.

**Tanzania: Capital Relocation Still In Progress, We Think?**

Among the African countries with moved capitals, Tanzania is the most noteworthy because the transitioning is still incomplete and transferring the capital is a test of wills among certain government leaders. The case of Tanzania exemplifies the power and influence that old capitals have on relocation by staying firm to their status. The ecological conditions of Dar es Salaam encouraged the need for the relocation to Dodoma, but the resistance from the elite and political front in Dar forcibly slowed down the transition in its tracks. Idealistically, the Tanzanian capital relocation was designed to fulfill many hopes and expectations. Unfortunately, the outcome has yielded an inconvenient truth leaving behind a trail of unkept promises.
Background

Located on the eastern part of Africa, Tanzania is home to about 41 million people. It is a nation that has undergone significant political changes and territorial aggrandizement in a relatively short amount of time. In the late 19th century, Germans took control and incorporated the Tanganyika area into German East Africa. Dar es Salaam was originally founded by Zanzibar Sultan Seyyrid Said in 1862 as his second residence and later became the capital of German East Africa in 1891 because of its well-protected harbor.³ Due to the forced removal of Germans during World War I, the British took control of the area. On December 9, 1961, Tanganyika became a sovereign state and later a Republic the following year. The union of two recently sovereign republics formed the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar on April 26, 1964, renamed the United Republic of Tanzania on October 29, 1964.⁴

The topic of relocating the capital had been discussed by colonials before the Tanzanian independence, with Dodoma as an early candidate. Since their attraction grew for the highlands amidst the high mortality rates and rough lifestyle by the seaside, Germans had considered moving the capital and inspected sites in the inlands, which included Dodoma.⁵ Along similar reasons as the Germans, the British considered

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⁴ Zanzibar gained independence on December 10, 1963 and the People's Republic of Zanzibar was established after the revolution of January 12, 1964; both were occupied by the United Kingdom.

⁵ Hayuma, “Planning and Building New Capital,” 654.
relocating the capital on several occasions to a “healthier and cooler region,” with Dodoma again as an option. Dodoma’s repeated candidacy was also due to its accessibility by railway and its central geographic location.

However, objections to moving there were based on cost concerns, water access problems, arid climate, and the mosquito-filled environment, which some perceived as unhealthier than Dar es Salaam. Thus, Dar es Salaam remained the capital because of “the inconclusiveness of the health advantages of more elevated sites” among the British colonizers. It wasn’t until after the independence that the Tanzanian government resurrected relocation talks since various problems in Dar were arising.

The coastal city of Dar Es Salaam served as the political capital from Tanzania’s independence until 1996 when it was replaced by the centrally located city of Dodoma, a distance of 486 km or 302 mi from Dar es Salaam and a larger land area of 2,669 square kilometers. However, as of 1996, Dodoma has received only Parliament and some government offices, making the relocation still incomplete.

Reasons for relocations & the trouble with Dar

The capital relocation to Dodoma was to satisfy several goals: its central location to produce better governance and access to its government institutions; its rural area to promote development in other rural sectors as well as its own; its fair climate to appeal to the citizenry; and its adequate infrastructure foundation, which can supposedly be

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adjusted to accommodate rising needs and numbers. In breaking with the colonial establishment, the relocation was to shift the water-side capital from the geo-strategic and commercial site that mostly benefited colonials to a centrally-located position set to serve the interest of the citizens of an independent state. Furthermore, Tanzanians may have wanted to finally accomplish the failed attempts of their colonial predecessors or to mark a symbolic end to foreign rule by establishing a sovereign Tanzania with a new capital. As there were many reasons for the push to Dodoma as a new capital, there were more motives for driving the capital away from Dar since various pressing concerns over the conditions in Dar es Salaam flourished.

There were expectations that Dodoma would alleviate the mess in Dar by relieving congestion, de-concentrating the population, and producing a better-looking, better-designed capital. With a growing population of 2.4 million in a condensed area of 1,393 square kilometers, the concentrated commercial capital suffers from declining air quality and extreme traffic congestion. Furthermore, the ecology and environmental setting of Dar is vastly deteriorating:

Approx. 83% of the wastes produced in the city were left near the house premises in open pits, streets, markets or stormwater drainage channels, etc…Not only do these sites look unsightly, but they emit unpleasant odors, and promote the breeding of flies and mosquitoes. This, in turn, increases the health risk to nearby inhabitants. As no measures have been taken to treat leachate from the dumpsites, there is a high risk of ground-water pollution. Groundwater in some parts of Dar es Salaam is found to be polluted by leachate, sometimes exceeding safety standards.

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9 Schatz, “Capital Cities Say,” 118.
But the conditions in Dar are further affected by socio-economic inequalities. Due to social discrimination in transportation services and infrastructural access in Dar, the lifestyle gap between rich and poor is clearly distinct as many unplanned settlements occupied by poor inhabitants emerge in their need to be closer to jobs, schools, hospitals, and markets. By contrast, affluent, developed areas are well-equipped not only with these amenities but have better access to roads, electricity, and water. Even deregulated transportation systems, specifically *daladalas* or “private-owned autobuses,” participate in a regular tendency of excluding the poor by servicing routes with profitable clientele. The many obstacles faced by the poor to obtain transport, services, and basic needs are still difficult to fix since financial struggles and prejudiced systems, such as the *daladalas* situation, remain.

In correlating these social and ecological problems with urban space, there exists a major flaw in the spatial distribution of business and facilities, which are mostly concentrated in or around the Central Business District located at the city’s center: “The main commercial district (Kariakoo), the largest market, the main hospital (Muhimbili), the industrial zone and the port are all close to the centre … the university, for example is located on the fringe.” As a result, the multitude of public transportation units traveling to the heart of the city corresponds to the problems of intense congestion, especially during peak hours.

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12 Ibid., 288.
To add to its congestion and infrastructure woes, Dar es Salaam also suffers from a significant percentage of unfinished building development: “Of the total city’s built-up area, 25 per cent comprises finished-and-occupied buildings; 30 per cent comprises unfinished and finished-but unoccupied buildings; and 45 per cent comprises a mixture of buildings that are finished-and-occupied, finished-but-unoccupied and unfinished.”

Factors contributing to this setback are monetary issues based on the anti-capitalist economic policies between 1967 and 1985, fears of the lack of security in some parts, and inaccessibility to services, utilities, roads and facilities.

Therefore, the high costs to provide utilities such as water, electricity, drainage systems, and road access in low-density areas have forced residents to either resort to other means of obtaining needed resources or to abandon such development and remain in the urban sprawl where needed utilities and services are more easily secured. At the same token, similar reasons foster the hesitation towards people moving to Dodoma. Some people view Dodoma as being too far from resources that are easily attained from the centralized capital and being too distant from the commercial, political, and economic activities of Dar. Thus, the limitations found in Dodoma continue to add to Dar’s already heavy burden.

The resistance front

Despite the ailments within the former capital, Dar es Salaam still carries significant historical, political, and economic importance as it refuses to completely

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14 Ibid., 378.
relinquish its major title as capital. Meanwhile, Dodoma’s full transition as the “chief” capital remains in limbo since resistance from Dar hardliners and elites has stalled the effort. Tanzania’s execution of the move is predominately affected by elected officials and presidents who have either encouraged the move or fought against it. While elite resistance prolongs the transitioning and development of Dodoma as the new capital, other factors add to the delay.

According to JM Lussugga Kironda, a professor at the Ardhi Institute formerly the Ardhi University, the hindrance to the completion, besides the issue of money, involves the lack of willingness, ambition and seriousness on the part of the government to shift itself to Dodoma. Kironda also points that “the decision whether or not to relocate the capital is dependent on whether the protagonists of the move can have their way within the political power structure of the nation.”

Keep in mind that a capital city represents the nexus of political power, and moving a capital means moving a power base from a long established settlement to a new frontier. Thus, the relocation delay results from the notion that certain individuals consider the move as a threat to their self-interests, thereby losing political and economic power and status.

Oppositions to the transition were not limited to politicians. Intellectuals, academics, and the public at large found fault with the relocation and building of the new capital. Critics of the relocation cited that the cost to fund this undertaking in a poverty-stricken country was extravagant and wasteful since the money could have been used to fix the existing problems in Dar es Salaam and other socio-economic issues in the country. Furthermore in the 1980s as the government shifted to socialist policies, an

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outcry against the new capital arose when it was learned that the city planning of Dodoma consisted of non-socialist elements of segregated residential areas, extravagant expenditures on land uses, and uneven spatial distribution of work facilities and residences in which long distances were set between them - recreating the same urban space problems of Dar es Salaam in Dodoma. Despite the location of the new capital being conceived under socialist intentions to be more centrally situated and to bring “justice in the distribution of national resources,”\textsuperscript{16} the design of the city’s interiors failed to produce a socialist environment, causing more dissent over inappropriate spending and further reducing chances for social equality.

Apart from the political conflicts impacting the stalled transition, the earlier mentioned accounts of unfinished projects and the slow response to address serious issues in Dar can easily illustrate why the transfer is yet to be finished in Dodoma. If the old capital had hosts of incomplete projects, it shouldn’t be surprising for the same outcome to happen in Dodoma. Certainly, financial matters always play the most defining role in the development and completion of a capital.

Attempts and finances

Financial concerns and availability affected Tanzania’s many attempts to move the capital and develop the rural area of Dodoma. In 1959, Parliament had debated the general possibility of capital relocation, proposing an early estimate of £ 7 million at the time. Then in 1966, the estimate grew to £ 50 million with Dodoma as a particular favorite. Nevertheless, the proposal was shot down each time by dissension over costs and discussions of more pressing concerns. After 14 years, Dodoma was finally

\textsuperscript{16} This paragraph takes accounts from Kironda, “Will Dodoma Ever,” 437.
designated as the new capital on October 1, 1973, and plans to start the implementation of the move were announced by President Julius Nyerere as the new estimated costs swelled to £ 186 million.  

The heavy reliance from the private sectors and foreign assistance from Europe, Asia, and Africa was necessary for almost every phase of the project:

Whatever financial aid has been obtained, it is strictly on commercial terms, and has mainly gone to the development of the construction of materials industry such as bricks and tiles, ceramics, quarry and concrete, and wood factories. Italy, India, Africa Development Bank, Arab Banks and Development Funds, have given loans to finance these projects. From 1973 to 1980 more than £60 million was spent in Dodoma, of which £20 million is foreign aid. There has been heavy reliance on foreign consultants for nearly everything in Dodoma, including: the setting up of the organizational and managerial structure of CDA [Capital Development Authority] and the Ministry of Capital Development; preparation of the Master Plan; urban design; feasibility studies for projects; design work; construction, etc.  

Due to the weak economy and lack of materials and human resources, Tanzania has long depended on foreign assistance for most of its nation’s needs – Tanzania being the most heavily dependent country on foreign assistance in Africa. However, the administrative and logistical problems of constructing Dodoma are not attracting enough investments to finish the job.

The mismanagement of funds and lack of financial availability severely hindered the implementation procedures to establish Dodoma as a capital. Under the management of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the relocation process was envisioned to take ten years starting in 1976 and consisted of two phases: the move of 40 percent of the

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18 Ibid., 667.
19 Ibid., 668.
government between 1976 and 1981, and the remaining 60 percent transitioning between 1982 and 1986. Over time, the government’s financial pledges were not promised, causing the setback of construction deadlines in which the initial forty percent target by 1981 failed to finish in time - overall lengthening the project. Scandals and reports of misappropriation of funds and embezzlements also surfaced, prompting yet another setback. Beyond the financial issues, the underdevelopment and lack of infrastructural systems, employment opportunities, and social services like schools and hospitals significantly impacted the endeavor: “According to the minister responsible for capital development, the 187 civil servants earmarked to move to Dodoma in 1991 had nearly 2300 children attending day schools and, as Dodoma could not accommodate them, the transfer was abandoned.”

Despite the financial obstacles, few political bodies attempted to campaign for the relocation. President Nyerere operated from Dodoma in 1981, however his move generated little following, and he later returned to Dar es Salaam. Likewise, the Prime Minister’s office shifted back and forth. The only real sign of progress along governmental lines came in October 1975 when Parliament convened there for the first time, but it was in 1996 that the National Assembly finally situated itself there. Although more government ministries and agencies have appeared in Dodoma, they still kept offices in Dar es Salaam. Most officials still flock to the former capital regularly.

Capital reality bites

Despite the trials to push Dodoma further into the forefront of national focus, Dar es Salaam remains the capital of choice by many Tanzanians. Meanwhile, various

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troubles persist in crippling the former capital. The socio-political instability, economic turmoil, ecological and environmental ruin continue to negatively affect the economic and social advancement of Tanzania. Particularly towards relocation, those same factors have influenced the longevity and deficiency of the transition that has taken more than thirty years with no official deadline ahead.

Although the case of Tanzania provides prime examples of the negative consequences of relocation, some good has transpired. The quasi-end result established two sorts of capitals - one political the other commercial; some have accepted this form of arrangement. In addition, the current “state of play,” gave political attention and national significance to Dodoma, an area once shunned for its rural nature now incorporated into a vision of governmental outreach outside the urban mainstream of Dar. Yet, Tanzania’s lengthy burden of moving a capital has led its citizens on a long journey with limited satisfaction and much displeasure.

Kazakhstan’s Effort to Unite

Leaving the African continent and entering the Central Asian frontier, the focus turns now to a capital relocation set on different terms. Under the vision of a leader, capital relocation sought to employ the difficult task of not only establishing a new independent state but also uniting a divided nation, saturated in decades of ethnic conflicts. Tucked between Russia, China, and several former Soviet states, Kazakhstan’s geographic location seems to share some responsibility for its social dynamics since the nation-state lies at the crossroads of European and Asian cultures. Russian colonization and Kazakh’s post-colonial institutional reformations add to the cultural-ethnic drama in
Kazakhstan. Although capital relocation served as a strategy to address these tensions, this pluralistic population still claim grievances pertaining to matters of exclusionist and unjust behaviors by the government against certain ethnic groups, contributing to the socio-economic inequalities among society.

**Background**

Kazakhstan’s geographic positioning allows for a rich ethnic diversity; in fact, it is the most culturally diverse of the Soviet secessionist states. Its population is composed of over a hundred ethnic groups, including Kazakhs, Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Chechens, Tartars, Germans, Uighurs, and more. It is also rich in fossil fuel reserves, minerals, and metals such as copper, iron ore, lead, zinc, bauxite, gold, uranium, chrome, nickel, etc. Despite the nation’s oil and mineral wealth and its ethnic diversity, Nazarbayev and his government encountered difficulties establishing and maintaining foreign investment relationships, avoiding corruptive and discrimination practices within and by its government since its Soviet detachment, and producing a united national allegiance and cohesiveness among Kazakh and non-Kazakh people.

Before Soviet colonization, the territory of Kazakhstan was originally inhabited by three hordes, or *zhuzes*, of pastoral nomadic Kazaks of Turgo-Mongol heritage: Small Horde inhabited the West; Middle Horde settled in the North-Central region; and Great Horde occupied the South and Southeast. In the 1700s, threats and territorial invasion from Kalmyk Mongol tribes forced Kazakh’s khans, or chiefs, to seek protection from Russia who later began conquering the area towards the end of that century. The territory
became a part of the USSR in 1936 as the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and Kazakhs continued to be oppressed greatly under Russian rule. 

Born out of the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan gained independence on December 16, 1991; however some Kazakh leaders and a majority of ethnic Russians were rather reluctant to fully separate from Moscow since it was the last republic to declare its own sovereignty, while other Soviet republics enthusiastically jumped on the secessionist bandwagon to seek greater autonomy. President Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev also hesitated because he originally recognized the interdependency between Russia’s and Kazakhstan’s economies and thought a complete break in their relationship would trouble Kazakhstan’s financial growth. Nevertheless, independence pushed through but the struggle remained for ethnic Russians to accept Kazakh statehood. Therefore, capital relocation was conceived as a plan to address the economic and ethnic dilemmas under the new post-colonial independence as well as problems in the former capital.

**Ethnic dilemma: Kazakh vs. Russians**

Tensions specifically between Kazakhs and Russians began as early as the fifteenth century when the Kazakh tribesmen sought Russian protection from invaders leading the way to Russian colonialism of the territory. Centuries later under Soviet rule, conditions worsened as incidents of abuse by Russians toward Kazakhs included the

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22 Ibid., 35.
famine during the 1890s when Kazakhs were removed from their traditional land to make way for Russians and again after World War II to accommodate European settlers.

In the twentieth century, numerous events sparked heightened ill-treatment of the Kazakh people by Russians. The deportation and forcible removal of thousands served as punishment for Kazakhs who participated in nationalist protest and uprisings such as the Central Asian Revolt in 1916. The collectivization policies in the 1920s and 1930s caused mass hunger and starvation, killing millions of Kazakhs. Stalin’s regime attack on Kazakh elites and intelligentsia provoked more anti-Russian sentiment. During the Alma Ata Uprising of 1986, protestors were killed and injured amid demonstrations against the replacement of the autocratic ruler Dinmuhammad Kunayev, serving for twenty years. He was fired by Mikhail Gorbachev due to his extreme corruptive practices and replaced by a Russian outsider Gennady Kolbin instead of a Kazakh.23

Since independence, troubles between the two groups persist but their roles have reversed. The general population composed of about 40 percent Kazakhs and 37 percent Russians during the independence period.24 Over the years, however, the Russians withdrew from the country in mass numbers as they claimed unfair policies that excluded Russian participation in government and civic culture. Since the Soviet collapse, ethnic Russians, left with no Soviet patronage, dropped from majority to minority due to their refusal to accept Kazakh-leaning changes in policy and customs, specifically language, resulting in the departure of over a million Russians over the span of two decades starting


24 Olcott, Unfulfilled Promise, 11.
in the late 1980s.\textsuperscript{25} Thus, the withdrawal of Russians and elevation of Kazakhs have influenced the social class composition, “...the country’s elite is 80-90 percent Kazakh, the Russians are still the backbone of the country’s middle class, although this is changing.”\textsuperscript{26} If interethnic relations were a battle before the independence, then it would be no less simple after.

To add to the ethnic woes, both Kazakhs and Russians stake a territorial claim on Kazakhstan. Kazakhs say that they are heirs of the land of their ancestors in which they were driven out from. Russians argue that they took over land that was abandoned and neglected by Kazakhs or that the territory originally belonged to the Soviet frontier.\textsuperscript{27} Thus, the relocation was a strategy to tackle this social discord by which it also aims to address concerns over the former capital’s role in social relations between Russians and Kazakhs.

\textbf{Almaty’s geo-physical troubles}

While Kazakhstan’s geographic positioning is criticized as being at the center of two different civilizations, influencing the social tensions within its boundaries, the geographic location of Almaty also apparently drew substantial criticism. Located on the southern region of Kazakhstan near the Kyrgyzstan border, Almaty’s positioning best served the Kazakh populace concentrated in the South rather than the northerners, mostly dominated by Russians - observed by Nazarbayev to be a hindrance to post-colonial,


\textsuperscript{26} Olcott, \textit{Unfulfilled Promise}, 177.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 56.
nation-building efforts. The ecological and environmental hazards were also significantly problematic for Almaty to continue as a national capital, providing more reasons to relocate the capital.

Under the physical reasons for relocation, Almaty’s troubles consist of ecological, environmental, and structural concerns. One of the official reasons behind relocation was based on scientific predictions of a massive earthquake to hit Almaty. More, the earthquake prone city of 1.5 million inhabitants has other significant issues regarding severe overcrowding, pollution, and limitations on future development. The Zailiiskii Alatau Mountains that sit south and east of Almaty trap the city with significant air pollution and smog and limit the city’s urban expansion. In addition, the city’s seismic history has made any attempt for upward expansion via skyscrapers and tall buildings a costly affair. Furthermore, Soviet rule is reflected through Almaty’s architecture and style, leaving many Kazakhs inhabitants there at ill-ease.28

In regards to being a non-centrally positioned capital, Almaty was also viewed as an ineffective governing and commercial center that could not be equitably accessed in the country. However, according to Schatz, Almaty is better geographically positioned to serve as the communication, transport, and commercial link to Central Asian states than to Kazakhstan’s inner regions.29 Almaty’s proximity to China, whose relationship with former Soviet nations was unclear until late 1990, also produced some security concerns, thereby provoking a move toward the Soviet frontier.30

28 This paragraph takes accounts from Jonathan Aitken, Nazarbayev and the Making of Kazakhstan (London: Continuum, 2009), 224-225.

29 Schatz, “Capital Cities Say,” 123.

30 Wolfel, “North To Astana,” 495.
In the framework of colonial symbolism, Almaty represented an old system with a deteriorating ecology; relocation served as a colonial detachment tool. It was the capital under the colonial Soviet period, and its posts would not have properly represented Nazarbayev’s image of a new Kazakhstan. Beyond the worsening conditions in Almaty, Nazarbayev’s relocation plans were to tackle several more issues involving socio-economic matters, the most important being the issue of reconciliation and social harmony. Since the location of Almaty would not effectively inspire a diverse citizenry to pledge allegiance to a newly independent nation, the capital shift to Astana was undertaken to form the foundation of a state built in a more centrally located zone, designed to foster a unified national identity under an independent Kazakh flag.

Astana: A leader’s vision and mission

Remaining faithful to his belief in Astana, Nazarbayev’s mission of social integration and reconciliation of diverse ethnic groups, specifically between Kazakhs and Russians, via capital relocation appears to be the most challenging attempt in his career. With Nazarbayev as the mastermind behind the concept and implementation of the relocation from Almaty to Akmola, the new capital was inaugurated on November 8, 1997 in which he later renamed to Astana. But the effort wasn’t without difficulty. The bright expectations of the capital toward social and economic progress were somewhat muddied with the challenges of incorporating non-Kazakhs and Kazakhs people under unified nationality and patriotism. Other obstacles were the challenges of securing investments and gaining support for the construction of the city.
Under a social framework, President Nazarbayev implemented the relocation strategy for multiple reasons. The primary mission was to encourage integration and inclusion in a pluralistic nation as a means to set a new atmosphere towards reconciliation specifically between Kazakhs and Russians. In Nazarbayev’s vision, Astana would bear a Eurasian symbolism in order to “hinge” together the European and Asian cultures: “Nazarbayev suggested that all Kazakhstans—whether of Kazakh, Russian, or other cultural background—were Eurasian (an amalgam of peoples located at the heart of a super-continent).”

Secondarily, by bringing the capital closer to the Russian frontier, the move was a response to allay ethnic Russians’ discomforts to the new independent Kazakh government; the placement of more Kazakh government presence and control in the northern region aimed to suppress sentiments and unrest from ethnic Russians wanting to incorporate northern Kazakhstan into the Russian federation. Thirdly, the relocation was to address sub-ethnic divisions among the Kazakh hordes; Nazarbayev, being from the Greater Horde of the south, looked to the north territory of the Middle Horde to place the new capital of Astana, a move that resulted in him gaining some loyalty from the clans of the Middle Horde.

While new ties to groups were being forged, old political ties were being broken. The transfer of the capital made some political clanship changes:

One of the motives for moving the capital of Kazakhstan was the wish to separate the Kazakhstani government from the powerful clans that are located in Almaty. The clan structure in Kazakhstan is very important for the political development of the country. Nazarbayev hopes that the move of the capital to the north will allow him to chart the course of development for the country with

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31 Schatz, “Capital Cities Say,” 130.
32 Ibid., 129.
limited interference from the powerful clans in Almaty.\textsuperscript{33}

Therefore, Astana would stand as a new political ground for the production of a new economy.

On the economic front, Nazarbayev believed that Astana offered solutions for the ailments of the former capital and held the torch for Kazakhstan’s future. The new capital would bring more financial opportunities to strengthen the weakened economy, and the city could access new foreign capital and markets. However, substantial controversy circulated over the building of Astana during Kazakhstan’s economic crisis in that period: “The budget for Kazakhstan's new capital, Astana, has been slashed by seventy-five per cent amid warnings that the country's economic situation is expected to worsen. Kazakh officials have confirmed that the budget has been reduced from one-hundred million dollars to twenty-five million dollars.” \textsuperscript{34}

Before Astana could be opened up for business, difficulties arose in acquiring and spending money for the construction of Astana; therefore, Nazarbayev’s system for paying for the new capital required some creative strategy with hints of a patronage system. To reward his supporters and extract extra-budgetary funds to build the city, Nazarbayev allowed his loyalists, domestic companies, and foreign investors to have a footing in construction of the new capital; they would bid for preferential contracts while he accepted contributions, or “donations,” from them.\textsuperscript{35} The price-tag of more than $400 million for the construction of Astana, Nazarbayev boasted, never came out of the state’s

\textsuperscript{33} Wolfel, “North To Astana,” 501.


\textsuperscript{35} Schatz, “Capital Cities Say,” 126.
treasury; however reports claimed that some funding, such as moving governmental offices, came from the state budget.  

For his personal motives, Nazarbayev used the relocation to marginalize his opponents and critics, to bolster his supporters, to gain some new ones, and to muster up new patronage networks.  

Going against major opposition from the general public, not surprisingly from many Almaty inhabitants, Nazarbayev devoted every effort to completing his new capital. As a result of his efforts, Astana was dubbed by UNESCO as a “City of Peace,” and housed more than 2,000 companies and a population of 700,000.

Although Nazarbayev pushed to make Astana a prominent social and economic hub, some sentiments emerged that there has not been enough progress to alleviate the socio-economic conditions and improve the relations between Kazahks and non-Kazakhs. His concentration on leaving behind his legacy of new capital may have trumped the purposes behind the relocation to establish better social relationships and economic opportunities for the populace. Hence, challenges still lie on the road ahead for Nazarbayev and his government.

From Astana, more challenges ahead

The creation of the capital Astana is regarded as Nazarbayev’s most signature move as a concrete testament of his legacy in independent Kazakhstan’s history. However, there is some confusion whether the relocation accomplished the goals of social reconciliation and economic growth stimulation. Not only has social conflicts interfered with its economy, there still remains the problem of fostering a united national

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36Ibid., 111; Wolfel, “North To Astana,” 500.

identity and allegiance. As the Kazakh language dominates the media, business, government, and social culture, ethnic Russians and other minorities are feeling uncomfortable and see themselves at a disadvantage.

More, mounting issues within society have affected all ethnic groups including Kazakhs themselves. As the government turned to more democratization attempts, the public has decried the government for the lack of diverse representation in the majority Kazakh government administrations and offices, contributing to more social discontent. While about half the population lives below the poverty line, there has been an unequal distribution of wealth throughout state. The country’s economic turmoil and political issues have fueled tensions among ethnic and sub-ethnic lines and have produced friction between rural versus urban, poor vs. rich, and north vs. south. Moreover, rampant corruption with various accounts of tax evasion, bribery, illegal barter trading, money laundering, and misappropriation of funds remains Kazakhstan’s biggest threat to social justice and progress.

It would be way too idealistic to assume that changing a capital would remedy all social ills, but the emergence of new problems may have not been anticipated. Specifically from the capital relocation, the move closer to the Russian frontier had heightened unrest from the Uyghur community since it created distance from the Chinese border. As for Astana, some complain about the capital’s location being too isolated:

If you fly south-east, eventually you reach Almaty after 1,200 kilometres. If you fly west, the first city of any size is Atyrau, centre of the Caspian oil industry, some 1,600 kilometres away. Travelling due north, there is a vast expanse of

38 Olcott, Unfulfilled Promise, 172.
emptiness punctuated only by endless wheat fields, occasional farming villages and two small provincial towns. To the north-east lies Siberia. A north-west course takes you to Moscow, a three and a half hour flight away.  

Astana’s residents also experienced infrastructural troubles with electricity access and housing quality issues, health concerns involving significant number of tuberculosis cases, and climate problems with extreme winters and scorching summers.  

Capital relocation has proved to be a very tricky matter in which old expectations may not be satisfied, and new surprises may not be welcomed. But Kazakhstan is making some steps to correct the socio-economic problems. Since Kazakhstan officials recognized the country’s corruptive weakness and ineffective punishment procedures, the government claimed to be committed to developing its anti-corruption policies, practice, and enforcement. The nation’s economy is still on a rocky road as it struggles to be more competitive. And the original social cohesion matter now depends on socio-economic and political reforms in law, legislation, and practices. Since the capital has already been established, more actions by President Nazarbayev, the government, and associates are expected to be produced from Astana onwards.

**Analytical Tools**

The complicated nature of transferring a capital is a process that has challenges from inception to inauguration and beyond. Therefore, the experiences of these relocations raise several key points to be explored when implementing such a change in other nations, such as Haiti. These analytical tools will demonstrate how the tactics of

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41 Wolfel, “North To Astana,” 499.
relocation can affect the existing socio-political patterns and tendencies that obstruct the development of people and the nation as a whole.

The first observation consists of addressing the matter of the target audience. Who will the new capital be built for; who will occupy the capital; and will the new capital generate the same old tendencies of promoting client/patronage systems and excluding those with no powerful ties or economic prowess? In both cases, the new capital, housing the government or parts of it, intimidated those who felt disadvantaged in some way (Russians or rural Tanzanians). For the purpose of unifying people across socio-economic lines, relocation must incorporate a system of equality and fairness in opening the channels for an array of business to operate and function; this equality must also be pursued in the spatial allocation of services and infrastructure in the city’s layout. Even though some benefits can be gained from the measure, there’ll always be someone or something at the losing end.

The second observational tool addresses the elite resistance agenda in which perceived losses and ways of retribution must be examined. As there is much distress by some over relocating a capital, what is the magnitude of loss suffered from the transition, and who are the ones at the receiving end of it: the politicians, the elite, the minority, or the general public? As seen in Tanzania, some members of the political and commercial arena, who perceive their eventual loss of resources and status, may discourage the process. The former capital can also be perceived as the biggest “loser.” The questions surrounding the capital are very significant: what will happen to it and the people who inhabit it, especially those who are not able to relocate themselves? Most importantly,
will the old capital waste away? The costs beyond monetary factors affecting the former capital and its inhabitants should also be considered.

Furthermore, other cities, provinces, and especially rural zones are added to this predicament since they will also be affected by the relocation. Creating further distances from places that profited from the vicinity of the former capital will spark fierce debate. Thus, the system of center-periphery vicinity profiteering must be adjusted in order to facilitate those outside of this “neighbor network” system.

The third tool speaks of the players involved in the process of relocation. As noted before, it is usually an authoritarian leader who pushes the relocation ahead; hence the role of the leader(s) is extremely important. The progression of a relocation is a test of wills, usually endured by a single man (or woman) or a small group of individuals at the top. However, other players are essential in making sure the new capital is formed and functional, principally domestic citizens and the international community. Tanzania needed money from the international community and so did Kazakhstan in many ways. In the case of Kazakhstan, where the nation was already complicated by drawbacks rooted from deep socio-cultural wounds, true nation rebuilding is almost impossible without the participation of minorities and diverse groups. Thus, the willingness and motivation of the domestic public to accept and acknowledge the new capital are necessary to allow the successful transition in promoting nation rebuilding efforts and the progress of the capital. It is also essential to allow and encourage as many people to participate in all the stages of the relocation.
The fourth tool consists of additional and complementary plans to coincide with the relocation. Corruption in these countries continues to be a grave problem; social and regional injustices are prevalent too. Thus, efforts are ongoing to combat those existing problems after a new capital has been built. Geographic positioning of the new capital can never alone solve the problems of the state, even if the new site physically breaks away from the colonial base, the saturated location of negative habits and traditions. In the effort to detach from these tendencies, emotional and mental change on the part of the individual are also needed, and the systematized, institutionalized functions of the state must be altered.

The fifth tool analyzes the reality of breaking with colonial ties. Do these efforts result in a successful change in forming a new national identity, or does it reinforce old attitudes? Kazakhstan attempted to detach from colonial Russian reminders found in their former capital of Almaty and establish a new Kazakhstan-centered image in Astana. Similarly, setting a different path away from German / British influences, Tanzania wanted to operate under new leadership by moving centrally to devote more attention to citizens in the hinterlands by forming a capital in the heart of the country. The end results of colonial detachment are not so clear. Some may even suggest that relocation failed under this criterion since former colonial capitals still thrive more than the new ones, and colonial tendencies may not have fully been reversed, provoking more of the same under new management. Nonetheless, the relocations are still justifiable in some sense since their initial and symbolic attempt aimed to usher in forms of change.
The final tool concentrates on the subject of money. Who will pay for it? How will the money be spent? Kazakhstan offered a controversial way of paying for the relocation. But the utilization of patronage network systems may affront the manner of equal opportunity in businesses, while replicating the same problems of clientelism, if produced in Haiti. If the old capital is still the vanguard of the nation, as in Tanzania, some may consider the money wasted on the relocation and the new capital. There is a risk that even with the best drawn, well-intentioned plans to bring out positive reforms, a bitter disaster during or at the end of the process can transpire. And, the money may dry up during the process. It is prudent to weigh the monetary arguments in support of or against the endeavor and to address alternatives to where the money would be the most effective and do the most good.

A Precautionary Tale

The cases of Tanzania and Kazakhstan offer certain displeasures and hopes in regards to relocating and building a capital. The idealist arguments from relocation proponents are that the newly relocated capital will promote better governance and administrative performance, serve as a model of infrastructural durability, and boost economic activities. For a colonized country with a coast-side capital, like Tanzania, a centrally located capital would be an equitably located apparatus to better serve the citizens in post-colonial, independent rule. As a social reconstruction tool in Kazakhstan, relocation has attempted to hinge together differing parties and help set a new environment for healing social wounds. The unfortunate reality to such moves shows that these ideal goals are slow to take effect, if ever fully accomplished; more social and

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political conflicts can arise; and transition operations can come to a halt. However, these relocations are not total failures. Rather, they were reasonable efforts with setbacks and can still be corrected in some form.

If projected benefits still outweigh the risks to implementing a capital relocation in other countries, let both case studies serve as a warning to “proceed with caution” when developing a new capital. Inhabitants, developers, and government officials should all be vigilant on decreasing wasteful spending, prohibiting hastily done jobs, and enacting steps to ensure the accessibility to services, the complete construction of infrastructure, and the occupation of buildings. Endeavors for social reconstruction maintain that establishing a new capital to promote nation building is a complicated process with many obstacles. As these cases show, what matters most is how the government treats its citizens no matter where it is located. Thus, reconciling groups is more a matter of policy and fair representation even if a new capital is set to be the base for new beginnings for a new statehood.

When turning attention towards Haiti, considerations must address the benefits and harms that relocation will bring to the Caribbean island at this point in time. Certainly, the attempt to transition power elsewhere away from Port-au-Prince will stir up fierce debate and opposition. The intent is not to replicate the same problems of PAP to another location, creating more ecological, economic, and environmental burdens for the country. The effort to foster better partnerships and cooperativeness among people is at the heart of the problem, and whether a new locale can encourage this is discussed in the next chapter. Therefore, by correctly mimicking Tanzania’s and Kazakhstan’s intentions,
the pursuits of relocation in Haiti are to remove the government via capital away from its “comfort zone,” to break away from the base that is saturated in centuries’ worth of negative colonial patterns, and to bring attention to the underused and neglected areas of the country. For Haiti and for many other countries, the progress of the state and the success of capital relocation depend on a number of factors. The most important is having a competent government with an efficient system of governance to undertake the mission.
CHAPTER 3

ASSESSING A CAPITAL MOVE IN HAITI

The transitioning of the capital, as seen from the case studies, generates many challenges and complications that can likely be reproduced in Haiti, if relocation was to occur. Several key analytical elements are gathered from the capital relocation experiences of Tanzania and Kazakhstan, as they pursued measures toward realizing new state identities by breaking away from the colonial patterns of their states. While their occurrences provide a cautionary tale of the pitfalls of implementing relocation, their own pre-existing national troubles seriously weakened the actual relocation process and challenged its goals. In addition, as ascertained from the case studies, relocation requires pertinent leaders to be completely dedicated from its inception to well after its completion. Thus, the pursuit of capital relocation, in addressing multiple pressing concerns, demands the doubling in time, energy, effort, planning, and financial resources, especially since there are two processes are at work - the building of a new capital and the moving from the old. In spite of the array of obstacles and disruptions, the lessons from Tanzania and Kazakhstan can still shed positive light for Haiti by providing some vital knowledge to the required steps needed to help smooth the progress and secure the objectives of capital relocation in the island nation.

Since significant analytical tools are gained from these studies, they will be applied to the country’s current situation, in which critical observations will reveal the possible effects of a Haitian relocation. Before relocation can occur, alterations will be needed on the part of Haitians and the relocation process; thus, this chapter will examine these needed requirements in order to facilitate a healthy, successful transition. From
these observations, the fundamental goals of relocation in Haiti will be explained in
detailing the urgent needs that must be addressed from the process. Finally, a list of
guidelines and considerations will be produced to increase the likelihood of a successful
relocation in Haiti, and elsewhere.

**Analytical Tools in Observing Haiti**

The analytical tools defined in chapter two will help explore the impacts that
capital relocation would have on Haiti and explain how Haiti’s current socio-political and
economic situation would affect relocation. These tools pertain to the subject of target
audience, relocation antagonists, the role of leaders and other participants, colonial
detachment, supplementary measures, and financial considerations. In the quest to
produce important goals and aims by the use of relocation, these analytical tools will seek
to generate the remedies needed to reverse the unsatisfactory conditions existing in
Haiti’s capital and the rest of the state.

**A capital for whom?**

The establishment of a new capital involves a target audience in mind. In the
scope of Haiti, three different approaches will be utilized to explain which types of
occupants will inhabit the new capital and which individuals will profit from the move:
the scientific approach, the socio-economic approach, and the equitable approach. The
evaluation of these types of individuals, benefactors as a result of the relocation, will
essentially provide perspective on the type of capital to be developed.

The scientific approach corresponds to the scientists’ proposal of relocating the
Haitian capital to avoid another disaster; this geological address was directed to the
government. Since these scientists’ domain does not expand beyond the parameters of
seismology and geology, they cannot determine who should or shouldn’t move in the new capital. However, it is clear that the primary target audience in this approach is the government apparatus; thus, a new administrative capital would be created. As observed in Tanzania, relocation does not always guarantee the transfer of all government offices, since the presidential office remains in Dar es Salaam. It is very likely that if the president moves, most, if not all, other offices would follow suit. Similarly, Haiti’s most powerful institution is no doubt the presidential office, and since the presidential palace was destroyed, the scientific standpoint would be primarily to safeguard and transfer that office. However, if the highest office in the land did not relocate, then the same outcome seen in Tanzania would be expected to result in Haiti, in which only a fraction of the government offices would transfer elsewhere.

The socio-economic approach in the realm of target audience incorporates a capitalist ideology mixed with the colonial tendencies in Haiti. The gist of this approach tackles the global problem of affordability and the high cost of urban living; only those who can afford the expensive lifestyle of the capital can live there comfortably, while struggling individuals harbor in unplanned, destitute settlements. Since a massive amount of money is spent to build a new capital with improved infrastructure, the capital must therefore generate a sturdy amount of income and financial profits. Foreign and domestic investors lay their stake in the new capital by reaping the awards of their investments through the construction of luxury apartments, condos, and hotels to attract a specific class of paying individuals. The majority of the labor force, working in the new capital, is not be able to live within this zone, creating underdeveloped, outskirt communities on the perimeter of the capital.
The unequal socio-economic living standards in Haiti are based out of the influences of the colonial-inherited class separation. In Port-au-Prince, the bourgeois class lives in the hilly areas away from the downtown area and government center, where a high concentration of poor masses inhabit. If a better, more sophisticated capital was built elsewhere, it is likely that the upper elite would have a footing in the new capital, possibly acquiring secondary homes there while maintaining their homes in the hills of PAP. Haitian middle class members would surely flock to the new capital if more contemporary and equipped buildings and homes were in the relocation plans; of course, the poor sector would move, regardless, in search of opportunities. However, the upper and middle class would demand that their communities be physically distant and aesthetically different from the poor masses, the bourgeois community wanting the most upscale and exclusive section of all.

Since this form of communal segregation exists on countless global frontiers, Haitian social segregation orients more towards racial and class discrimination. For example, an economically-elevated black man, who originated from the poor sector and became wealthy, would have a tougher time entering into the traditional Haitian bourgeois community than a mulatto person with lesser money. However, because literacy is an important aspect to social elevation, the Haitian aristocracy community would be more accepting of a rich black individual who symbolized mulatto virtues, specifically an educated, French-speaking Catholic, over a rich black person of limited education who conveyed the African-rooted virtues, a Voodoo practicing, Kreyol speaker. Likewise, in an apartment setting, legacy middle class individuals (those of middle class origins) may not want to inhabit the same building of elevated middle class
individuals of lesser origins. Thus, if a better-equipped, more sophisticated, and resilient capital is propelled by these class-driven attitudes, this city would be a reverse of what is seen in PAP today, that is the upper and middle class would keep the new capital restrictive, seeing more of them in the downtown area than the poor.

The equitable approach combines the significant social disparities in PAP, the issue of fair resource distribution and access, and widespread infrastructural development. In an effort to establish a more democratic, fair, and balanced capital, this approach aims to reverse the syndrome that benefits the same “sorts” and disadvantages the same “others” in PAP. This approach attempts to incorporate as many types of individuals in the habitation of the city, given that those individuals work to maintain, preserve, and advance the new capital. Therefore, the new capital carries an equal representation of diverse groups in a controlled and regulated setting and seats the government institutions most able to implement and enforce better policies and laws for the advancement of the capital and state.

This approach recognizes that socio-economic segregated communities will naturally evolve, but addresses that the poorer communities cannot fall into the depths of PAP’s current deplorable conditions. Thus, the new capital must have the basic infrastructure of electricity, water, sanitation, and housing available to all sectors; the urban space must entail equitable access and fair distribution of jobs and service institutions, such as schools, police stations and hospitals, in the layout of the capital. The development of public housing must also be included, especially for the labor force who would be commissioned to build and maintain the structures of the new capital. In
addition, for the safety and preservation of the new capital, Haitian authorities must install effective enforcement measures to counter the constant uncontrolled in-migration, overcrowding problems, and dangerous construction practices that have long debilitated PAP, impacting the ecological, environmental and infrastructural setting of the urban landscape.

Furthermore, in applying a scientific prevention spin on this approach, government officials cannot be viewed as more “valuable” in needing more protection from a future calamity than regular citizens; all of them must be protected. Port-au-Prince’s failure to provide security and safety for its general population before and after the earthquake has generated current demands for an improved capital, with an efficient government, that can perform effectively in times of urgency and normalcy.

The resistance front

The relocation opposition groups consist of those who perceived themselves on the losing end of the stick, and resistance can be fierce enough to stop the process dead in its tracks. As observed in the case studies, politicians and elites are usually composed of these resistance fronts; many of the public have also decried relocation, in fear of wasting vital limited funds. Although the public at large may vehemently oppose relocation, it is the high-ranking politicians that set the course for the plans, either by working for or against relocation. The commercial and political elites of Port-au-Prince would be no different. The discussion to remove capital status and power away from PAP, the city of major historic, cultural, economic, and political importance in Haiti, would definitely produce serious debate and serious hesitation; in fact, the matter is still being debated within the government. However, the discussion has been stalled since the current
pressing concern focuses on the presidential election, but the relocation talks may be revived again once a new president takes power.

Apart from politicians, major threats to relocating this capital would come from PAP’s business monopolies, consisting of bourgeois families that have secured their investments mostly in PAP. As evidenced by the major underdevelopment of other Haitian cities, the markets and economies of the bourgeoisie and big businesses are predominately tied to the PAP and seldom elsewhere; investing and establishing more markets outside of PAP would cost them more riches, money that they may not be willing to spend. Thus, their interests lie with the institutionalized circuits of PAP as well as their close connections to political forces.

Outside the elite factor, major outcry against relocation would also come from the public, specifically PAP hardliners and possibly the inhabitants of the host site. Many Haitians would not accept the idea of PAP no longer being the Haitian capital for a number of personal and economic reasons. In addition, many non-capital dwelling Haitians would not tolerate bringing the government apparatus closer to them. Since many Haitians perceive the government as untrustworthy and corrupt and regard politicians as criminals, many individuals who have suffered under the hands of the repressive government regimes have fled the capital, if they weren’t able to leave the country entirely. Moreover, the government’s mismanagement in protecting PAP’s ecological, environmental and social settings may generate more fears that such patterns will repeat on the home turf of the host site inhabitants.
As confidence in the Haitian government continues to dwindle in light of more election fraud allegations, relocation critics would suggest that the money to develop the new capital cannot be entrusted in the hands of this government. There is a chance more corruption and misappropriation of funds may occur and that other programs may lack sufficient funds. The issue of accountability can create more dissensions over relocation.

Although relocation plans may not satisfy everyone, there are some steps that can be made to lessen some negative consequences and promote more “winners” than “losers.” Considerations must be weighed about providing compensation and assurance to those at a loss from the change, and planning must allow the voicing of concerns from many diverse individuals from various socio-economic and political backgrounds. The most important consideration is not to subject the old capital to neglect and abandonment; planning for PAP’s reconstruction too must be employed. Prior to the actual execution of capital relocation, abundant and healthy discussions on the anticipated problems of relocation beforehand are needed, in which various perspectives from the Haitian people can be gained to aid the progression of relocation.

**Leadership and participation**

While global commitment and domestic participation are important to the relocation process, the essential component for real progress lies on the shoulders of the state authorities and leaders. The role of leaders is important to every step of capital relocation; usually long-term authoritarian leaders have implemented capital relocation for their states. For instance, Kazakhstn’s current president Nazarbayev, taking presidential office since 1990, stood in power for seven years before Astana was finally inaugurated. Likewise, Tanzania’s former president Nyerere, assuming office from 1961
until 1985, participated in the early relocation plans during the late 1960s to 1970s; however Dodoma wasn’t quite recognized as a capital until 1996, well after his departure. Therefore, relocations depend on two factors on the president’s part: his willingness and his duration in office.

Looking at Haiti’s troubled political past, the country’s major challenge is finding capable and trustworthy leaders. Haitian leaders have lacked true initiative to promote an atmosphere of reconciliation and unity among societal and political members; thus finding strong, effective leaders to push forward a relocation project would be painstaking. In addition, the cruel Duvalier father-son regime, which was the longest running dictatorship in Haiti, made a lasting impression on a majority of Haitians who now dread leaders who don’t observe the presidential mandates set by the Haitian Constitution, which dictates two non-consecutive 5-year terms. And since capital relocations can take up to more than five years, a newly elected president must be willing to take up the slack of his or her predecessor.

Beyond the involvement of the president, the participation and involvement of various members within society are needed to contribute to the project as a nation-building endeavor. Certainly, continuous financial and administrative support from the government, private sectors, and foreign community are crucial for pre- and post-relocation efforts, from the design and layout planning to the infrastructural maintenance of the city decades after its completion. More, as “hinging” maneuver, the participation of the diverse citizenry can be a chance to create social bonds and ties by working together for a new, resilient capital.
In the aftermath of the earthquake, the healing process for the Haitian people must incorporate a multitude of tasks to pave their own rehabilitation, instead of merely usurping donated aid. Thus, the relocation can serve as means to voice their opinions and suggestions on the matter, to allow them to manually build their recovery, and to continue to learn about ecological and environmental durability and safety.

**Breaking colonial ties & added measures**

In conjunction to creating new social bonds, the most socio-culturally significant purpose of relocation appeals is to break away from negative colonial-based traditions that segregate and oppress the population under class and racial terms. Because altering the negative colonial effects in Haiti is a major undertaking, complementary measures must be added to the relocation plans for this pursuit.

Relocation sets the new iconic stage for new customs and practices to be established in reversing the negative socio-political system, inherited from the colonial era and post-colonial beginnings. The new capital therefore stands as a symbolic representation of a post-colonial independent state with architectural and landmarks to reflect more native “Haitian” influences. Therefore, to form a new foundation for the new capital involves many adjustments to the existing socio-political, ecological and environment conditions by producing effective law, legislation, regulations, and enforcements. Specifically, building and housing codes that were nonexistent in PAP must now be developed and effectively enforced for the capital and the entire nation. Environmental degradation in rural communities and the underdevelopment of other urban areas must be addressed in order to slow the migration of Haitians toward the capital, those who flock the capital looking for a better life.
As a breeding ground for the discriminatory practices, violent upheavals, and mismanagement and corruption, PAP stands as the primary culprit for the entire island’s current socio-economic, ecological, environmental and political traumas. Perhaps Haitians need to physically break from a deeply-rooted colonial capital of PAP to psychologically detach themselves from the negative practices and attitudes within the city. Port-au-Prince’s capacity to preserve the cycle of making the rich richer, the poor poorer, and the powerful greedier deems the capital as a toxic environment for many of its inhabitants, where health and safety are at high risks. In this respect, relocating the capital may be a vital solution for the future security and development of Haiti.

Money matters most

The deciding factor concerning all relocations is the issue of financial resources. Anti-relocation critics predominately use the money argument to challenge the endeavor; they often argue that relocation money could be allocated towards other pressing needs or that the state cannot take the huge financial burden under existing economic difficulties. Both arguments were used in Tanzania and Kazakhstan, and they surely uphold to Haiti’s situation. The country’s poor economy and repeatedly mismanaged, corrupt governments are solid reasons to prohibit the relocation act. Still, there may be solutions to secure some resources by making certain adjustments within the government institutions.

Although the Haitian coffers are not near enough to supply the necessary funds for capital relocation, major difficulties in filling the treasury overall involve problems in tax collection, wasteful expenditures, and accountability. Insufficient tax enforcements to collect tax from citizens and private business as well as to effectively prohibit tax
aversion tactics greatly contributes to the country’s poor financial state; citizens, investors and government all contribute to the flaws within the tax collection system. In addition, money is severely wasted by the government’s distribution of “zombie checks;” these are checks written out to individuals who no longer work for the government or have died, but many are still somehow cashed by others. Once the government establishes a more effective means to obtain and keep money in the treasury, the other matter is to ensure that the money is properly allocated, getting to where it needs to go. Therefore, wealth must be distributed fairly to cover diverse socio-economic communities throughout the country by the use of decentralization. And most importantly, officials must be held accountable and tried by the courts for any transgressions that enrich them personally instead of putting the needs of the state first.

Even with improvements within the administration, the state still needs financial help with relocation, for it cannot take sole financial responsibility from start to end. The involvement of foreign donors is necessary, but they too must consider if their financial contributions would be well invested by this procedure. The cajoling and persuading of the rich Haitian elites and the Diaspora community to give financial and material contributions can be another financial outlet. Haitian officials and ambassadors should take an active role in finding various types of investors and support. Still, for these investors to be comfortable in putting money towards a Haitian relocation, the government must work on itself to produce a stable political environment.

In closing this section, the analytical observations presented correspond to the World Bank’s views on population relocation. Several guiding principles provided by
World Bank specialists express significant values that are resonant with the capital relocation efforts:

An effective relocation plan is one that affected population helps develop and views positively...Relocation is not only about housing people, but also about reviving livelihoods and rebuilding the community, the environment, and social capital...The host community is part of the affected population and should be involved in planning.¹

Many of these guidelines closely adhere to the observations defined in this analytical study. The key point from these guidelines, which reiterates the intentions of capital relocation, is that relocation is more than housing people, more than providing a safe seating for the government. Therefore, capital relocation must promote the rebuilding of lives and livelihoods, not just homes and edifices.

The Risky Pursuit of the Haitian Motto: Reasons for Relocation

From the analytical study, the results show that the actual undertaking of a relocation of Haiti is a highly complicated procedure. Relocation runs serious risks of track-stopping obstacles from resistance elites, wasteful expenditures by the government, and dissatisfaction from the public in completing its set objectives; even unexpected complications can arise, including the risk of the money-well running dry. If there are more perceived “losers” than “winners,” more disadvantages over benefits, and the likelihood that “relocation winners” will consist of the same bunch of PAP’s profiteers, then the chances for relocating successfully will likely decline, and the relocation goals of overall social advancement and unity and breaking with negative colonial ties will become meaningless, making the relocation venture counterproductive.

However, looking beneath the surface of difficulties, the chance to implement capital relocation may be a risk worth taking, providing that considerable steps and planning are thoroughly examined and relocation is conducted as an enforcer of productive socio-economic and political changes, instead of as an alternative to them. Just by acknowledging some of the risks firsthand and making efforts along the way to correct them can be a good start to relocation. Tough decisions are always needed to break from the norm; therefore, relocation itself is a tough decision in order to break away from old influences and create positive changes.

In light of the deadly aftermath in PAP and the expectation of a future quake, some public support may have been gained for relocation; it is quite possible that the shock of the earthquake has shaken people’s sensibilities and attitudes towards pro-relocation sentiments. There was some public opinion, prior to the quake, that Haiti needed a more attractive capital since PAP was severely degraded. In this post-quake stage, it is likely that people may prefer safety and endurance over instability and deterioration, but that doesn’t escape the need for some major convincing to relocate the capital. If a new capital at a new location were to give rise to new hope, new and better infrastructure, more jobs and new opportunities, the outcry against relocation may be short-lived, providing that the benefits were plentiful and fruitful for a majority of diverse people.

In mimicking the relocation intentions of Tanzania and Kazakhstan, Haiti can use relocation to attend to serious concerns in addition to avoiding another major seismic disruption. Therefore, relocation specifically can address ecological and environmental
issues, help relieve pressures in PAP, promote nation-building initiatives and social
equality efforts, bring attention to rural areas and other urban communities, and mark a
fresh, post-colonial identity. For Haiti, these goals of relocation all circulate around the
welfare of the Haitian people and aim to enforce the Haitian motto of “liberty, equality,
and fraternity,” a saying that has yet to truly manifest within Haitian society.

Ecological and environmental issues

In the most ideal of situations, the new capital can become the modern, durable,
and resilient city with all the capable amenities and sturdy infrastructure able to withstand
natural and man-made disasters. The overuse of ignorance and the undersupply of
preparedness in Haiti created the ecological and environmental nightmare in PAP, which
resulted in the highly fatal outcome of the earthquake. The earthquake awoke everyone
about the dangers of living in the capital: the city’s seismic vulnerability, the unsafe
housing, and the mounting health risks from the poor infrastructure.

The complete reconstruction of PAP requires the establishment of proper drainage
and sanitation systems, the removal of debris from the quake and the clearing of waste in
the streets and canals left before the quake, the implementation of underground plumbing
systems and water piping, and the demolition of unsafe houses and buildings and the
construction of safe-ones. Whether the capital is relocated or not, the repairs needed for
PAP would still require relocating PAP residents. Since many people became homeless
by the quake and are living in tents all around PAP, there is a current problem to clear
people away from devastated zones, and many of these people are refusing to leave PAP
in general.
In an effort not to aggravate the sensibilities of PAP occupants by forcibly displacing them, the production of a better, sturdier, and modern capital may orient towards capital relocation, relocating the capital to a low-density area, rather than population relocation, moving a mass of distressed and upset people in PAP. Still, no matter the choice, sturdy shelters must be built to accommodate the millions who are homeless and living in unsafe structures. Although the rebuilding of PAP is necessary, building a durable, modern, resilient capital in an overpopulated area, where an earthquake can happen at any time, gives relocating the capital an edge. Still, the ecological and environmental precautions and vulnerability of the quake-safe host site for the new capital must be assessed, since other natural disasters, such as severe flooding and hurricanes, seasonally attack the heavily deforested island.

**Nation-building and social equality initiatives**

Capital relocation in Haiti would serve as a nation-building strategy. In a country that is divided across many frontiers of class, race, economic standing, literacy, and regional lines, the critical response for the new capital is to promote social equality, thereby opening the long-closed opportunities to the disadvantaged and poor. The new capital must be a welcoming environment for various social, political, and economic individuals to interact and participate in all civil, government, and social matters, to work for the advancement of the poor, to improve economic performance and open industries to diverse investors, to reconcile political differences, and to reverse the effects of social injustices and environmental/ecological hazards throughout the country. These changes may be easier implemented on the fresh ground of a new location with little negative political and elite influences, instead of an environment overly saturated with them.
Addressing David Harvey’s concerns of uneven development on urban space, the planning of relocation must involve strategies to tackle the disproportional struggles among class sectors to acquire wealth (money, education, labor, basic services, etc.) within their communities. The layout of a new capital requires the implementation of better services and access to diverse communities, especially the poor ones, and fair distribution of resourceful institutions, such as schools, hospitals, police, administrative buildings, etc. The new capital must entail balanced development of urban spaces, in which geopolitical and territorial battles are resolved to produce fair access to resources. Basic infrastructure with electricity access, water availability, and sanitation and drainage systems established among all types of communities, especially the poor ones, provides a foundation to social progress and equality.

The equitable distribution of wealth from the government to diverse socio-economic neighborhoods, free from elite and political manipulation, can help heal the social friction that exists in Haiti. The new capital’s development of fair infrastructure and services across the city’s landscape can boost the image of Haiti and government. But fair wealth distribution is not limited to the areas inside the capital; it must be redirected to flow out of the capital into territories starved for resources, thereby creating a capital that is sensitive to the needs of distant villages and communes.

Revitalizing life outside the capital

The ruination of the countryside and other important cities puts Haitian lives and Haiti’s future in jeopardy. Therefore, by improving the overall condition of the state, the other mission of relocation is to encourage attention to rural and other urban areas in
desperate need of resources. Revitalizing life outside the capital can significantly slow down the migration coming to the capital, a factor which greatly impacted the dangerous housing conditions in PAP.

If the host site represents an area once disregarded and abandoned, capital relocation will add more attention and fuel more resources to the area and its surroundings; this may trigger responses to other neglected outposts. Investments to the development of a new capital, if successful, may encourage investments in places outside the capital. But the government must initiate the first push for development outside the capital. For instance, the growing deforestation that threatens all Haitians in rural and urban zones is an urgent matter that should be on top of the government’s to-do list. In addition, lessening Haiti’s heavy dependence on imported goods by improving its ruined agricultural lands can help stabilize the country’s economy and security.

In the effort for national emergency preparedness, the importance in developing other urban areas helps the aid and rescue of disaster-affected people. Because Haiti did not have “back-up” cities to respond to emergency missions during the quake’s aftermath, the bulk of the affected population had to remain or returned to collapsed PAP for aid distribution; airports in Santo Domingo had to be heavily relied on. And affected people in the southern regions, hardest hit by the earthquake, had to wait days before help could arrive via Port-au-Prince. Even if a new capital were to be built, Port-au-Prince would still need to be established as a “back-up” city for the sake of emergency preparedness.
A new post-colonial, hinged capital

The creation of a new capital in Haiti would represent a transitioning from colonial to post-colonial influences in order to hinge together broken social and political groups. According to Abidin Kusno, architecture and urban space are used as representational forms of colonialism which inspire social formations and interactions; in conjunction, transforming a capital to reflect a post-colonial design through the use of architecture and space can also have socio-political effects.¹ From Jean Gottmann’s view on relocation, the formation of the capital can be designed to improve social relations by hinging differing class sectors and racial groups.

By applying the approaches from Kusno and Gottman, the fusion and harmony of Eurocentric and Afro-oriented cultures in a Haitian-style framework of architecture and design can be represented through the new capital, giving it a true Haitian-centered face. By hinging together different influences of the French and Kreyol cultures, the new capital can have a unified Haitian state identity, where members from the bourgeois minority to the mass majority, including the mulatto, black, intelligentsia, members of the Haitian Diaspora, and disadvantaged would interact, live, and work together in order to generate an arena of social harmony and improved social relations.

Haiti’s failure to reverse the effects of colonialism creates an atmosphere where free citizens either become the enslaved (the poor black mass) or the oppressors (socio-political elites). They are all victims who can never fully adhere and perpetuate the Haitian motto of “liberty, equality, and fraternity.” This motto is not realized because the

racial attitudes and skin-color issues endure; business monopolization of the highest class persists; political clashing and violence continue; the non-capital cities and rural sectors struggle for resources; and the proportion of poor, illiterate black Haitians are dramatically high. Thus, the new Haitian capital must work for the Haitian people to exemplify and encourage the Haitian motto. As a pinnacle site for the country, the capital must represent equality in its urban space and layout, liberty in its access and distribution of wealth and opportunities, and fraternity by the habitation of diverse racial, socio-economic groups living in safe environments with basic infrastructure. The new capital must spearhead these values to the rest of the country and be a beacon for many to follow.

The pursuit may sound too idealistic, but many nations with their own set of values make attempts to progress their state and do so by not accepting the status quo. In fact, all these goals expressed in this section are needed in the reconstruction of Port-au-Prince and Haiti, regardless of relocation. Haiti was the first black free republic to liberate itself. If Haitians kicked out French imperialists once, then the effort can be done again to fight against the residual effects of colonialism. If relocation is the way to do so, then Haiti will expect some bumps along the way either by elite blockade, limited financial outlets, other few unexpected surprises. But as understood from Haitian history, the fight for Haiti’s future is no easy feat.

Ingredie

By understanding the complications of capital relocation, the observational analysis of a Haitian relocation produces a guideline list to mitigate and reduce relocation
blunders and increase the chances of its success. When moving forward with relocation, these “ingredients” can help Haiti follow some important considerations in preparation for the trials of the process; they might also help reduce replicating errors experienced from other relocations. The following list of ingredients is practical enough to be observed by any other nations that are considering relocating their capitals:

1. Willingness: Willingness on the part of leaders and the general public is essential for any major transformation that will change the constructs of a state. Relocation demands the willingness of pertinent parties to execute the endeavor from the early stages of planning to the full transfer of institutions and people to the new location and well beyond that.

2. Accompaniment of laws and policies: Social inclusion, equality, and justice do not rest alone on the change of physical location but also depend on laws, policies, and practices that encourage diverse social participation, allow diverse groups to participate in government and business ventures, open the channels of opportunity for the poor and disadvantage, enforce general social safety and security, and promote fair distributions of wealth and resources to diverse socio-economic communities.

3. Strong leaders: Strong leaders are required to push forward and advertise the project from beginning to end and are willing to make the tough decisions in order to bring about necessary changes. These leaders are to be held accountable for their work on relocations, thereby putting the needs of the state above their own personal wants.

4. Financial resources outlets: Initial projections of relocations are seldom the actual final bill. Therefore, financial resources from outlets other than the national treasury are needed to proceed with the undertaking, but this may include improving the government system of collecting taxes, duties, fees, etc. It takes capital to make a capital.

5. Location, location, location: The establishment of the new capital must be easily and equitably accessed to state’s citizens, must be able to accommodate and regulate an influx of individuals, and must be resilient to physical changes or environmental threats. In addition, a thorough evaluation of the host site and its environment is necessary.

6. Anticipation of problems and preparedness: One must always take into account that the relocation process may be lengthy, may be delayed by disruptions, and can be affected by other problems. It is necessary to make an effort to anticipate
potential hindrances and devise tactics needed to remedy inconveniences.

7. A capital relocation by the people and for the people: It is important to ensure that the general public benefits from capital relocation. Planners of the relocation should avoid replicating the patterns of socio-economic disparities within this new area. Relocation should encourage the opinions and participation of diverse socio-economic and political members.

Even while observing these set criteria, other unforeseen negative results may be produced that is unique to Haiti entirely. Capital relocation cannot be held as a flawless endeavor, and it alone cannot automatically fix issues surmounting from years of conflicts and mismanagement. Still, the consideration to relocate the capital cannot simply be rejected on fears of costs and management issues, while the projection of a greater seismic attack threatens PAP and the entire Haitian state continues to suffer from ecological, environmental, socio-economic, and political insecurities.

Capital relocation is not the only answer to Haiti’s problems, but can be part of the solution especially during this period of reconstruction. Since the overall goal of the relocation is not to replicate the same problems of the old capital in the new one, the new capital must have a higher degree of resiliency and durability against the effects of socio-economic, ecological, environmental, and political abuses. In creating a more modern and efficient city with adequate infrastructure, a more responsible and competent government must be placed there to ensure that the goals are being met and that the needs of the general public are being satisfied.

The intent of reconstruction corresponds to the rebuilding of the entire devastated island. Relocation may be the move towards the direction of national recovery in conjunction with other programs designed to foster social equality and advancement, to prepare for future disasters and to repair broken structures and broken-down systems.
Capital relocation is one piece of a complicated rebuilding puzzle, one way to break from the old and begin a fresh new start. Although relocation is not the only method for achieving these goals, it is still one possible tool for reconstruction.
CHAPTER 4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RELOCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

The devastating earthquake has highlighted Haiti’s many faults: the deep dark stigmas, the failure of fair wealth distribution, oppressive and exploitative patterns, and reckless mismanagement across various socio-political levels that interfere with the nation’s progress. Therefore, the central question of this thesis is whether capital relocation can do more: Can it serve to promote better governance, produce a safer and well-equipped environment, foster social equalities in living conditions, relieve the pressures on PAP, and remedy the pre- and post-earthquake woes endured by the nation as a whole? Yes, relocation can. As a tool to decolonize the damaging effects of imperialism and as a means to safeguard important governmental apparatuses, relocation can serve for the purpose of reconstruction, provided that correct steps are followed to ensure its success and completion. But, beware of putting too much faith into one procedure alone; relocation cannot be the only measure implemented to reconstruct and rebuild Haiti overall.

Expanding beyond the perimeters of the capital, rebuilding after this catastrophe incorporates an over-encompassing approach to tackle many feats, required to improve the country as a whole. Just like a hammer cannot be the only instrument used on the construction site, capital relocation needs to be accompanied with other tools. More, these rebuilding devices cannot be used for just one particular location. Therefore, many tools are needed to be used for the general reconstruction of the country.

This chapter is divided in two segments. The first portion deals with relocation’s role in reconstruction activities, in which the importance of the relationship between the
old capital and new capital will be addressed within the framework of capital relocation. Extracted from the case studies, three models - the quake avoidance model, the central regional model, and the old-new capital proximity model - will be tested to produce a recommended Haitian capital site. Furthermore, the risk of the neglect of former capitals by relocation will be discussed by using a brief synopsis of Haiti’s former capital of Cap-Haitien. The second part explains the complementary reconstructive measures that should coincide with relocation but are not exclusive to it. These measures consist of enforcing decentralization and anticorruption initiatives, resurrecting and bringing attention to neglected and abandoned lands, preparing for future cataclysmic occurrences, and building up human resources. Whether or not a relocation of the capital occurs, various programs, like the ones detailed in this chapter, are needed to promote broader nation-building and rebuilding initiatives in order to prepare for the unexpected and even prevent future disasters from happening.

**Reconstruction via Relocation: Linking the Old and the New**

In appreciation of Harvey’s earlier discussion about uneven geographical development, the interconnection between cities and the relationship between the capital and the rest of the state encourage the understanding that the efficacy and success of a new capital depend on the treatment of the former capital and other urban and rural segments. Within the framework of relocation, the relationship between the old capital and the new capital is essential to the future and functioning of the state; or to put it another way, what affects one place will surely affect the other. Tanzania serves as a prime example of this. Because of the bond between these two places, it is important that the former cannot be neglected even if a new city arises and gets most of the attention;
Haiti has suffered in consequence of this. Therefore, relocation should fulfill two goals: the formation of the new capital and the care and concern of the former.

Modeling a new capital site

Although the reconstructive phase signals the adoption of wise urban planning and the fruition of fresh concepts and practices, the building of a new capital cannot always ensure that new conceptual constructs will completely model a new city. The adage that “old habits die hard” comes to mind, and the new capital is often built out of old principles. However, new practices must emerge from the understanding of how destructive the old habits were. On the other hand, the acknowledgement of good “old practices and influences” must continue to be adhered to, thereby giving a nation’s legacy or heritage a distinct quality over others. For Haiti, cultural stereotypes and oppression should cease to influence the dynamics of social interactions, but the appreciation of the French and African roots that gave birth to the Kreyòl culture must continue to flourish. Thus, the new capital is created to symbolize the hybrid culture that respects the values of a diverse society and to encourage the Haitian motto of liberation, equality, and fraternity among Haitians.

In constructing a new capital for Haiti, the prime consideration rests on the matter of geographic location - where would the new capital be located in Haiti? This shift in location may reinforce the identity of the post-colonial nation-state and may also introduce a different type of capital. The size of the new capital does not have to be as large as Port-au-Prince; not all government administration buildings are required to occupy the new capital. In the quest for a potential site, three thematic models (the quake avoidance model, the central regional model, and the old-new capital proximity model),
extracted from the case studies, will generate some important guidelines to the positioning of a possible future capital site. Since St. Marc and Marchand-Dessalines were mentioned by American and Haitian scientists respectively as safe zones, the models will assess their advantages and disadvantages. A third possible option is attained from the results of the schematic models.

_Earthquake Avoidance Model_

The earthquake avoidance model concentrates on the scientists’ argument of avoiding another seismic disaster. Haiti is flanked by two faults running on either side of the island, the Septentrional fault to the north and the Enriquillo-Plaintain fault in the south. Therefore, many cities and towns like Port-au-Prince, Fort Liberté, Port-au-Paix, Léogâne, Les Cayes, and Cap-Haitien are earthquake prone and cannot be proposed as a secure zone safe from the seismic occurrences displayed in this model. In fact, Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitian with their environs have previously experienced quakes in the 18th and 19th centuries respectively. (See figure 4.1 for map of the earthquake prone areas and fault lines in Haiti). Although scientists have accredited St. Marc and Marchand-Dessalines as being seismically safe sites for a new capital, other factors must be weighed to analyze their effectiveness for the state and its citizens.
Central Location Model

The central location model demonstrates the global relocation pattern for capitals to shift to more central areas in their states; both Tanzania and Kazakhstan followed this method. Due to the Haiti’s unusual shape and widespread mountainous topography in its interior, a capital site in that area would be challenging. Haiti’s rugged, mountainous terrain in the central portion of the island makes access to certain regions extremely difficult. In addition, these central regions, many very isolated, are highly underdeveloped, having very limited accessibility to water, electricity, roads, and other services. Thus, the costs to develop proper infrastructure, to level the ground, to transport materials and people, and to build national access roads to these parts would be far too

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1 This map is this author’s readaptation of Corum’s illustration, which sourced Paul Mann, University of Texas at Austin, Eric Calais, Purdue University, Geological Society of America, American Geophysical Union, US Geological Survey, Gebco, Collins Bartholomew.
expensive. Besides, coastal locations are preferred among Haitians since the major cities and towns lie along the coast.

A potential site under this model is further complicated by marking a spot for equitable accessibility from other parts of the island. Port-au-Prince is somewhat better centrally positioned as a capital as compared to other places like Marchand-Dessalines, but PAP still favors its southern neighbors than its northern ones. Similarly, Marchand – Dessalines has an advantageous position to northerners and the central Artibonite inhabitants rather than to southerners. Because St. Marc is a port city, it has an advantage over Marchand-Dessalines since it can be better accessed via roadway and waterway (however interstate sea transportation needs further developing).

Therefore, this central model recommends a seaside location that provides equitable access to both northern and southern inhabitants by multi-transport systems (roads, sea, etc.). To reduce costs, an area that already has access to major interstate roads, being itself easily accessible to/from other cities and towns, would be also beneficial (see figure 4.2).
Old - New Capital Proximity Model

The old-new capital proximity theme focuses on the significance that former capitals have on affecting relocation procedures, as understood by the elite resistance in Tanzania. There seems to be a direct correlation between proximity/distance of capitals and public reaction: the wider the distance between old and new capitals, the greater the rejection to the move. Similar to the experiences in Tanzania, many PAP residents and elites would perceive more losses than gains from the relocation in which their jobs, prestige, and power would be at stake if the capital were transferred elsewhere. In general, many Haitians have high sentimental regard to PAP as the capital for its historic and cultural significance. And because PAP carries close to a third of the general population, many of them drawn to the capital for a number of reasons (see Appendix 4),
the response to relocating far from PAP would very likely draw much dissension and severe condemnation.

Furthermore, the relocation opponents may also include the inhabitants of the host site. It is quite possible that residents of St. Marc would likely reject the “invasion” of their city to make room for “outsiders,” especially for a current government they have little trust in. The problem may be further complicated if the population of the host site is rather large, prompting more outrage if their homes and way of life were threatened by new developments that are not geared for their benefit.

Since there really is no simple solution to remedy these resistance issues from the residents of the old capital and host site, the two best suggestion that this model can recommend is (1) that the site location would have to be closer to PAP for a majority of people to accept it and (2) that the host site location should be a low-populated area with inhabitants who also are accepting of the new capital (see figure 4.3). In addition, the relocation measure should also include plans for the residents of the host site to participate in construction endeavors and to gain some benefit from the development of the new capital.

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The results from these models suggest a potential capital host site to be in the region of St. Medard and Arcahaie, satisfying the requirements presented in the discussion: close proximity to PAP, seaside advantage and access to a major interstate, relatively low-population density, and adequate distance from either fault lines (see figure 4.4). However, there may be some limitations to that area, specifically on constraints to expanding eastward due to the mountainous range and flooding concerns, affected by the lack of proper drainage systems. There may well be other, even unanticipated, concerns that may arise for the rejection of this, or any host site, for no location is ever really full-proof. Likewise, there may be more important reasons to relocate the capitals to places like Marchand-Dessalines, a former Haitian capital for a brief time after Haiti’s independence that can be reclaimed once again to represent a new post-colonial state identity, or St. Marc, a depreciated city that needs much attention and resources to be brought into its region.
Even with the possibility of the region of St. Medard – Arcahaie (or other choices), the greatest component to any relocation is the willingness of the government, its local inhabitants, and the general public reaction to remain steady with the development of the new capital from its inception to inauguration and well after that. Since the original goal of the relocation is to mitigate the disturbances from natural and man-made attacks, the constant maintenance and upgrading of the new capital are necessary. By understanding the relationship between the new capital and other regional sectors, the major obstacle to the endurance and efficacy of the new capital is the abandonment and depreciation of the former.
Forget me not: The case of Cap-Haitien

The positive relationship between former capitals and new ones is vital to the efficient productivity and functioning of the state. Because of their interdependency, former capitals can positively or negatively influence the development of the new capital, and new capitals are often prescribed to alleviate the pressures of the old capital. The new capital cannot function well without the support from the former capital as well as other urban regions and rural sectors. In turn, the rest of the state are doomed to fail without the support from the capital. The unfair risk of capital relocation is that all attention is turned from one sphere towards another, when the attention should be equally distributed.

As observed from chapter one, the ruin of agricultural lands and underdevelopment of other urban areas affect the ecology of the overcrowded PAP as a result of the capital failing to provide enough funds to assist those areas, causing the mass migration to the capital – home to where the money is. In light of the earthquake, the lack of developed “back-up” cities made the rescue missions difficult since PAP was the only major site in the country equipped to receive mass relief goods as well as the barges and planes that carried them. While this paper provides the potential consequences of relocating the capital away PAP in the 21st century, Haiti itself has presented the case of the relocation trap that disregards the former capital, as experienced by Cap-Haitien.

Beginning in the early colonial period until after Haiti’s independence, capital shuffling between PAP and Cap-Haitian was a matter of commercial advantage for the French and political tactics among Haitian leaders. Founded in 1670, Cap-Haitien, formerly Cap-Français, served as the first capital of the colony of Saint Domingue but
was later replaced by Port-au-Prince in 1770. In 1804, the newly independent Haiti continued to host Port-au-Prince as its capital until the country’s split during the period between 1807 and 1820 in which both cities functioned as capitals for their dominions. Despite the country’s reunification in 1820 headed by PAP once again, the capital was briefly transferred back to Cap-Haitien in 1845 for a year until new leadership restored the honor back to PAP. Unfortunately since then, CAP did not just lose its capital rights and title but experienced further economic loss for years.

As Haiti’s second largest city, Cap-Haitien has fallen from a once prosperous, influential metropolis to a structurally-debilitated and economically-ruined city in modern day. In its heyday under Henri Christophe’s 13-year reign, Cap-Haitien was a thriving capital in the North, which hosts Haiti’s most symbolic treasures. For instance, La Citadelle Laferriere, Haiti’s most popular fortresses built by Christophe to repel French forces, was recognized by the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a World Heritage site in 1982. Christophe was not the only ruler to attempt to contribute to Cap-Haitien’s grandeur. Under President Paul Eugene Magloire in the early 1950s, $7 million dollars was spent in a renewal program for the construction of new harbors and sea wall in Cap-Haitien, as well as for a new national road to connect PAP and CAP.³

Despite such progressive tactics by some leaders for this city, a series of volatile political and economic events, including the ignorance of government officials, led to the city’s ruin. Unfortunately as a result of centralization in PAP, many Haitian presidents

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³ Diederich and Burt, *Papa Doc & Macoutes*, 68.
have centered on policies in Port-au-Prince and its environs while disregarding regions like CAP beyond their sight. Over time, the attractiveness and ecology of Cap-Haitien has significantly downgraded, and the city has lost many of its industries and businesses.

In terms of ecological and environment hazards, Cap-Haitien experiences the same problems found in Port-au-Prince. While both cities are earthquake prone, lying very near to fault lines, there are many concerns over their construction practices and housing safety. Because of the lack of construction policing and enforcement, Cap-Haitien faces a dangerous, city-wide housing hazard in which unreinforced multi-story building structures are being built upon old existing structures (see figure 4.5). Even after seeing the devastation from the earthquake, the same faulty construction procedure of using weak support materials (betons armées or “iron rods”) that don’t properly secure the wall with the ceiling have not ceased in CAP (see figure 4.6). In addition, the general housing design in the city does not include plans for external evacuation fixtures such as fire escapes (see figure 4.7).
Figure 4.5. Dangerous practice of building multi-story buildings atop of existing figures in Cap-Haitien. Photography by Jayne Hendry, reproduced with permission.
Figure 4.6. A two-story weakly reinforced residence being built closely beside a run-down house in Cap-Haitien; this picture was taken a year after the earthquake in 2011. Photography by Renold Horat, reproduced with permission.
Figure 4.7. A four-story school without external evacuation fixtures in Cap-Haitien. Photography by Renold Horat, reproduced with permission.

The experience between these two rival cities, competing for the capital title, provides a real-life example of the flaws of relocation. At present, since the recovery efforts are centered towards Port-au-Prince, not enough attention is being brought to the construction dangers in CAP; there are not enough plans being brought to the table for its economic development. Since the most valued lessons of relocation can be observed from Haiti itself, the past relocation trials were not implemented to fulfill the needs of the state and the Haitian citizens; rather the moves were primarily based on the colonial’s needs for seaside commercialism and served to satisfy the Haitian rulers’ preference and political agenda. Beyond any justifiable or frivolous reasons for the move, the significant risk to any future relocation in Haiti is that Port-au-Prince may suffer the same fate as Cap-Haitien.
The lens of relocation must look back to support the former capital while eyeing the future ahead. Port-au-Prince should and will always be a key player to Haiti’s rebuilding, regardless of capital transitioning. Although this thesis does not advise to resurrect Cap-Haitien as capital either, this second major city also shares symbolic importance to Haiti’s heritage and should not be shunned out of development and renovation projects; nor should any other city, town, or village. It is therefore prudent to acknowledge and work to develop these areas. Thus, relocation efforts must aim to link the new capital to the old capital together in the reconstruction plans, bringing the cause for nation rebuilding full circle to correct old mistakes while advancing the state to a new frontier.

**Reconstruction by Corrective Endeavors**

Seeing that relocation can help bring focus back to forgotten areas and promote socio-economic alterations on a national scale, reconstruction, likewise, views that the capital is not the sole heir to change. The definition of rebuild is “to make extensive repairs to or to make extensive changes in.” In regards to Haiti’s post-earthquake reconstruction, rebuilding incorporates fixing more than structural damages and repairing pre-existing problems beyond the socio-ecological arena. The implementation of preventive measures by the actual construction of seismic-proof structures and the establishment of early warning systems are without a doubt necessary; but for these measures to endure, rehabilitation within society and within the individual plays a major role in the success of any post-cataclysmic rebuilding project. If a new capital were to be built, these necessary reconstructive initiatives are needed to accompany the relocation
effort. By correcting the old flaws in the Haitian system, these reconstruction plans must include multi-lateral and multi-faceted changes in the following endeavors:

1. mental healing and recovery through education and changes in pre-existing attitudes
2. decentralization and anticorruption initiatives
3. preparation for future risks
4. the attainment of human resources

The state of mind: Healing, recovery and education

The urgent step in reconstruction starts with the changing and recovery of a state of mind first. Not only must individuals be taught to prepare for natural disasters, they must be taught to live and work differently with the knowledge that they inhabit an earthquake and hurricane prone zone. Along with verbal instruction, the education to prepare for impending disasters involves many diverse people to encourage others through example and practice (i.e. constructing homes with safer materials or having an emergency kit at easy reach). But before these life-saving lessons can taught, the education itself in Haiti needs an overhaul, and mental reformations on pre-existing social conceptions must be changed.

The call to fix social stigmas and change pre-existing attitudes that deprive the poor class from opportunities must be incorporated in the reconstruction of Haiti. Access to education in general is complicated by pre-existing attitudes based on discriminatory practices set to disadvantage the poor, and those far from the capital are not getting the vital resources and information. Haitian authorities and leaders themselves must improve
the education system and adjust the laws, legislation, and customs to open up the channels of opportunity, resource, and information. Because many Haitians follow the Christian faith, religious leaders must be called upon to encourage their flock to work together in unity and good faith to promote the complete recovery of the country.

Moreover, the psychological traumas experienced by masses of people who lost dear loved ones from the event are not thoroughly being dealt with, as millions of people remain homeless, tormented, and distressed. It is suggested that even charity handouts may not be beneficial to the victims because they wait lazily for items to be hand-given to them instead of being put to work to earn them. Still a majority of Haitians do express their willingness and desire for employment. Since the healing process must entail the personal task of trying to regain control of a desperate situation, Haitians must be involved in the physical rebuilding of their environment as a path towards mental and emotional healing.

**Decentralization and anticorruption initiatives**

By definition, centralization is meant to reinforce the structure of a capital, lending to an inbound and outbound flow of resources, goods, information, and labor from and to its periphery. However, the result seen in Haiti produces an unequal accumulation of these resources within the capital that suffocates the periphery and the rest of the country. The effects of centralization have posed a great threat to other urban areas.

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4 Hughes Foucault, interview by author, West Palm Beach, FL, January 4, 2011. Mr. Foucault is a professor at the University of Haiti and is currently working on a study with Tulane University on the effects of charity handouts in the post-earthquake period.

5 Rapoport, "Nature of Capitals and Expressions,” 34.
zones and the rural sector where spatial distribution of power and resources are at its lowest, leading to their drastic underdevelopment and devastation. As centrality is emphasized in the function of the capital, the practice becomes counter-productive in a corrupt and flawed government system. And when corruption appears, heavy mismanagement follows.

Due to the inefficacy of the centralized government and the rampant corruption, Haiti is misrepresented as being “the poorest country in the western hemisphere” simply because there is much wealth inside the country since the bourgeois and political elites keep getting richer and countless monetary aid has been given to Haiti over the past decades. Therefore, Haiti really is not the poorest but the most seriously mismanaged nation. Similar to the problem with the charitable hand-outs, the emphasis must be to improve the government system and make the nation more self-efficient.

It is evident from the January 12th event just how centralization even creates various complications to rescue and relief missions, specifically in the disproportionate aid distribution between the capital and other affected regional areas. The delivery of aid relief to zones outside the capital was delayed by disruption in attention-grabbing PAP – sadly many of the other affected areas were long left neglected and improperly cared for before the quake. One major hurdle to getting aid inside Haiti involved the country’s deficiency to accommodate numerous airplanes flying from across the globe to a single-lane airport in Port-au-Prince. Perhaps if Cap-Haitian or Jacmel airports were significantly spruced up, flights would not have diverted to Dominican Republic, further delaying the distribution of supplies. Many accounts reported the challenge in early
distribution efforts of relief materials to Léogâne, the location of the quake epicenter, where 80% of devastation occurred:

A town of 50,000 just 20 miles west of the capital, Léogâne has been left practically to its own resources since Tuesday's earthquake. "Everybody is talking about Port-au-Prince. What about Léogâne?" asks Ms. Alcindor who returned to Haiti in 2005 after 30 years of working in Miami hospitals. "Léogâne is all broken." If getting aid from Port-au-Prince's airport out to its shattered neighborhoods is difficult, bringing help to devastated outlaying areas has proven to be a monumental challenge.6

Haiti is not the only nation to suffer from the problem of centralization in the aftermath of natural disaster. Mexico also realized similar ailments:

[C]apital-city dwellers were made painfully aware of the need for demographic and economic deconcentration by the powerful effects of the 1985 earthquake, which affected the Valley of Mexico basin and caused massive building damage. Less clearly perceived by local populations, there are diseconomies in the massing of population in one or a few cities at the center of most Latin American countries. These diseconomies result directly from congestion and pollution cost and indirectly from the lack of human and physical resources in the peripheral regions and from the negative features that result from a centralized political and administrative system.7

In fact, in lieu of capital relocation, Latin American countries have been compelled to implement and enforce decentralization aims because of the risk that regional competitors could attract more activities, alarming the capital if resources are not secured for itself:

Because of this fact, national governments are less likely to countenance a move that could compromise the position if their leading city, by implication, their


country. Therefore, the likelihood is that they will seek to decentralize more routine government functions to provincial cities, leaving the capital as an ever more specialized command and control centre for government and, by implication, their nations’ economic and political life.8

Even if relocation were to occur, the solutions for Haiti’s long-term recovery must include plans for decentralization of Port-au-Prince and enforcing anticorruption practices in order to provide equitable services and access to its citizens, executing changes in economic policies, allocating more administrative and political power to regional centers, establishing regional planning development, and developing better communication between center and periphery zones. Decentralization would help reaffirm the importance of having non-capital cities and regional locales to serve as back-up sites in rescuing efforts and to work together for the general welfare of the people.

Furthermore, decentralization calls for simultaneous rural and urban development to adverse the effects of deforestation and urban concentration and to establish environmental restoration in the rural sectors. The urgency to develop Haitian cities and rural zones is not only critical for the emergency planning of natural disasters; it is vital as a daily procedure for the activities and system of the entire nation. Diffusing the wealth and power from the capital by developing other cities and rural areas and improving the road connection between them will help create national equilibrium in the country. No longer can one city be the alpha and omega of the state when so much is at risk.

Preparing for future calamities

Preparation is a necessity to any country when there is promise of a looming catastrophe. However, for any poor nation, a major obstacle to preparing for future risks is the lack of financial resources. Fortunately, there are several helpful ways that Haiti can still prepare for imminent disasters.

Michele McNabb and Kristine Pearson, authors of the essay “Can Poor Countries Afford to Prepare for Low-Probability Risks,” argue that although poor nations cannot devise their own individualized warning systems, they can still utilize other early–warning alternatives for “low-probability risk events,” or events that happen irregularly. The authors cite four cost-effective solutions that rely on global and regional participation:

1. “Multihazard early warning systems:” a coordinated system that accumulates groupings of data of low-probability hazards (that is hazards that don’t occur regularly ie: tsunamis, earthquakes, etc), such as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).9

2. “Disaster Risk-Reduction Education”: education programs among the public to help prepare and improve their safety for potential low-probability and high-probability events of various types.10

3. “Low Cost/ Technology Solutions”: the development of safer practices and tougher interventions on a constant basic level, such as enforcing tougher builder construction codes and utilizing more resilient structure types.11

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10 Ibid., 115 - 116.

11 Ibid., 116 - 117.
4. “Multiuse Communication Systems”: the use of various methods to constantly communicate with the public about safety preparation and impending disasters from cell phone texting to radio transmission; redundancy is key.\(^{12}\)

If more money was attainable, then this author recommends establishing a national emergency center in an earthquake safe zone - perhaps at the same suggested host capital site location of St.Medard – Arcahaie. This emergency center would satisfy many of Haiti’s immediate post-quake needs by consisting of:

(a) hospitals with psychiatric centers

(b) a multi-lane airport or open field to receive helicopters and air drops

(c) warehouses to house food, water, medicines, other aid relief supplies, and life-saving equipment including bulldozers and cranes

(d) various temporary public shelters

(e) multiple communication centers with internet and phone access

(f) an administrative quarter for administrative officials

(g) a security compound

(h) disaster prevention instructional schools

By having a predetermined, designated area for victims and domestic and international help-aid workers alike to congregate, this safety hub would contribute to faster distribution rates and promotes an effective risk management system. In addition, this safe place would have all the infrastructural amenities (electricity, water, sanitation, etc.) and utilize the same control measures as assumed for a new capital. The hub can surely be utilized for much more occasions other than just for the anticipation of another earthquake.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 117 – 119.
As sophisticated and costly this emergency center sounds, it does not replace the need for local safe places or hubs to be distributed around the island, consisting of some of the amenities aforementioned. It is also essential to have an evacuation plan, implement more evacuation exits in all buildings, and place public placards emphasizing safety routes and safe zone places. Since the island is prone to other natural disturbances, such as flooding and hurricanes, having these measures add needed security for the Haitian people.

Securing human resources

Finally, securing human resources for the reconstruction of Haiti might be the most challenging endeavor since the human resource problem has global implications. The education system is impaired by the lack of teachers and instructors needed to teach Haitians to reconstruct their environment. Coinciding with this issue, Haiti has lost a significant amount of resourceful people due to various political and economic insecurities.

In regards to the amount of refugees and immigrants who have fled the island, the political and economic crises mounting in Haiti have consistently impacted neighboring nations, which have had to deal with a growing number of Haitian refugees; nations such as Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Cuba, the United States, Canada, and others have hosted the Haitian Diaspora populations. Since members of the intelligentsia and middle class communities are incorporated in those numbers, Haiti is left with a human resource dilemma, in which many mentors, scholars, skilled laborers, and other productive members of society are not present to guide and teach the future generations of domestic
Haitians. There is also a fear that future generations of the Haitian Diaspora will be totally disconnected from the homeland.

While countries like China and India are luring their abroad citizenries to return home to work for the development of their states, the Haitian government and other civic leaders are not making enough attempts to attract Haitians back home. Furthermore, the high level of insecurity of violence and kidnappings, which continue to terrorize the public today, has not encouraged people to return either. Since reconstruction demands the involvement of Haitians in general, the effort to rebuild after a disaster and to promote nation-building agendas is significantly jeopardized while essential human resources are lacking.

In respect to obtaining the expertise of the Haitian Diaspora, the development of human resources in Haiti requires the consistent transmittance of knowledge passed from one party, or generation, to the other. The domestic Haitians must learn from the Diaspora community since they share a common language and understanding of the Haitian environment. In regards to the building of a new capital, the maintenance and productivity of the capital needs the help of the global Haitian community, in particular Haitians who have lived in countries with varied capital or city structures and understand firsthand what it takes to ensure the functioning of a capital; they can train their fellow Haitians on the tasks of preserving a new capital. Since the Diaspora community is responsible for a major portion of the Haitian economy by their sending of cash and materials back to their families, Haitians living world-wide should be tapped into providing more than just money to their native country.
Final Word on Reconstruction: The Duty to Prevent Disasters

By looking at the aftermath of the quake, this thesis has explored the basis behind the idea that “disaster begets disaster.” Some disasters may not have a direct, sudden and violent impact as a quake; many are disasters-in-waiting. The growing impediments and malfunctions that accumulate into producing disastrous events or highly contribute to the human toll and infrastructural damage of a severe blow are termed by this author as “hush” disasters because the hazards were “hushed” down due to the ignorance of concern; no bells were being sound off, so to speak. The ecological damage in the form of urban infrastructural decay, agricultural ruin, and unreinforced housing practices are concrete examples of “hush” disasters that exist to threaten the lives of the Haitian people, the contributors to the high number of fatalities from the quake. Sadly, Haiti is not out of the dark since many of these “hush” disasters still pervade and blindly continue throughout the country in the form of the decentralization effects, human resource issues, and socio-economic prejudices.

This thesis strongly recommends that reconstruction tackles the foundational problems and dangerous risks in the nation. The pursuit of relocation cannot be complete without the accomplishment of responding to the underlying issues that negatively affect many “hush” disasters in Haiti. The mission to safeguard the capital from future quakes must be complemented with the goals to alleviate the disasters of pollution, crippling infrastructure, inadequate housing structures, government mismanagement, socio-political tensions, and uneven development. At the same time, Haiti should strive to hinge together its divided citizens by setting a new social arena where individuals from either side of the socio-economic scale can have equal access and opportunities.
True rebuilding starts at the roots of these problems, which require multilateral strategies. Capital relocation, done correctly, can be useful. The “hush” disasters must be sought out and corrected. Reconstruction pushes all of those involved to be conscious of the things that affect and impact the nation and to respond to them effectively. In order to withstand future events or disturbances, rebuilding heavily relies on preparation in which attentiveness is crucial and ignorance has no place.
CONCLUSION

Capital relocation is an on-going debate, surely to become a hot topic for the upcoming Haitian administration. Although some Haitian authorities are pushing for capital relocation, many are leaning towards keeping PAP as the capital. While current reconstruction plans consist of substantial infrastructural improvements, massive construction plans, and new architectural designs for the devastated city, the rebuilding efforts have been slow, since only 20 percent of the debris has been cleared as of early 2011. Haitians, who are used to and frustrated by empty promises, are afraid that the international community will fail to provide their promised share towards Haiti’s recovery. More so, they are afraid that many Haitian authorities might try to funnel the money away from reconstruction efforts into their own pockets. Thus, many Haitians may not be accepting of such a big endeavor as capital relocation.

To win their favor, small steps could make a world of difference in changing their minds in accepting capital relocation. The assured deliverance of medicines and care, the nationwide access to water, and hauling away of trash and debris are primary steps that can be done to allow an open mind for bigger projects. Unfortunately, these minimal tasks are often very difficult to accomplish in Haiti.

With the 2011 elections complete, the hope is that the new Haitian administration can implement true-lasting changes towards Haiti’s development, stability and recovery during the course of the reconstruction period. If the new president and government choose the capital relocation route, then the goals must be not to abandon PAP while building a new capital elsewhere and must include correcting old mistakes (flawed colonial-stemmed tendencies and destructive habits) in order for the entire state to
function properly and productively. In conjunction to physical reconstruction, the hope is that liberty, equality and fraternity will take place as a permanent fixture in the daily lives of the Haitian people, which will unite people to live freely, to have equal access and opportunities, and to collaborate peacefully.

By observing the experiences from other global relocations, the task of transitioning the capital may prove challenging, but relocation is still attainable, provided that supplementary measures and initiatives are implemented alongside it to improve and develop the entire state. The two fundamental elements to Haiti’s long-lasting recovery are education and employment, both sources of empowerment for the poor and promoters of social elevation and mobility. Since most Haitian people desperately want jobs to support themselves, feed their families, and send their children to schools, major projects, like capital relocation, can guarantee employment and education for a lengthy period of time. Still, more consistent measures to improve the social, political, economic, and ecological conditions in the country are needed for the nation’s stability, prosperity, and progress, such as decentralization and reforestation programs. These measures and initiatives must be installed for Haiti’s complete reconstruction, regardless if relocation occurs.

In lieu of relocation, there may be another option for Haiti regarding its capital. In the spirit of decentralization, the South African three-capital system might be something worth investigating; more research is required to analyze whether this model is attainable in Haiti.
Taking pride as being the first free black republic of the world, Haiti has encountered countless struggles from man-made forces that challenge the freedom, independence, and stability of the country. The combination of abuses from foreign imperialism and domestic conflicts has detrimentally damaged the island nation, where the chains of slavery still exist in the social mentality and discriminatory practices. Compounded with existing deteriorating infrastructure and reckless mismanagement, this impoverished nation’s capital faces mounting domestic and international pressure to address and fix its ailments as a threat of another disaster looms. Unless serious steps are established to combat these debilitating effects on environment, health and safety, the Haitian people are doomed to further suffer an agonizing fate.

The Haitian catastrophe helps us understand that disasters impact more than just the ones directly affected and that there are many causes to this disaster. This terrible incident signals the help of the global community, and reconstruction involves setting regulations and guidelines for future preparedness in affected and non-affected areas. The magnitude of a disaster can result in significant loss of lives and major collateral damage; it also creates changes in life-styles and daily activities. Reconstruction mandates certain adjustments in the future habits of the state and its people. The rebuilding process is not limited to a sole person, political group, social class, or nation; it involves a whole range of domestic and international participants. Most importantly, reconstruction is not confined to just the space of a capital.
Figures A.1.1. – A.1.5. are visual renderings of Haitian historian and author Bellegarde-Smith’s discussions on the social class composition of Haiti’s colonial period:

Figure A.1.1. Three-tiered social class pyramid of colonial Haiti.
Source: Data adapted from Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, *Breached Citadel*, 7.
Figure A.1.2. The hierarchy pyramid of the white class in colonial Haiti.
Source: Data adapted from Bellegarde-Smith, *Breached Citadel*, 36-37. Amidst the white class were divisions among them in which France-born whites had higher positions and status than colony-born whites.

Figure A.1.3. Affranchis types in colonial Haiti.
Source: Data adapted from Bellegarde-Smith, *Breached Citadel*, 37-38.
Figure A.1.4. Black slave division in colonial Haiti.
Source: Data adapted from Belgarde-Smith, *Breached Citadel*, 39-40.

Figure A.1.5. Class representation in colonial and post colonial Haitian flags.
Source: Data adapted from Belgarde-Smith, *Breached Citadel*, 43. In the colonial flag, blue, white and red symbolize the slave, white, and Affranchis classes respectively. After the Revolution, the white center was torn from the flag, producing the red and blue flag that represented the mulatto and black struggle for independence. According to Haitian lore, Jean-Jacques Dessalines created the red and blue flag by stripping off the white center of the French tricolor flag, and he had a relative sew the remaining parts together.
APPENDIX 2

HAITI'S MODERN-DAY CLASS COMPOSITION

The modern-day social class composition has had few alterations in the top and middle strata, in which mostly mulattoes and some black elites have filled the social rank vacuum left by the French. Because many social opportunities, such as education access and employment, are extremely limited, there is a disproportionally large majority of blacks unable to elevate from the bottom class (see Figure A.2.1. for modern class structure).

Port-au-Prince’s upper bourgeoisie minority, predominately of the mulatto race, incorporates some blacks and expatriate businessmen from Europe, Lebanon and Syria who entered Haiti in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In replacing the colonial Affranchis class, the middle class of today consists of a mix of mulattoes and more black Haitians who are business owners, workers, military officers, administrators, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals.¹ Also part of this class is the emergence of the Haitian Diaspora, called jasporas in Kreyòl, who are living and working in the US, Canada, France, and elsewhere with ties to the homeland. As black Haitians became more educated, earned more money, and rose to political power, they began to elevate into other classes but have not fully dominated at the very top. One can argue that powerful black Haitian politicians, who resist politics de doublure maneuvering, has gained some hierarchy above the upper class, creating a possible fourth category at the pinnacle.

Since the Haitian population consists of 80 percent African-descent people, it comes to no surprise that the bottom of the social pyramid is the black majority. However

the alarming factor is that, in spite of the size of this class, the treatment and status of the poor mass have not undergone major improvement. With the national literacy rate standing at about 53 percent, the bottom class, the largest percentage of the population, remains underprivileged, illiterate, destitute and black.

Figure A.2.1. Modern-day social class pyramid, author’s design.

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APPENDIX 3

POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN HAITI

Politics in Port-au-Prince is a dangerous affair, where the first response usually consists of violence instead of peaceful negotiations. Throughout Haitian history, the volatile political situation has encouraged disharmony and discord in the public, further heightening civil disobedience and unrest, and has discouraged many attempts for social and economic development in the country. The repeated downfalls of presidents leave behind a power vacuum, creating cycles of volatile and deadly episodes that torment the Haitian people.

The political mistrust and unrest began at the root of the Haitian independence and never ceased growing. Early in Haiti’s post-colonial period, conspirators including Henri Christophe and Alexandre Pétion participated in a plot to assassinate Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the first ruler of independent Haiti and a great hero of Haitian Revolution, widely admired by many Haitians. However, Dessalines had a notorious reputation for killing thousands of white French men and women; other critics accused him of lascivious activities, despotic authority, and maltreatment of his military officers.¹ After Dessalines assassination, fierce political squabbling continued between Christophe and Pétion, which led to the country’s split in 1807 to form a republic to the south with Pétion as leader and a kingdom to the north, including the Artibonite region, headed by self-proclaimed king Christophe. Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitian served as the capitals for each dominion respectively.

Since then, political warfare has prompted a cycle of severe presidential problems. From the many records of political downfalls, the Haitian presidency may seem to be plagued by some curse, but often this presidential omen is triggered by those wanting to stay in power longer than

¹ Heinl and Heinl, Written in Blood, 129-130.
mandated. In the span of two centuries with over fifty presidents or rulers starting with Dessalines, more than thirty Haitian presidents have either been overthrown by coups d’états and insurrections (i.e. Jean-Pierre Boyer, Faustin Soulouque, Jean-Louis Pierrot), forced to exile (i.e. Dumarsis Estimé, Paul Eugène Magloire, Jean-Claude Duvalier, Jean-Bertrand Aristide), or brutally assassinated (i.e. Jean-Jacques Dessalines by his peers, Cincinnatus Leconte during a Palace explosion, Vilbrun Guillaume Sam by the populace dragging and killing him in the street). In some cases, some Haitian presidents died while in power (i.e. Henri Christophe, Jean-Baptiste Riche, Phillipe Guerrier, and Francois Duvalier).² Seeing how most Haitian leaders suffer brutal or embarrassing ends, one must ponder whether the ascension to the presidency is worth the trouble if the descent from it is so brutal.

In the attempt to possess and maintain political power, presidents, and some politicians, rely on extra measures of security because of the reminders of Haiti’s abundant political unrest, assassinations, and ousting. Many Haitian leaders regularly create their own brand of security by forming leagues of trusted guards or paramilitary groups and by using public supporters, usually consisting of people who live and circulate primarily in the slums of the capital. Examples include Soulouque and Les Zinglins, Francois ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier and the Tontons Macoutes, Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his Chimères. These presidential guards also execute many secret and scandalous activities to pressurize politicians to favor certain legislation, mobilize the populace to perform certain actions as dictated by the leader, and display signals of intimidation towards dissidents.

Moreover, the presidents’ fight against the elite’s tool of politics de doublure and manipulations consists of having a personal army as a demonstrative show of his unyielding

² See discussions about the fall of Haitian presidents in Pierre, Haiti, Rising Flames, 4, 71-73.
authority. Being sent out do the president’s dirty work, these henchmen have been summoned to perform disturbing duties ranging from antagonizing opponents and intimidating voters to eliminating enemies that are perceived as threats and extremists.

Although political play may seem to involve primarily the rich and the powerful, the support and manipulation of regular people, specifically the poor masses, often play a large role. Historically, socio-economic elites had major ties to key political figures to maintain their status, while politicians find financial support from the bourgeoisie and wealthy businessmen to secure political power in the next election. This tendency still exists to some extent. However, the dynamics have changed somewhat from elite sponsorships to public mass support for politicians to get elected and maintain power, specifically those in line for the presidency. This was best captured during Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s first political win in 1990 drawing huge mass support: 67 percent of the vote. Although some presidents and politicians have easily gained political power, others had to engage in more illegal forms by committing voter fraud or ballot stuffing or by violently pushing their way into the presidential office. Once the power is attained, the tricky and most futile part is maintaining that power.

As a result of the lengthy and constant political crises, countless amounts of violence, corruption, and deaths have destabilized the country and fueled animosity among the population along socio-economic, political and regional lines. In addition, politics in PAP has an effect on Haiti’s post-quake reconstruction initiatives. While the October 2010 presidential elections ended with massive fraud, provoking nation-wide demonstrations and international

condemnation and causing a second run-off round of election in March 2011, only 20 percent of the rubble from the earthquake has been cleared.\(^4\)

APPENDIX 4

CENTRALIZATION AND CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL PORT-AU-PRINCE

Home to over 2 million, close to a third of Haiti’s 9 million population, Port-au-Prince is Haiti’s largest and most densely populated city with “28,757 persons per km\(^2\) in 2003.”\(^1\) PAP is the premier place of influence, power, and wealth, where political exchanges and favors are made to accommodate the socio-political and economic elites. But, PAP is not immune to deceit, corruption, and crimes that have negatively impacted the entire nation. Due to PAP’s centralized system, there is a high accumulation of wealth and resources that are not actually accessible to many. Still, the capital remains popular and populated for a number of reasons.

The first reason for its popularity is historically founded. The first post-independence attraction to Port-au-Prince was under the rule of Alexandre Pétion in which he allowed anyone (mulatto, Affranchis, or former slave) to own a piece of land in the republic side of the island, while Christophe forced former slaves to return to the land as laborers and not as owners in the North.\(^2\) Possessing property was the ultimate testament of being truly liberated by many Haitians, which is still very important to many Haitian people today. On the other hand, there are some Haitians who do not necessarily want to own land parcels because of the reminders of slavery and instead prefer owning residences or making domiciles in PAP.

The second reason for the capital’s overcrowding corresponds to the centralization of services in the city. Access to major civic services, medical care, and businesses all hover around the capital. Since PAP houses most of the government administrative service agencies,

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\(^1\) Myrtho Joseph and Fahui Wang, "Population Density Patterns in Port-au-Prince, Haiti: A Model of Latin American City?" *Cities* 27, no. 3 (June 2010): 128.

moun andeyo (those living outside the capital) must travel to PAP to get official documents from passports to driver licenses. Thus, some people become moun lavil (city dwellers) by staying in the capital instead of making the arduous journey back home on bad roads.

The third reason pertains to politically-motivated actions, in which there is a direct correlation between the insecurities of Haitian presidents and the overcrowding of Port-au-Prince. Due to their fear that a rebellion may be brewing somewhere within the distance, presidents have been more inclined to have the bulk of the population within sight. As a result, the slum zones in PAP have swelled and are considered as political enclaves, often times breeding a sort of “slum army” to either support or oppose the ruling government. For example, Duvalier had ordered La Saline, the biggest slum during his time, to be leveled because of his suspicions that political opposition circulated in that area. In contrast, Cité Soleil, currently the largest and notorious slum in PAP where violence, gangs, kidnapping, and drugs run rampant, was home to many Aristide supporters. The following Washington Post article describes a clashing event between troops and Aristide supporters:

Estimates of the death toll vary from 250 to 600 or more. Much of the killing took place in desperately poor slums such as this one on the outskirts of the capital and Cite Soleil near downtown Port-au-Prince, where [Jean-Bertrand Aristide] is extremely popular. ‘They came to Cite Soleil not because of revenge but because they know Cite Soleil people are Aristide people,’ said Jean Robert Birmingham, 38, who lives there.

Furthermore, presidents, who suspects threats to their power, call upon their trusted guards or supporters, who mostly live in slums close to the National Palace, to dismantle any uprisings at a moment’s notice. In turn, these presidential aides and supporters get paid for their

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3 Diederich and Burt, Papa Doc & Macoutes, 391.

loyalty and services. And since the country face an unemployment rate of 50 to 70 percent,\(^5\) so many Haitians are desperate to find any type of employment, even from corrupt politicians able to pay them.

Lastly, the most significant reason to PAP overcrowding problems corresponds to the effects of deforestation. Due to the significant deforestation and rural land degradation, PAP has become a final refuge for the nation’s rural folks and farmers, who seek survival elsewhere. Generally, PAP is also attractive to any poor and disadvantaged person looking for an alternate means of living, only to be deceived: “[e]ach year about 75,000 people migrate from very rural areas to Port-au-Prince and other urban areas in search of jobs — which are not, however, generally available.”\(^6\) Deforestation has decimated the island, and no major steps have been initiated to remedy the loss. The lack of arable land forces an uncontrolled growth of rural population into a limited space within the city:

A poor and largely uneducated rural population has a high rate of population growth. Limited arable land and a lack of investment in it lead to small or even negative marginal output from the growing population. Misuse of the land, such as ‘slash and burn’ hillside deforestation in Haiti, can reduce the arable land base and degrade the environment more broadly…There is both a supply-push effect from overpopulated arable land and a demand-pull effect from higher paying jobs in urban areas.\(^7\)

From the loss of trees, environmental degradation significantly threatened both rural and urban sectors with widespread soil erosion, severe flooding, and threatening mudslides and runoff, causing major coastal pollution. Hurricanes have caused severe problems to the productivity of


\(^6\) Ibid., 13.

the agricultural fields and environmental safety. The decline of rural areas by natural and man-made factors greatly affects the increase in population within the capital.

Since there are no effective birth control and migration control measures, the population of PAP will continue to increase. In light of the disaster, many people who had left PAP immediately after the quake find themselves returning right back. The following article describes one woman’s return to the devastated capital:

This is not surprising, since the refugees have little to look forward to in the countryside: no jobs, no place to live and not much to eat. "What am I supposed to do in the countryside?" asks Cynthia Saint Fort. The 22-year-old nurse wants to go to medical school, and the country's only university is in Port-au-Prince. Of course, she adds, she is also afraid to stay there, in a place where she has seen so many people die...

For Saint Fort, Port-au-Prince is still the only place where she feels useful. The hillside house she and her brothers lived in before the quake was destroyed, but the family has now built a makeshift shelter in the ruins with mattresses, furniture and tarps.

They plan to rebuild the house, and they hope to receive government assistance to do so, but like everyone else, they have no idea what the future will hold. She spends her days tending to her patients in a makeshift hospital set up in the courtyard of a house. Death was yesterday. Now her life is in Port-au-Prince.8

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8 Höges, “Haiti Debates Moving.” http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,675299,00.html.
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